

Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is David Mapes-Frances, and I am a student at Oberlin College and Conservatory. Just two weeks ago, fliers with antisemitic stereotypes and links to an alt-right website were found posted on buildings on my campus. Antisemitism is absolutely rising on college campuses and elsewhere. I am afraid and furious at those who would deny human rights to me or to anyone, and everyday I work to end racism and antisemitism. I understand that criticism of Israel does not target me, harm me, or make me feel unsafe as antisemitic acts do. It is simply an effort to make Israel comply with international law and respect human rights. There exists a repeated false equivalence; the free speech of literal Nazis and Nazi sympathizers is often vigorously defended, while we are called antisemitic just for criticizing the Israeli government and working to change its policies. Whenever anybody who supports BDS does anything antisemitic, we absolutely must call it out as we do with anyone else. We also must be able to keep any real antisemitism from influencing or representing the entire movement for justice in Israel-Palestine.

The text of HCR 10 says that the goal of the BDS movement is objectively the destruction of Israel, which is inaccurate. The BDS movement takes no stance on either a one or two state solution, although some of its supporters support a one state solution with full equal rights and protection for Jews and Palestinians. Many *support* BDS because they love Israel and hate to see it breaking international law and oppressing Palestinians. The text of the resolution says that the BDS movement's slogan is "Palestine forever, Israel Never Ever" which is completely false to my knowledge; again, the BDS campaign takes no such stance. We don't deny our connection with the land of Israel, but we reject Israel's policies of displacement and occupation.

The standard anti-BDS argument says that although the BDS movement claims to be working entirely for peace and against all forms of discrimination, because many supporters of BDS want Palestine to be free "from the river to the sea", it is akin to supporting the ethnic cleansing of Jews from the region. It should be obvious that advocating for a one state solution with full rights for Jews and Palestinians is not advocating for ethnic cleansing, nor is referring to the region as Palestine. However, again, the BDS movement does not even have the goal of a one state solution.

The anti-boycott narrative relies on an equivalence between the antisemitism of white nationalists (many of which, such as Richard Spencer and Greg Johnson, strongly support Israel as a validation and application of ethnonationalism) and legitimate criticism coming from Palestinians and their allies. I am unsurprised that Christian organizations are now educating us on antisemitism. Pro-Palestine activism is deemed the "new antisemitism", completely ignoring the actions of people like Steve Bannon or CUFI founder John Hagee, who believes the antichrist will be half-Jewish and who famously preached: "Those who came founded Israel. Those who did not went through the hell of the Holocaust. Then God sent a hunter. A hunter is someone who comes with a gun and he forces you. Hitler was a hunter."

Another part of anti-BDS rhetoric asks why it singles out the only Jewish state for criticism. My own personal connection to this issue should not be doubted; I observe violence being committed in my name, so I work to end it. Palestinians' connection to the occupation is incredibly clear; they have witnessed, many first-hand, the demolition of homes, the suppression of dissent, racial and religious discrimination, excessively violent military siege, incarceration without trial, and restriction of movement. Jews and Palestinians are the overwhelming majority of people involved with this activism. Had Japanese people decided to establish an ethnostate on inhabited land which violated human rights law as often as Israel does, we would absolutely be advocating for BDS, and it would in no way be *inherently* racist. While I absolutely support sanctions on Saudi Arabia for example, due to their fueling of the terrorism and violence in Yemen, it's important to note that we do not give the Saudi government 3.1 billion dollars in military aid per year. I strongly encourage you to view the FAQ and other sections of bdsmovement.net if you want more information.

I personally am against any state being defined by an ethnicity or religion; we have seen how it always contributes to the oppression of ethnic and religious minorities, from slavery to the Trail of Tears to Liberia to South Africa to the current persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and yes, also to Israel-Palestine. However, I know that even Hamas is open to negotiating a two-state solution if it ends the occupation and the violence. The long discussions about the solutions to the conflict are scarcely even necessarily relevant to this resolution, which simply represents the use of the state to discourage a peaceful boycott against corporate entities and institutions invested in the occupation.

This issue is so frustrating for me because I am so affected by antisemitism, and it hurts that this rhetoric equates my work in my family's interpretation of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world, or the pursuit of justice) with the work of people who would want me deported or dead. Characterizing BDS, a well-established type of nonviolent protest, as inherently antisemitic provides neither justice nor accountability, and brings us further from achieving our goals of human rights, peace, and prosperity for Jews and Palestinians. Thank you.