

LEGITIMIZING STRUGGLE: THE RHETORIC OF NONVIOLENCE AND THE
PALESTINIAN AND INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS
MOVEMENT

by

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Legitimizing Struggle: The Rhetoric of Nonviolence and the Palestinian and International

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement

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ABSTRACT:

In this thesis, I argue that activists in the Palestinian and international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement use three rhetorical strategies to claim moral legitimacy for the movement and to mobilize a non-Palestinian, specifically English-speaking, western audience, to support the movement by enacting boycotts and divestments and encouraging their governments to enforce sanctions against Israel. They are: 1) That the history of BDS is rooted within a local history of grassroots Palestinian nonviolent resistance and is a reflection of the will of the Palestinian people; 2) That BDS is part of a genealogy of movements worldwide which have successfully used similar nonviolent tactics, especially boycott, to achieve their goals. In particular, BDS activists align BDS with the South African anti-apartheid movement, the US civil rights movement, and the Indian national liberation movement; 3) That BDS is legitimized and justified in its demand for the use of the nonviolent tactics of boycott, divestment, and sanctions because states and state organizations have failed to respond to Israel's consistent violation of international law and human rights, both for Palestinians as well as for all of humanity.

While variable in interpretation and presentation by BDS activists, these arguments serve as the core narratives that BDS activists tell in order to legitimize the BDS movement as a just and moral response to what BDS activists see as Israel's unjust treatment of Palestinians, and to suggest that the movement's nonviolent tactics are effective methods for achieving Palestinian self-determination. I look at how three BDS activists, Ramzy Baroud, Omar Barghouti, and Raji Sourani, write about each of these arguments respectively to persuade their audience to join the movement. I analyze the presentation of their texts and suggest how their rhetoric functions to convince their audience of the efficacy of the movement and compel their reader to join. Importantly, my focus on rhetoric is not meant to assess an author's belief (or lack thereof) in a particular argument, but rather to analyze the rhetorical tactics authors use to mobilize their readers.

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2014, British musician Roger Waters, co-founder of the band Pink Floyd, released a statement on *Salon.com* regarding why he chooses not to perform in Israel and instead advocates for a cultural boycott of that state. In support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, Waters states,

After visiting Israel in 2005 and the West Bank the following year, I was deeply moved and concerned by what I saw, and determined to add my voice to those searching for an equitable and lawful solution to the problem – for both Palestinians and Jews... The Palestinians’ prolonged statelessness has made them among the most vulnerable of all peoples... What can we all do to advance the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, Israel and the diaspora? Well, BDS is a nonviolent, citizen-led movement that is grounded in universal principles of human rights for all people. All people! In consequence, I have determined that the BDS approach is one I can fully support...¹

Waters proceeds to suggest that the BDS movement was “modeled on the boycotts employed against Apartheid South Africa and used in the U.S. civil rights movement,” and in response to the strong critiques of the BDS movement occurring in the United States, Waters quotes

¹ Roger Waters, “Roger Waters: Why I Must Speak out on Israel, Palestine and BDS,” accessed October 13, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/03/17/roger_waters_why_i_must_speak_out_on_israel_palestine_and_bds/.

Mahatma Gandhi's iconic statement: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win," suggesting that the BDS movement, despite opposition, is growing and will ultimately succeed. Waters has followed up this statement by issuing multiple letters to musical artists such as Robbie Williams² and Dionne Warwick, petitioning them not to play in Israel and reminding them about how musical artists refused to perform in apartheid South Africa. Waters concludes, "There is no place today in this world for another racist, apartheid regime."³

Waters' statements, defined by their declaration of BDS as non-violent, inspired by other movements, and rooted within international law and human rights, are notable because they encompass the range of rhetorical elements commonly seen in entreaties written by activists in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel to convince people around the world to join the movement. The BDS movement emerged in 2005, an initiative of Palestinian civil society, a collective constituted by a variety of Palestinian political parties, organizations, unions, coalitions and individuals said to represent three distinct groups of Palestinians: those living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Palestinian citizens of Israel, and

² Roger Waters, "Roger Waters to Robbie Williams: 'Your Decision to Play in Tel Aviv Gives Succor to Netanyahu and His Regime, and Endorses Their Deadly Racist Policies,'" accessed May 21, 2015, http://www.salon.com/2015/04/28/roger_waters_to_robbie_williams_your_decision_to_play_in_tel_aviv_gives_succor_to_netanyahu_and_his_regime_and_endorses_their_deadly_racist_policies/.

³ Roger Waters, "Roger Waters to Dionne Warwick: 'You Are Showing Yourself to Be Profoundly Ignorant of What Has Happened in Palestine since 1947,'" accessed May 21, 2015, http://www.salon.com/2015/05/14/roger_waters_to_dionne_warwick_you_are_showing_yourself_to_be_profoundly_ignorant_of_what_has_happened_in_palestine_since_1947/.

Palestinian refugees living in diaspora.⁴ The BDS movement seeks to mobilize “international civil society and people of conscience all over the world” to boycott Israeli products, divest from Israeli companies and encourage international states to place sanctions upon Israel, severing economic and negotiating ties between Israel and other states “until it [Israel] complies with international law and universal principles of human rights.”⁵ The primary document of the movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Calls for BDS,” (which I will refer to as the BDS Call for the remainder of the paper) demands that Israel “recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination,” through “ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall,” granting equal rights to and treatment of Palestinians citizens of

⁴ BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS,” *BDS Movement*, July 9, 2015, Accessed August 8, 2014, <http://www.bdsmovement.net/call>. It is notable that the BDS Call includes Palestinian political parties as signatories and designates them as part of Palestinian civil society. While Palestinian political parties are not technically part of the state, as a Palestinian state does not yet exist, they are state-like mechanisms. This inclusion may complicate Mary Kaldor’s definition of civil society given below, which explicitly excludes organizations that are explicitly part of politics, not simply concerned with them. See Mary Kaldor, “Transnational Civil Society,” in *Human Rights in Global Politics*, ed. Timothy Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 195-213.

