

The Goal of the Boycott - Los Angeles Review of Books

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This is one of eight essays we published today on “Academic Activism: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Ethics of Boycott.” [Click here to read the others.](#)

THE MOVEMENT to boycott, divest, and sanction (BDS) Israel presents itself as a nonviolent and grassroots movement, allegedly based in Palestinian civil society, that promises to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As the boycott movement has spread to American campuses — especially in the wake of its endorsement by the American Studies Association in December 2013 — it has received considerable media attention. The level of interest reflects the widespread hope for a positive resolution of the situation and particularly for an alleviation of the conditions of the Palestinians on the West Bank. Any seemingly serious proposal deserves close attention, which is why the boycott movement has attracted supporters. Upon close examination, however, one finds that the movement offers something different from what it promises.

The goal of the boycott movement is not peace: it is the elimination of the State of Israel. This is the logical implication of all its arguments. Its supporters refrain from spelling out this endgame in order to avoid scaring off moderates who would reject the eliminationist agenda, but the end of Israeli sovereignty altogether is the clear purpose of the movement. It will fail in this pursuit, and Israel will survive, but the radicalism of the boycott movement is succeeding in poisoning debate on the Middle East.

The boycott movement bases its animosity toward Israel on the twin claims that it is a colonialist state and that it relies on an apartheid system of racial segregation. These are not arguments but slurs, and an examination of the historical record shows that they are falsehoods.

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The boycott movement ostensibly dodges the question of the political future of the region, claiming agnosticism between the two-state and one-state solutions. In fact its arguments subvert the possibility of a two-state solution — a secure Israel next to a sovereign Palestine. In its de facto opposition to the two-state solution, the boycott movement stands outside the mainstream of the political discussion about the future of the region.

The boycott movement, furthermore, proposes to restrict academic life on the basis of political allegiances, which would do significant damage to the principle of academic freedom. Even though it cleverly claims to cherish academic freedom, it advocates steps that will stifle the free exchange of ideas, effectively subverting academic freedom.

Wrong on history, wrong on politics, and wrong in its understanding of academic values, the boycott movement is contributing to the degradation of campus debate on the Middle East. That there is campus debate, with passionate commitments on both sides, should be welcomed. The longevity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a source of frustration, disappointment, and anger. No one can be satisfied with the status quo. But the boycott movement distracts from the one fundamental truth in the region: that there is plenty of blame on each side. Israel succeeded brilliantly in offering haven to millions of refugees the world did not want, and it built a political system as democratic as those of Western Europe — but its history is marred by displacements and violence, such as at Deir Yassin, and it has tragically failed to extract itself from the West Bank, as urged by Israeli critics as early as 1967. The Palestinians have had to suffer enormously, through the UN-imposed partition and the violence of the nakba, but also through the mistreatment accorded to them as refugees in other Arab states where they are denied citizenship and barred from engaging in professions. Moreover the Palestinian leadership has done more than its share to undermine the Palestinian national cause, from the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem al-Husseini's collaboration with Nazi Germany, through the miscalculation of opting for a strategy of terrorism against civilians, to Yasser Arafat's refusal of the 2000 Camp David proposal. Had Arafat accepted a version of that agreement, the Palestinians would now be in the middle of the second decade of a free and sovereign state, encompassing the West Bank and Gaza.

That Palestinian state will be formed eventually. This means that Israel will have to abandon the settlements, except where a reciprocal land swap can be negotiated. At the same time, the Palestinians will have to accept that Israel is not going to disappear. The price of the Palestinian state includes the recognition of the Jewish state, consistent with the original UN resolution of 1947. Yet political leaders on both sides continue to fail to make the case to their respective constituencies that significant compromise will be necessary.

Similarly, the boycott movement miseducates the campus public by evading the necessity of compromise. On the contrary, it finds fault exclusively with the Israelis, as if the Palestinians had no agency and bore no responsibility. It also refuses to endorse a negotiated compromise that could lead to the establishment of a Palestinian national state next to Israel. Instead, boycott supporters use terminology that indicates that their genuine goal involves the dismantling of the State of Israel

altogether. Their calls to “end the occupation” remain deceptively ambiguous, never clarifying whether they refer to the territories that came under Israeli control in 1967 or to Jewish presence in the region altogether, especially the Jewish state founded in 1948. To claim agnosticism on this urgent matter is politically irresponsible.

