

# Anti-Israel Activity on Campus, 2011-2012

## An ADL Annual Review



*Student protesters at a pro-Israel event at Wayne State University on October 31, 2011*

Nafeh AbuNab

## INTRODUCTION

***"Boycott the apartheid state of Israel!"***

***"The Israel lobby...leverages its access to Congress and the executive branch to gain tacit American support for Israeli actions....and to stifle any debate about American support for Israel."***

***"'Never Again' includes Palestinians!"***

In the 2011-2012 academic year, these and other expressions of animus toward the state of Israel and its supporters were espoused on hundreds of university and college campuses across the United States.

Anti-Israel activity takes a multitude of forms on campus, ranging from opinion pieces in campus newspapers and speaking engagements to more well-planned weekend or weeklong conferences and long-term campaigns.

The 2011-2012 academic year began with a flurry of anti-Israel activity. Some students used the popularity of the Occupy Wall Street movement to spread their anti-Israel messages. Others expressed solidarity with the Palestinian Authority's unilateral declaration initiative at the UN General Assembly. And in October, hundreds of students participated in a national student conference at Columbia University to strategize about anti-Israel initiatives and form a national coalition.

Before long, however, many anti-Israel student groups turned their attention to some of the more traditional strategies and campaigns employed by the anti-Israel movement. These include vocal disruptions of pro-Israel events on campus; Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns; calls for a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and more.

In the absence of any significant Israeli military action in the Palestinian territories over the course of the year, which often leads to reactive demonstrations from student groups, some new anti-Israel initiatives developed on campus.

Two new strategies were particularly ubiquitous: concerted efforts to promote the allegation that Israel exploits its progressive LGBT values as a way to distract attention from the occupation, a term known

as "pinkwashing," as well as intense outreach by anti-Israel groups to Hispanic student groups under the pretext of alleged similarities between the hardships faced by immigrants and Palestinians. Both of these new trends represent an effort by the anti-Israel movement to couch their agenda in terms that will appeal to a broader base of support, in this case the LGBT and Hispanic communities on campus. These new initiatives increase the potential for more students to be exposed to hostile narratives about Israel.

In addition, a marked increase in anti-Israel programs receiving sponsorship from university institutions provides undeserved level of credibility to biased and divisive events. In the past year, university departments provided sponsorship to at least ten anti-Israel events and conferences, including a major "one-state" solution conference at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in March 2012.

While these trends are striking and significant, and anti-Israel groups on campus are increasingly organized (in the past year alone, at least ten new Students for Justice in Palestine chapters formed on college campuses), their programs and initiatives do not generally attract a large segment of the student population.

Only a small percentage of college and university campuses endure frequent anti-Israel programming throughout the school year. Furthermore, university administrations across the country have consistently demonstrated a commitment to rejecting more extreme manifestations of anti-Israel activity, including support for terrorism and anti-Semitism, as well as rebuffing student-led divestment campaigns against Israel.

And, perhaps most importantly, pro-Israel groups organize meaningful programs presenting a pro-Israel narrative and countering biased messages from anti-Israel groups on campus.

### **PINKWASHING**

A new campaign in anti-Israel activity seeks to paint Israel's promotion of its successes regarding gay rights as part of a stealth effort to distract attention from the ongoing conflict and Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

Many anti-Israel activists, both on and off campus, have begun accusing Israel of "pinkwashing," contending that Israel self-consciously and intentionally exploits its positive record on LGBT issues (including gays in the military, rights and relationship recognition for gay and lesbian people, pride parades etc.) in order to convince the international community that it is a vibrant protector of civil rights. All the while, it is secretly "oppressing Palestinians."

The chorus of claims that Israel is guilty of pinkwashing has grown significantly louder in the past year. While the term was first coined in 2010, an anti-Israel op-ed titled "Israel and Pinkwashing," which appeared in *The New York Times* in November 2011, popularized the allegation. The author of the article, a CUNY professor and activist named Sarah Schulman, argued that Israel's acceptance of gays into the military is an "incomplete indicator of human rights" and shouldn't "blind us" to the Palestinians' issues. She also warned that Israel is engaging in an expensive propaganda campaign to promote its LGBT record and that people should not be fooled by this.

