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Successful Appeal Against NYU Grad Student BDS Motion Has Great Implications in Fight Against Global Anti-Israel Movement, Say Leaders of Campaign

JUNE 26, 2016 6:11 AM 6 COMMENTS



The NYU campus. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

A successful appeal against New York University's (NYU) Graduate Student Union's (GSOC) motion in support of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has great implications in the fight against the global anti-Israel movement, students who led the appeal campaign told *The Algemeiner* on Friday.

Ilana Ben-Ezra and Samuel Zerin — members of [GSOC for Open Dialogue on Israel and Palestine](#) — said they applaud United Auto Workers International's (UAW) decision against empowering the April GSOC BDS motion, which they claimed violated the UAW's constitutional bylaws. UAW is the parent union of the Graduate Student Union.

According to UAW, GSOC's BDS resolution "is contrary to the position of the International Union." Citing as precedents two recent rulings by the UAW's International Executive Board and Public Review Board nullifying similar BDS motions at the University of California, UAW declared GSOC's resolution void of "force or effect." As a result, UAW-affiliated unions at over 15 universities are prohibited from supporting BDS.

Zerin said that what was most interesting about UAW's decision is that "the International UAW actually did not nullify the resolution. Rather, it declared that the resolution was *already* null and void because GSOC never had the authority to pass it in the first place."

Both Ben-Ezra and Zerin told *The Algemeiner* they were not surprised by GSOC's decision to support the global anti-Israel movement. According to Ben-Ezra, what really disappointed her was that "my fellow graduate students had failed to engage in meaningful dialogue about the Middle East, and that our union was straying from its primary purpose of fighting for graduate student workers rights."

For Zerin — who said he "felt betrayed by my classmates" — GSOC's decision came at an ironic time in his life. "I was overwhelmed by the fact that I was in Jerusalem, of all places, for my PhD research, when all of this was happening. It felt so ironic to be coordinating the counter-BDS campaign from Israel. It was painful and yet so perfect and fulfilling, and especially so 'right' when I finally cast my ballot online against BDS from my apartment in Jerusalem."

"I guess you can say my body was in the East, but my heart was in the West — with my classmates in New York," he said.






When news of the BDS motion broke, Ben-Ezra said she and fellow like-minded students who oppose BDS "were prepared in advance and took appropriate action against the motion." According to Zerin, within days,

Author:



Lea Speyer

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“putting aside our political arguments and focusing on union policy,” GSOC for Open Dialogue on Israel and Palestine submitted its appeal.

“I read our union’s constitution, our ethical practices codes, the bylaws for both our local and our unit, as well as our union contract with NYU. As I did so, the number of violations just kept piling up and piling up. It was unbelievable to me – yet also totally predictable – that the BDS referendum violated our union policies in so many ways,” he told *The Algemeiner*.

Zerin believes the UAW decision is making a “strong moral statement.”

“GSOC’s BDS resolution is null and void *not* because its wording or demands violate a clause of our union’s constitution, but because the union opposes BDS itself. That’s really powerful. This isn’t just about NYU. It’s about every UAW-affiliated union, and it’s about BDS itself,” he said.

While UAW’s decision is a major setback for the BDS movement, Ben-Ezra said she applauds UAW International “for taking a strong stand against BDS but I unfortunately do not believe that it will prevent the movement from finding other avenues for expressing itself. I believe that UAW’s public stance and ruling that BDS is discriminatory sends a strong message to bystanders about what BDS implies, but BDS supporters will remain undeterred.”

According to prominent legal expert Kenneth Marcus — president of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law who is currently battling pro-BDS academic institutions in court — GSOC’s resolution is “another example of BDS advocates disregarding the rules.”

“In this case, they are breaking the rules of an organization that will not be messed with: the UAW union. The UAW had already ruled against BDS and it was foolish of a UAW-affiliated student union to think that this didn’t apply to them,” he told *The Algemeiner*.

Based on its prior rulings, UAW made its position on BDS “crystal clear,” Marcus said, adding that its opposition to BDS was “interestingly for a distinctive reason, because it would harm American corporations that do business with Israel and that also employ UAW and other union members, such as Boeing, Caterpillar and General Electric. The UAW understand that BDS is bad for American workers because it is bad for American companies.”

“The graduate students at the UAW-affiliated student union should have understood that their union’s ruling applies to them, too,” Marcus stated. “It’s about time that the grown-ups step in. The UAW should be commended for their wise and just and decision.”

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USW appeal decision letter courtesy of GSOC for Open Dialogue on Israel and Palestine.