⁵ BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call.” Part of the larger boycott movement is the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), which was initiated in 2004, a year prior to the broader movement. This movement endorses a cultural and academic boycott of Israel in addition to an economic boycott. The PACBI call states, “We, Palestinian academics and intellectuals, call upon our colleagues in the international community to *comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions* as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel’s occupation, colonization and system of apartheid.” It is notable that the PACBI statement is bolder in its determination of Israel as a “system of apartheid” than the general BDS Call, and also denotes occupied lands more specifically as defined by the 1967 borders, as opposed to the general BDS Call’s broader and less distinct call for cessation of occupation of “all Arab lands.” See “Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel,” *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869>.

Israel,⁶ and recognizing the right of Palestinian refugees who fled or were driven/forced from their homes during the 1948 war to return to their homes per United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194.⁷ Because of the variety of ways that BDS activists interpret the concept of self-determination, for the purpose of this paper I will broadly define the term as denoting the ability for Palestinians to choose their own political, cultural, and economic destiny.⁸

Many BDS activists, both Palestinian and non-Palestinian, have written petitions calling upon people around the world to join the BDS movement. Although there are a plethora of compelling facets of the BDS movement which merit academic analysis, I am interested here in

⁶ Some critics of BDS question the BDS Call's claim that Palestinian citizens of Israel are treated unequally. Emily Budick, Professor of American Studies at Hebrew University, states "That Israel is a Jewish state...does not mean that it is not a democratic state, for all its citizens. It can mean no more than that there is a majority population or culture within that nation, as is the case in almost every nation on earth. This immediately calls into disrepute point number 2 in the boycott platform: there is no need to compel Israel into "recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality." Such "full equality" by law, for all of its citizens, is already part of Israeli law. Israeli Arabs...do by law enjoy full civil rights...." See Emily Budick, "When a Boycott is Not Moral Action but Social Conformity and the 'Affection of Love,'" in *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*, ed. Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Brahm (Chicago: MLA Members for Scholar's Rights, 2015), 95. As I will show in chapter 3, Omar Barghouti disagrees that Palestinians enjoy full rights.

⁷ BDS Movement, "Palestinian Civil Society Call." For the full text of resolution 194 see General Assembly resolution 194, *Palestine -- Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator*, A/RES/194 (11 December 1948), <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/C758572B78D1CD0085256BCF0077E51A>.

⁸ Self-determination is a constantly evolving concept in international law has been defined in various ways over time. For a fuller exploration of the history of the term's use in international law, see Daniel Thürer and Thomas Burri, "Self-Determination," *Oxford Public International Law*, December 2008, accessed April 8, 2015, <http://opil.oup.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e873>. On self-determination and nationalism, see Diane Orentlicher. "Separation Anxiety: International Responses to Ethno-Separatists Claims," from *Yale Journal of International Law*, 23:1 (1998), in *International Human Rights in Context*, edited Henry Steiner and Philip Alston, 1249-1257 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

thinking about what types of rhetorical tactics BDS activists use to mobilize what the BDS Call defines as “international civil society and people of conscience all over the world.” Civil society can be defined as,

...groups, individuals and institutions which are independent of the state and of state boundaries, but which are, at the same time, preoccupied with public affairs. They are, in effect, the guarantors of civil behavior both by official institutions (states and international institutions) and in the world at large. Defined in this way, civil society does not encompass all groups or associations independent of the state. It does not include groups which advocate violence... To be part of civil society implies a shared commitment to common human values and, in this sense, the concept of global civil society might be equated with the notion of a global human rights culture.⁹

This definition of civil society suggests that the “groups, individuals and institutions” which BDS activists call upon are devoted to regulating “civil behavior,” particularly that of the state. Civil society is committed to both nonviolence,¹⁰ and promoting “common human values.” As seen in the BDS Call, the movement is based upon the idea of utilizing nonviolent tactics to compel the state of Israel to comply with international law and “universal principles of human rights.” The similarity between BDS’s proposed tactics and the values of global civil society

⁹ Kaldor, “Transnational civil society,” 209-210. She also states “Transnational civil society has to be viewed as a political project which crosses the global/local divide....those who are trying to exert a constructive influence over local life in a globalised world, can only succeed if they have outside support and access to those international organisations that can influence governments and global regulatory processes.” The necessity for international participation in BDS is noted frequently by BDS activists, such as Ramzy Baroud and Omar Barghouti, as I will explore below.

¹⁰ This is particularly the case because the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.

suggest that BDS activists use the framework of nonviolence to convince civil society of the legitimacy of the movement itself. The use of nonviolent tactics is also important in maintaining this legitimacy with civil society, as it allows an activist to fully participate in the movement without violating the laws of her home state. In addition to international civil society, BDS activists are also committed to convincing “people of conscience around the world,” to join the movement. In its contemporary iteration, the term “conscience” denotes the ability to discern right from wrong and ultimately chose what is right.¹¹ It is thus the task of the BDS activist to convince people that the movement is in the right, and that supporting it is to support a just cause.

In this thesis, I argue that activists in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement use three rhetorical strategies to claim moral legitimacy for the movement and to mobilize a non-Palestinian, specifically English-speaking, western audience, to support the movement by enacting boycotts and divestments and encouraging their governments to enforce sanctions against Israel.¹² There are three primary arguments asserted by BDS activists:

1. That the history of BDS is rooted within a local history of grassroots Palestinian nonviolent resistance and is a reflection of the will of the Palestinian people.
2. That BDS is part of a genealogy of movements worldwide that successfully used similar nonviolent tactics, especially boycott, to achieve their goals. In particular,

¹¹ Douglas Langston, “Medieval Theories of Conscience,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2011, accessed March 24, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/conscience-medieval/>.

¹² By rhetoric, I mean the stylistic presentation of language intended for a particular audience with a particular intended goal. BDS activists use a variety of rhetorical strategies to convince their reader of the legitimacy of the BDS cause.

BDS activists align BDS with the South African anti-apartheid movement, the US civil rights movement, and the Indian national liberation movement.