This irresponsibility applies as well to the historical misrepresentations on which the boycott movement bases its hostility to Israel: the claim that it is colonialist and that it is dependent on apartheid segregation. These distortions derive from the propagandistic discourse of the Soviet Union in the 1950s and have been revived in the radical fringes of contemporary academia. The point of declaring that Israel is a settler colonialist regime is to associate Israel, and the Zionist movement that preceded it, with the history of European colonialism. If that association is established, Israel becomes susceptible to the same disapprobation that prevails toward the whole history of European colonialism and imperialism. If the boycott campaign could establish that Israel is the functional equivalent of French Algeria or British Kenya, then it could also argue that Israel deserves to come to a similar end: think of The Battle of Algiers restaged in Tel Aviv, hardly a vision of peace. If, however, Israel is not tarnished as a colonial creation, it would have a claim to the same respect accorded to other multicultural democratic nation-states and member states of the United Nations. The colonialism calumny is therefore central to the boycott movement’s efforts to rob Israel of its political legitimacy. It has nothing to do with a scholarly pursuit of truth.

In fact the case of Israel has not played much of a role at all in the established scholarly discussion on colonialism. In his classic volume *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, D. K. Fieldhouse, formerly the Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History at Cambridge, makes no reference to Israel or to Zionism and touches on Palestine only briefly as part of the discussion of the post-World War I dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, although he cites the Balfour Declaration’s promise of a “national home for the Jewish people.”^[1] He does address Palestine extensively in *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, where he begins, however, by recognizing the “moral and physical justification” for a Jewish home. He underscores how Palestine differed from standard colonization patterns, and, in the end, he views the conflict as a responsibility of the British Empire, not of Zionism.^[2] The result is not very different for Marc Ferro, who, in *The Black Book of Colonialism*, points out not the similarity but the key differences between Israel and standard colonialist models: “that [Israel] is not the extension of a metropolis elsewhere; and that it was recognized by the UN in 1948 and, afterwards, by Arab or Muslim countries.”^[3] Such recognition of Israel by independent Arab and Muslim states — and of course many others across the globe — makes the boycott movement’s treatment of it as a garden-variety colony implausible.

It was precisely at the moment when the European colonial empires were beginning to collapse that Israel gained its sovereignty. It looks more like a postcolonial formation, contingent on the British departure, than it does a standard colony. The new arrivals in Israel were, moreover, beholden to no “mother country,” as is the case in colonial situations, and its legitimacy derived from a decision by the

UN (hardly a colonialist organization, especially since the 1947 decision was supported not only by Western powers but also by the Soviet Union, with all of its anti-imperialist ideology). Yet Israel's legitimacy derived as well from ancient ties to the land and an uninterrupted history of Jewish habitation in the region, which was hardly the case when European colonizers, i.e., genuine colonials, arrived in New England or Australia. It is only with regard to the early immigration period, the first and second Aliyot, that one might make the case that the Jewish immigrants were motivated by settler colonial aspirations. However, that early immigration was dwarfed, in sheer numbers, by subsequent waves of immigration made up of refugees from Europe, driven by the Nazi threat and in the aftermath of the Shoah, as well as from Arab countries and later from Russia. To oppose those population movements is not anticolonialism; it is about hostility to immigrants and refugees.

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A further criterion distinguishes Jewish immigration to Palestine from the paradigm of settler colonialism: the pattern established during the Ottoman period of acquiring land through purchase in contrast to the appropriation of territory through violence or coercive treaties that characterized expansion in North America or in parts of the British Empire. In the words of the Israeli sociologist Gershon Shafir, "Jewish colonists in Palestine had neither military nor political power to conclude the one-sided treaties which the British mastered so well. Nor did they partake in the first stage of land allocation: the free or virtually free grants from the colonial power [...]." [4] Their dependence on purchases on the open market distinguishes this process from the "settler capitalism" described by Donald Denoon. (Denoon's study makes no reference to Israel.) Nonetheless, transactions on the real estate market hardly prevented tensions, as Shafir underscores: "Jewish immigrant-settlers and their philanthropists had to purchase land on the market, though frequently from absentee landowners and not from the actual cultivators." [5] The growth of the immigrant population involved benefits to parts of the Arab population, but only at costs to others; the story of the Jewish presence has to be framed by an examination of class tensions among the Palestinians, as well as conflicting agendas among the Jewish immigrants themselves and between them and their supporters.