Anti-Israel student groups widely distributed the article and began using their college campuses as a venue to disseminate pinkwashing theories and host events alleging that Israel engages in pinkwashing. Some went so far as to try to minimize Israel's laudable record on LGBT issues and claim that the 2009 shooting attack at the gay center in Tel Aviv and incidents of harassment of gay people demonstrate that Israel is not as gay-friendly as it purports to be.

- Columbia University:** Columbia hosted [two programs](#) in April that accused Israel of pinkwashing. The events were sponsored by Columbia Law School's Center for Gender and Sexuality Law, an example of a university department sponsoring a blatantly anti-Israel program. The first event, titled "The Ethics of Pinkwashing: LGBT Rights in Israel/Palestine," featured several Columbia professors who had recently traveled on an LGBT delegation to the West Bank. The delegation was led by Schulman. Not surprisingly, the panelists criticized Israel's alleged exploitation of LGBT people and described it as an insincere propaganda effort to divert attention from the occupation. The lead panelist, Katherine Franke, who is the director of the Center, further claimed that Israeli security organizations pressure gay Palestinians to collaborate with the Israeli government in exchange for asylum or promises of safety, which results in gay Palestinians being viewed with suspicion because they are assumed to be collaborators. Franke's co-panelist, Professor Kendall Thomas, claimed that the situation in the West Bank is reminiscent of segregation and Jim Crow laws in the U.S. Thomas also asserted that Israel's Jewish character and democracy are on a "collision course" and cannot be reconciled with each other.



- Tufts University:** The campus newspaper featured an op-ed in early April called "Not in Our Name," which argued that pinkwashing is a "new form of violence" and represents "the active commandeering of queer identity as a political weapon." The author of the article, an undergraduate student who works as an intern in the LGBT Center on campus, alleged that Israel's "theocratic policies" result in discrimination against LGBT people and that "painting Israeli culture as LGBT-affirming is "inaccurate, manipulative and morally repugnant. Homophobia and transphobia are found throughout both Palestine and Israel, and should not distract us from Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine and monstrous human rights violations." He concluded by urging students to engage in BDS campaigns against Israel.
- Temple University, Yale University and Boston University:** These three campuses each hosted [pinkwashing-related events during Israeli Apartheid Week](#) on campus. The event at **Yale University** featured a student speaker who is affiliated with the SJP chapter on campus. The student shared anecdotes about how gay Israelis outside of Tel Aviv have allegedly been persecuted and that Israel targets gay Palestinians to turn them into "informants" and "collaborators." She also claimed that Israel's "pinkwashing" is designed to "make American liberals support Israel...this is indefensible in my opinion." During the Q&A, one attendee remarked that while many governments have public relations campaigns, "not all governments are committing atrocious human rights abuses every day. Millions of abuses a day." The event at **Temple** went so far as to describe Israeli pinkwashing as evidence of a "Queer Propaganda War." The session was led by Sherry Wolf, a Jewish anti-Zionist who was part of efforts to protest an LGBT Community Center in New York's decision to refuse to host an Israeli Apartheid Week event in 2011. In response to the decision, Wolf was quoted in a local newspaper saying, "This should not be a place where people defend the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. It's an attempt to whitewash and pinkwash over the crimes people do not agree with... If this were Uganda, there would be no problem. But because we're talking about our Palestinian gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, it's an issue."
- Penn BDS Conference:** The BDS conference that took place at the **University of Pennsylvania** (which is further detailed in Section VI of this report) included a breakout session on pinkwashing



led by Wolf and a Palestinian-American student from **Harvard University** named Sa'ed Adel Atshan. The session was titled "Pinkwashing to Pinkwatching: Queer Organizing and BDS."

In addition to the above, pinkwashing-related events also took place at **Connecticut College**, **Northeastern University** and the **New School** in the second half of the school year.

