

## **The Palestinian BDS Movement as a global antiracist campaign**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper will argue that the Boycott, Sanctions, Divestment Movement launched by Palestinian civil society in 2005 has become an important organizing tool for interethnic, antiracist, anti-imperialist struggle across the globe. Like the BDS campaign against apartheid South Africa upon which it is modelled, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment Sanctions movement has produced wide forms of solidarity transcending national boundaries, while leveraging specific antiracist coalitional politics central to the contemporary period. In particular, BDS has provided platforms for the integration of these antiracist struggles: 1) Against Israeli settler-colonialism, and against settler-colonialism as a racist ideology; 2) Against Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism, an important counterhegemonic force against Western racist chauvinisms, especially after 9/11; 3) For Afro-Palestinian and Afro-Arab unity, a current that has exploded in the face of systematic and simultaneous state-sponsored racist violence, especially police violence, against Palestinians under Israeli Occupation, and African-Americans under U.S. racial capitalism; 4) Against both right-wing Zionism deploying Israel as a figurehead for new ethnonationalist regimes, and right-wing Antisemitism meant to use Israeli state aggression to whip up traditional forms of antisemitism; 5) For an indigenous, anti-capitalist critique of Western histories of settler-colonial violence and domination. The paper will track these currents by mapping the contours and directions of the Boycott, Divestment Sanctions Movement from 2004 to the present. It will argue that BDS's insistence on grassroots organization, self-determination struggle, and internationalism are the most important and successful social movement dimensions of the campaign.*

**Keywords:** Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement; Palestine; Israel; Apartheid; Settler-Colonialism; Internationalism; Antiracism; Occupation.

### **BDS: A history**

The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement was launched by 170 Palestinian civil society organizations in 2005. Its roots in global anti-racism were very specific: discussions about Palestinian adoption of the South African BDS strategy were initiated at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance at Durban, South Africa. The initiative was in tandem with discussion at the Conference about reviving the 1975 U.N. resolution 3375 that “Zionism is a form of racism and racial

discrimination.” The initial draft for the conference included that charge; it was later changed to substitute Islamophobia for racism after the U.S. and Israel withdrew from the Conference in protest.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the conference also produced widespread support for a “second anti-apartheid movement,” and officially raised the comparison of Israel’s regime with South Africa’s. The conference also formally declared Palestinians as subject to settler-colonial rule. It nurtured an incipient internationalist response to Israel’s Occupation. From that event, Palestinian civil society and leaders gathered momentum for implementation of a second BDS campaign launched in 2005.<sup>2</sup> Like the South Africa campaign, the Palestinian BDS Movement focused on use of international law, non-violence disobedience, and grassroots organizing tethered to an analysis of Israel as a racist, apartheid state. It presented three founding demands:

- 1) Ending the Occupation, return of all stolen Arab lands, and dismantling of the Apartheid Wall.
- 2) Recognizing the rights of all Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel to full equality under the law.
- 3) Protecting the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland in accordance with United Nations resolution 194.

The significance of the launch of the Palestinian BDS campaign for global anti-racist activists was significant and immediate. The demand for return of stolen Arab lands invoked national liberation struggles across the Arab world dating to the Western imperial annexations of the World War I period. In Egypt, the BDS movement grew to become one of the prevailing demands of the “Arab Spring” revolution seeking ouster of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, seen as a tool of Western imperial governments, and critical of Mubarak’s tacit support for Israel’s apartheid state. The BDS Movement also resuscitated a critique of Zionism as a racist ideology meant to suppress Palestinians, and by extensions

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<sup>1</sup> Lollo, Stephanie. “World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance: Resolution amid Controversy.” *NYLC Journal of Human Rights*. V. 18, Issue 3, Summer 2002, pp. 481-486.  
[https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1499&context=journal\\_of\\_human\\_rights](https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1499&context=journal_of_human_rights)

<sup>2</sup> Vally, Nathasha. “South Africa’s Second Anti-Apartheid Movement.” *BDS and the Global Anti-Apartheid Movement*. N. 38, Summer. 2008,  
<https://www.badil.org/en/publication/periodicals/al-majdal/item/97-south-africa's-second-anti-apartheid-movement.html>