3. That BDS is legitimized and justified in its demand for the use of the nonviolent tactics of boycott, divestment and sanctions because states and state organizations have failed to respond to Israel's consistent violation of international law and human rights.

While variable in interpretation and presentation by BDS activists, these arguments serve as the core narratives that BDS activists tell in order to legitimize the BDS movement as a just and moral response to what BDS activists see as Israel's unjust treatment of Palestinians, and to suggest that the movement's nonviolent tactics (boycott, divestment and sanctions) are effective methods for achieving Palestinian self-determination. In this paper, I will look at how individual BDS activists write about each of these arguments respectively to persuade their audience to join the movement. I will analyze the presentation of their texts and suggest how their rhetoric functions to convince their audience of the efficacy of the movement and compel their reader to join. Importantly, my focus on rhetoric is not meant to assess an author's belief (or lack thereof) in a particular argument, but rather to analyze the rhetorical tactics authors use to mobilize their readers.

ON SPEAKING TO NON-PALESTINIAN AUDIENCES

One of the primary tensions for BDS activists in their efforts to convince others to join the movement is the dual nature of BDS as a Palestinian-led movement attempting to mobilize a global public. Palestinian BDS activists such as Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the BDS movement, and Ramzy Baroud, US-based Palestinian author, internationally syndicated

columnist and editor of *PalestineChronicle.com*, as well as non-Palestinian activists such as Richard Falk, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, are deeply emphatic that the BDS movement is, and ought to remain, Palestinian in its leadership. The primary concern behind this suggestion is that in their call for BDS, Palestinians are demanding their right to self-determination. As self-determination suggests that Palestinians alone have the right to choose their own political, cultural and economic destiny, then it follows that the terms and directives of the BDS movement should be established by Palestinians, not by an outside party. Further, BDS activists, such as Barghouti, suggest that external, non-Palestinian expressions of what the movement's goals should be (no matter how well-intended) reflect "colonialist and patronizing attitudes."¹³ Falk states, "It is important... that those of us who are not Palestinian, yet lend support to BDS, reject Orientalist efforts to substitute our West-centric guidance for theirs. In this regard, non-Palestinians active in the PSM [Palestinian Solidarity Movement] have a political responsibility to defer to the lead of Palestinian civil society, who currently best represent Palestinian democratic aspirations."¹⁴

Nevertheless, the primary audience of BDS activists, as suggested by the BDS Call, is international civil society.¹⁵ The reality of a global audience produces a need for BDS activists to

¹³ Omar Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*, (Chicago, Ill: Haymarket Books, 2011), 219.

¹⁴ Richard Falk, "International Law, Apartheid and Israeli Responses to BDS," in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles, (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 87.

¹⁵ The BDS Call suggests as much, stating "We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states

make the movement relatable and palatable to non-Palestinians who may have little context or exposure to Palestinian realities or claims. Maia Carter Hallward argues that, “The issue of local solidarity with people located halfway around the globe relies on knitting together networks of identity in order to craft a movement of activists, whether they are for or against BDS.”¹⁶ Sarah Soule argues that activists regularly construct “frames” by which to make a movement relevant to their target audiences’ experiences. She states,

Frames are essentially signifying devices that help people understand complex issues and integrate these with their own prior experiences and knowledge. Activists use these to help buttress their claims and win supporters, thus frames are an essential part of recruiting participants and they are likely an important factor impacting the outcome of activism...those frames that resonate with the existing culture are more likely to be met with success.¹⁷

Many BDS activists are aware of this necessity to build frames that can make BDS relevant and accessible to an external audience while still insisting that BDS is Palestinian-led. In a discussion regarding what “lessons” the BDS movement could learn from the South African anti-apartheid movement, Ronnie Kassrils, former minister in the African National Congress and anti-apartheid activist, suggests that the strength of the anti-apartheid movement was that it

to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel.” See BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call.”

¹⁶This identity, Hallward continues, can be established through the use of “symbolic, material, or ideational” collective resources. Maia Carter Hallward, *Transnational Activism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 15-16.

¹⁷ Sarah Anne Soule, *Contention and Corporate Social Responsibility*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 42.

“tapped into issues that those on the ground could easily identify with.” He gives examples of how the anti-apartheid movement related issues of South Africa to those of British colonialism in Ireland and racism and slavery in the United States.¹⁸ Barghouti too insists on relating BDS and the Palestinian experience to local experiences, as well as suggesting that local activists ought to focus on forms of boycott that relate most to their own contexts.¹⁹

Soule’s theory of framing is helpful in illustrating the rhetorical mechanisms used by BDS activists. The primary frames used by the BDS activists I explore in this paper are Palestinian nonviolent history, human rights/international law, and the memory of other successful (and presumably just) movements of South African anti-apartheid, US civil rights, and the Indian liberation movement. Each of these frames holds a potential moral resonance for its audience who may be committed to nonviolent action, fighting for human rights, or who find the work and vision of historical, nonviolent movements compelling or inspiring for strategic or moral reasons. Regardless of whether these frames are good or bad, true or false, they are in some sense “familiar” frameworks BDS activists use in their attempts to convince their audience of the legitimacy and correctness of the movement.

Each of these frames, some more blatantly than others, entail or are shaped by the concept of nonviolence. Nonviolent protest can be defined as follows:

¹⁸ Ronnie Kassrils, “Boycott, Bricks, and the Four Pillars of the South African Struggle,” in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles, (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 30.

¹⁹ Barghouti suggests, “BDS is about context sensitivity, campaigns that are sensitive to every context, and sustainability.” Omar Barghouti, “Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions – Israel: The Legacy of MLK and Mandela,” speech to the Resource Center for Nonviolence, Santa Cruz, CA, January 8, 2012, accessed April 27, 2015 <http://rcnv.org/author-omar-barghouti-on-boycott-divestment-sanctions-%E2%80%93-israel-the-legacy-of-mlk-and-mandela/>. Min. 43:24.