"Pinkwashing" will likely remain a featured theme for the domestic anti-Israel movement in the upcoming academic year as well. A two-day conference called "Homonationalism and Pinkwashing" is scheduled to take place at the **City University of New York** in April 2013. The conference is being organized by Sarah Schulman and will be held at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at CUNY. It will focus on the "co-opting of some LGBT people by anti-immigrant and in particular anti-Muslim political forces" and how this has become a potent tool in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, according to CLAGS's Web site.

#### **U.S.-MEXICO BORDER ANALOGIES**

Anti-Israel student groups often try to rouse support for their agenda by attracting like-minded students and student groups. In the past year, [Students for Justice in Palestine \(SJP\)](#) chapters have tried to find common cause with Hispanic students by promoting the notion that the U.S.-Mexico border fence is analogous to the security fence Israel has built along the West Bank and that immigrants in the U.S. and Palestinians are similarly discriminated against.

Several SJP chapters recently formed a close alliance with MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan), a national Chicano student organization. MEChA now works closely with SJP chapters at campuses across the West Coast and the two organizations have even co-sponsored a variety of events seeking to highlight commonalities between Palestinians and the Mexican-American community. Aside from MEChA, however, the vast majority of Hispanic and Latino groups on campus do not collaborate with anti-Israel student groups.

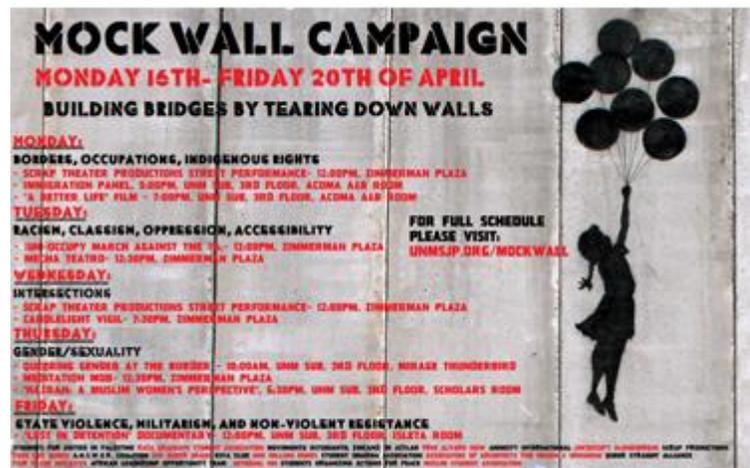
MEChA, which reportedly has more than 400 chapters across the country, [voted to endorse the Palestinian call for BDS](#) at its annual conference at Arizona State University. The SJP chapters at **Arizona State University** and the **University of Arizona** helped MEChA arrive at the decision and, according to a statement announcing the decision, led several workshops on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the conference. One of the sessions, called "Concrete Connections," compared the U.S.-Mexico border fence to the Israeli security fence and explored the potential for "cross-movement building" for Palestinians and Latin Americans. The statement about the conference concluded: "Together, these civil societies – from

Arizona to Palestine – are working towards one goal of fighting oppression and resisting everyday injustice."

The national MEChA conference had been preceded by a MEChA-Pacific Northwest regional conference a week earlier, at which BDS was endorsed as well. During the conference, the MEChA chapter at **Evergreen State College** invited anti-Israel students into the divestment campaign on campus (known as TESC Divest!) to participate in a teach-in connecting the BDS movement to the "indigenous struggles in the Americas." A statement issued by the group read, "We recognize that our peoples' historical and present struggles – against deportation, occupation, exploitation, and dehumanization – in Arizona, in the border, and in the United States – not only coincide, but are also connected to Palestinians' struggle against Israeli military occupation and settlement of Palestine."

Numerous events also took place on campus that were co-organized by SJP and MEChA, including:

- California State University, San Marcos:** SJP and MEChA built a wall during Israeli Apartheid Week to "denounce both Israel's Security Wall around the West Bank and all other walls (especially the United States-Mexico border fence)," according to an article in the campus newspaper. An SJP leader quoted in the article condemned U.S. taxpayer dollars



going to "almost rogue states." A Women's Studies professor named Cecili Chadwick, who gave a keynote speech during the program, further analogized the two causes: "The Israelis term it a 'security fence' or a 'security wall,' while Palestinians and much of the world term it an 'apartheid wall' or a 'separation wall,'" she said.

