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Comments on Resolution 2014-1

As one of the resolution's co-sponsors, I urge you not only to vote (in favor) but also to let others know about it and get them to vote as well. Resolutions frequently don't get enough members voting at all.

If you have doubts about the evidence presented, I would suggest you google the article about it in the Jewish Daily Forward. The author tracked down impartial human rights sources and more than verified the evidence by which the resolution was inspired and on which it was based.

Posted 17 Mar 3:15 pm by Bruce W. Robbins

I very much hope that 10% of the membership will participate in this process and advocate for academic freedom and the quality of higher education in the West Bank and Gaza.

Posted 17 Mar 3:18 pm by Christina Crosby

I hate this resolution, but at least it's better than the one the ASA passed. Still, I doubt that such a resolution makes sense since Israel isn't the only nation doing things of this sort and since Israel probably thinks what it's doing is connected with its national defense.

Would the MLA even be considering this resolution if ASA hadn't passed its resolution, which, I feel, is downright anti-Semitic?

Posted 17 Mar 3:30 pm by Richard Tuerk

As research and education make no sense without freedom, As as freedom cannot exist without education and research, As meetings and contacts are the core of research and education, I strongly support this resolution of MLA, an association of which I'm proud to be a member. I'm not American, I am not Palestinian, I'm not Israeli, but I'm a researcher and I'm a human being Marisa Verna Milan

Posted 17 Mar 3:42 pm by Marisa Verna

Let us put the teeth back in words used repeatedly these days--"common sense" and "academic freedom"--and vote "no" to discrimination and the continued erasure of the restrictions on Palestinian scholars and their universities and "yes" to this crucial resolution.

Posted 17 Mar 3:43 pm by Colin Dayan

I oppose these continuing attempts to single out, one way or another, Israel and Israeli academics for special discriminatory attention. This has very bad historical precedent. I would, however, support any attempts that MLA might make actively to support the efforts of colleagues in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Ukraine, and other distressed locales to nurture academic freedom.

Posted 17 Mar 3:46 pm by David John Wallace

I wholeheartedly support this resolution. My only criticism is that it should go further, and follow the example of the ASA.

Posted 17 Mar 3:51 pm by Vidar Thorsteinsson

criticism. If anything, this resolution argues that Israel should live up to its self-portrait, one which is altogether commendable but at present not quite true. The main point however is this--the MLA has long acted to protect the rights of scholars to fully participate in research. It has passed resolutions toward this end many times before. It should remain consistent to its principles in this and all cases. I urge passage of this resolution.

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Posted 17 Mar 3:57 pm by David Palumbo-Liu

"Wheres" in this context is supposed to mean "since it is true that." Despite repeated requests, the sponsors of this resolution have provided no proof that these "whereases" are actually true. There are NO restrictions on academics visiting the West Bank beyond those usually expected when one crosses borders into hostile territories. Whatever restrictions are in place are within reason and are also enforced for the safety of the traveler. No evidence has been shown that any one was denied entrance. If there is such a case, I urge the sponsors to make public the particular circumstances of the denial. I have myself contacted some sources in Israel, many of whom strongly support the Palestinian cause, but they could not provide me with the evidence required to support this resolution. I urge the delegates to vote against a resolution that is based on hearsay and bias and amounts to nothing more anti-Semitism as it singles out the Jewish state as anti-academic even as it is surrounded by too many other nations where human, civil and academic rights are violently violated daily and publicly.

Posted 17 Mar 4:05 pm by Chamutal Noimann

The fact is that American and other foreign academics do work at Palestinian Universities, where they have not been barred from full participation. Academic freedom exists throughout Israel in an interchange of scholars at both Palestinian and Israeli Universities. This resolution is not based on facts and should, therefore, should not be endorsed.

Furthermore, it is beyond the scope of the MLA to take a political position, albeit one disguised as an academic initiative. Should Israeli universities be barred from international conferences, the academic world would be seriously diminished.

Posted 17 Mar 4:11 pm by Ann R. Shapiro

This seems a mild enough way of addressing a rather blatant injustice. All it does is ask the US government to support the visits of relevant American scholars to Israeli universities, even if they are of Palestinian descent.

Of course there might be other issues relating to academic freedom which should concern our government, but let's support this self-evidently necessary resolution. If we accept that an American citizen can be denied access to another country on basis of ethnicity, we've moved toward concurring that some citizens have fewer rights than others.

Posted 17 Mar 4:27 pm by Florence S. Boos

Resolution 2014-1 passed 60-53. The Delegate Assembly has 278 members, but only 113 were around to vote after the meeting had degenerated into farce with amendments to the motion, substitute motions, points of order, rulings from the chair, votes on rulings from the chair, reversals of rulings from the chair by the chair, moments of personal privilege, timeouts, stern orders from the president to "stand easy." All it lacked was a soundtrack, something like "Yakety Sax," the musical accompaniment to Benny Hill. Seven members, then, midwived a policy for 28,000 members (with only 2800 members needed to ratify it).

The membership should repudiate Resolution 2014-1 and send a clear message that it's time for the MLA to stop beclowning itself. With all the problems facing higher education, and the study of languages and literature in particular, why are we pontificating on hellishly complex and incendiary issues that only forward one clique's political agenda?

Posted 17 Mar 4:31 pm by David Clemens

I'm inclined to vote for the resolution. I'm untroubled by its singling Israel out; singling out is one of the ways in which political action works, and I'd be equally happy to vote for resolutions condemning comparable behaviors committed by other individual governments, should those with a passionate interest in those other governments choose to propose them. I'm untroubled by having the MLA's taking what might be called a political stance, especially since this particular stance is so closely related to the business of being a scholar. I wish there were a rigorous academic study of the data, but there isn't; and in the absence of such a study, I'm willing to accept the non-quantified judgments of people with expertise in the area. I agree with Bruce Robbins that the Forward article is helpful in this last regard, and would only note that the article in question is that written by Hody Nemes on January 17th.

Posted 17 Mar 4:34 pm by Lawrence Alan Rosenwald

I read the article in the Forward, which Bruce Robbins mentions (and it's a weekly paper, not a daily, these days), and it is far more even-handed than his post suggests.

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detained in an Egyptian prison, their freedom of speech and of the press revoked. MLA's inconsistency in ignoring this event was glaring.

I don't advocate censoring every country that limits freedom; in principle, it might be a good idea, but, sadly, there are far too many, and we would not be able to keep up. But for that reason I strenuously object to singling out Israel, as in Resolution 2014-1.

Israel is far from perfect, and I object to many of the Israeli government's policies. But compared to many countries in the world, Israel has a decent record on academic freedom. I can't help but see resolutions such as this one as antisemitic. I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution. I also encourage them to contact Israeli academics in their fields and get a sense of the larger picture.

Posted 17 Mar 4:44 pm by Meri-Jane Rochelson

After letting my MLA membership lapse for so many years that I was no longer in the system, I recently re-joined because I was so inspired by this resolution. I hope that people will think beyond specious sound-bite dismissals—it's "singling out Israel," it's "like the ASA resolution"—and do what members of our profession are supposed to do: read carefully and think critically. The "Academia Undermined" document is a wonderful resource—read it!!! If you're opposed to BDS because of its putative infringement on Israeli academic freedom (another specious sound-bite, but that's another story), it's hard to see how you cannot support Palestinians' needs to stop "recycling old knowledge" (9) by letting in the fresh air of new methodologies, curricula, intellectual perspectives, pedagogies, and theoretical frameworks. Remember that Israel has occupied the West Bank and Gaza for 47 years, refusing either to make the residents there Israeli citizens (with the rights of citizenship) or, conversely, to enable separate, full Palestinian statehood (with its own rights of citizenship and self-determination). By sustaining a seemingly infinite occupation, Israel (which insists that it is "the only democracy in the Middle East) has singled itself out, distinguishing itself from non-democratic countries whose own populaces can't act in response to outside pressure (despite which we did "single out" half a million Iraqi children for death after the 1990 Gulf War —while calling Saddam Hussein a dictator—as if those kids could fork over weapons of mass destruction).

So, too, does Israel single itself out by employing a clear double standard: asserting its own right and need to participate in the global intellectual arena while fencing the Occupied Territories off from any such participation. It's really hard to see why anyone who genuinely supports academic freedom would object to this resolution—which seeks only to put a stop to what is essentially racial profiling and to revitalize Palestinian academic life, while doing no harm to Israel, or Israeli academics, at all.

Posted 17 Mar 4:56 pm by Harriet Malinowitz

Given the many drastic human rights violations around the world in relation to education, research, and freedom of speech, I am opposed to the MLA making a resolution that singles out one country (especially where previous postings suggest that "the facts" seem to be disputed). Even if such a resolution were to receive the votes of 10% of the membership, I find it hard to see it as representing the informed viewpoints of the MLA as a whole. I would prefer to see the MLA exert its influence on behalf of the intellectual rights of all academics, and others, wherever their rights are unduly curtailed—why are the sponsors of the resolution unwilling to broaden it that way?

Posted 17 Mar 5:00 pm by Caroline D. Eckhardt

As one who was denied entry by the Israelis as I was trying to go back and resume teaching the semester at a Palestinian institution, I find the comments by such people at Drs Noimann and Shapiro to be totally inaccurate, in that they suggest the contrary that there is no evidence of Israeli harassment and disruption of Palestinian education. I had to continue the semester by electronic contact from Jordan and the final exam papers for all my courses had to be sent to me there to correct. Since that instance, I was allowed to enter, so it was obviously a case of routine harassment of anyone who tries to enter frequently.