Protest is the act of challenging, resisting, or making demands upon authorities or power holders. Violent protests entails the exertion of physical force for the purpose of damaging, abusing, killing or destroying. Nonviolent protest does not entail physical force.²⁰

The BDS Call explicitly refers to the tactics of boycott, divestments and sanctions as “non-violent punitive measures.”²¹ Most BDS activists understand BDS tactics as nonviolent in the sense that they do not “entail physical force.”²² However, ideas of what constitutes nonviolence

²⁰ Wendy Pearlman, *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3. She continues to outline Gene Sharp’s classical distinction of different forms of nonviolent protest. “Gene Sharp identifies three kinds of nonviolent action: acts of protest and persuasion, such as marches or the display of signs or slogans; noncooperation, such as strikes and boycotts; and nonviolent intervention, such as sit-ins, hunger strikes, and other deliberate refusals to observe law or social custom.” While Pearlman’s definition is corporeal because she is defining particular kinds of action, I am interested in thinking about nonviolence and violence more broadly, specifically how language can be violent or nonviolent.

²¹ BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call.” Of course, many critics have suggested that BDS is violent. Alan Dershowitz suggests that the BDS movement’s true motivation is to “destroy the state of Israel.” Stating that BDS leaders do not support a one-state solution, Dershowitz declares that BDS activists “want to see one side, Israel, destroyed. They don’t want to see a change in policy. They want to see an end to the nation state of the Jewish people. Do you want to spend your time and moral energy supporting such a cause? For decent people, the answer is no.” Alan Dershowitz, “BDS: The Attempt to Strangle Israel,” *JSpace News* video, 5:16, July 22, 2014, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.jspacenews.com/alan-dershowitz-boycott-israel-movement/>. In his preface to *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*, Paul Berman suggests that the BDS movement is rooted in previous Arab boycott movements which were antisemitic in nature, based off incorrect “supernaturalist doctrines about the Jews and their cosmic menace to the world”. See Paul Berman, “Preface,” in *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*, ed. Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Brahm (Chicago: MLA Members for Scholar’ Rights, 2015), 6.

²² Hallward, *Transnational Activism*, 18.

are highly varied amongst people in general, existing on a spectrum.²³ Thus, when I suggest that BDS activists engage in the framework of nonviolence, I do not mean that they necessarily all agree on what constitutes violence or nonviolence – this is impossible to determine.²⁴ Rather, I suggest that each of the frames they use (such as human rights and examples of other movements) are largely premised upon nonviolence. In this paper, I am interested in analyzing how framing BDS as engaging in nonviolent tactics can be a rhetorical strategy for reaching non-

²³ In an essay entitled “Understandings of Nonviolence and Violence: Joint Palestinian and International Resistance,” Sarah Scruggs conducts an intricate study of perceptions of violence versus nonviolence. Her findings demonstrated that both Palestinians and international activists who adhere to nonviolence differ in what acts they perceive as nonviolent suggesting that nonviolence is not simply the use or refrain from lack of force but rather a spectrum. For example, one activist believed that even thoughts could constitute violence (and should thus be avoided), while other activists suggested that even acts of property destruction could be nonviolent as long as they were done with the right intentions. See Sarah Scruggs, “Understandings of Nonviolence and Violence: Joint Palestinian and International Resistance,” in *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy*, ed. Maia Carter Hallward and Julie M. Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 69-88.

²⁴ BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call.” A good example is the variation in interpretation amongst BDS activists regarding the term “punitive” used by the BDS Call. “Punitive,” which roughly suggests that BDS tactics are “intended as punishment,” is interpreted in a variety of ways by BDS activists. In support of sanctions against Israel, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa, 1984 Nobel Laureate and former anti-apartheid activist, writes that Israel is able to act with “impunity” (i.e. lack of punishment) incurring “no penalties” from the international community. He states, “Even on the rare occasions when they [almost all western governments and the US] do finally condemn some Israeli outrage, they do nothing in practical political terms to show that they mean what they say.” Desmond Tutu, “Foreword,” in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles, (London: Pluto Press, 2013), xiii. Raji Sourani, director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, suggests that BDS is not a form of punishment: “BDS is not a unilateral measure, or a form of punishment, it is simply a clear demand that existing international laws be enforced.” Raji Sourani, “Why Palestinians Called for BDS” in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles, (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 69-70. Punishment could be understood as violent or nonviolent. However, despite the varying understandings of “punitive” by BDS activists, this does not mean that the majority amongst them perceive BDS tactics as necessarily violent.

Palestinian audiences who would be more inclined to support a nonviolent movement than a violent one.

Hallward suggests that perceptions of BDS as a legitimate movement, particularly to western audiences, are largely dependent on BDS maintaining nonviolent tactics exclusively. Hallward notes that as the Palestinian national movement historically has engaged in both violent and nonviolent tactics, any association of violence with the BDS movement can cause people to perceive it as illegitimate. Speaking specifically about when BDS activists or particular campaigns engage in violence, she states,

This mixed history of tactics by the Palestinian national movement, combined with the tendency of the media to highlight violent stories over peaceful ones and the Western public's skepticism regarding nonviolence, means that nonviolent efforts are either not reported or dismissed as untrue. Even if current BDS efforts are nonviolent, this historical legacy, which is part of the broader context in which BDS activists operate, as well as the loose network structure of the BDS "movement" as opposed to a centralized, disciplined cadre of activists), means that any linkage of "BDS activism" with violence can delegitimize local campaigns and the "movement" as a whole. Peace scholar Michael Nagler stresses that "nonviolence plus violence equals violence," and as numerous peace scholars have demonstrated, failure to use nonviolent tactics exclusively can lead to distrust and/or a violent response.²⁵

²⁵ Hallward, *Transnational Activism*, 19.

While Hallward is speaking exclusively about physical violent and nonviolent actions, I argue that BDS activists often engage in nonviolent framing within their texts to legitimize the movement (as well as to protect it from delegitimizing claims of violence).