- University of New Mexico:** The SJP chapter, along with approximately 20 other student organizations, erected a "mock wall" on campus in April. Three of the 20 groups were MEChA, the Raza Graduate Student Association and the Asociacion Latina de Estudiantes.

The wall, which was erected on campus for a week, was intended to symbolize "a number of

barriers...including the Israel/Palestine separation wall, the US/Mexico border fence, and the walls that racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and oppression create," according to SJP's press release. In an interview with the campus newspaper describing the project, a member of SJP claimed that the mock wall was important because AIPAC has "created this sort of censorship against knowing what's actually going on on the ground in Palestine."

- **St. Cloud State University:** During Israeli Apartheid Week, MEChA and a group called Students for a Free Palestine hosted a panel discussion called "Criminalizing Borders and Cashing In." An event description on St. Cloud's Web site promoted the event as an opportunity to learn how "Israel and the U.S. are using walls to oppress and profit in Mexico and Palestine."

### DISRUPTIONS ON CAMPUS

Anti-Israel groups use a variety of disruptive tactics to express opposition to programs sponsored by Israel advocacy student groups and/or promote anti-Israel agendas on campus.

While efforts to express opposition are generally part of a healthy campus environment fostering a free exchange of ideas, there are some [disruptive tactics](#) that have gained particular prominence within anti-Israel circles that are anathema to those ideals.



These disruptions vary in terms of extremes and can range from merely holding demonstrations outside the event to vocally interrupting the speaker and preventing him or her from speaking. The message and intent, however, is generally the same: to signify that the pro-Israel voice is "not welcome" on campus.

- **University of Chicago:** The SJP chapter on campus organized a protest outside a speaking appearance by Israeli Ambassador Michel Oren on campus in April. The students held signs alleging that hosting Oren "stands against the interests & principles of America and the 'pursuit of rigorous inquiry' and critical thought at this university." They also engaged in loud chanting designed, by their own admission, to disrupt the event, and staged a



"murder scene" that included a map of Israel chalked onto the sidewalk with spots of fake blood to mimic a crime scene.

- **Georgia State University:** The Progressive Student Alliance on campus distributed a flier calling for disruptions of "Israel Fest" month, which was scheduled to take place in April. The flier included what appeared to be a veiled warning of violent protest, stating that the group's "present starting point is not issuing any physical threat of violence against participants or organizers if the festival does take place."
- **University of California, Davis:** Members of the SJP group on campus staged a walkout during a presentation by former soldiers who served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). One student defiantly stood up and shouted obscenities at the speakers, claiming that Israel has "turned the land of Palestine into a land of prostitutes and rapists and child molesters," and harassed the speaker, asking him, "How many women have you raped? How many children have you raped? You are a child molester." During his outburst, the heckler defended his actions as a free speech right, yet noted, "My only purpose today is that this event is shut down." His comment is further evidence that these disruptive tactics seek to exploit freedom of speech in order to curtail the free speech rights of others. [The university administration responded strongly to this incident, issuing a statement asserting that a "serious exchange of ideas and debate is prevented when individuals shout down a speaker and dialogue cannot take place." The statement further described the incident as "deeply disturbing and inconsistent" with the goals of the university's community.]
- **Northwestern University:** After the SJP chapter on campus staged a walkout of an appearance by Gil Hoffman, a former IDF soldier and journalist, in November, the students wrote a letter to the editor of the campus newspaper expressing their view that "affording [Hoffman] a platform to speak was a disservice to the university." The letter also asserted that the walkout was intended to "protest the disrespect to NU created by hosting a narrow-minded speaker who claims to be unbiased and clearly violates that ideal."
- **Kent State University:** A history professor named Julio Pino loudly disrupted an event featuring Ishmail Khaldi, a Bedouin diplomat and former Israeli Consul General, shouting "Death to Israel" during the Q&A session. Pino had been the first to ask a question at the event, which took place on October 25, and began shouting his hateful message while Khaldi tried to answer his question about the numbers of Palestinian civilians who have been killed by Israel.