However, I have objections to the wording of the resolution, which should really be amended, for the following reasons:

1. Not only US citizen of Palestinian descent: The denial of entry does not apply ONLY to US citizens of "Palestinian ethnicity" or "Palestinian descent." It happened to people I know who are US citizens of perfectly clear "Anglo-Saxon" ethnicity for one reason: namely, that they declared honestly their purpose to proceed to a Palestinian university to teach. I can provide names and probably can convince the persons to send testimony to prove this. (There is also the example of Noam Chomsky, who was denied entry to speak at the Palestinian university.)
2. Not only US citizens: The denial of entry or other harassment or restrictions, such as issuing a limited visa rather than the normal three months, applies to people and academics of other countries such as Canada, the UK, France, Italy, etc., who are suspected of or declare an intention to help in teaching or work for other Palestinian institutions. Not sure if any of them are MLA members, but the MLA has an international membership.
3. The new "The West Bank" trick: In some cases now, the Israelis have created a new stamp whereby US citizens' passport are limited to entry or work in the West Bank, which thus prevents entry to occupied Jerusalem or other areas in Israel, and makes the situation very restrictive.

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university for several years, as well as more recent closures of other universities for shorter periods. Al-Quds University's Jerusalem offices were physically attacked for no good reason, and the Israelis of course found nothing. See my article "Geography of Occupation. Students and faculty are still constantly harassed at check-points, and sometimes their textbooks and notebooks thrown out. Even inspection copies of textbooks from publishers are interfered with and exorbitant customs amounts were added to prevent their delivery. Graduates of Al-Quds University are singled out for non-recognition of degrees by the Israeli ministry and employers, for no reason other than "Al-Quds" as a name is associated with Jerusalem.

5. Finally, what about Gaza and education in Gaza.

Posted 17 Mar 5:19 pm by Basem L. Ra'ad

I urge members to vote against this resolution.

To equate the gate-keeping activity that underlies the Israeli government's position on how to keep peace in the West Bank with an attempt to crush academic freedom creates a fallacious argument

attempt to squasn academic freedom creates a tallacious argument.

Such a sanction against Israeli academics will actually impoverish all other academics.

C. A. Sofia

Posted 17 Mar 5:24 pm by Carolyn A. Sofia

I strongly support both resolutions. I am pleased to see the tactfulness of the Palestinian resolution, as I'm tired of Zionists constantly carping at those who support Palestinian rights...such as this Jewish American.

Posted 17 Mar 5:32 pm by Richard S. Pressman

Although this resolution seems to be concerned with education, its singling out Israel for condemnation, makes it a step toward the kind of resolution the ASA passed. It is a political statement--something inappropriate for the MLA--in the guise of a statement of concern for scholarship. If the MLA continues in this direction, I and I suspect many others will drop our MLA membership.

Posted 17 Mar 5:51 pm by Marcia Jacobson

As soon as Palestinian organizations recognize the legitimacy of Israel as a sovereign state, as soon as Palestinian terrorists stop lobbing rockets into Israel. and as soon as Palestinian leaders agree to negotiate with Israel in good faith for a peaceful two-state solution, then I will take into consideration the merits of your proposal. Until that time, such efforts are ignorant, left-wing wastes of time and resources.

Posted 17 Mar 5:57 pm by Steven Callow

As someone who has worked with Palestinian academics, and who has done work (both research and teaching) in the West Bank, I can affirm that the concerns identified in this resolution are not overstated. The Israeli authorities have for many years administratively sought to impoverish Palestinian civil society and Palestinian universities--one aspect of this has been the limitations and psychological pressure that these authorities place on academics entering and exiting at the borders. Many have been harassed and subject to extra "security" procedures including being interrogated and having extra searches conducted at the airport for no reason other than disclosing an intention to engage in academic exchanges with Palestinian universities--and the treatment of Palestinians (including those with US, EU or other nationality) is often much worse.

I strongly support the MLA resolution.

Posted 17 Mar 6:26 pm by Kamran Rastegar

We are a professional language association. We should not make POLITICAL resolutions.

Posted 17 Mar 7:14 pm by Pamela Alexander Gill

Against MLA's condemnation of Israeli institutions of higher learning, as written in the resolution.

Posted 17 Mar 8:04 pm by William Edward Engel

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that many members find intolerable. I fully support this resolution.

Posted 17 Mar 8:24 pm by Peter M. Logan

This rather safe and timid resolution, with its nevertheless clear affirmation of academic freedom, should certainly not be controversial. It's hard to see any ethical and rational basis for opposition to it.

Posted 17 Mar 8:29 pm by H. Bruce Franklin

Despite the claims made by others, this resolution does not sanction Israel, Israeli academics or Israeli academic institutions. It merely asks the US State Department "to contest Israel's denials of entry to the West Bank by United States academics who have been invited to teach, confer, or do research at Palestinian universities." One would think that all academics would be opposed to anything that interferes with academic freedom, but apparently there are some here who are trying to rationalize Israeli interference with the academic freedom of others with specious claims about the resolution.

As for those who claim that this resolution is singling out Israel, if you are willing to put in the work required to create and substantiate resolutions about other countries' interference with academic freedom, I promise you will have my vote. But until such time as other resolutions are put forth, the claim that Israel is being singled out rings hollow. By that same logic nobody should ever focus on any particular violation of anything anywhere as there's always an occurrence of it elsewhere that is being left out of such

focus.

Posted 17 Mar 8:32 pm by Robert E. Kaplan

Whenever I get an email from the MLA, I expect it may contain another Israel bullying fest--and indeed, here we go again.

Centuries of experience 'discussing' Jews to death...why expect this century to be any different?

Oh, but we are only having a little conversation--no need to get upset about it...

Posted 17 Mar 8:41 pm by Yael Halevi-Wise

I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for this resolution, which strikes me as well within the purview of our organization. Owing to the intense, even frightening response that can be mounted against individuals who speak on behalf of the Palestinian people or criticize the state of Israel, we need whole organizations to speak out so as to create a more democratic, open conversation about the plight of the Palestinian people, and what the US state can and should do about it. I am proud to see the MLA set forth a clear, focused and objectively-stated resolution calling on our government to take a principled position respecting the right of the people of the Occupied Territories to develop intellectual communities benefiting from the same free international exchange enjoyed by scholarly communities everywhere.

Posted 17 Mar 8:55 pm by Margot Backus

I am disappointed that the MLA would adopt a resolution that ignores, as several have pointed out, that the the Palestinian authorities refuse to recognize Israel's existence and in fact desire Israel's eradication. I am far from uncritically supportive of the Israeli government, which I think has done much to exacerbate the situation, but the fact remains, they have no-one to negotiate with. How does one strike a deal with people who refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist?

I also agree with those who note that the MLA is remarkably silent on the track records of Syria, Egypt, China and other countries. Where are the howls of protest over Egypt's treatment of the Al Jazeera journalists, or over Assad's genocide of his own people? How free are the professors of those countries to say and write as they will?

I therefore urge the MLA membership to vote against this resolution. Passing it would not only be a futile gesture, it would only further erode our credibility.

Posted 17 Mar 9:00 pm by Peter C. Herman

I am strongly opposed to this resolution. There are many countries around the world that are guilty of similar infringements on the rights of academics, even academics of particular religious views or ethnicities. I am not in favor of singling out Israel.

Posted 17 Mar 11:09 pm by Victoria Kahn

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resolution was laughable, and three of the four cases of detainment of academics that they used as evidence were shown to have been resolved. In short, the resolution is based on hearsay. While I am also critical of many of Israel's policies, I have to be critical, also, of the anti-Semitism that is rising in many European countries and has always been virulently present in many Middle Eastern countries. You may see this resolution as "benign," and "gentle," but in fact it is participating in the discourse of the BDS movement, which is unabashed about wanting to remove the Jews from Israel. The MLA enabled Omar Barghouti, who openly endorses violence against Jews and the promotion of Israel as a non-Jewish country, to speak on a pro-boycott panel. Barghouti and the BDS believe the Jewish people have no rights. While the statements in this resolution seem "benign," they are clearly meant to link the MLA to the rhetoric of the BDS. Those of you who see this resolution as "benign" and "harmless" have your heads in the sand. Do you really want the MLA to be linked up, in even a "small and mild" way, to the rhetoric of BDS, which means the rhetoric of removing Jews from Israel? I think the MLA should be taking an explicit stand against BDS. When that resolution comes around, I'll vote for that one. In the meantime, I'll vote against this one.

Posted 18 Mar 1:03 am by June S. Cummins

Ridiculous and not thought out. Israel, with all of its warts and issues is the only country in the Middle East that supports and develops democracy, free trade and integrity in international relations. MLA might want to spend a little more time chastising the truly rogue nations, including Syria (anyone getting invited to share their academic expertise there?), Russia, and its medieval approach to human rights and national sovereignty. If we, the MLA are interested in weighing in on International Relations, lets address the real international criminals and rogues, N. Korea, Sudan, Russia. Let's not waste our time picking at the few zits on the face of Israel.

Posted 18 Mar 3:03 am by Rick Bereit

If the MLA wants to be taken seriously as a guardian of global academic freedom, it should develop independent research practices and then conduct a broad survey of the rights of individuals to education, the restrictions on classroom speech, and the conditions of

employment for academics in different countries.

A one-off resolution condemning Israel for making it difficult for U.S. citizens to teach in Palestinian universities implies that Israel's policies do particular harm to global academic freedom. Meanwhile, U.S. colleges happily forge 21st century partnerships with the governments of China, the United Arab Emirates, and other nations that restrict the academic freedom of both faculty members and students.

This resolution is dangerous. It follows the argument of a partisan report to single out Israel without seeking a broader assessment of the political situation in Israel and Palestine, all while remaining silent on egregious violations of human rights and academic freedom around the world.

I urge my fellow members of the MLA to vote NO on this resolution.

