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Anti-Israel Bias Infiltrates the Classroom

By [Tammi Rossman-Benjamin and Leila Beckwith](#)

At the heart of the recent controversy over Professor [Steven Salaita](#), whose job offer at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign was rescinded after dozens of his virulently anti-Zionist tweets came to light, is whether a professor's speech outside of the university should impact his or her university employment.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has argued that basing Salaita's employment decision on his extramural tweets violates his right as a citizen of constitutionally protected freedom of speech. The assumption underlying the AAUP's argument is that what a faculty member does or says outside the university is independent of what he does or says in carrying out his academic responsibilities inside the university. In other words, according to AAUP there is no good reason to believe that Salaita would bring the anti-Zionist sentiments expressed in his extramural tweets into the university.

But what if there is good reason to believe that Salaita will bring his anti-Zionist sentiments onto the campus, and even try to disseminate them among students and faculty?

Indeed, Salaita has done just that. His expression of opposition to Zionism and the existence of a Jewish state goes well beyond his "extramural" tweets. Salaita has promoted for academic colleagues what he describes as "a primer for practicing BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel)" on university campuses in a recent article titled "[How to Practice BDS in Academe](#)." His suggestions include organizing pro-BDS university events, supporting student activists such as Students for Justice in Palestine, proposing a boycott resolution in the faculty senate, writing pro-BDS articles for the university publication, and opposing the university's study abroad program to Israel.

Salaita is by no means the only professor to bring his campaigns to destroy the Jewish state onto campus and to use his academic position and his university's resources to promote it. Here are just a few examples of faculty across the country who have imported their virulent hatred of Israel onto their campuses and into their classrooms:

- In January, David Lloyd, a Professor of English at University of California Riverside and a founder of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI), organized on his campus a lecture by Omar Barghouti, the founder and most vocal advocate of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The talk was funded and sponsored by the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences along with the Department of Ethnic Studies, a third of whose faculty have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel, including the department chair. Students in eight courses were required to attend and listen to Barghouti's talk, which

consisted of anti-Israel propaganda laced with classic antisemitic tropes used to promote the academic boycott of Israel.

- Lisa Duggan is a professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University. She is also the President of the American Studies Association and was an organizer and vocal advocate of the ASA's resolution to boycott Israeli universities and scholars. A few months after the ASA's membership approved the boycott resolution, Duggan helped to organize the annual conference of NYU's American Studies Program, entitled "Circuits of Influence: U.S., Israel." The conference, which was co-sponsored by three other NYU departments, included talks by 21 BDS-supporting academics and activists focusing on "using boycotts as a tactic and substantive challenge to systems of injustice" that include Israel's "racialization, empire, and settler colonialism". The conference also featured workshops on how to boycott Israel, run by representatives of virulently anti-Zionist organizations such as Adalah-NY, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Jewish Voice for Peace.
- David Klein is a mathematics Professor at California State University Northridge and a founder of USACBI. For more than 4 years Klein has been using his university's server to promote his web page entitled "Boycott Israel Resource Page," calling for the economic, academic, and cultural boycott of Israel. His web pages contain a litany of false and inflammatory statements and photographs intended to incite hatred and promote political activism against the Jewish state, particularly boycott. He also organized a petition to boycott the Israel Abroad program on CSU campuses in solidarity with the academic boycott of Israel.
- Rabab Abdulhadi is a professor of ethnic studies at San Francisco State University and a founder of USACBI. Earlier this year she received \$7,000 from her university to organize and lead a delegation of boycott activists to the Middle East, where the group met with PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled and other Hamas-affiliated activists to build solidarity for promoting the academic boycott of Israel. Abdulhadi is also the faculty advisor of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) at SFSU. As a featured speaker at student-organized events often sponsored by her ethnic studies department, Abdulhadi has advocated overthrowing the "settler colonial" occupation of Palestine by any means, including by armed violence and BDS. She has also posted messages on the GUPS Facebook page promoting BDS. In her role as GUPS faculty advisor, Abdulhadi helped the GUPS students organize an event in November 2013 that featured an image of PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled holding a rifle with the caption "resistance is not terrorism," and another with the words "My Heroes Have Always Killed Colonizers." Abdulhadi was also the personal mentor of former GUPS president Mohammad G. Hammad, who was expelled from SFSU in January 2014 for numerous violent social media postings glorifying terrorism and threatening to kill Israelis and their supporters.

Our universities are out of control, and the impact on students is enormous. Professors who bring their one-sided anti-Israel perspectives onto the campus and into the classroom limit the access of students to vital information about complex topics of global importance and violate their fundamental right to be educated and not indoctrinated. Even more troubling, professors who use their university positions and university resources to promote campaigns to harm or dismantle the Jewish state, and who encourage students to do the same, contribute to the creation of a hostile and threatening environment for many Jewish students, who report

feeling emotionally and intellectually harassed and intimidated by their professors and isolated from their peers.

Faculty who not only express their hatred of the Jewish state as private citizens, but bring their anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic expression onto the campus and into their classrooms, have stretched the public trust in our nation's universities to the breaking point. University stakeholders -- students, parents, alumni, donors, and taxpayers -- should be outraged.

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