Disruptions of pro-Israel events also took place at the **University of California, Los Angeles; Michigan State University, Wayne State University, the University of Chicago and Tufts University.**

There have also been several instances of pro-Israel fliers and signs being defaced on campus in what amounts to a further attempt to suppress or counter pro-Israel speech through the use of disruptive (and possibly illicit) tactics.

- **University of California, Riverside:** In March, the word "terrorists" was scrawled on an Israeli flag outside the Hillel building on campus. In this case, the SJP chapter on campus condemned the incident. A statement by the university was explicit in excoriating the perpetrators, stating, "The defacement of any nation's flag with pejorative characterizations of its people is an insult to every nation and its people. Such behavior diminishes us all, and we have zero tolerance for it." These statements go a long way in expressing absolute rejection of the views of the extreme.
- **University of Florida:** A mural for "Israel Month" was vandalized with graffiti that read "Allahu Akbar," "Murders" and "A Plauge [sic] on Both Your Houses."

Some SJP chapters have also resorted to disruptive measures to propagandize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the posting of mock "eviction notices" outside students' dorm rooms in an attempt to simulate the notices Palestinians sometimes receive if their homes were built illegally. The SJP chapter at **Florida Atlantic University** [did just that](#) in March, with fliers that seemed very realistic and featured the stamp of the Housing and Residential Life Department at FAU.

These fliers were contrary to the university's housing code but nevertheless were approved by the housing department and an employee of the department also escorted a representative from SJP to hang the fliers in various dorm buildings. The Housing Department's imprimatur on various stages of the process upset Jewish and pro-Israel students on campus, who interpreted it as an indication that the university department sanctioned the anti-Israel messages featured on the flier. [The incident was subsequently investigated by the university and the university vowed to take "corrective steps" to repair the posting approval process.]



## CALLS FOR A ONE-STATE SOLUTION

Many of the leading anti-Israel ideologues in the United States support a one-state solution to the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which would result in the dismantling of the state of Israel as a Jewish state to be replaced with a single state called "Palestine."

In the past decade, calls for a one-state solution have multiplied and grown more shrill. The late Edward Said, a Palestinian-American professor and writer, first formalized the contemporary call in an essay in 1999 in which he expressed that the only remaining option is "sharing the land that has thrust us together, sharing it in a truly democratic way with equal rights for all citizens." Since then, a variety of anti-Israel academics and activists have similarly expressed support for a one-state solution, including Ilan Pappé, Jeff Halper, Omar Barghouti and [Ali Abunimah](#), who is the author of a book called *One State: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*.

This year, however, the traction for a one-state solution seems to have intensified, specifically because of a large [conference](#) that took place at **Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government**. The conference, which was held in early March, was designed to "explore the possible contours of a one-state solution." Reportedly, only one of the twenty scheduled speakers, [Stephen Walt](#) (the co-author of *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* and a professor at the Kennedy School), professed support for a two-state solution.



Ali Abunimah and Ilan Pappé were invited to give the keynote addresses at the conference and both used the platform to condemn and demonize Israel. Pappé described Gaza and the West Bank as the "biggest open-air prisons in human history." Abunimah criticized the Israeli government as predicated on "colonial and racial power."

What is further notable about this conference is the sponsorship it received from two university departments, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and the Office of the Provost.

While the Harvard conference was the most seminal pro-one-state program on campus this year, numerous other events also expressed support for the radical solution, particularly during weeklong

programs like Israeli Apartheid Week and various Palestine Awareness Weeks.