If the membership of the MLA wishes the organization to become an international watchdog, we should instead vote to build the necessary internal organizational structures to research, analyze, and publicize global violations of academic freedom.

Posted 18 Mar 4:28 am by Sarah A. Kelen

Stay out of politics

Posted 18 Mar 6:16 am by Spiros Pappleacos

I would vote for a resolution setting up a committee to compile an ongoing list of specific instances of the infringement of the academic freedom of literature and language professors in every country in the world, provided that the membership first agree on the criteria for measuring academic freedom and it's infringement.

In my book, Jews and Human Rights, I have written of many Israeli violations of Palestinians' rights. There is no special reason why Israel should be exempt from criticism when particular policies or practices infringe the rights of its citizens or those under its control. A state under constant existential threat, as Israel is, can sometimes find the appropriate balance between security and liberty hard to strike. And it is the duty of those who care about Israeli democracy to press it to live up to its own highest ideals.

But for the MLA to pass a one-off resolution like this suggests that there is special egregiousness in Israel's handling of the issue. We don't know that. We have no data to contextualize the instances in question. This resolution will only allow the media to paint the MLA as biased, ignorant, and naive. Vote no.

Posted 18 Mar 8:54 am by Michael S. Galchinsky

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the contrary, the journalist was professional enough to check the sources and to concede that yes, there is considerable evidence of widespread abuses. Exactly as the resolution suggested. that's why it's well worth looking at for those who might be wavering on the subject.

Posted 18 Mar 9:04 am by Bruce W. Robbins

It pains me to see that this resolution is even considered. I agree with, and share the opinions of, all the colleagues that have submitted their critiques about it, so I will not repeat their entries. I hope that the MLA does not pass this resolution; otherwise, as Marcia Jacobson says, "if the MLA continues in this direction" I will be among those who will have to make the decision to drop their membership.

Posted 18 Mar 9:43 am by Silvia Berger

The MLA has no business making resolutions on subjects outside the range of language and literature. These kinds of resolutions can only divide our membership. Even proposing such a resolution may result in a number of resignations from the organization. I will vote against this resolution.

Posted 18 Mar 9:58 am by William Michael Gargan

In a world where scholars are silenced, shouted down, harassed, imprisoned, and murdered--only Israel, which is guilty of none of these actions, is excoriated. Israel has not "singled itself out" by atrocious, racist discriminatory behavior. Rather, it is the "bon ton" of academia today which endlessly recycles baseless scripts of Israeli culpability. Where was the MLA when Israeli universities and colleges, not to mention grade and nursery schools, were shut down due to Palestinian missile attacks which severely disrupted the academic year? And what will be the MLA's next move? boycotting Israeli researchers and institutions--in the name of academic freedom?! I won't be surprised.

Posted 18 Mar 10:44 am by Sarah R. Gilead

By singling out Israel in a one-sided and distorting manner, Resolution 2014-1 works against the values of academic exchange that it

claims to support. I urge colleagues to reject this divisive move. The MLA has already taken a broad position on travel restrictions in the Executive Council's 2013 Statement on the Importance of Unrestricted Travel for Scholarly Exchange.

Posted 18 Mar 10:49 am by Anne Golomb Hoffman

The resolution is far better than the proposals to sanction Israeli academics because of the actions of their government or institutions. I agree with this but could not support any sanction against Israeli academics. They are opposed to Israeli policy in the OTs in greater proportion by far than the rest of the population.

Posted 18 Mar 11:08 am by Jeffrey L. Spear

I checked the "background" supplied. Neither PMLA nor any reputable journal would accept an article based on that kind of documentation: the sources are unreliable; there is no attempt to check the incidents mentioned (was it really the "causes" mentioned that produced the "effects" described, if such effects really happened?); attribution is sketchy; there is no serious attention paid to contrary views. Even were there not plenty of other reasons, if the MLA membership values academic standards, it should reject the resolution.

Posted 18 Mar 11:17 am by Renata R. M. Wasserman

I support this resolution.

Posted 18 Mar 11:53 am by Lawrence M. La Fountain-Stokes

I strongly oppose the resolution. As a number of members pointed out at the time of the Delegate Assembly, the resolution is based on a number in serious inaccuracies and biases. Israel assuredly does not oppose all Americans from visiting the West Bank universities; in fact, only a very few have been denied access--many fewer than the US has denied, for example. Just recently a left-wing group has argued that neither anti-Israel nor anti-Palestine attitudes and actions serve any useful purpose, especially now at a time when peace negotiations are under way. In its one-sided view, the resolution is a step in the wrong direction and should be voted down.

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Many countries besides Israel, including the United States, restrict the movements of academics. There is no reason to single out Israel. To do so suggests that the MLA's motive is to express anti-Israeli sentiments rather than encourage free speech.

Posted 18 Mar 1:50 pm by Mary Anne O'Neil

The resolution injects a welcome note of common sense into the partisanship of the debate thus far.

Posted 18 Mar 3:40 pm by Stuart Samuel Peterfreund

The main reason for "singling out Israel," as the phrase goes, is Israel's unique relationship with the United States. There is a lot of bad behavior out there in the world, some of it even worse than Israel's. But there is no case where the bad behavior is totally dependent on huge amounts of American money. This is being paid for by US taxpayers. We therefore have a special responsibility to make it stop.

As for "being political," we are talking about coming to the defense of American scholars who are systematically harassed and mistreated when they try to teach or attend conferences. that seems pretty close to the interests and concerns of an organization like the MLA.

Posted 18 Mar 5:38 pm by Bruce W. Robbins

Opposed.

The MLA proposes an anti-Israel resolution at almost every convention. It is now politically correct to do so.

The rest of the world does not seem to do any injustice against academics

I lost my respect for the MLA when it jumped on the one note Israel-bashing bandwagon

And, yes, as I have witnessed, it often does shade into antisemitism.

Posted 18 Mar 5:43 pm by Edna Aizenberg

The comments thus far have been unexceptional, perhaps with the exception of the one from William Gargan. Really? People will give up their membership in the MLA simply because this resolution was put forward? Isn't that a bit hasty? What if it fails? Write the check all over again? I would be quite saddened if members of this organization were so intolerant of even the introduction of an idea for

... that other people I would be quite surprised if members of this organization were so intolerant of even the introduction of an idea for debate.

Posted 18 Mar 6:21 pm by David Palumbo-Liu

I strongly support this very reasonable resolution, which is aimed strictly at defending the freedom of movement for US scholars and students who wish to work in the Israeli occupied West Bank. Critics of of this resolution claim that it is unfair, biased and even anti-Semitic political advocacy within the MLA; but in advance of reading the resolution, even before the January 2014 meeting of the MLA, some of these same colleagues mounted a spurious assault on the association's Executive, Delegate Assembly and staff. And during the meeting in Chicago, some of those who are speaking out against this resolution here sought to obstruct the work of Delegate Assembly on this resolution. Now on this comments forum, the defenders of Israel at all cost continue their attacks. It should be clear to anybody who reads the resolution and the arguments against it that these defenders of Israel care little for academic freedom, which they invoke (along with accusations of anti-Semitism) to silence all and any criticism of Israel.

Posted 18 Mar 7:02 pm by Salah D. Hassan

For a resolution that clearly stirs up passions on both sides, the comments so far have been remarkably temperate.

Until the one above, that is. I went over the "nay" comments, and I confess I don't see how one can say that "the defenders of Israel at all cost continue their attacks," or defend the proposition that if one is not in favor of the resolution, then you are trying to "silence all and any criticism of Israel." Such positions try to silence any criticism of the resolution.

Posted 18 Mar 7:23 pm by Peter C. Herman

While I'm aware that critics of Israeli policies in the US media are often met with charges of anti-Semitism and bias (shutting down debate rather than encouraging critical analysis of the actions on the ground), I was hoping for a more thoughtful response from

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resolution is not meant to single out a particular ethnicity or religion but rather to pressure a powerful, US-backed government to cease to do so.

The above references to Israeli security and Palestinian missile attacks imply that there is an equivalence between the parties and ignore that Israel's restriction of movement and educational activities increase desperation and hopelessness among Palestinians. As some commenters have noted, these kinds of misguided state actions are not unique to Israel. In my view, a fitting comparison (in terms of the power relationships and militarized response) would be the US's War on Terror (restricting scholars' and students' ability to visit or attend US universities and creating hopelessness and anti-American sentiment in other countries). However, I don't agree that because this resolution doesn't address all similar restrictions on scholars of literature and language that MLA members should vote against it. It's a necessary first step, and I strongly support it.

Posted 18 Mar 8:04 pm by Rebecca Dyer

I applaud this resolution and urge MLA members to vote for it. I cannot see how anyone who believes in academic freedom can oppose asking the State Department to contest the well documented practice, acknowledged on the State Department's own web site, of restricting the freedom of movement of US citizens of Palestinian descent--a practice that clearly interferes with the academic freedom the MLA in principle supports.

Posted 19 Mar 12:21 am by Carolyn L. Karcher

"I would be quite saddened if members of this organization were so intolerant of even the introduction of an idea for debate" says one member. This is not an idea for debate, this is the always-present anti-Semitic / anti-Israel "supposedly" politically correct way to go.

I suggest that we apply the same "close-reading" method to differentiate fact from fiction and political poses.

Posted 19 Mar 9:09 am by Silvia Berger

I strongly oppose this resolution and urge MLA members to vote against it.

Posted 19 Mar 9:49 am by Kathryn Ann Hellerstein

Judicious and wholly appropriate. If Israel is being "singled out," that is because it purports to be a free democracy sharing our principles of academic freedom.

Posted 19 Mar 10:05 am by Jonathan Vere Crewe

I support this resolution and plan to vote for its ratification. Rather than fewer "political" resolutions, the MLA should take MORE stands on injustices that impede scholarly development and the robust exchange of ideas, and that constrict debate about our world.