Arab states (like Egypt) who had lost land in the 1967 war by Israel and Jordan, Syria, and Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

Within Palestine, BDS brought unity to political aspirations for political self-determination that had been expressed but not realized by the First and Second Intifadas (it is significant that the BDS launch year was the same year as the end of the latter). Unity in this instance meant a shared set of political principles identifying Israel as a racist, apartheid-regime imposing second class-citizenship under the law for Palestinians within '48 and Gaza. BDS's articulation of "full equality under the law" implied that discrimination based on race and ethnicity in virtually all walks of Palestinian life---jobs, education, housing, health care, social provisioning, the environment---was a political norm. The language of "second-class citizenship" also resonated in countries like the U.S., where concomitant language of Jim Crow---"separate but equal"---began to translate Israeli apartheid into terms of anti-racist struggle conducive to organizing in solidarity.

More specifically, and important to this essay, the original Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions made explicit the ethnonationalist basis of Israel's apartheid state. The call stated, "Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact".<sup>4</sup> Using the term "ethnically cleansed" enabled the BDS movement to invite participation in protest against the state of Israel in the name of resisting the racial genocide of a Palestinian and Arab population. This idea was underscored by an ensuing sentence charging Israel with an "entrenched system of racial discrimination"---or systemic racism. In tandem, the terms made Israel apartheid legible as both an echo of earlier ethnic genocides (the German Holocaust against Jews, the Turkish against Armenians, the U.S., Australia and Canada against indigenous peoples) and as a reproduction of South Africa's white majority apartheid regime. In short, covertly, but implicitly, the BDS call named Israel as a white supremacist state.

This move had the important corollary effect of making Palestinians legible for the first time in Western history as a recognizably racialized subaltern population. It challenged and erased prior framings of the "historic" conflict in the Middle East as Israeli/Arab, Jewish/Muslim, into one of racial hierarchy. It renamed the project of the state of Israel as a settler-colonial one, and implicitly condemned Zionist ideology as----to return to Durban---racist. In this moment, Palestine became a vehicle for a global antiracist strategy, and BDS its conduit. By deploying the South African BDS strategy, the Palestinian campaign also

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<sup>3</sup> Abou-El-Fadl, Reem. "The Road to Jerusalem Through Tahrir Square: Anti-Zionism and Palestine in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. V. 41, N. 2 (Winter 2012), pp. 6-26.

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2012.xli.2.6?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2012.xli.2.6?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

<sup>4</sup> "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS." BDS Movement.net. <https://bdsmovement.net/call>

recuperated an historical memory of what was arguably the single largest global antiracist movement of the contemporary period. A generation that was not familiar with the legacy of Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress, and the 1993 end of “official” South African apartheid would now learn that history through the prism of Palestine.

This global remembering helped trigger a proliferation of solidarity campaigns internationally. Within five years’ time, nationally-based BDS movements for Palestine were launched in Ireland, the U.K., France, and, importantly, South Africa; both the African National Congress and Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared their support for BDS,<sup>5</sup> the latter after a visit to Israel describing its apartheid system as “humiliating” as the one that dominated Black South Africans. Tutu’s encouragement of the Episcopal Church to divest from Israel<sup>6</sup> gave special valence to the BDS strategy. The Ireland BDS campaign meanwhile resonated strongly with that country’s anticolonial history. In the U.K., where BDS against South Africa launched in the early 1960s, the campaign has also invoked a spirit of internal anticolonial struggle against the British Empire.

In 2009, scholars and activists in the United States launched a national solidarity movement modelled on the Palestinian BDS call named USACBI (The United States Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel). The USACBI call for boycott centred on the role of Israeli universities in maintaining Israel’s apartheid state.<sup>7</sup>



## US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

*Courtesy of usacbi.org*

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<sup>5</sup> “AMP Calls for An End to Israeli Apartheid and US Aid to Israel.” American Muslims for Palestine. Sept. 30, 2013. <https://www.ampalastine.org/media/media-room/news/amp-calls-end-israeli-apartheid-and-us-aid-israel>

<sup>6</sup> Tutu, Desmond, Cannon Bonnie Anderson and Patti Browning. “A Letter to General Convention Regarding Justice in the Holy Land.” BDSMovement.net July 3, 2018. <https://bdsmovement.net/news/letter-general-convention-regarding-justice-holy-land>