- **Ohio University:** The SJP chapter on campus hosted a speaking appearance by Ali Abunimah called "One State? Ali Abunimah on a Solution to the Israel-Palestine Conflict." The event, which took place in May, was also co-sponsored by the Center for International Studies, a university department.
- **University of California, Los Angeles:** A lecture titled "Beyond Two States" by Saree Makdisi, an English professor at the university, took place during Palestine Awareness Week on campus. Makdisi alleged that the two-state solution is "dead" and that he supports a one-state solution, which he described as a "single democratic and secular state that treats all its citizens equally." He further described the two-state solution as a "trap for Palestinians." The event was sponsored by SJP at UCLA and took place in March during Israeli Apartheid Week on campus.
- **Brandeis University:** The Israeli Apartheid Week program on campus featured a keynote speech by Ali Abunimah titled, "Who is Afraid of the One-State Solution?" The event, which took place in late February, was sponsored by the campus chapters of SJP and [Jewish Voice for Peace \(JVP\)](#), the largest Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the United States.



### BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT and SANCTIONS CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns designed to financially punish and isolate Israel, known as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), represent the most well-organized, often-strategized aspect of the domestic anti-Israel movement. Many anti-Israel groups, both on and off campus, focus much of their efforts on boycotting Israeli products, performance artists and universities, and advocating for corporations, universities and other institutions to divest from their holdings in Israel and/or multi-national companies that engage in business in the Israeli settlements.

The BDS campaign against Israel, which is modeled off of similar efforts in the 1980s against the apartheid regime in South Africa, is predicated on the allegation that Israel is an "apartheid state" and that punitive efforts will help force Israel to change its policies.

For the most part, anti-Israel groups on campus that support BDS (which are the vast majority) have limited their efforts to calling for divestment from multi-national companies that "profit from the

occupation." To this day, no university administration has upheld a divestment resolution on campus.

In the 2011-12 academic year, several universities encountered divestment resolutions on campus and many anti-Israel events focused on BDS as the most critical way to "combat" Israeli policy.

- **University of Pennsylvania:** The BDS-related event that had by far the most resonance in the campus community was a large BDS conference that took place at the University of Pennsylvania in February 2012. The conference, which was organized by a student group called Penn BDS, attracted more than 50 leading anti-Israel activists as speakers and several hundred participants.



Some of the leaders of the anti-Israel movement were among the group of speakers, including Ali Abunimah; Omar Barghouti, the co-founder of PACBI; and Rebecca Vilkomerson, the director of JVP. These and other speakers used their platforms to advocate extreme positions on the conflict. Omar Barghouti, for example, described Israel as a "racist oppressor" and an "apartheid state" and claimed that Israel is governed by an "extremist ideology." He also condemned the role of "Israel's lobby groups" in the U.S., a thinly veiled reference to the conspiratorial theory that pro-Israel lobby groups wield undue influence over U.S. policy. Another speaker, an English professor at Penn named Amy Kaplan, advised participants how to integrate BDS into the classroom, saying "you take a thematic course and you bring in themes from this issue [BDS], and literature is really a great way to teach students about what's going on."

- **Arizona State University:** A resolution calling for divestment from a variety of corporations that are "complicit in human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian Territories and Sudan" was initially passed by the Student Senate in June. It [turned out](#) that the SJP group on campus, a representative of which was a member of the Student Senate, had hastily introduced the resolution on the last day of classes and had not left any time for a debate or discussion of the resolution. The president of the Student Senate did not sign it and the incoming president affirmed that he will not sign it either, which effectively killed the resolution. A high-level university administrator also directly rejected BDS in an article in a local newspaper, saying "Regardless of this or any other student senate bill, ASU President Michael M. Crow has been and remains on record opposing any boycott or (divestment from) Israel."