Posted 19 Mar 11:53 am by Margaret Harriman

Posted 19 Mar 11:52 am by Margaret Hanzimanolis

The MLA should stay out of Arab-Israeli politics. It has nothing to do with our institutional mission one way or the other.

Posted 19 Mar 12:41 pm by Jonathan D. Greenberg

It is dismaying to see so many MLA members in favor of a resolution which stems from ignorance, which itself stems from prejudice. Israel may have human rights issues; so does the United States of America; but both are beacons of human rights compared to most of the Arab countries. Arab Israelis may find prejudice, but their living and working conditions are far better than their counterparts in the Middle East outside Israel. Israel has working constituencies in various academic and humanistic areas in which Israelis and Arabs, Jews and Muslims, work cooperatively. Try to find a counterpart to these elsewhere in the Middle East! Israel has a large peace constituency, aimed at reconciling with its neighbors. What other Middle Eastern country does? Israel's academics contribute far out of proportion to their size to the world's intellectual and practical benefit. Can the same be said for academics in other Middle Eastern countries?

And, of course, boycotting academic enterprise is itself anti-intellectual and anti-humanist. How do you expect to encourage dialog and change minds if you refuse to speak to those whose minds you would change?

Posted 19 Mar 1:10 pm by Ruth K. Crispin

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Guest User



With all the sectarian violence going on such places as Syria, Zimbabwe, Somalia, to name a few, and human rights violations in China, Crimea, etc it almost bathetic to even consider this resolution.

Posted 19 Mar 1:14 pm by Daniel Roger Schwarz

I have read the comments up to this point and the materials accompanying the resolution, and while I support that part of the MLA's mission devoted to ensuring academic freedom and access, I remain troubled by the site-specific nature of the resolution, and the quality of the evidence upon which it is based. One must start somewhere and it can be reasonably argued that this is a first step, but I cannot help but wondering why THIS is the first step, as it was for ALA. One comment suggested that the particular relation between the US and Israel is one of the justifications for this particular resolution, but the MLA is not a US institution, as I understand it, even if its headquarters are located in New York; it is a global institution, representing teachers and scholars in modern languages worldwide. Why then choose the specific issue of US academic access to Palestinian institutions as the first step? Alternatively, if MLA wanted to focus on something that is particular to US academics (although again, one would want to ask why?), why not ask the US State Department to stop restricting the movements of US academics (and all US citizens) in and to Cuba? Or why not turn to China, and formulate a resolution against the egregious violations of intellectual and academic freedom that occurs in that country? Or, finally, turn to the US itself, and ask the US state department to stop restricting the influx and movements of academics who wish to come to the US from any country on the face of the earth? As several have said, this resolution is a modest one, and a first step, but I still have to think long and hard about voting for it given the specificity and evidence: one does not have to be pro-Israel, or not deeply critical of Israel's policies and treatment of Palestine and Palestinians, to ask such questions.

Posted 19 Mar 1:16 pm by Patrick James O'Donnell

Supporters of this resolution speak of it as a good "first step" in support of academic freedom worldwide, but the resolution does not contemplate a "second step"; it begins and ends as a condemnation of Israel, quite as if it were the only guilty party in the world. If the MLA were as serious about academic freedom as it appears to be about condemning Israel, it might pass a resolution creating a standing committee to consider abuses wherever they may occur, and to do so on the basis of evidence of a better character than is offered in the highly partisan, largely unsourced, and unparticularized article "Academia Undermined," which is notably uncurious as to what Israeli officials might have to say about these allegations. The allegations may or may not be true, but the document setting them forth (as should be clear to professional readers of texts) is a prejudice-bolstering document.

Posted 19 Mar 1:39 pm by Albert J. von Frank

Given the state of the world and its many zones of abuse and torment, it seems strange and weirdly reminiscent of the 1930s to be focused on Israel. While I would agree that discrimination described in the resolution is not right, I would not support this resolution for many reasons, but primarily because it is itself discriminatory in the global context.

Posted 19 Mar 2:06 pm by Martin Joel Gliserman

This is a necessary and good resolution and I strongly support it.

Posted 19 Mar 2:33 pm by Joya F. Uraizee

Having reread the description of the session at which this resolution was passed my opposition has only increased. The Mla has allowed itself once more to be hijacked.

Where are the authorities who seem to take cover in procedure as their only responsibility?

Posted 19 Mar 2:50 pm by Edna Aizenberg

I applaud this resolution. True, it is not nearly aggressive and inclusive enough to match my opinion of the delusional and self-righteous sense of exceptionalism that drives the current Israeli administration in its occupation and unremitting take-over of Palestinian land and the progressive ruin of its inhabitants' lives. But for an organization the size of the MLA, compromise and middle ground is necessary, and this resolution finds it, even while choosing its wording carefully (what else do we expect from ourselves?) and making that wording specific. I have not read the members' comments on the resolution but I am assuming that in them the usual objections are being raised, notably anti-semitism and unfairly picking out Israel. As for the first, through indiscriminating and reflexive over-use, it is rapidly losing any persuasive force it might once have carried. As to the second, there certainly are many countries in the world with far worse records in this area than Israel, and they should be named and deplored. But none of them, to my knowledge, receive \$8 million a day in aid from the US and declare, clamantly and insistently, to share the same values as the US. There is a further, more diffuse benefit to the Resolution: it might help check the insidious and persistent attempt to undermine academic freedom and freedom of speech in this country, an attempt made in order to bring them into line with their practice in Israel and with Israel's opinion of itself.

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I look forward to seeing more MLA resolutions requesting that the US State Department intervene on behalf of academic freedom throughout the world.

Posted 19 Mar 4:15 pm by Eve Eisenberg

Fine tuning my previous comment:

MLA should NOT be a home for these kind of incendiary propositions. This particular one is simply a mask for "Punish Israel" if not worse impulses.

With all the sectarian violence going on in such places as Syria, Zimbabwe, and Somalia, to name a few, and human rights violations in China, Crimea, etc it is almost bathetic to even consider this resolution.

Posted 19 Mar 4:44 pm by Daniel Roger Schwarz

I support the resolution.

Posted 19 Mar 5:52 pm by Judith Kegan Gardiner

The MLA ought to advocate for intellectual freedom for scholars and intellectuals from all nations around the globe.

The resolution currently presented to the membership of the MLA focuses on one nation only: Israel. Yet Israel is a nation that fosters intellectual freedom, and has made enormous contributions in every academic discipline and human endeavor.

I will not vote for a resolution that unfairly focuses on one nation, and does not broadly state principles that defend academic freedom for all scholars and intellectuals around the globe.

A fairly worded resolution advocating academic freedom for scholars of all nations was proposed during the general assembly meeting held last January and was ignored, making the current resolution suspect in its motivations, and prejudicial in its content.

Sincerely,

Olivia Maciel Edelman

Posted 19 Mar 7:24 pm by Olivia Maciel Edelman

I joined the MLA because of my interests in language and literature and am now surprised to see that it is engaged in political activism. Why single out one country? I'm sure many of us can come up with countless examples of oppression all over the world. Shall we pass resolutions to condemn oppression wherever we find it? If so, count me in. If not, then put me down for a "No."

Posted 19 Mar 7:53 pm by Carol Apollonio

If you want to condemn one nation, condemn all that have academic injustice. As it is, this is borderline Antisemitism for singling out this nation.

Posted 19 Mar 7:59 pm by Sarah Slachter

Thank you, Anne Golomb Hoffman, for a useful reminder and effective point of comparison. The Executive Council's 2013 Statement on the Importance of Unrestricted Travel for Scholarly Exchange already affirms the MLA's unequivocal support of free travel, especially for scholars, researchers, artists, and teachers. Although that Statement is included in the supporting materials for resolution 2014-1, the model it offers of affirming such support has not shaped the current resolution.

Were the current resolution to offer the clear detail, and the demonstration of MLA interest, in the case being singled out, it too could claim such support as its primary motivator. In the absence of such clarity or demonstration of MLA interest, I find the current resolution disingenuous and dangerous, and I strongly oppose it. It may not be as destructive to academic freedom as the recent ASA resolution, but it does not deserve the support of MLA members.

Posted 19 Mar 9:23 pm by Gail Sherman

While I believe peculiar limits have been set on the framing of this resolution, I see the difficulties facing the framers. The nature of the current Israeli government as partially dependent upon, and partially determinative of, US policy towards it makes its conduct a

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academic departments such as American Studies have already been attacked, their status endangered, their right to survive infringed upon, for their position on Israel. We would be blind to pretend this is not already a highly politicized issue. This modest resolution hardly constitutes an exacerbation of that existing situation. I will support the resolution.

Posted 20 Mar 12:09 am by John Franklin Crawford

This resolution must be voted down. Arguments against have already been made both on this list and in the press. See, for example, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304617404579306663589640636>.

All members must vote their conscience. It would be an even greater shame if this measure passed because members did not take the time to cast their votes.

Just vote no.

Posted 20 Mar 9:34 am by Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi

The wording of the Resolution is so qualified as to be pointless; those who vote for it who do so in the belief that they are accomplishing something significant or relevant are mistaken. For anyone who is critical of Israel's policies on the settlements, the Resolution is worse than nothing--and yet to vote against it may seem to be understood as a vote in support of Israel's policies. I formally request that an option be available in the vote to 'abstain' (in addition to the options of voting in favor or against). I believe there are other MLA members who would take this third option, on the grounds that the Resolution itself is a misrepresentation of the very real issues involved.