<sup>7</sup> “Endorse Our Call to Boycott.” USACBI.org <https://usacbi.org/about>

The formation of USACBI was a tipping point in the United States for antiracist discourse around the historical dispossession of Palestinians. Because it emanated from the imperialist centre of the Western world, and from the country historically Israel's strongest financial and military backer (the U.S. provides 3.8 billion per year to Israel, more than any other country) the call for BDS resonated as a significant challenge to the Middle East geopolitical order racial and otherwise. Indeed, USACBI's call to boycott quickly gained traction among U.S. antiracist activists for whom Israel's racist, Zionist regime became legible as a sequel to South Africa, and as an outpost of the United States' own settler colonial history.

This was the meaning of specific U.S.-based boycott campaigns undertaken by American academic associations with a strong commitment to antiracism. Indeed, the first U.S. academic association to vote to boycott Israeli Universities was the Association of Asian American Studies. In its call to boycott, AAAS underscored the ethnoracial dimensions of the Occupation as a galvanizing force of for antiracist interethnic solidarity. The call noted that "Arab (West Asian) and Muslim American communities, students, and scholars have been subjected to profiling, surveillance, and civil rights violations that have circumscribed their freedom of political expression, particularly in relation to the issue of human rights in Palestine-Israel" and that the "seeks to foster scholarship that engages conditions of migration, displacement, colonialism, and racism, and the lives of people in zones of war and occupation" while opposing "racist practices by the Israeli state."<sup>8</sup>

The Association of Asian American studies vote to boycott was quickly followed by other academic organizations with a stated commitment to antiracist politics. These included the American Studies Association; the Critical Ethnic Studies Association; the National Association of Chicano and Chicana Studies, and the African Literature Association. A statement by the American Studies Association declaring its support for the Boycott was typical in its renunciation of Israel apartheid as part of a global commitment to antiracism:

The ASA is an organization that supports the protected rights of students, scholars, and peoples everywhere to freedoms of expression, thought, and movement. The ASA has long played an important role in critiquing racial, sexual, and gender inequality in the United States. It condemned apartheid in South Africa and urged divestment from U.S. corporations with operations there. It has condemned anti-immigrant discrimination in Arizona and in other states. It has spoken out in support of the Occupy movement, and of the human dignity and rights of the economically disenfranchised.

In addition, the United States is the world's strongest supporter of Israel, providing the majority of Israel's military and foreign aid, and providing political

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<sup>8</sup> Association of Asian American Studies. "Resolution to Support the Boycott of Israeli Universities." [https://aaastudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/aaas-4\\_20\\_13-conference-resolution-to-support-the-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions-revised.pdf](https://aaastudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/aaas-4_20_13-conference-resolution-to-support-the-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions-revised.pdf)

support for settlement expansion. As a U.S.-based organization, the ASA condemns the United States' significant role in aiding and abetting Israel's violations of human rights against Palestinians and its occupation of Palestinian lands through its use of the veto in the UN Security Council.<sup>9</sup>

The wave of academic boycotts was also conjoined to historical events: in 2014, Michael Brown, a young African-American man, was shot to death by police on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri. The shooting came in the middle of Israel's seven-week bombing campaign on Gaza, Operation Protective Edge, which resulted in the killing of more than 2,000 Palestinians, 500 of them children. Protesters in both Gaza and the U.S. immediately made connections between racist police violence, U.S. state violence against oppressed minority populations, and the need for interethnic antiracist solidarity. For example, journalists were quick to report that the St. Louis County Police Department, which killed Michael Brown and was deployed to repress protest in Ferguson, had been trained in Israel.<sup>10</sup> From Gaza, Palestinians seeing police violence against African-Americans tweeted messages of solidarity.<sup>11</sup> Building from Ferguson, in 2015, more than 1,100 African-Americans, including prominent intellectuals and activists, signed "Black for Palestine," a solidarity statement that was the first and largest of its kind in U.S. history.<sup>12</sup> Afro-Palestinian solidarity perhaps culminated in the formal endorsement of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign against Israel by the Movement for Black Lives.<sup>13</sup>