This complexity of social conflict in the real history of the region has no room in the boycott movement's dualistic accounts, which are only useful for polemical purposes: Jews versus Arabs, colonizers versus colonized, and other such simplistic caricatures. Much more differentiated narratives are needed. So is the capacity to understand the other side in a dispute. In that spirit Shafir invokes his colleague Baruch Kimmerling's observation that while Israelis explain the motivations for Jewish immigration in terms that have little to do with colonialism, Arabs tend to focus on the consequences to the economy and society. "Until the former learn about results and the latter about intentions, neither is likely to gain access to new knowledge." [6] That those Zionist intentions could involve powerful appeals to spiritual and national renewal was clear to no less a critic of colonialism than the pan-Africanist W. E. B. Du Bois, who wrote, with admiration, in 1919, that "the African movement means to us what the Zionist movement must mean to the Jews." [7] From this early support for Zionism, Du Bois eventually grew into an adamant

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supporter of the founding of Israel, at that point with explicitly leftist, anti-imperialist arguments.^[8]

Yet as much as the model of settler colonialism proves inadequate to describe the particular character of Jewish presence in Palestine, one cannot overlook the reality of the tension between the early Yishuv in the pre-World War I years and the Arab population. It was arguably not an explicitly national conflict, but frequently enough more a matter of “disputes between neighbors over such issues as land, water, and grazing.”^[9] Nonetheless, the Arab community in Ottoman Palestine was concerned about the growing number of immigrants and appealed for help from the sultan in 1891. Meanwhile on the Jewish side there was what Anita Shapira calls an “existential anxiety,” while intellectuals including Ahad Ha’am and others voiced concerns about the treatment of Arab labor.^[10] While the foundational pattern of Jewish settlement in Palestine does not support the claim that the Zionist enterprise amounted to a local variant of European colonialism, neither should one ignore genuine disputes that ensued when domestic and immigrant populations interacted, with their different points of cultural orientation, exacerbated by tensions inherent to the growing market economy. Social change was coming to Palestine, including immigration with new ideologies and aspects of cultural and economic modernization. The situation was fraught with opportunities but also with the potential for conflict. This was, however, not colonialism. The boycott movement gets the history wrong.

The boycott movement also mischaracterizes Israel as an “apartheid state,” a clone of the old South Africa and its odious system of extensive racial segregation, which came to an end in 1994. The claim is wrong: it trivializes the depth of suffering that prevailed in apartheid South Africa, misrepresents the character of the Israeli legal system, and significantly overstates de facto social and economic disparities in Israel. However, before turning to these points directly, it is instructive to measure the credibility of the boycott movement’s apartheid accusation against the testimony of another authority on South Africa: Nelson Mandela, the hero of the antiapartheid movement and the first president of a free South Africa. On September 19, 1997, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from an Israeli university, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev — precisely one of the institutions that the boycott movement now vilifies. If Israel were an apartheid state, and if (again, as the boycott claims) the universities were thoroughly complicit in maintaining an apartheid system, it is difficult to understand why he accepted the degree and delivered a gracious address — unless one assumes that the proponents of the boycott understand apartheid better than Nelson Mandela.

Not all discrimination or inequality amounts to apartheid. Despite antidiscrimination legislation, discriminatory practices in housing, education, and employment occur in the United States and Europe, and they rightly face legal sanctions. Such discrimination however falls far short of the reality that was South African apartheid. Apartheid involved systematic segregation in all aspects of social life — residence, education, transportation, and more. It denied Africans the right to vote. It was designed to prevent or at least to minimize interracial contact. As deplorable as are all forms of racialized inequality in the United States and Europe, they do not meet the notorious standard set by South Africa.

Israel is not an apartheid state, it bears no resemblance to the old South Africa. Unlike an apartheid

regime, Israel provides for equality before the law, as stated in the Israeli Declaration of Independence. According to the US State Department's 2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Israeli "law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status, and the government was generally effective in enforcing these prohibitions."^[11] Arab citizens of Israel have the right to vote in democratic elections and have representation in the Knesset, in stark contrast to historical apartheid.