Posted 20 Mar 10:36 am by Berel Lang

I support this resolution, and only wish it could be stronger. Despite the numerous efforts to cover up the issue, it is clear that the MLA has identified a significant problem and that the resolution is well-founded. For those who don't agree, please see the article "Israel Under Fire Over 'Restrictions' on Palestinian Academics - But What Is Truth?" published in the Jewish Daily Forward, written by Hody Nemes, published on January 17, 2014, and recommended by Bruce W. Robbins in comments above.

Read more: <http://forward.com/articles/191100/israel-under-fire-over-restrictions-on-palestinian/?p=all#ixzz2wwQZPLgs>

However I urge you also to consult the evidence of restriction on the academic freedom of Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel published by the Institute for Middle East Understanding as "Israeli Violations of Palestinian Academic Freedom & Access to Education." There you will find details on the Palestinian students in Gaza who were denied Fulbright Scholarships to study in the U.S. by the Israeli government in 2008, and several other examples. <http://imeu.net/news/article0024864.shtml>

Finally, this resolution cannot be accused of being anti-semitic. Criticizing the Israeli government and military is not the same as anti-semitism. See Judith Butler, "No, It's Not Anti-Semitic," in Reframing Anti-Semitism, Jewish Voice for Peace Publication, 2004.

Posted 20 Mar 1:18 pm by Cristina Malcolmson

The wording of the actual resolution--"the MLA urge the United States Department of State to contest Israel's denials of entry to the West Bank by United States academics who have been invited to teach, confer, or do research at Palestinian universities"--is not merely "mild" or "timid," as some of its supporters state, but innocuous, if not meaningless, in regard to having any actual effect. If passed, it is difficult to imagine that it will move the State Department to revise any policies toward Israel or Palestine. Its purpose then becomes merely rhetorical--reassuring some of its supporters that they are "doing something" and putting the MLA on record as concerned with only a single state's real and alleged abuses of academic freedom and intellectual exchange, while such abuses are rife around the world. It would be better for the MLA's Executive Committee to amend its 2012 Statement on the Importance of Unrestricted Travel for Scholarly Exchange (included in the "documentation") to apply not only to restrictions in the United States, and for the MLA to follow the lead of such organizations as PEN America to investigate and take concrete actions on behalf of academics who have suffered unwarranted restrictions on travel and scholarship, no matter where they occur. In the meantime, there is no concrete benefit to anyone, but quite possible damage to the MLA itself from an appearance of partisan bias, if the current resolution passes.

Posted 20 Mar 1:55 pm by Donald F. Larsson

Please vote against this resolution and support scholars everywhere (read the material on this link below):

www.scholarsrights.com

Posted 20 Mar 2:24 pm by Emily Rebecca Steiner

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States academics who have been invited to teach, confer, or do research at Palestinian universities.

Many of the comments I have read opposing this resolution label it either anti-Semitic or oppose because it singles out Israel. But, none of these I have read so far dispute the evidence presented. I want to be persuaded by critical thinking and evidence, not labels. Further, I feel it is disingenuous to suggest that a wrong in a specific place should not be opposed simply because it happens elsewhere too. Finally, the resolution doesn't demand anything other than future denials be officially contested. I don't see how this hurts Israel or hurts the Jewish people. I'm willing to be persuaded not to support it, but do so by reasonable means, please.

Posted 20 Mar 3:57 pm by David Hurst

It is time that Zionists are asked to finally account for their support to the illegal occupation of Palestine since 1967. This resolution rightly targets only Israel given the humongous influence that Jewish scholars have in the decision making process of Academia in general.

Posted 20 Mar 4:11 pm by Alessio Lerro

The MLA is going down the wrong path with Resolution 2014-1. If you examine the documentation that is being used in support of the resolution, you will see that it would never withstand the rigorous review that the MLA is supposed to exemplify.

Posted 20 Mar 5:09 pm by Naomi Lindstrom

It is incomprehensible how the MLA can promote a dichotomous resolution that rejects equal opportunity for various perspectives to participate in reasoned discussion and in effect, creates alienation among its membership.

Posted 20 Mar 7:01 pm by Phyllis Lassner

I oppose this resolution because of its content and the way it has been presented. The materials offered as evidence are insufficient for serious consideration of the issues.

Posted 20 Mar 7:03 pm by Gwen Kirkpatrick

Reading over the comments after I posted my own, I was shocked but not surprised to read the following comment posted by Alessio Lerro: "This resolution rightly targets only Israel given the humongous influence that Jewish scholars have in the decision making process of Academia in general."

This age-old antisemitic stereotype surely puts the lie to claims that the resolution incites only reasoned, fact-checked discussion.

As a Jew and a Zionist who is strongly critical of the policies of Israel's current government, but believes that like the Palestinians, the Jewish people must have their own nation state, I am not reassured by this comment of the intentions or outcome of the MLA Resolution.

This comment cannot be rationalized or wished away. Votes in favor of the resolution condone such antisemitism.

Posted 20 Mar 7:38 pm by Phyllis Lassner

I too was shocked to read this statement: "This resolution rightly targets only Israel given the humongous influence that Jewish scholars have in the decision making process of Academia in general."

Prof. Lerro is engaging in anti-semitic hate speech, and it should not be tolerated.

Posted 20 Mar 9:24 pm by Peter C. Herman

As an opponent of the academic boycott of Israel, I was expecting to disagree with the MLA resolution on Israel. However, as I read it, resolution 2014-01 simply urges the U.S. government to support U.S. citizens and residents whose access to the West Bank may be restricted on, for example, purely ethnic grounds. (On the severe restrictions on travel by ethnic Palestinians, including U.S. citizens, see <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/israel.html>. Unfortunately, only part of this document is included in the supporting materials for the resolution.) In other words, it is simply calling on the government to act as a representative of the people of the United States when those people find themselves in conflict with another government.

There remains the issue of whether the focus of this resolution is too narrowly confined to Israel. "Selective prosecution" is a serious issue when it comes to something that is akin to prosecution, such as boycott. But this resolution is nothing like a boycott.

restricted in other countries due to their ethnic background.

Posted 20 Mar 9:40 pm by Patrick Colm Hogan

I support Resolution 2014-1.

Posted 20 Mar 10:07 pm by Patrick Conley

Resolution 2014-1 is a Trojan Horse. The cargo is The Boycott Divest Sanctions movement.

Posted 20 Mar 11:00 pm by Carole S. Kessner

We have all now received an email from a group urging us to vote against this resolution. You may wonder how they got access to the MLA member listserv. They did not. According to one of the group's members, Cary Nelson, this group hired students to go through the entire MLA Directory and extract the emails of 28,000 members. I for one find the practice of hiring non-MLA members to invade the privacy of members of the MLA highly problematic. I also wonder how they amassed the funds to do so.

Posted 21 Mar 1:19 am by David Palumbo-Liu

Following up on that--I would like proof that all those who were given access to MLA members' email addresses were indeed members of the MLA. I would also like to know on what date they became members of the MLA.

Posted 21 Mar 1:25 am by David Palumbo-Liu

I am horrified to see scholars I respect supporting this blatantly biased, one-sided, ill-informed resolution.

Posted 21 Mar 1:35 am by Eve Eisenberg

The company Cary Nelson et al used to send out the spam says on its website that they do not send out unsolicited emails. Wasn't that precisely what these emails were? So if you have the money you can hire anyone you want to go through the private membership directory, extract email addresses, hand over 28,000 email addresses to an outside company that then has those email addresses in its possession, and have them send 28,000 people emails they did not solicit? Conversely, if you do not have the funds for this you do not have the privilege of so widely representing your point of view? I hereby call on the MLA to investigate this matter fully.

Posted 21 Mar 7:43 am by David Palumbo-Liu

And note that this group of "students" (we have to take their word that the people they gave MLA Directories to were students and indeed MLA members in good standing) now have all our emails on their computers. As sometimes happens, what if one of these laptops is stolen? And unencrypted? Are you comfortable having your data floating around? What if the company they used to send the emails sells your address to another company? I have no problem having MLA members send emails to others to advocate whatever. But until information comes forward to prove otherwise, this particular practice is shady and reflects poorly on the anti-resolution side. I really would like to have full disclosure on which funds were used to hire "students" to copy 28,000 email addresses.

Posted 21 Mar 7:50 am by David Palumbo-Liu

Against the argument that this was simply member-to-member communication. I have no problem with member to member. I do have problem with hiring people to facilitate. I have problem with them handing that information to people who may not be MLA members (real, not those who joined specifically for this purpose). I have a problem with private data on unsecured computers owned by unknown parties. I have a problem with all that data being handed over to a commercial third party without legal statement assuring they will not sell that data. I have a problem with not knowing how secure that company is against getting hacked into and having its/our data stolen. These are all standard questions of IT privacy and security. Individual members do not have the resources to amass data on this scale. Finally, now Cary Nelson is saying they simply handcopied 28,000 email addresses from the print directory, and typed them into an electronic data base. Are we really to believe this? If you believe that I have a great piece of swampland for you in Florida. MLA--investigate this.

Posted 21 Mar 8:16 am by David Palumbo-Liu

I have checked out the documentation on this resolution and in addition I would urge all involved to note that the assertions of

as well as israeli organizations such as israelis Against Housing Demolitions, Combatants for Peace, IPCRI, the Palestine-Israeli Journal, and many others, all of which are either Israeli directed or joint Israeli-Palestinian efforts.

These and many other organizations. reports. and books. whose assertions are not covered in the U.S. press. will verivy in multiple

These and many other organizations, reports, and books, whose assertions are not covered in the state press, have relayed an message instances that what Professor Chomsky has asserted is the truth. He is a man of integrity and given all the evidence that is mounting of a crackdown on free speech and academic freedom in Israel, I tend to believe him, rather than cling to rather meaningless assertions that "documentation isn't sufficient," since these events are not documented in a general suppression of criticism of Israel in the U.S.