The conjuncture of Black-Palestinian solidarity has also resonated in indigenous communities across the globe. Palestine has afforded activists a settler-colonial lens on global capitalism useful to analysis of ongoing neocolonial regimes around the world. In North America for the Red Nation, a radical pan-tribal indigenous movement, solidarity with Palestine and BDS has become a central tenant of organizing:

Settler colonialism presents itself as a shield, as a protector. What they don't tell you is that it shields occupation and protects occupiers. Palestinians have resisted

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<sup>9</sup> American Studies Association. "What Does the Boycott Mean?" <https://www.theasa.net/what-does-boycott-mean>

<sup>10</sup> "The Ferguson/Palestine Connection." *Ebony*. August 19, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Donaghy, Rory. "Palestinians Send Messages of Solidarity to #Ferguson Protesters." *Middle East Eye*. August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/palestinians-send-messages-solidarity-ferguson-protestors>

<sup>12</sup> Black for Palestine. <http://www.blackforpalestine.com>

<sup>13</sup> Green, Emma. "Why Do Black Lives Matter Activists Care About Palestine?" *The Atlantic*. August 18, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/08/why-did-black-american-activists-start-caring-about-palestine/496088>

Israeli settler colonialism since 1948 and European colonialism since 1917. Israel's violent occupation of historic Palestine is typically framed as a "conflict." This is a distortion of history that erases the actual truth: Israel's very existence depends upon the elimination of Palestinians. This is called settler colonialism. Israel is a violent settler nation that should be condemned for its crimes against humanity.

And like its patron, the United States, white historians in the United States have long framed the history of settler colonialism in this nation as a "conflict" between two equal sides: cowboys and Indians; settlers and savages...Like Palestinians, Native people continue to resist systematic colonialism by the U.S.

We refuse to be uprooted. Refusal is the basis of all forms of anti-colonial resistance, and we, as the original peoples and nations of these lands, extend unwavering solidarity and support to our Palestinian relatives who struggle for liberation from the same violence that threatens to erase *our* histories and *our* futures.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most significant contribution of BDS to the contemporary real and discursive battle against racial capitalism is the Palestinian challenge to right-wing normative Islamophobia and ethnonationalism. Western imperial hegemony in the Middle East since at least World War I has been predicated on a racist, Orientalist discourse. U.S. wars against Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan; the so-called "War on Terror" before and after 9/11; Western drone bombing campaigns against Islamic movements in Africa; and demonization of Arab liberation struggles, especially in Palestine, as "terrorist" have combined to make Islamophobia a common currency about far-right ethnonationalist, neo-fascist and white supremacist regimes globally. Indeed Israel's own ethnonationalist state model, consecrated by the so-called "nation state law" of 2019 making Judaism and Hebrew "official" elements of Israeli citizenship<sup>15</sup> have been building blocks for the rise of a global far right: from Orban's Hungary, to the revived National Front in France, to Bolsonaro's Brazil, to Trump's America, rabid support for Israel combined with nativist resentment against Arab and Muslim immigrants and 'others' have become bedrock strategies for whipping up nationalist and authoritarian rule.

This development should be understood as the return of classical Zionism as a right-wing global political force. As numerous scholars have shown, classical Zionism as articulated by movement founders Theodor Herzl prized the development of ethnonationalist states over and against racial (and socialist alternatives). Critics of Zionism in the early twentieth century included Socialist

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<sup>14</sup> "The Liberation of Palestine is an Alternative Path for Native Nations." The Red Nation. <https://therednation.org/the-liberation-of-palestine-represents-an-alternative-path-for-native-nations>

<sup>15</sup> Berger, Miriam. "Israel's hugely controversial 'nation-state' Law, explained." Vox. July 31, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/7/31/17623978/israel-jewish-nation-state-law-bill-explained-apartheid-netanyahu-democracy>