In addition, South African apartheid maintained absolutely segregated education systems. Israeli law prohibits discrimination in education, and Arab students study in the same university classrooms and reside in the same dormitories as Jewish Israelis. At the elementary and secondary levels matters are more complex because of the bilingual character of the society. There are separate Hebrew and Arab schooling options. However, Arab parents can choose to send their children to Hebrew-language schools; needless to say, African parents had no such latitude to gain access to white schools in South Africa. Bus service is integrated; Arabs and Jews use the same public transportation. It is true that the opportunity to purchase land owned by the Jewish National Fund, an organization that bought up territory in order to promote Jewish immigration to Palestine, was historically limited to Jews. However, in 2000 the Israeli Supreme Court found in *Ka'adan v. Israeli Land Authority* that "the principle of equality establishes that the state may not discriminate among individuals when deciding on the allocation of state lands to them."^[12] In the face of historical inequality, progress is possible through the Israeli judiciary and its insistence on fundamental norms, a situation that mirrors the role of the courts in ending segregation and combatting discrimination in the United States.

Israel's formal legal commitment to nondiscrimination demonstrates the inappropriateness of the South Africa analogy. Nonetheless, adherents of the apartheid claim make a supplementary argument, that nondiscrimination is impossible given the specifically Jewish character of the State of Israel. The root of the problem, in their eyes, is the very aspiration for a state for the Jewish people. Whether they would draw the same conclusion with regard to the project for a Palestinian state or for the Arab nation, or for any nation, are questions they should answer. The concern here is only the State of Israel and whether its Jewishness necessarily makes it an apartheid regime. It does not. In *Ka'adan*, the court also found that "the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state do not, by any means, suggest that the State will discriminate between its citizens. Both Jews and non-Jews are citizens with equal rights and duties in the State of Israel."^[13] The opinion proceeds to elaborate on this with reference to similar findings and the long legal tradition behind it. It is worth reading.

Israeli law recognizes the fact that the population includes distinct ethnic groups, but it declares them equal, a bedrock principle of the Jewish state. The prohibition against discrimination separates Israel from apartheid South Africa. That boycott proponents dismiss this difference demonstrates their bad faith in discussing the Middle East. However, the Israeli legal commitment to equality, as important as it is, should not obscure genuine inequalities that Israel is making programmatic efforts to address. For example, Arab schools have historically been underfunded, although policies are now in place to redress

this situation. Similarly there are significant income differentials in Israeli society. Haaretz recently reported that in 2012 the average Jewish Israeli earned 61 percent more than the average Israeli Arab. [\[14\]](#) This sort of inequality represents a significant challenge to Israeli society. To put it in perspective however: according to the figures reported by the US Census Bureau, 2012 average income for white households in the United States was 71 percent higher than for black households. At least in terms of this measure, Israel appears to be more egalitarian than the United States: no reason for Israel to minimize the challenges it faces but sufficient grounds to recognize that its problems are hardly unique. [\[15\]](#)

Matters are significantly worse in the West Bank than in Israel proper, and Israeli entanglement there threatens the democratic character of its society. Both for that reason and for the sake of Palestinian national aspirations, the settlement process should be curtailed in order to reach a two-state solution. How to reach it, how to resolve seemingly intractable differences, and how to overcome the deficiencies in political leadership on both sides are questions that go beyond the scope of this essay. The question of the West Bank is pertinent here, however, because the boycott advocates make no distinction between Israel and the West Bank. In their account, it is all one undifferentiated system of apartheid that should come to an end. In that case, however, their proof of apartheid should not depend on West Bank examples, where the conditions are indeed worthy of strong condemnation, but only on the Israeli core. Under those conditions, the boycott case fails.

If the fundamental tenets of the boycott — the colonialism accusation and the apartheid analogy — are so weak, what compels various academics, some of them distinguished, to jump on the boycott bandwagon? That this is a boycott that specifically targets universities helps answer the question, telling us something about the contemporary academic world. One might have thought that professors, of all people, would be defenders of the free flow of ideas, judging them only in terms of intellectual quality rather than partisan allegiances. Yet the boycott, if it means anything, threatens to impede the international exchange of ideas and knowledge. It encourages professors to make decisions on political, rather than pedagogical, grounds, and this will undoubtedly seep into the character of classroom instruction as well: expect further politicization of the student experience.