The fact remains that Israel is not being "singled out," but in fact is shielded from the consequences of its troubling crackdown on free speech and academic freedom by billions in aid and cover in the UN on the part of the U.S. Resolutions such as these are really the only option left, and there is no denying that some Israelis themselves have urged stronger sanctions (see, for example, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/20/opinion/oe-gordon20>), and that those who have spoken out, respectfully and in good conscience, against policies have been smeared with labels such as "anti-Semite," "anti-Zionist," and "anti-Israel" in an attempt to cow critics into silence. Furthermore, the current Israeli leadership has engaged U.S. academe in ways that try to aid its PR campaign, in additions to passing laws in Israel that limit speech, movement, and freedom, academic and otherwise, in its own institutions and Palestinian ones. Here in the U.S, Hillel officials deny the presence of anyone in their organization who speaks out in criticism of Israeli policies in Palestine or measures to combat them.

Therefore, since resolutions such as these are really the only option left for people of conscience, and no one can deny that accounts similar to Professor Chomsky's account of what happened are abundant, even among Israelis themselves, I wholeheartedly support this resolution.

Posted 21 Mar 10:03 am by Maria C. Spitz

According to Michael Bérubé, the MLA Directory is in the public domain. If that is the case then I would retract some of my criticism. However, it still remains an issue that some group such as this one that has the financial resources can hire people to go through the Directory and in effect replicate a listserv that the MLA itself does not sell. This creates a hugely uneven playing field for those without those financial resources. The MLA should come up with a policy. And I am still troubled by the fact that that information is now in the possession of a third party. Even though it is public (i.e., individual MLA members' email addresses), those emails are now identified as the membership of the MLA.

Finally, I do wonder how a small group of scholars marshaled the funds to hire enough students to, as Nelson claims, hand-copy 28,000 email addresses.

Posted 21 Mar 11:12 am by David Palumbo-Liu

I would vote no.

Posted 21 Mar 11:59 am by Roberta Rosenberg

My letter to the MLA asking for guidance on this:

Dear T. Callaghan,

I wish to seek your guidance on the recent episode wherein, as I understand it, an ad hoc group of MLA members paid students to hand-copy email addresses from the MLA Directory, and then turn that list over to a third party so as to generate and disseminate advocacy materials to all MLA members without either their or the MLA's prior review or permission.

As one of my colleagues puts it, it allows one group with resources to extract emails and produce a proprietary list to influence a vote. It's important to note that the directory is not a "list" in form but rather emails that need to be manually entered one at a time to make a list that can be used to send unsolicited emails. It's not simply about the information being in the public domain, but having that information reconstructed in a form that it was not originally intended to in order to yield a shadow listserv for lobbying purposes. If there is to be parity in this vote and the debate surrounding it, all parties concerned should use the MLA Commons.

Posted 21 Mar 12:00 pm by David Palumbo-Liu

Dear MLA members,

I have received several inquiries about an email message that was sent from

MLA_Members_for_Scholars_Rights@mail.vresp.com using an email distribution service, Vertical Response. The MLA does not give or sell members' email addresses, so we did not supply MLA_Members_for_Scholars_Rights@mail.vresp.com with the email addresses they used.

Cary Nelson has provided me with the following answer to my questions about the message:

"The organizers of MLA Scholars for Faculty Rights arranged for students to be hired to type in the emails from the published book. We

on... indeed the purpose of the list is to facilitate member-to-member communication. we have followed standard ethical procedures and included an UNSUBSCRIBE button at the end of the email. For the record, the AAUP compiled a much larger email list from web sites. They did not ask anyone's permission to gather emails or to send emails to people, but they too include an unsubscribe button. It is worth recalling that MLA used to distribute the annual Directory with emails to everyone automatically. It was thus publicly available. You can thus assure people that the MLA itself was in no way involved in this effort to educate members."

I inquired, at members' requests, about the group's practices with respect to collecting email addresses and funding the effort.

Cary Nelson replied:

"Email addresses were transcribed from the published list of addresses, as made available to all MLA members. As the term is most commonly used, email harvesting refers to obtaining email addresses from a third party who obtained them using a variety of methods. That is certainly not the case. As members, we were entitled to view and use the list, which is exactly what we did. Funding for our advocacy efforts is a private matter."

I hope this explanation answers your questions. Please feel free to address questions about the email you received from MLA_Members_for_Scholars_Rights@mail.vresp.com to the sender of the message. If you have questions about the MLA practices, I am happy to answer them.

Cordially,

Rosemary

Rosemary G. Feal
Executive Director

Posted 21 Mar 12:11 pm by Rosemary G. Feal

The number of countries that protect and value freedom of inquiry is not large. The number of countries in which scholars and artists and any representatives of such freedom are persecuted, arrested, silenced, or driven into exile is miserably large. There is only one country that struggles to preserve the tradition of learning despite every danger to its existence. That is the country we now propose to exclude from discourse. Russia is annexing territory because it suits its leader to do so, Syria has slaughtered a hundred thousand of its citizens and driven millions into exile because its ruling powers want to rule on and on, from one generation to the next. Even the United States violates everyone's privacy and indulges in shadowy maneuvers of which we should be ashamed. By the standards of this resolution, we should boycott ourselves. We should at least refuse to take federal money. But instead we choose to find the most vulnerable party we can and exert ourselves against Israel. Only against Israel can we feel ourselves made powerful. Such is the provocation of vulnerability. We have, let us face it, no shame.

Posted 21 Mar 12:16 pm by Marcus Paul Bullock

That the MLA should engage in politics that result in the singling out of a single country (e.g., Israel) is misguided and shortsighted, if not offensive and potentially dangerous. I understand the premise of facilitating academic travel and the right to academic freedom WORLDWIDE. Anti-Zionism is of course NOT necessarily to be equated with Anti-Semitism, but in this warring world people will find Anti-Semitism all too often where they will. MLA should not, in my view, be taking a political stance that could fuel those Anti-Semitic fires. As a Hebrew, I cannot but be offended at the MLA's promulgation of such an (anti-Israel) resolution.

Posted 21 Mar 1:11 pm by Susan L. Fischer

Thank you, Rosemary Feal, for your comment. I still have doubts about the ethics of what transpired, and one question remains unanswered. And this has relevance to the MLA way beyond this particular case. Where did this group get the funds to mount such an extensive media campaign? Cary Nelson tells us it is none of our business. In that case we are free to speculate that an outside organization wishing to protect Israel from censure may well have donated the funds and/or manpower to cull 28,000 email addresses from the Directory and pay for the services of the company that sent out the emails. The web design, cleverly made up to make it appear that the mailing came from the MLA, could have been paid for by this outside organization as well. If this is the case this opens up the MLA to undue influence from non-members. I continue to wish clarity on this issue.

Posted 21 Mar 1:37 pm by David Palumbo-Liu

I think this resolution is misguided because it is based on inaccurate information. To me, it sounds anti-Semitic and would take the academy back to the 1940s.

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Posted 21 Mar 2:18 pm by Donna Krolik Hollenberg

As a social media frenzy escalates--based on speculation that a secret cabal of international financiers paid for our email to MLA members--it seems appropriate to supply more information. First, it isn't very expensive to gather email addresses when they are all in one place. Second, sending emails is fairly inexpensive IF you fall beneath certain thresholds. Sending 300,000 emails can be more expensive per email than sending 20,000 emails if it requires the use of more expensive servers, more complex software, etc. Our expenses--covered by MLA members themselves--were \$670 to collect the emails and \$150 to send them. No doubt other angry demands will follow--like the demand to investigate this huge monetary outlay--but we do not promise to respond. The focus should be on the Resolution.

Posted 21 Mar 5:01 pm by Cary Nelson

I support this resolution whole-heartedly. Two of my Ph.d students (One Palestinian and one Jewish American) were both informed

categorically that they could not enter Israel if their research involved the West Bank.

Posted 21 Mar 5:16 pm by Masood Raja

I have followed with great interest the lively discussion on this resolution because it represents the best of our profession – the opportunity to engage in democratic and open debate on issues we care deeply about. But, I am also troubled by several strands that have come up repeatedly. First, as immediate past president, I can vouch for the fact that “the MLA” is not a body that decides to single out one country for critique. It is an association of members who individually or in small groups bring concerns to the Delegate Assembly in the form of resolutions by way of a strictly defined process. Other members may bring other concerns about specific infringement of rights to the fore in other parts of the world and these will surely be debated with equal vehemence. Second, as Jew and a scholar of Jewish Studies, I strongly object to the characterization of any critique of the state of Israel as anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic. No state should be immune from criticism for curtailing academics’ rights to teach and travel, including Israel. Third, in my time as MLA officer, I came to see even more strongly than before why the resolution process is so enabling for our members. It gives us a larger forum in which to learn, debate and speak out about issues or importance to our profession – beyond our departments and our universities. At MLA we can speak without fear of reprisal by university officials. We can engage in open disagreement of the kind many campuses no longer foster. This is a process whose integrity we need to protect. The mass mailing we all received from an outside group violates the integrity of this process. Debate on the resolution should be carried out right here, in this space, and among ourselves.

Posted 21 Mar 7:23 pm by Marianne Hirsch

I strongly support this resolution. The aim of the MLA is “to promote study, criticism, and research ... and to further the common interests of teachers of these subjects.” Interference with scholarly travel affects all these purposes. And Israel’s immigration policies affect scholars at all levels of the profession.

On July 14, 2010, Donna Shalala, US Secretary of Health and Human Services for eight years under Clinton and currently the president of Miami University, was detained at Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport and subjected to invasive and humiliating personal questions. Why? Simply because she has an Arab name, having been born in the US to Lebanese immigrant parents. Such incidents of racial profiling are systemic, not haphazard instances: according to the US State Department, “U.S. citizens whom Israeli authorities suspect of being of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin... may face additional, often time-consuming, and probing questioning by immigration and border authorities, or may even be denied entry into Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza.”