- **University of Massachusetts, Boston:** The student government passed a bill in April demanding that the university's investment fund divest from Boeing because it manufactures military aircraft that were used by the Israel Defense Forces in the 2008-9 Gaza War. The resolution also called for the "establishment of a Responsible Investment Committee to monitor future investments" and ensure that they are socially responsible. It does not seem like the university administration ever formally responded to this resolution. Moreover, Boeing is still listed on the university's Web site as a "Corporate Donor" so it does not appear that the university has cut ties with the company.
- **University of California, San Diego:** In February, the SJP chapter on campus introduced a resolution calling for "Corporate Accountability through Divestment from Corporations Profiting From Violent Conflict." Although there are violent conflicts taking place in many regions around the world, the resolution focused solely on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and two companies that allegedly help the Israel Defense Forces maintain the occupation, General Electric and Northrop Grumman. The resolution was defeated by the student government at UCSD.
- **New York University:** The SJP chapter began a campaign urging the university to divest from TIAA-CREF, a retirement fund used by NYU, in November. TIAA-CREF invests in several companies that work with Israel. Students have called on university faculty and "members of the NYU community" to sign a letter to the CEO of TIAA-CREF calling for the removal of holdings in these companies. So far, the campaign has not gone further than the "signature-gathering" phase.

While divestment resolutions are the most prevalent form of BDS activity on campus, there are also campus groups that lobbied for different forms of BDS in the last academic year:

- **Cornell University:** The SJP chapter engaged in an effort to pressure its university to cancel a commitment to partner with Technion-Israel Institute of Technology on a large campus that will be opened in New York City. The group sponsored a petition against the partnership, published letters to the editor in the campus newspaper advocating for a boycott, and organized events to educate other students about the issue.
- **Evergreen State University:** A student-run café voted to boycott Israeli products in June. This follows a record of anti-Israel activity at Evergreen, including a divestment resolution that was passed by the student body in June 2010 but ultimately rejected by the university administration.



- **DePaul University:** After the SJP chapter pressured the university for more than a year to remove Sabra brand hummus from campus, the university made a decision not to de-shelve Sabra but to offer an alternative brand of hummus as well.

### ANTI-ISRAEL MEETS ANTI-SEMITISM

Perspectives vary on where to draw the line between anti-Israel sentiments and anti-Semitism. Indeed, it is perhaps one of the most contentious debates in the pro-Israel community.

ADL takes an extremely rational approach to distinguishing between rhetoric that is critical of Israel *versus* rhetoric that is more extreme or vitriolic and can be classified as "anti-Israel," *versus* anti-Israel rhetoric that devolves into anti-Semitism. Indeed, many expressions of anti-Israel sentiment, while extreme and repulsive to members of the Jewish and pro-Israel community, do not, in and of themselves, necessarily constitute anti-Semitic speech. However, even those that should not be deemed anti-Semitic can help create a climate where anti-Semitism is more acceptable.

There are episodes of anti-Semitism, however, that are clear-cut and can only be described as such. In the past academic year, three anti-Semites, [Louis Farrakhan](#), [Gilad Atzmon](#) and [Amir Abdul Malik Ali](#), were invited to speak on college campuses across the U.S. These appearances were marked by vile anti-Semitism, including accusations that Jews were responsible for the financial collapse, that Jewish students should be "faulted" if Israel attacks Iran over its nuclear program and that the historical veracity of the Holocaust ought to be revisited.

- **Louis Farrakhan**, the racist and anti-Semitic leader of the [Nation of Islam](#), used an invitation to speak at the **University of California, Berkeley**, in March as an opportunity to spout vitriol about Israel and the Jewish people. [During his speech](#), which took place during the Afrikan Black Coalition Conference on campus, Farrakhan warned students not to engage in dialogue with Jewish students before reading *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, an anti-Semitic book that claims that slavery was largely initiated by Jews. Farrakhan also warned that he would "fault" Jewish students if Israel decided to attack Iran and urged the U.S. not to allow Israel to "[pull] America into another war...and spend the lifeblood of Americans for Israeli aggression."

- **Gilad Atzmon**, a London-based jazz musician who describes himself as an "ex-Israeli" and "ex-Jew" and whose rants about "Jewish supremacy" and control are virtually unparalleled, spoke at [several universities in March](#). During a tour to promote his new book, *The Wandering Who*, Atzmon spoke at the **University of La Verne** in California; **the University of Wisconsin, Madison**; **Northeastern Illinois University**; and the **University of Colorado, Boulder**. Atzmon's appearance at Boulder, titled "A Musical Conversation about Israel," was a featured part of the campus's Israel Apartheid Week program, which was sponsored by a group called "Students 4 Peace and Justice" and CU-Divest, a Boulder-based group that has unsuccessfully lobbied the University of Colorado to divest from holdings in companies that work with Israel.



