

RYAN BELLAROSE TO THE NAISA (2013)

To the leadership of Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)

“I was shown your website by a friend and colleague and to be quite honest I am extremely shocked that an organisation that states it is here as a group dedicated to studying Native American and Indigenous issues is openly supporting a racist, anti-indigenous group like BDS. As a Metis human rights activist who has studied the history of the Middle East, I feel it’s important for people like me to speak out because frankly you can only be supporting this boycott out of ignorance.

First off, as indigenous people it’s very important for us to support the struggles of our indigenous brethren. Contrary to popular belief and the false narrative being spread by pro-palestinians, Arabs are not indigenous to the Levant. The indigenous people are the Jews who trace their origins as a people and their culture to the levant. The Arabs who conquered the Middle East in the seventh century are in fact indigenous to the arabian peninsula. They do not get to claim indigenous status to the levant any more than white people can lay claim to being indigenous to North America. Israel is an indigenous rights project at its core; it is the return of an indigenous group that was disenfranchised by colonialists dating back to the Roman occupation and culminating in the Arab expansion in the seventh century. There is no statute of limitations on human rights, and indigenous rights are in fact human rights.

Second off, the boycott is inherently racist and prejudiced; even anti-Israel spokespeople like Norman Finklestein have openly stated that BDS is simply another attack against Jews. The hypocrite who started this Boycott is in fact a student at an Israeli university (Omar Barghouti who studies at Tel Aviv University). The idea that people should boycott an entire indigenous nation because of some ridiculous notion that colonisers have become indigenous is offensive as hell.

This entire ‘supporting the Palestinians out of some misguided “affinity” with them due to their underdog status’ is quite idiotic itself; in fact the entire Middle East minus one percent of the land mass, is under the control of Muslims who share the stated goal of the Palestinians’ leaders, which is “to remove the state of Israel and its people from the map”. So that means that in fact Israel is not just the underdog, but has overcome almost insurmountable odds. The Palestinians have been nothing more than a tool for the Arab nations to fight the Jews by proxy.

So you explain to me how a state that consists of one percent of the land mass and less than one percent of the total population is somehow an oppressor. The truth is that the Palestinians have been given several things that North American Indians have never been given: the opportunity to create their own state. They refused each time, believing that their Muslim brothers would destroy Israel for them – only they never have.

Boycotting academics is wrong, it's immoral and disgusting. It is not borderline racism, it is abject racism. I urge you and your friends to reconsider this support of an illegitimate boycott. Please do some research into this.

We have struggled for equal rights in North America for decades; we have never stooped to terrorism, or propoganda. We rely on the fact that our cause is inherently just, so why we align ourselves with people who advocate for violence I have no idea. We have grassroots movements like Idle No More in which I have worked as both an organiser and participant in several events. We do NOT glorify murder nor do we advocate for violence. BDS is merely less open in its goals, which are the destruction of Israel and its people.

Regards,

Ryan Bellerose, Organiser and Participant of Idle No More.”