While the BDS movement's primary audience, as stated in the BDS Call and reiterated repeatedly by BDS activists, is a global one, for the purpose of this paper, I am interested in narrowing the scale to explore how BDS activists engage with particularly English-speaking, western audiences. Because English is a language that is spoken in many global contexts, the texts BDS activists write could theoretically be accessed by any English-speaker around the world – a compelling reason why BDS activists may write in English, a global language that can potentially speak to people everywhere.²⁶ However, I suggest that there are certain frames which BDS activists use in English texts which could have potential resonance with a specifically western public, and thus why I have limited the scope of this study to English-only texts. Comparative research between BDS texts in different languages would be an excellent expansion of this study.

I engage with the term “western” in a geographical sense, referring in particular to audiences in Europe and North America, particularly the United States.²⁷ When BDS activists

²⁶ English plays an important role in Israel/Palestine more broadly. In addition to being one of the official languages of the State of Israel, it is a common language of diplomatic relations between both parties and third state parties, including the US, who interfere in or facilitate treaties.

²⁷ I am not saying that this is the entirety of what defines “the west,” a largely indeterminate term with a plethora of potential meanings. For deeper reflection on the west and its modern projects, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). For a discussion of the west and projects of secularism, including human rights, see Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003).

speak about the west, they generally point to these state entities, which are often perceived as holding significant influence in the international community and the United Nations.²⁸ Thus the public of these states are important audiences for BDS activists as mobilizing them may enable change in western states' policies in the international arena. The United States in particular is an important target because of its diplomatic and financial relationship with Israel.²⁹ In a speech to an American liberal audience at the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, California, Barghouti suggests that billions of American taxpayer dollars are given in support Israel, particularly in the form of "military aid."³⁰ He asks his audience to cease with their complicity, stating, "If you're part of a church, part of a pension fund, part of a university, part of any association that's invested and profiting off the occupation, you're complicit. And we're asking you to stop this complicity because we cannot do it alone. We cannot end Israel's occupation and

²⁸ In his discussion of apartheid, Barghouti chastises western countries in particular for their "complicity" with what he calls Israel's discriminatory actions. See Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*, 202. In his foreword to *Generation Palestine*, Tutu suggests that "...almost all western governments, especially the US, are acquiescent in this process [of deeming criticisms of Israel as antisemitism]. Even on the rare occasions when they do finally condemn some Israeli outrage, they do nothing in practical political terms to show that they mean what they say." Tutu, "Foreword," xiii.

²⁹ Hallward notes that changing US policy is highly important given that the United States, in addition to providing Israel with significant financial aid. Hallward, *Transnational Activism*, 56.

³⁰ "The Resource Center for Nonviolence, founded in 1976, is a peace and justice organization promoting the practice of nonviolent social change. Located in Santa Cruz, California, we cultivate relationships with allies around California, across the United States, in Latin America, the Middle East and elsewhere. Our primary mission is to support the growth of nonviolent activists. The Center hosts activists and analysts from nonviolent struggles around the world." "About," *Resource Center for Nonviolence*, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://rcnv.org/about/>.

apartheid alone while you're feeding it with billions and billions and billions of dollars which you could better use for your health services, education and jobs.”³¹

This invocation of western states is not the only indication that BDS activists attempt to reach a western audience. Two texts which I analyze deeply in this paper, Rich Wiles' *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement* (published by Pluto Press in London)³² and Omar Barghouti's *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* (published by Haymarket Books in Chicago) were published by presses located in western countries. Articles and op-eds by BDS activists frequently appear in online news sources produced out of the United States and Europe, such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Huffington Post*, and the *Electronic Intifada* amongst others. BDS activists, particularly Barghouti, conduct speaking tours at college campuses in Europe and the United States. While activists in the BDS movement certainly address other global communities, the United States and Europe feature as a large focus.

ROADMAP

In chapter one, I look at the BDS Call, demonstrating how it introduces the themes I am most interested in following through the paper: tactical nonviolence, historical precedence of such nonviolent movements, and the central role of human rights/international law. In the subsequent chapters, I conduct close readings of texts by three Palestinian BDS activists, Ramzy Baroud, Omar Barghouti, and Raji Sourani, analyzing in particular how each activist engages

³¹ Barghouti, “Legacy of MLK and Mandela,” 20:00.

³² Rich Wiles, ed., *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement* (London: Pluto Press, 2013).

with the themes introduced by the BDS Call. I have chosen each of the respective activists not because they are necessarily authoritative representative of the BDS movement as a whole, but because they are highly visible public figures and frequently write and speak about BDS.

In chapter two, I turn to Ramzy Baroud's article "Palestine's Global Battle that Must be Won,"³³ which is the first chapter in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*. Baroud's article highlights the first of the three arguments highlighted above, that the BDS movement is rooted in historical grassroots, Palestinian nonviolent resistance efforts. I outline three rhetorical elements of Baroud's argument: his construction of the Zionist/Israeli enemy, his insistence on the nonviolent and Palestinian-led nature of former movements, and his emphasis on the Palestinian nature of the global BDS movement. I argue that Baroud's emphasis on Palestinian nonviolence and his equal emphasis on Zionist/Israel violence is a rhetorical strategy employed to demonstrate to his reader the injustice faced by Palestinians. Through showing Palestinians as nonviolent throughout time, Baroud attempts to create a local legitimacy for the BDS movement, showing it not as a new initiative but one deeply entrenched in Palestinian values.

In chapter three, I explore how Omar Barghouti draws parallels between the BDS movement and other historically successful movements, which employed nonviolent methods, particularly the South African anti-apartheid movement. I look primarily at Barghouti's recent book, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*, as well as the 2012 lecture he gave to the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, California entitled

³³ Ramzy Baroud, "Palestine's Global Battle that Must be Won," in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles, (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 3-17.

“Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions – Israel: The Legacy of MLK and Mandela.” Barghouti argues that while Israel and South Africa are not the same, Israel still constitutes an apartheid state per international law. He also frequently engages comparisons between Israel and South Africa, as well as between BDS and the South African anti-apartheid movement, suggesting that BDS is inspired by and based upon anti-apartheid. He also frequently refers to the US civil rights movement. I argue that in making these comparisons, Barghouti attempts to place BDS in a lineage of historically successful and recognizable movements that are frequently perceived by western audiences as just. In doing so, Barghouti suggests to his audience that BDS is similar to these other movements, and thus merits the same support these prior movements received.

In chapter four, I analyze Raji Sourani’s article “Why Palestinians Call for BDS.” In this article, Sourani argues that the international community of states has failed in its obligations per international law to place sanctions upon Israel for consistently violating international law and Palestinian’s human rights. Sourani argues that the BDS movement is a method for compelling states to comply with this duty. I look particularly at how Sourani frames the BDS movement as a method for enforcing what he calls “universal principles,” human rights, rule of law, democracy, and justice. In invoking these principles Sourani suggests that the BDS movement is itself compliant with an international moral system, and thus a legitimate way for enforcing these values.

In chapter five, I conclude with some general remarks on similarities shared within these three examples of BDS rhetoric. In drawing these comparisons, I suggest that certain rhetorical strategies, such as framing the BDS movement as a nonviolent movement in opposition to Israeli violence, suggest a certain morality BDS activists claim for the movement to frame it as a legitimate cause.

The framework of this paper is deliberately broad. While each of the themes explored are deserving of their own essay, analyzing them in tandem allows me to express the depth and complexity of how individual BDS activists attempt to reach a potential sympathetic constituency. Each author analyzed here attempts to persuade his³⁴ reader through different rhetorical strategies to mobilize that reader to personally enact boycotts and divestments and become politically active to encourage their government to enforce sanctions. As broad and diverse as BDS activists' readership is, so too are BDS activists. Demonstrating this diversity in both themes and activists suggests something fundamental about the BDS movement itself: it is not a monolithic movement, but highly organic and determined by both its proponents and opponents. In fact, Hallward suggests that the BDS movement is not a "movement" in a singular sense, but a variety of movements, defined by the experiences and desires of its local activists.³⁵ While my paper is interested in analyzing Palestinian activists who have been vocally supportive of BDS and in many ways support BDS mainline demands found in the BDS Call, in no way do I suggest that these individuals constitute "authoritative" positions of BDS. When a diversity of BDS activists are read beside one another, both the consistencies and differences among thinkers becomes apparent. Nevertheless, although BDS activists diverge from one another in many

³⁴ I am aware that I have chosen articles all written by Palestinian men. While these articles were chosen because of their content, significant research could be conducted regarding gender and the BDS movement.

³⁵ Hallward states, "Although opponents (and the press in general) refer to 'the BDS movement,' I suggest that what occurs on the ground is less a coherent, collectively organized global movement in the singular and more a network of local BDS movements, linked together via certain key activist nodes (like the Palestinian BDS National Committee or BNC), conferences, email listservs, and organizational websites. Palestinian initiators of the 2005 BDS Call have consistently emphasized 'context sensitivity,' that 'activists should make decisions based on what makes the most sense in their particular context,' while the BNC 'connect[s] Palestinian civil society with its global counterparts, facilitating the sharing of information, coordinating international campaigns, providing guidance and positions on political demands.'" Hallward, *Transnational Activism*, 2.

ways, they have in common the three themes of nonviolence, common histories, and a grounding in international law and human rights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is relatively little academic literature that explores BDS without primarily seeking to defend or criticize the movement's aims and tactics. For example, a newly released publication entitled *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* encompasses a variety of essays by academics discussing the controversial move of academic institutions and individual scholars who have chosen to boycott or divest from Israeli academic institutions presumably complicit in facilitating occupation. While editor Cary Nelson suggests that these contributions are "longer essays written in a more scholarly style," and intended to "promote rational discussion," he also notes that, "Everyone in this collection is opposed to academic boycotts."³⁶ Similarly, while Judith Butler is a renowned philosopher, her speech to Brooklyn College provides a variety of reasons why BDS is a reasonable move in combatting "Palestinian subjugation."³⁷

As the BDS movement explicitly calls for an academic boycott, discussions regarding boycott and divestment's stifling of academic freedom or their ethical necessity has thus far been the main focus of debate amongst scholars; the BDS movement itself has been an infrequent

³⁶ Cary Nelson, "Introduction," in *The Case Against Academic Boycott of Israel*, ed. Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Brahm, MLA Members for Scholar's Rights: Chicago, IL, 2014, 17.

³⁷ Judith Butler, "Judith Butler's Remarks to Brooklyn College on BDS," in *The Nation*, February 7, 2013, accessed October 7, 2014 <http://www.thenation.com/article/172752/judith-butlers-remarks-brooklyn-college-bds>.

object of academic analysis.³⁸ Many scholars who have produced academic articles on the movement nevertheless tend to use their scholarship either for or against the movement. While Palestinian psychiatrist Jess Ghannam has written on the BDS movement in the context of human rights and health in Gaza, he sees the movement as an effective method for “establishing justice in Palestine and, in turn, for promoting health rights and improvement in health-related quality of life for Palestinians.”³⁹ Sean McMahon’s recent article in *Race & Class* provides a helpful analysis of BDS claims and points out contradictions within the movement, such as the fact that the movement appeals to the same international law that sanctioned the creation of Israel. However, McMahon operates upon strong claims of Israel as being an apartheid state such as, “Israel is an apartheid state with, not because of, a colonial regime in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.”⁴⁰ He suggests that the BDS movement should promote “opportunit(ies) to educate and organise for Palestinian rights and international law on a global scale.”⁴¹ Hazem Jamjoum’s recent article, “The Global Campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel,”

³⁸ The discussion of academic boycott on the institutional level of the university is likewise complicated, as most universities often hold lucrative stock portfolios which sometimes contain stock in allegedly human rights violating companies. Sarah Soule elegantly outlines the difficulties universities faced when considering divestment from South Africa in the 1980s. See Soule, *Contention and Corporate*, 82-102. While I will not look explicitly at the economics of university divestment from Israel, given the limited scope of this paper, it is important to highlight that this discussion is not simply one of academic rights and ethics, but also one of economics and university image.