6 COMMENTS

Jacob L. Schachter
June 27, 2016 9:14 am

Sam Zerin was paraphrasing the Spanish-Jewish poet, Yehuda HaLevi (1075-1141) stating that his body was in the East, but his heart was in the West with his classmates in NY.

In a very short 6 line Hebrew poem Yehudah HaLevi wrote in the opening line:
“My heart is in the East but I am the (far) West”

[REPLY](#)

Ani
June 27, 2016 5:43 am

BDS advocates will stop at nothing in their attempts to eliminate the state of Israel. Just amazing how ignorant students, and in many cases, grad students, can be as to what the real situation is. They know what they are told and this cause is now dear to their progressive hearts.

Odd as so many would be appalled at the treatment they would receive at the hands of the Palestinians they so ardently support. Last I checked, the Palestinians weren’t so nice to women, feminists, gays and non-Moslems.

So good job dealing with this. Eventually they will find another cause to turn their attention to one would hope.

REPLY

Harvey

June 27, 2016
9:48 am

The enemy of the Jewish people is to be found from within . There are no greater haters of Eretz Israel than the faux Jews of 'Jewish Voice for Peace'.

REPLY

robert davis

June 27, 2016
3:56 am

gsoc anbd other more or less fake organisations meddling with Israel's politics are mere gangsters,BURGLARS breking into prémices which do not belong to them. They are corrupt people breking into politics just because they get corruption money from arabs or the eu that 4th reich organisation hopefully about to fall apart. eu is not a defensive organisation it's an aggressive one which does NOT defend the europans people but want to rule the world and their attitude towards Israel AND Jews prove it because this has always been a maverick in politics. Not only is anti Zionism a hidden way for antisemitium but eu proved it when it tried to ban circoncision and casher meat only against Jews not moslems. Hopefully the majority of european nations will depart from that filthy 4th reich.Congratulations to GB which showed the way.

REPLY

nat cheimann

June 27, 2016
1:18 am

People are getting tired of pro muslim nonsense

REPLY

Lia

June 27, 2016
1:05 am

Congratulation UAW!!!

REPLY

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Imminent and Ominous: The Facebook-Jihadi Nexus (REVIEW)

For most Americans, Israelis and other Westerners, Facebook is a benign and useful forum through which to catch up with old friends, make new ones, connect with relatives and engage in virtual exchanges of information. There is, however, a much darker side to the picture. An increasing number of Islamist terrorists, well-versed in modern technology and its usage for jihad-related tasks, are exploiting the world-wide reach of social networking for their own nefarious purposes – despite the fact that, paradoxically, [...]

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The Trombone Man: Tales of a Misogynist (REVIEW)

The Trombone Man: Tales of a Misogynist. (164 pages. Lulu Publishing, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4834-5008-7.) Ron J. Hutter has written a provocative, entertaining and thoughtful novel that explores the problem of antisemitism in a very original way. In The Trombone Man: Tales of a Misogynist, he uses misogyny both as a protest about the treatment of women in various parts of the world and as a metaphor for what the late scholar Robert Wistrich called “the longest hatred.” Based on some actual [...]

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‘Today’ Co-Host Surprises Holocaust Survivor by Introducing Him to Icon Tennis Player at US Open (VIDEO)

A “Today” show co-host surprised a Holocaust survivor by introducing him to his favorite tennis player on Thursday at the US Open. Hoda Kotb shocked 80-year-old Les Held after he finished watching his idol John McEnroe win a match at Arthur Ashe Stadium in Queens, NY. Kotb walked out on the court and told the crowd about Held, who was sitting in the stands with his family and had no idea cameras were pointing at him. After a video played on the mega screen about Held’s story [...]



‘Real Housewives of New York City’ Cast Member Defends Accusing Co-Star of Making Jews Look Bad (VIDEO)

A cast member of Bravo TV’s “The Real Housewives of New York City” defended accusations against one of her co-stars for making Jews look bad on the hit reality show. Bethenny Frankel was challenged by Andy Cohen, host of “Watch What Happens Live,” for having told Jules Wainstein, “I don’t think you represented a positive side of being Jewish at all.” Cohen said Frankel’s remarks to Wainstein, which were made during the “Housewives” reunion special earlier in the [...]



‘Bad Jews’ Makes Audiences Laugh and Think in Teaneck, New Jersey

In 2013, the play Bad Jews premiered off-Broadway. It dealt with assimilation, intermarriage and every major issue facing the Jewish community today. It was also incredibly funny. In fact, the New York Times called it one of the funniest comedies of the year, and the Huffington Post said it was “one of the funniest things on the New York stage,” and a “thought-provoking evening.” I am currently acting in the New Jersey professional premiere of the play at the Black Box PAC [...]

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