



Critical Ethnic Studies, Anti-Zionism and BDS

FACT SHEET

Ethnic Studies Discipline and BDS:

- More than one-third of all U.S. faculty who support an academic boycott of Israel have a primary or secondary affiliation in a university Ethnic Studies program.¹
- Ethnic Studies departments with one or more academic BDS-supporting faculty members were 10 times more likely to sponsor events with BDS-supporting speakers than departments with no faculty boycotters.²
- More U.S. departments of Ethnic Studies were headed by academic BDS-supporters than any other discipline.³
- The University of Hawai'i Ethnic Studies Department passed a resolution supporting academic BDS in December 2013.⁴
- Recent studies suggest that many academic BDS-supporting faculty, such as those involved with Ethnic Studies mentioned above, are bringing their extramural support for BDS and their anti-Zionist politics into their conference halls and classrooms: departments with faculty who support BDS are five to twelve times more likely to sponsor events with one-sided, anti-Zionist content and BDS promotion,⁵ and BDS-supporting faculty are four times more likely to include readings by anti-Zionist, BDS-supporting authors in the syllabi of Israel-related courses they teach.⁶

¹ "The Impact of Academic Boycotters of Israel on U.S. Campuses" (October 2017): <https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Faculty-Report.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2319>

⁵ <https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Faculty-Report.pdf>

⁶ <https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Syllabus-Study-Report.pdf>

Critical Ethnic Studies Association (CESA):

- The Critical Ethnic Studies Association (CESA) membership passed a “Resolution on Academic Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions” in July 2014.⁷
- **All 13 members** of the founding board⁸ of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association (2011 - 2012) signed petitions endorsing BDS - 12 endorsed academic BDS petitions, with one a USACBI founder and another on the USACBI advisory board; 1 signed a recent UC racial justice petition that calls for divestment from Israel.
- Professional organizations of three of the four “foundational groups” comprising Critical Ethnic Studies have passed resolutions in support of an academic boycott of Israel⁹:
 - a. Association for Asian American Studies – December, 2013
 - b. National Association of Chicano and Chicana Studies – April, 2015
 - c. Native American and Indigenous Studies Association – December, 2013
- Eleven of the 14 founders of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel are associated with Critical Ethnic Studies.¹⁰
- The four past conferences of the CESA (2011, 2013, 2015)¹¹ and 2018¹² each had several sessions bashing Israel, with a majority of their presenters being academic BDS promoters, and some presentations promoting BDS (in 2013, a whole workshop at the conference was entitled, “Critical Ethnic Studies Association Workshop: Intro to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement”)¹³. See Appendix for description of the 2011 conference.

⁷ <https://criticalethnicstudies.org/content/bds>

⁸ <https://www.criticalethnicstudies.org/governance-structure>

⁹ <https://amchainitiative.org/academic-associations-endorsing-academic-boycott-of-israel/>

¹⁰ <http://web.archive.org/web/20090202085703/https://usacbi.wordpress.com/about-us/>

¹¹ <https://www.criticalethnicstudies.org/past-conference-materials>

¹² <https://www.criticalethnicstudies.org/conference-information>

¹³ https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/1LV2oaHyMpdxr1kfWFWVAHP8hW1YDY4-p_Rjv_4x9WVw/pub?single=true&gid=0&output=html

Appendix

“Critical Ethnic Studies & the Future of Genocide” Opening Conference of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association, March 2011

- Conference panels and talks related to Israel/Palestine:
 - “Israeli Occupation as Racist Nation Building” – two of the four presenters have expressed public support for academic BDS and one of them (Magid Shihade) is a founding member of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)
 - “Colonizing Palestine?: The Spatial and Discursive Construction of Identity and Difference Under Israeli Military Occupation” – three of the four presenters are academic boycotters, with one (Steven Salaita) a member of the USACBI organizing collective.
 - “Palestinian Liberation and the Conceptual Limits/Problematics of Ethnic Studies” – all five of the presenters are academic boycotters, with one (Nada Elia) a member of the USACBI organizing collective.
 - “Turtle Island and Palestine: Forging Alliances Against Settler Colonialism” - all four of the presenters are academic boycotters, with one (Nada Elia) a member of the USACBI organizing collective.

- “Forum on Social Movements and Activism” – All six of the speakers are academic boycotters, with one (David Lloyd) a USACBI founding member.

- Individual anti-Israel presentations by BDS supporters in panels not specifically about Israel or Palestine:
 - “Two Stories in One and the Perils of Group Belonging in Palestine and Israel” in a panel entitled “Who/What We Are: Thoughts on Mobility, Settlement, Belonging, and Coloniality”
 - “What’s Queer About Palestine Solidarity?: Homonationalism, Apartheid, and Transnational Queer Activism, in a panel entitled “Queer Ethnic Studies Across Texts and Violences”
 - “June Jordan’s Palestine” in a panel entitled “Present/Future Relations: Alternative Poetics of Race, War, and Internationalism in the Middle East and South Asia”
 - “(Sub)Versing Hegemony: The Poetry of Palestinian Women as Projects of Solidarity and Liberation,” in a panel entitled: “Liberation Theory, Radical Thought, and Political Freedom”
 - “Suppression of Palestine Solidarity by the Academic Industrial Complex and the Nation State,” in a panel entitled: “Deterritorializing Knowledge in Canadian Studies Today”