³⁹ Jess Ghannam, “Health and Human Rights in Palestine: The Siege and Invasion of Gaza and the Role of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement,” in *Human Rights in the Middle East: Frameworks, Goals, and Strategies*, ed. Mahmood Monshipouri (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 245-246.

⁴⁰ Sean F. McMahon. “The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Campaign: Contradictions and Challenges,” *Race & Class* 55, no. 4 (April 1, 2014), 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

provides helpful information about the history of international solidarity movements with Palestinians but also explicitly supports the BDS movement as a method of nonviolent resistance against Israel.⁴² While the work of these scholars is insightful when analyzing the BDS movement, these sources often incorporate political reflections that make it difficult discerning academic content from polemic or simple author bias.

Also notable is the fact that the majority of writings on BDS, of which there are numerous, are primarily journalistic in nature. Many of these pieces, such as an excellently balanced 2010 article by Adam Horowitz and Phillip Weiss for *The Nation*, have been utilized as the authoritative secondary literature about the movement.⁴³ While good journalism should not be discounted as invaluable sources of information, there is a scholarly lacuna when journalism has largely been the arena for a discussion of BDS.

The most neutral and helpful literature on the subject has been Hallward's *Transnational Activism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, and a master's thesis by Jonas Xavier Caballero submitted to Sydney Sussex College entitled "De-Shelving Apartheid, Re-Imagining Resistance: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions and the Palestinian National Movement" (2012).⁴⁴ Hallward's

⁴² Hazem Jamjoum, "The Global Campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Against Israel," in *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy*, ed. Maia Carter Hallward and Julie M. Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 133-145.

⁴³ Adam Horowitz and Philip Weiss, "The Boycott Divestment Sanctions Movement," *The Nation*, June 28, 2010, p. X. Accessed September 25, 2014, <http://www.thenation.com/article/boycott-divestment-sanctions-movement>.

⁴⁴ Jonah Xavier Caballero, "De-Shelving Apartheid, Re-Imagining Resistance: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions and the Palestinian National Movement," Diss., University of Cambridge, 2012. As a brief, but important caveat, Caballero's language is not always neutral. While he does not explicitly advocate for BDS as Ghannam and Jamjoum do, he nevertheless reflects language that suggests that he does not agree with Israeli policies. While this, in some ways, probably reflects personal conviction, it is also largely due to the sources he utilizes to construct his historical sections.

book is fundamental to this thesis, as she explores the contours of how BDS is imagined by its supporters as a nonviolent movement while simultaneously being denounced by opponents as potentially dangerous to the state of Israel. Focusing in particular on conversations about BDS in the United States, she uses case studies of recent BDS campaigns in the US (Code Pink, the Berkeley divestment movement, the Olympia food co-op, and the divestment of the Presbyterian Church) to explore activist experiences and legitimizations of their work. Fundamental to Hallward's argument is the fact that the BDS movement is largely decentralized and diverse,⁴⁵ resulting in a multiplicity of boycott, divestment, and sanctions movements. As she writes,

⁴⁵ BDS leadership is complicated and diverse. Leadership in the movement is not institutionally clear (ie: there is no one distinct leader, such as Martin Luther King or Gandhi); rather there are multiple highly visible spokespeople, such as Tutu and Barghouti. Wendy Pearlman's theory of organizational mediation theory of protest highlights that self-determination movements (such as BDS) are more likely to be nonviolent when there is cohesion "cooperation among individuals that enables unified action." This cohesion is created through strong leadership, institutions and the population's sense of collective purpose. The BDS movement's sustained nonviolent action attests to some maintenance of Pearlman's proposed structure. While there are a diversity of leaders, these leaders "contribute to a cohesive organizational structure by clarifying goals and inspiring people to cooperate for their achievement." Pearlman, *Violence*, 9. This is evident in *Generation Palestine*, where the selected authors' messages, while variable in approach, support structured goals (those outlined by *Civil Society Call for BDS*). These goals, and the international web presence that accompanies them (www.bdsmovement.net), are evidence of a centralized institution, the BDS National Committee, which serves to create the "rule of the game" for BDS members and helps enable mass mobilization. Using Pearlman's theory and Hallward's case studies in tandem, it is notable that while BDS is seemingly decentralized and leaderless, and that BDS movements in the US are highly plural in their approach (and even their belief in all three of the BDS goals), there is a centralizing mechanism that encompasses all of these groups. While Pearlman notes that fragmentation, "the diversity of objectives or dispersion of authority within a collective," can be the cause of rupture and violence within a movement, she also states that "fragmentation is not the absence of pluralism, but pluralism without rules or mechanisms for generating cooperative behavior." Pearlman, *Violence*, 8-11. In light of both these insights, this study will proceed with an understanding of BDS as being at once plural and centralized. Statements by leaders, such as those in *Generation Palestine*, will be analyzed both individually and as projecting clear and similar goals that are institutionally structured. Nevertheless, this study will not portray these viewpoints as essential to the movement as a whole, allowing for the plural nature of the movement to exist outside, yet connected to, these central voices.

"Rather than mobilizing around a primary goal related to a single target, activist movements are dynamic, with actors reframing their targets and goals and adjusting their tactics according to the political and social resources available to them."⁴⁶ This plurality is fundamental to keep in mind, as it cautions against essentializing statements about the BDS movement. Nevertheless, it is this plurality and ambiguity of BDS activists' goals that also opens up the movement to criticism.⁴⁷

Based on extensive human-subject research with Palestinian BDS activists, Caballero's dissertation focuses largely on how BDS is imagined as a project that provides Palestinian communities with national cohesion and identity. In Caballero's words, "By channeling extant energies through a three-tiered platform enshrined in the Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS, the movement has reinvigorated the Palestinian national movement. It has done so by mobilizing around principles that seek to unite Palestinians in their scattered communities in the occupied Palestinian territories, Israel, and the Diaspora".⁴⁸ Caballero explores in particular the difficulties encountered by some Palestinian BDS activists who disagree with BDS leadership or feel like they are not properly represented by the movement. Caballero also notes that the BDS movement within the Occupied Territory is often disjointed and unorganized, questioning the idea of the cohesive popular Palestinian representation that BDS activists claim. Caballero's work is essential to this thesis as his human subject research with non-leadership BDS activists

⁴⁶ Hallward, *Transnational Activism*, 10.