Jews and the Bolsheviks, for whom Zionism constituted a threat to international working-class solidarity and a secular Socialist movement.<sup>16</sup> In the current political conjuncture, Zionism plays a similarly reactionary role: support for Israel by far-right states has been used as a cudgel to attack anticapitalist and antiracist movements, including movements like Black Lives Matter. Conversely, support for Palestinian liberation struggle has become a de facto element of all major antiracist movements globally. This dialectic has made Palestine and its defense of national Arab liberation struggle a provocative wedge into the neoliberal alliances across the Middle East between Israel and Arab capitalist states like Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. Palestine, in other words, has become a keyword in protesting what Adam Hanieh calls neoliberalism's reactionary upending of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Arab nationalisms and liberation struggles.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it is not surprising that BDS has led to the most recent political resistance in Palestine, named by some the "Third Intifada." Examined carefully, the coordinates of this uprising bear the fingerprints of BDS's global antiracist strategy come home to roost in the form of a resuscitated global unity movement. Israel's most recent bombing campaign against Gaza was itself a reaction to the success of BDS: since 2005, the Knesset has spent millions of dollars combating BDS; passed laws making BDS support within Israel subject to civil lawsuit; used support for BDS to prevent intellectuals and writers from traveling to or from Israel. These repressive acts are marks of BDS's success as a tactic. Indeed, polls within the U.S. show radically decreasing support for Israel especially among those under 30; even Israel's most recent bombing of Gaza failed to elicit a support from the majority of Americans.<sup>18</sup>

As to the resistance itself, unique to its formation is a return of a Pan-Arab solidarity predicated on Palestinian liberation struggle. Israel's most recent bombing campaign was met by Palestinians with a display of unity and solidarity that has literally crossed boundaries and borders. Salwa Ibrahim has characterized this as follows:

What is happening in Jerusalem has consequences for Gaza; the uprising of Palestine '48 is joined with those of the West Bank; most importantly, the refugees at the borders are involved.

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<sup>16</sup> See Sumaya Awad and Annie Levin. "Roots of the Nakba: Zionist Settler Colonialism" in Sumaya Awad and Brian Bean, *Palestine: A Socialist Introduction*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020, pp. 11-36.

<sup>17</sup> See Adam Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Abunimah, Ali. "Poll: Israel Failed to Win Support of U.S. Voters During Gaza Massacre." *Electronic Intifada*. May 23, 2021. [https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/poll-israel-failed-win-support-us-voters-during-gaza-massacre?fbclid=IwAR19pA7PL3X5Z9fPd3NwLhMgdvSBcRXz6M32-Fn-ZGtpcH31XrtCX8I\\_DQ](https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/poll-israel-failed-win-support-us-voters-during-gaza-massacre?fbclid=IwAR19pA7PL3X5Z9fPd3NwLhMgdvSBcRXz6M32-Fn-ZGtpcH31XrtCX8I_DQ)

As these lines are being written, hundreds of Palestinians and Arabs in Jordan and Lebanon are attempting to cross – for the first time in three generations – the occupied border with Palestine, tearing aside the painful, colonial discontinuities of *Bilad al-Sham*. For some, an eternal dream, a near-fantasy, is coming to be realized – to walk on the land of Palestine, to return.<sup>19</sup>

The flood of refugees seeking return also instantiated the third principle of the BDS movement. At the same time, Israel's most recent bombing has galvanized the largest international support for Palestinians since 2014. Solidarity marches as large as 200,000 took place in London.<sup>20</sup>

What is also significant about these marches, to return to our main theme, is the centering of Zionism as a racist ideology. In the U.S. for example the largest Jewish civil rights group in the country, Jewish Voices for Peace, has hitched its own support for the BDS movement to a radical break with Zionism. JVP's own unequivocal critique of Zionism as racism as been fundamental to its growth as a coalition partner in antiracist U.S. struggles:

While it had many strains historically, the Zionism that took hold and stands today is a settler-colonial movement, establishing an apartheid state where Jews have more rights than others. Our own history teaches us how dangerous this can be.

Palestinian dispossession and occupation are by design. Zionism has meant profound trauma for generations, systematically separating Palestinians from their homes, land, and each other. Zionism, in practice, has resulted in massacres of Palestinian people, ancient villages and olive groves destroyed, families who live just a mile away from each other separated by checkpoints and walls, and children holding onto the keys of the homes from which their grandparents were forcibly exiled.<sup>21</sup>

The significance of Jewish Anti-Zionism as a constituent element of support for Palestinian liberation underscores the centrality of antiracism to the BDS movement. AntiZionism as an historical current had made manifest the relationships between white supremacy and ethnonationalism in the Zionist movement. BDS has helped make manifest this relationship by underscoring the white Christian Zionism has itself been both supportive of the Israeli state

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<sup>19</sup> Ibrahim, Salwa. "Reflections on the Third Intifada." *Spectre*. May 21, 2021.