If this can happen to Donna Shalala, it can and does happen to professors, even on non-partisan or sympathetic visits: Kavita Khory, of Mount Holyoke College, had signed up for a faculty study tour of Israel, sponsored by Combined Jewish Philanthropies. Khory alone of the group was asked to carry a separate identification document at all times—a “card” certifying that she had been “prescreened” by the Israeli Consulate in Boston. Professor Khory is a US citizen, but was born in Pakistan.

It certainly could affect any of our students who might have quite unexceptional reasons to wish to study in the Holy Land: in May 2010, Abeer Afana, a 21-year-old Wayne State University student, she tried to enter Israel for a month-long program designed to examine conflict and cooperation among Israelis and Palestinians. Seven other students in her group were admitted, but this US citizen was denied, simply because of her Palestinian origins.

Such incidents are routine, as several commentators on this resolution have remarked. Opponents of this resolution ask for more facts. I do not know how many more facts would satisfy them, but I do want to ask if they can present any fact that would show, contrary to the State Department’s advisory statement, that Israel’s control of entry is not on its face discriminatory and frankly a form of racial profiling, bound up with its discriminatory demographic practices against Palestinians.

To say so does not “single out” Israel, but to ask it to conform to principles we expect any democracy, and especially a favored, even privileged and politically protected ally, to adhere to. Certainly its policy would be in violation of any of our universities non-discrimination codes and the MLA should condemn it by passing this resolution and urge the U.S. Department of State to contest not only

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Posted 21 Mar 7:35 pm by David C. Lloyd

I have to note the irony of an organization that calls itself “MLA Members for Scholars Rights” urging people to vote against a resolution that supports scholars rights. Beyond that, I’d like to point out some fallacies in their rationale:

1. They argue that the resolution is wrong because Israeli academics and Palestinian academics “collaborate on a host of subjects.” That’s wonderful, and irrelevant to the text of the resolution.
2. They argue that restricting movement of Israelis, Palestinians and foreigners from Israel to the West Bank must be viewed in the light of terrorist threats to Israeli civilians. Aside from the erasure of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank that that statement makes, it also erases the fact that foreigners cannot enter the West Bank directly but must do so either through Israel or through Jordan; therefore, since the resolution in question asks the State Department “to contest Israel’s denials of entry to the West Bank by United States academics who have been invited to teach, confer, or do research at Palestinian universities,” MLA Members for Scholars Rights is rhetorically equating US academics who try to enter the West Bank through Israel with terrorists.
3. They, and others here, argue that the resolution unfairly singles out Israel when there are many other countries that also infringe on academic freedom. And there certainly are other countries that do so. But by that logic, no one should organize against, say, discriminatory housing policies in New York City because there are also discriminatory housing policies in other cities.

Finally, I’d also like to say that the responses of a number of members that the resolution is anti-Semitic is just specious.

Criticizing the policies of the state of Israel does not equal criticizing Jews unless one wants to erase the 20% of Israel's population that is Arab and the millions of Jews who do not live in Israel. By the logic of such an equation, criticizing the policies of the US government is anti-American.

That such an innocuous resolution brings forth such virulent and slippery slope arguments against it (first this, then BDS!), to me demonstrates why it is so important that the resolution be approved. And I think it's important to keep in mind what the resolution is asking, which is for the State Department "to contest Israel's denials of entry to the West Bank by United States academics who have been invited to teach, confer, or do research at Palestinian universities." Why would anyone who purports to be for scholars rights be against that?

Posted 21 Mar 7:52 pm by Robert E. Kaplan

I would urge MLA members to vote against this resolution for a reason not often put forward. It is totally counterproductive. Anyone who knows Israel knows how the Israeliest Israelis relate to isolation and a feeling that an unfair world is against them: they just dig in their heels further. A common perception there—whether or not you think it is true—is that the world metes out to Israel an unjust proportion of criticism. They will easily ask something along these lines: "Why are only we criticized regarding free exchange of ideas in Gaza, when Hamas itself does not even allow Fatah to demonstrate?"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/17/world/middleeast/palestinians-split-in-gaza-as-hamas-blocks-fatah-rally.html>

It might flatter a sense of moral righteousness to criticize Israel and come up with all sorts of postcolonial excuses for Hamas' behavior, but it won't help any Palestinian one whit.

For a far more productive and even-handed way to register protest, check out <http://thirdnarrative.org/>

The greatest intellectual sin is Manicheism.

Posted 21 Mar 7:53 pm by Alan Astro

Several commenters here are distressed that an "outside group" that supposedly exists only to "protect Israel" has somehow appropriated members' email addresses to nefarious ends. There is a lot of interest in the "funding" of the "media campaign."

Please, if you have a conspiracy theory about what is happening here, just tell us what you believe.

Hundreds of us have signed the members' petition against resolution 2014-1; I think it is clear that many MLA members have heard all the evidence and rejected resolution 2014-1 on the basis of their own evaluations. I would like to know what "funding" has to do with this.

Posted 22 Mar 4:15 am by Eve Eisenberg

Denial: that's what is represented in the comments and actions of those who want the membership to vote "no." And shielding Zionist practices at all cost.

A "yes" vote is more necessary than before. This is a modest resolution; it is not a boycott resolution, nor does it remedy all the injustices. But now with the organized action of a group that appears to have hijacked the MLA list (which is allied to the Zionist

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what is equally important is to make sure that Zionist groups do not boost membership to sway the vote. MLA administration should be alerted, and a response message from the YES vote group allowed to go to all the members.

As I explained in an earlier comment, I am one who was arbitrarily denied entry by the Israelis to resume my academic duties, along with several others I know were denied (including Noam Chomsky). In this instance, the denial destroy the semester for my students. I have other direct experience with the history and practice of Israeli policies designed to disrupt Palestinian education and cultural life over decades, not to mention other aspects of living.

The problems of Palestine and Israel, and Zionism, have been festering for more than 100 years, particularly since 1948, and specifically since the occupation of 1967, which is still going on and becoming worse. This resolution, if anything, is a mild one that addresses an issue that is transparent and obvious. Sure it should have been more inclusive, but inclusive by adding other points that are not covered (e.g., the denial is not limited to US citizens of "Palestinian ancestry").

Is there an occupation on earth today that is more vicious and more self-righteous? It is false this impression that is being given by some that if academics are denied entry the instances are minor, and that this is picking on Israel. Israel dispossessed and still dispossesses people. It has a system built on robbing other people's properties and destroying their culture. Hundreds of thousands of people were made refugees in 1948, their homes either destroyed or used by Israeli Jews without any sense of shame. Today, apartheid-like policies of dispossession, expropriation, appropriation, restrictions continue to be implemented.

In addition to denying entry, Israel never grants regular work visas to those who want to work in Palestinian institutions, and academics have to depend on the vagaries of visitor's visa, which can be denied or restricted at the whim of the border officials and the directives of the Ministry of Interior. It is never possible for these academics to renew visas with the Ministry of Interior, which other normal tourists are able to do. If a visa is processed by the Palestinian Authority's cooperation with the Israelis, restrictions of movement are attached. Add to that closures and other daily harassments.

There are systematic policies designed by the Zionist system that are being implemented to affect Palestinian education and every aspect of life.

The reason this group calling itself MLA Members for Scholars' Rights and Zionist organizations are fighting against the resolution is not that they want a more inclusive resolution or want to protect scholarly rights. Rather, it is because they don't want a precedent or even any mild criticism of Israeli practices. This group represents denial of the problem and not a concern for rights.

I urge you to vote YES as a human gesture in support of minimal academic rights.

Posted 22 Mar 2:11 pm by Basem L. Ra'ad

I am opposed to this resolution and respectfully urge members to vote against it. I oppose it on the merits. The supporting documentation was shoddy, far below the standards acceptable in an academic context. It is also blatantly one-sided: it criticizes restrictions on travel into the West Bank, but if my passport indicates that I have traveled to Israel, I will face extraordinary difficulty entering many Arab countries. I support unencumbered scholarly travel throughout the region, and I wish the MLA would do so as well. This is an important principle to hold up always, not selectively. We need a better resolution, not this one.

I have opposed this resolution for another reason from the start: that it would divide the membership bitterly. This apprehension has been born out by some of the comments here. When MLA Members for Scholars' Rights--a group of which I am a member--chose to communicate directly with the membership on this issue because we oppose the resolution, we have faced attacks and insinuations. We have been labelled an "outside group," which is nothing other than an effort to exclude us from the process, to silence us and to deny us our right to free speech.

I reject such efforts to police my speech. We have a right to communicate with other members in any way and venue we see fit. We have a right to organize and freely associate--as do those who oppose us on the resolution. Yet when we chose to speak out, the resolution supporters have met us with the xenophobic rhetoric of "outsiders" and conspiracies. That is exactly the division in the association that I have feared: not because I will cease to engage on this issue (far from it) but because the MLA should be united around the urgent issues that face us in our profession. The humanities are under siege, the working conditions of adjuncts are shameful, and the job market remains cruel. Colleagues: let us focus.