In addition, if the boycott gains ground, watch for individuals to take radical actions that push beyond the letter of the boycott itself. Professors convinced that Israel is the equivalent of colonial Algeria and ought to be treated like apartheid South Africa are likely to go the extra mile to punish Israelis. The experience of the boycott in the United Kingdom is instructive: Israeli scholars were removed from the editorial board of a scholarly journal because of their nationality, a graduate applicant was turned down because he had served in the Israeli Defense Force, and a British professor refused to meet with a visiting Israeli colleague to discuss shared scholarly interests unless he would first offer a declaration of political correctness. Expect similar extensions of the boycott here. It is therefore fair to doubt the capacity of boycott supporters to exercise scholarly objectivity when making professional decisions: for example, when evaluating applications for graduate school from Israeli students. In such cases, the best decision

would be for the faculty member supporting the boycott to recuse him or herself from the admissions committee. Otherwise, a negative decision could be interpreted as tainted by the boycott. Indeed the boycott begins to appear as a de facto incitement to discrimination on the basis of national origin. The boycott proponents have let this genie of bigotry out of the bottle and bear the responsibility for the damage that will ensue to academic culture.

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While the boycott analysis has little relevance to the realities in the Middle East, the movement is symptomatic of parts — but only parts — of higher education. We should not forget that it was the American Studies Association (ASA) that endorsed the boycott in December, setting off the current debate. American Studies is a small humanities field, and the humanities as a whole are a very small piece of the American higher education pie. Across the humanities there is a sense of losing ground. The culture at large — including President Obama — emphasizes the virtues of studying STEM fields rather than the humanities, and the rising cost of higher education seems to put particular pressure on the humanities that are viewed (to my mind wrongly) as having insufficient value on the job market.

Within this beleaguered world of the humanities, American Studies has had to watch the various minority ethnic studies fields become independent programs or departments, with their own professional associations. As those pieces of the American experience found different scholarly homes, American Studies has run the risk of turning into little more than the leftovers after the other, sometimes more dynamic fields move on. The boycott must have looked like a tempting opportunity to burnish the field's anti-imperialist credentials and to garner public attention for a small professional association that was otherwise quickly dropping out of sight. Academics are more likely to reach for this sort of high-profile politicization the less secure the standing of their field within the university. Professional associations of stable and respected fields — economics, chemistry, or engineering — will not join in the boycott.

Whatever the intention behind the ASA's boycott endorsement, the effect has been clear: long-term reputational damage to the association, which has cast a pall over the field itself, including important work in American Studies by scholars who no longer maintain membership in the ASA. In addition, the ASA frankly has only further tarnished the reputation of the humanities more broadly. For the public at large, the whole episode seems bizarre, a terrible result for higher education at this point in time when questions are being raised about the value of college altogether, the quality of instruction, and the spiraling costs that generate mounting student debt. Every public statement by a professional association impacts the public's understanding of higher education. One wishes that professional association leaders, at the ASA and elsewhere, would recognize this, rather than misusing their pulpits for their own idiosyncratic political agendas.

The animosity toward Israel also has an important connection to an animus toward the international role of the United States (referred to inside universities as “American imperialism”). The boycott movement's attack on Israel has little to do with colonialism or apartheid but rather with the opportunity to attack a US

ally. This connection explains the spread of the boycott appeal in Western Europe, where an underlying current of anti-Americanism has long played an influential role, particularly among educated elites. We are now witnessing a new version of the entwinement of anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, a venerable pairing that predates the founding of Israel and stretches back well before the early 20th century.