[https://spectrejournal.com/reflections-on-the-third-intifada/?fbclid=IwAR3woDz6I5jivMgX2rCwWP7Ps\\_VepJhWatPcpLhtLeSyqaX9WdMcgoCHAHY](https://spectrejournal.com/reflections-on-the-third-intifada/?fbclid=IwAR3woDz6I5jivMgX2rCwWP7Ps_VepJhWatPcpLhtLeSyqaX9WdMcgoCHAHY)

<sup>20</sup> "Palestinian Solidarity Protests Held Around the World." Aljazeera. May 22, 2021.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/22/palestinian-solidarity-protests-marked-around-the-world>

<sup>21</sup> "Our Approach to Zionism." Jewish Voice for Peace. <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/zionism>

project while remaining both white supremacist and antisemitic. To take one example, when Donald Trump moved the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem he invited two prominent right-wing evangelical pastors to the ceremony to indicate the move's appeal to fundamentalists who see Jerusalem as the eventual site of Christian rapture and the conversion of the Jews to Christianity.<sup>22</sup> Christian Zionism has been a critical building block in both far right and white supremacist politics Trump's own administration recognized as strategically important. Rejecting Zionism then, especially among liberal Jews, has become a critical means of advancing BDS's valence as a global antiracist movement.

### **The future of the movement**

On 17 May 2017 the centrist American news magazine Newsweek reported that the state of Israel was having "its own black lives matter moment"<sup>23</sup> the article used the coinage to describe what it called the "intercommunal" conflict on the streets of Israel between Arabs and right-wing Jews over Israel's bombing of Gaza, in particular Palestinians as a "minority facing systemic racism and discriminatory acts." As this essay has noted, the Black Lives Matter movement itself has viewed the Palestinian liberation struggle through an antiracist solidarity lens. The adoption of that lens by a mainstream American news outlet to describe *Israeli* apartheid represents a signature moment in the success of the Palestinian liberation struggle as an antiracist movement. Indeed, the refraction of Palestinian antiracist street protests into the discursive arena signals a massive eruption of the status quo as it relates to Western comprehension of historical Palestinian oppression.

It is worth recalling in closing that the roots of today's global antiracist Palestine struggle lie in the global internationalism of an earlier era. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement against South Africa emerged in a decade (the 1960s) when international support for Palestine reached what might be called its first zenith among antiracist activists across the globe. In 1967, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the U.S. and the Black Panther Party simultaneously declared their support for Palestinian liberation, their critical rejection of Zionism as an imperial ideology, and their recognition of Palestinian and African-American subjugation as part of a global system of imperial domination.<sup>24</sup> Antiracist solidarity for SNCC and the BPP was grounded in analysis of Palestinians and Black Americans as oppressed national minorities

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<sup>22</sup> Korade, Matt, Kevin Bohn and Daniel Burke. "Controversial U.S. Pastors Take Part in Jerusalem Embassy Opening" CNN May 14, 2018  
<https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/13/politics/hagee-jeffress-us-embassy-jerusalem/index.html>

<sup>23</sup> "Israel Faces Its Own Black Lives Matter Moment." U.S. News and World Report. May 17, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2021-05-17/israel-is-having-its-own-black-lives-matter-moment>

<sup>24</sup> Thomas, Greg. "The Black Panther Party on Palestine." Hampton. May 19, 2021.  
<https://www.hamptonthink.org/read/the-black-panther-party-on-palestine>

“internally colonized” by the states of Israel and the U.S. respectively. Out of those solidarity declarations came the beginnings of the long historical arc that has led to this moment of “Black Lives Matter” as its own global trope for Palestinian liberation.

That originary moment now finds itself repeated in our time: the Palestinian BDS movement has helped to foster and regenerate a new global antiracism still seeking its final expression in the defeat of Israeli settler-colonialism, Occupation, and Apartheid. Whatever and whenever the endpoint, it is clear for antiracist movement activists there is no turning back.

### **About the author**

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