Posted 22 Mar 2:46 pm by Russell A. Berman

Does anyone remember Edward Said, our beloved late leader? I think he must be turning in his grave to see how far we have regressed since his tenure! What is stiking here is not that that Resolution 2014-1 is eliciting debate. Rather, what stands out in bold relief is just how intolerant of debate are its detractors. As on the broader political scene, moves to seek justice and opportunity for Palestinians (or to remove obstacles to achieving those goals) are countered by Zionist attack dogs. When the Zionist lobby railroads its way through Congress, universities, and civil society no request is made for equal time for the other side. Only when a counter voice is raised in this tightly controlled wilderness, do the proponents of Israeli exceptionalism cry foul. VOTE YES on this simple proposition seeking to facilitate academic freedom and inquiry in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

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I agree with Russell Berman, Cary Nelson, and Michael Berube. I too am shocked to see the vocabulary of conspiracy theory invoked to demonize those of us (MLA Members for Scholars' Rights) who would choose to voluntarily associate for the purpose of discussing matters of justice and the common good, and to disseminate our considered views to colleagues and fellow citizens in public space. Put me down on the side of distinguished past MLA and AAUP presidents on that one! As to the resolution itself, I'm opposed because it does not defend scholars' rights either--the Israeli stamp in my passport, for example, excludes me from entering a number of countries that routinely reject people like me because we've been to Israel. I support the rights of scholars everywhere to travel, meet, discuss, organize--and even send emails. Therefore, I say that if the MLA is to take a stand on the matter of such universal human rights as these, let it be an evenhanded one--and not this product of fevered imaginations.

Posted 22 Mar 5:24 pm by Gabriel Noah Brahm

I write as an American and an Israeli (am citizen of both countries) and as a Jew who lives in Israel.

First I would like to express my appreciation of Rosemary G. Feal's depiction of the issues she and resolution 2014-1 faced and are facing. It is typical of ultra pro-Israel supporters to reject any and all criticism of Israel, not to mention the methods they use in trying to quell criticism.

I have read comments opposing 2014-1 and urging MLA members to vote against it.

This is ridiculous and, further, does neither Israel nor the MLA good. Israel is justly becoming more and more recognized for being the pariah that it is!

The argument that the resolution is one-sided because it singles out Israel is ridiculous. This is tantamount to saying that no one who commits a crime should be punished until everyone in the world who has committed the same or similar crime is punished. If any of the people who produced this letter wish to bring a resolution against any other country that should be blamed for its acts, then let them do so.

I include below a link to an article that all should read less for its stand than for the data.

"Reply to University Presidents Who Condemned ASA Boycott"

<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/reply-to-university-presidents-who-condemned-asa-boycott/#.Uy30gonNvMM>

As for 2014-1, it is a very mild resolution. I, for one, will vote for it, and am proud to be a member of an association that allows discussion and debate of painful issues.

Please do read this article. It is most informative, and I as an activist against Israel's occupation, ethnic cleansing, expansion, and racism will surely vote for it, as I hope that the majority of MLA members will.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Naor
Herzliah, Israel

Posted 22 Mar 5:42 pm by F. Dorothy Naor

Elizabeth Jane Ordóñez's dismissal of everyone who opposes this resolution as "Zionist attack dogs" is insulting, contemptible, and unacceptable.

Posted 22 Mar 6:46 pm by Peter C. Herman

"Zionist attack dogs" was probably used metaphorically. However, considering the undue and unfair pressures being exercised on universities by Zionist funders and lobby groups to quell any dissent or any objection to Israel's colonial activities, as well as Zionist academics using their past or present positions (as with Cory Nelson) to strangle resistant voices, not to mention Zionist politicians pushing the US into disastrous wars, the expression maybe severe but not far from the truth. I can understand that some Jews can be mild Zionists (not sure if the Christian variety in North America can be that mild), but Zionism is a harmful ideology that has caused tremendous damage to the minds of otherwise reasonable people as well as disrupted and unsettled the lives of millions of people it has dispossessed.

Posted 22 Mar 8:30 pm by Basem L. Ra'ad

I looked again at that statement by Prof. Ordóñez that mentions "Zionist attack dogs." It's quite surprising that people who teach literature and languages can take it so much out of context to say that it applies to anyone who doesn't like the resolution. The statement clearly speaks about the "broad political scene" of not recognizing the injustices to which Palestinians are subjected, not about anyone who thinks the resolution is not for him or her. On "dogs" change the word to any other word that may sound less insulting, but the sense of it is that there are some out there who have shown intolerance, who control and twist the media, who silence the truth, who flex their muscle, who organize unfair and biased campaign, who have even pushed the US to wars for Israel's sake, and who have worked their money or influence to destroy academics or students who express solidarity with the Palestinian cause or any criticism of what should be, to any fair human, an unbearable situation that needs to be rectified.

Posted 22 Mar 10:04 pm by Basem L. Ra'ad

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Academia in general.

Where have we heard that one before?

It is hateful to say that those who oppose Israel's policies in Palestine are anti-Semites. And then we're faced with the above sentence.

We all want say yes to academic freedom, the right to self-determination, justice, and more. (That's what this resolution purports to do.) We should say no to discrimination, hate, and this resolution.

Posted 23 Mar 9:18 am by Anita Norich

History is replete with examples of political domination crushing, or trying to crush, the power of the mind, in this case the pen too. It is clear that such restrictions, whichever the country may be, hamper knowledge dissemination. Such occurrences make one think and question whether we have truly reached the state of a world without boundaries or is it an imagined term?

I hope the powers that be see the light of wisdom and do not let political differences come in the way of creating an environment which encourages free flow of thoughts, ideas, philosophies & opportunities. The oppressor is always the one who is filled with fear. The fear of freedom being used against him!! If we want the freedom for the world of 'word' to be allowed to flow freely like the wind, I guess, we will have to relentlessly work towards creating an environment of trust. This also places responsibility on the people who want this freedom. This is not just about Palestine and the USA but about the whole world. It may be these countries today, but some others tomorrow!! I would be cautious about not making this a political statement but a case for the world of academia to come together for a cause.

Reminds me of Tagore's poem, "where the mind is without fear..."

Here's hoping for 'CHANGE'!!

Posted 23 Mar 12:01 pm by Mythili Rao

If the professors who are educators talk of Zionist attack dogs and Jews controlling academia we are in bad shape.

Posted 23 Mar 1:11 pm by Edna Aizenberg

I have been an MLA member for more than 30 years, and have served on the Delegate Assembly for 5. Along with Cary Nelson, a life member, and Russell Berman, a former president of MLA, I took part in an effort to let fellow MLA members know my many reasons for discomfort with Resolution 2014-1. In our letter, there was no name-calling, no accusations. We disagreed with the premise of the resolution and found the evidence offered in its support insufficient. For this, we have been called "shady," "an outside group [violating] the integrity of this process." Intimations have been made that we somehow have secret access to vast resources—Cary Nelson has already addressed this theory in an earlier post. And the rhetoric has degenerated from there. Among the comments was an attack on the "humongous influence that Jewish scholars have in the decision making process of Academia in general." We have been clustered among "Zionist attack dogs" and then instructed that to take offense at the violence of this language would indicate our failure as readers

LAURENCE BUCKLEY WROTE, AND THEN INSTRUCTED THAT TO TAKE OFFENSE AT THE VIOLENCE OF THIS LANGUAGE WOULD INDICATE OUR FAILURE AS READERS OF METAPHOR. I WRITE BECAUSE I CAN NO LONGER TOLERATE THESE AND OTHER EFFORTS TO SILENCE THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE RESOLUTION. I STRONGLY OPPOSE RESOLUTION 2014-1 AND BELIEVE THAT WE MUST VOTE IT DOWN.

Posted 23 Mar 1:49 pm by Martin B. Shichtman

I am for free speech rights for everyone as much as I am for academic freedom for everyone, and in the case of this resolution I am for the MLA remaining consistent in its efforts to make sure scholars are able to do their research in Israel-Palestine unimpeded. Let's remember what the resolution actually, and very modestly, asks for, after all--that the US State Department pay close attention to this issue. Period.

I regret that my surprise at receiving, out of the blue, the anti-resolution materials, from what I thought was a private list, may have contributed to diverting attention from the resolution itself; I am glad things have been clarified to some degree. Once I learned that the Directory is in the public domain I retracted my criticisms of the anti-resolution group's emailing the membership from what I assumed was a members-only resource.

I even do not strongly object to them working closely with a non-MLA, non-scholarly, and explicitly political organization to defeat this resolution, though I am not pleased that they felt they had to resort to so doing. I remain, however, concerned that the anti-resolution group paid others to cull the email addresses, and at 2-3 cents a email address that seems a bit on the low side of the pay scale.

I agree with those that say we should now concentrate on the actual resolution itself.

Posted 23 Mar 4:29 pm by David Palumbo-Liu

"I remain, however, concerned that the anti-resolution group paid others to cull the email addresses, and at 2-3 cents a email address that seems a bit on the low side of the pay scale." So the newest objection to those of us who oppose the resolution is that we are

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Posted 23 Mar 5:35 pm by Martin B. Shichtman

I can't believe this.

Posted 23 Mar 6:21 pm by Gabriel Noah Brahm

Why should anyone apologize to the exploiters of the MLA list? Even the apology by David Palumbo-Liu has been misinterpreted and turned into something else. How would members feel if the list is used for other purposes such as sales or other promotion or worse? Using the list in this way is improper, in effect indiscreet and deceptive, and should be condemned, and also investigated by MLA officials, whose reaction up to this point seems to be weak.

Posted 23 Mar 6:27 pm by Basem L. Ra'ad

Martin, your colleague Cary used the word "cabal," with tongue in cheek, after all. I really had no intention of resorting to that offensive stereotype. Please don't take it that way.

Posted 23 Mar 6:57 pm by David Palumbo-Liu

I heartily applaud this resolution because it is in keeping with MLA policies on freedom of movement for academics from one country to another. It is important that Israel be made to realize that its harassment of academics of Palestinian descent (as well as many other Palestinians) is inhumane and unacceptable to people who value democracy and freedom of speech. Requesting that the US government look into this sort of harassment does not amount to taking sides on the issue of Israeli occupation.

Posted 23 Mar 11:15 pm by Janet M. Powers

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