At Northeastern, Atzmon repeatedly used Holocaust-related language to demonize Israel. He described a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon as a "concentration camp" and alleged that the 1982 Lebanon War, during which Atzmon was a member of the Israel Defense Forces, made him realize that "they are the Jews and I am the Nazi." At the same time, Atzmon called for the history of the Holocaust to be "open...for historical research." Atzmon also argued that the "evils" of Israel and Zionism are a direct result of Jewish ideology which is "extremist, supremacist, chauvinist [and] racist" and described Palestinians as "the only real Jews." Never one to leave out any anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, Atzmon also claimed that the U.S. government is thoroughly controlled by pro-Israel lobby groups: "They have bought your entire political system...100% of government is controlled by the Zionist lobby."

Two days later, Atzmon gave a similar address at the **University of Wisconsin, Madison**, where he described himself as a "proud self-hating Jew" and claimed that the right to question the veracity of the Holocaust is sacred, saying "To stop us from looking into the Shoah is, for me, more devastating than the Shoah." He repeatedly described groups that lobby on behalf of Israel as a "Jewish lobby, it's not an Israeli lobby...The Jewish lobby is a lobby of some, run by some very rich American Jews." He also professed his wish for the Iranians to develop a nuclear bomb and argued that it would serve as "deterrence" in the region.

It is notable that Atzmon reportedly drew very small audiences at most of these events, a hopeful indication that the vast majority of students on these campuses had no interest in listening to hateful messages about Jews and Israel.

- **Amir Abdul Malik Ali**, an anti-Semitic imam based in the Bay Area who has previously described Israelis as the "new Nazis" and expressed support for terrorist groups that target Israeli civilians, spoke at the **University of California, Irvine's** Palestine Liberation Week in May. The weeklong program was sponsored by the [Muslim Student Union](#) on campus, a group that has regularly invited anti-Semites like Malik Ali to campus. During his speech, Malik Ali ranted about Zionism's responsibility for the financial collapse ("The current financial crisis and collapse, the architects of it, are Zionists") and argued that Zionism represents "slavery, injustice and racism and inequality." He also alleged that Zionism corrupts "Jews who believe in it." Malik Ali's speeches often veer into conspiracy theory and this one was no exception: at one point, he predicted that President Obama will be reelected only because the "next theater of [military] operations is Africa...and they cannot have a white man in the White House bombing Black Africa." In response to a question from an audience member about Israel being the national homeland for the Jewish people, Malik Ali said that Israel is not the Jews' homeland and that "y'all came from Europe, you gotta go back."

One of the "red lines" when it comes to gauging anti-Semitism is the use of Holocaust-related terms and rhetoric to demonize Israel and its supporters. In addition to the above instances, an example of this can be found at **Portland State University** where a flier announcing a lecture called "Stand With Israel," which was to be held in May, was graffitied with a swastika and the words "Never Again includes Palestinians!" Similarly, the image at right shows a mock wall at the University of California, Los Angeles that compared Gaza to the Warsaw Ghetto. The perverse use of Holocaust-era symbols and language to vilify Israel is an expression of anti-Semitism and serves to diminish the memory of the Holocaust.



Finally, the use of imagery designed to conjure up age-old "blood libel" accusations against Jews is also anti-Semitic and has no place in discourse surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In June, the SJP

chapter at the **University of California, Riverside** had an image on its Facebook page that was very extreme in terms of its message. The graphic makes the claim that U.S. aid to Israel is directly used to kill Palestinians, one of whom is seen drowning in a vial of blood. The text says that "the ongoing extermination of Palestinian children" is dependent on American taxpayer dollars, a gross demonization of Israel and the realities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