Not every criticism of Israel or Zionism amounts to anti-Semitism, if the word is not to be robbed of all meaning. There are plenty of reasonable criticisms of specific Israeli policies (and I have made some of them here) that are not anti-Semitic. However, neither does the mere fact that one criticizes Israel or Zionism prove the absence of anti-Semitism. There is no logical inconsistency in opposing Israel and holding anti-Semitic views. On the contrary, it is obvious that genuine anti-Semites will very likely, indeed necessarily, cultivate a hostile attitude toward the Jewish state and at least its Jewish citizens. In fact, survey research has shown that, at least in Europe, individuals who hold strongly anti-Israel views are more likely also to harbor traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes than the population at large.^[16] The two perspectives have certainly converged recently in France in the figure of the anti-Zionist actor and activist Dieudonné, who has re-legitimated anti-Semitism for a new generation of French youth, both on the right and the left. In addition, for observers of the Middle East and its press, the extensive overlap between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism is well known. In the to and fro between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military in Egypt, each side accuses the other of untoward associations with Israel, a kind of mudslinging to garner public acclaim, and interim Egyptian President Adly Mansour continues to find himself denounced by opponents as secretly Jewish. (He is not.) In the anti-Zionist environment surrounding Israel, gross anti-Semitic caricatures are frequent in the Arab press. It is therefore unfortunate when boycott sympathizers try to censor any discussion of anti-Semitism. It is a difficult topic, but one that has to be addressed.

While Middle Eastern anti-Semitism may seem far away from American campuses, it is part of the international context in which the debate about Israel rages on, and it is not misplaced if Israel defenders wonder if it has spilled over into discussions here. It was therefore worrisome when, writing in the *The Electronic Intifada* in late 2013, Rania Khalek criticized an allegedly pro-Israeli perspective at *The Nation* through the tried and true anti-Semitic tactic of counting the Jews among the staff writers and, not surprisingly, determining that there were too many to her taste. The response from the progressive camp was closer to silence than outrage, indicating a willingness to give anti-Semitism a pass, as long as it has the correct political credentials.^[17] Not all anti-Zionists fit this paradigm of bigotry, but when boycott proponents automatically reject concerns about anti-Semitism a priori, they undermine their own antiracist credibility.

The primary response the ASA has received is the resounding criticism from more than 200 presidents of colleges and universities across the country, who — in various formulations and with interesting nuances — have denounced the boycott as inimical to academic values. This rejection of the boycott by higher education leadership has been a historic moment, a reassuring affirmation of our core values.

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The ASA fully deserves this criticism. That the criticism has been so forceful testifies to the integrity of higher education in the United States.

There has however been another sort of response, which the ASA does not deserve. In some quarters, initially in the New York Legislature, there have been calls to refuse to provide college or university funding to support travel to ASA conferences because of the boycott endorsement. As much as I disagree with the boycott call, I oppose placing political litmus tests on legitimate scholarly travel, which would represent an unacceptable restriction on academic freedom. By the same token, however, and in defense of unencumbered scholarly travel, one should also oppose the boycott of Israeli universities. Academic freedom deserves defense, regardless of one's political inclinations. The only criteria that should count in higher education are the qualities of the scholarship and the teaching: not one's political beliefs, not one's institutional affiliations, not one's travel plans, and not one's nationality. Unfortunately the boycott supporters do not support these principles.

It is, however, important to keep this all in perspective and remember what really matters for universities and scholarship. The unedifying boycott episode is less important than the stunning quality of the continued cooperation between Israeli academic institutions and the international scholarly community. When Canada Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Israel in January, an interuniversity agreement was signed between Dalhousie University in Halifax and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev to cooperate in the field of Ocean Studies at Eilat. Meanwhile the plans for Cornell University to collaborate with the Technion (Haifa) on a major joint project in Manhattan continue apace. And in December, Israel became the first non-European member to join CERN (the European Organization of Nuclear Research) in Geneva, the first new member in 14 years. These collaborations at the forefront of research in the sciences and technology — and not the backwaters of the boycott, which would forbid them — point to the real future of international scholarship and Israel's vibrant participation in it.

The impact of the boycott movement, if any, will be primarily in American universities, with more politicized classes and infringements on academic freedom. And in the Middle East? That future does not hinge on the academic boycott (which in fact will only harm the peace camp, which is concentrated in the universities that the boycott opposes). Instead the future depends on the grand compromise that is self-evident: the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, which requires that Israel give up on settlements, and a reciprocal recognition of the legitimacy of the Jewish State by the Palestinians and the other Arab countries. What is missing so far on both sides are the political leaders up to the task.

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