⁴⁷ Berman suggests that BDS supporters' attempts to distance themselves from previous Arab boycotts with (per Berman) all their antisemitic commitments leads to this diversity and lack of clarity on goals. He states, "...everyone appears to have settled on a method for drawing the distinction. The method consists of proposing a partial boycott, instead of a total boycott. A nuanced boycott, instead of a blunt boycott. Only, the proponents have not been able to figure out how to define the nuance. No two boycott committees or leaders have been able to agree on this point. Berman, "Preface," 7.

⁴⁸ Caballero, "De-Shelving," 1.

demonstrates that, regardless of party-lines, it is not always the case that all BDS activists act for the same reasons or interpret the Call in the same way.

While Hallward and Caballero have conducted extensive human-subject research on BDS activists in both the Palestinian and American contexts, there has not yet been a study focused on the rhetorical strategies used within BDS activists' texts to convince their readers of the justness of the BDS cause. My thesis aims to fill this gap.

In addition to Hallward and Caballero's work, this thesis engages a variety of different scholars whose work provides the theoretical framework for my analysis of each of my respective themes. Julie Norman's introduction to *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada* contextualizes different tactics of nonviolence used by both Palestinians and internationals in solidarity, and Sarah Scrugg's article in the same book "Understandings of Violence and Nonviolence: Joint Palestinian and International Nonviolent Resistance" demonstrates the variance of conceptions of violence by Palestinians and international activists generally.⁴⁹ Wendy Pearlman's *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement* has been invaluable in demonstrating how Palestinian national movements have engaged with both violent and nonviolent tactics, suggesting that nonviolent tactics are more prevalent and successful when a movement has less fracturing in its organizational structure. Her argument is instrumental in my analysis of Baroud's narratives of nonviolent Palestinian history, along with Amal Jamal's *The Palestinian National Movement: Politics of Contention, 1967-2005*, Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni's *Speaking Stones: Communiqués from the Intifada Underground*, and *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*, a dual narrative history composed by a cohort of

⁴⁹ Scruggs, "Understandings of Violence," 69-88.

Palestinian and Israeli teachers.⁵⁰ A set of volumes entitled *Documents on Palestine*, edited by Mahdi Abdul Hadi, contain a compilation of legal and political primary source documents from 1990-2007, and have helped contextualize my reading of Baroud's history within sources from the periods he discussed.⁵¹

Contention and Corporate Social Responsibility by Sarah Soule provides not only the theory of framing that I use in this paper to understand the rhetorical devices engaged by BDS activists, but also provides helpful information on the South African anti-apartheid movement, along with Håkan Thörn's *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society*.⁵² Talal Asad's article "Redeeming the 'Human' Through Human Rights" is helpful in understanding how particularly American audiences have responded to particular rhetoric used in other movements, such as by Martin Luther King, Jr. during the US civil rights movement, and the resulting moral associations created.⁵³

⁵⁰ Amal Jamal. *The Palestinian National Movement: Politics of Contention, 1967-2005*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni, *Speaking Stones: Communiques from the Intifada Underground*, (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1994). Sami Adwan et al. ed., *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine* (New York: The New Press, 2012). *A History of Modern Palestine*, written by Israeli academic and BDS activist Ilan Pappé provides an interesting comparative narrative to Baroud's. While Pappé does not insist on the strict nonviolence of the Palestinian national movement as Baroud does, he still constructs an apologetic for Palestinian victimization. Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, edition 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵¹ Mahdi Abdul Hadi, ed., *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1-8, (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007).

⁵² Håkan Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Also helpful is Neta Crawford and Audie Klotz, eds., *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa*, International Political Economy Series (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

⁵³ Talal Asad, "Redeeming the 'Human' Through Human Rights," in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 127-158.

There are a plethora of texts that have been instrumental in understanding international law and human rights, which are the focus of Sourani's article. In addition to the variety of United Nations documents Sourani and other activists refer to explicitly, these include Sam Moyn's *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*; Henry Steiner and Philip Alston's *International Human Rights in Context, Human Rights; Self-Determination and Political Change in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* edited by Stephen Bowen, *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* edited by Susan Akram, et. al., *Human Rights in Global Politics* edited by Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, and *Ethics and Foreign Policy*, edited by Karen E. Smith and Margot Light.⁵⁴ Additionally, the work by Lisa Hajjar on Palestinian human rights organizations in her article "Human Rights in Israel/Palestine: The History and Politics of a Movement," helps contextualize how the concept of human rights has evolved on the ground in Palestinian communities.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). Henry J. Steiner and Philip Alston, *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*, 2 edition (Oxford UK ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Stephen Bowen, ed., *Human Rights, Self-Determination and Political Change in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, *International Studies in Human Rights*, v. 52 (The Hague ; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Pub, 1997). Susan Akram, ed., *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Rights-Based Approach to Middle East Peace* (New York: Routledge, 2011). Timothy Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, eds., *Human Rights in Global Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁵⁵ Lisa Hajjar, "Human Rights in Israel/Palestine: The History and Politics of a Movement," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 4 (July 1, 2001): 21–38.

CHAPTER I: THE BDS CALL

The BDS Call is the fundamental document that launched the BDS movement in 2005. It is used as a point of reference by many activists to direct their BDS actions, and activists writing on behalf of the movement (including Baroud, Barghouti, and Sourani) often interpret and expand upon the BDS Call. Full of complicated historical references and claims, the BDS Call is a document worthy of significant scholarly study. However, for the purposes of this paper, I am interested in demonstrating how the BDS Call introduces the three themes which Baroud, Barghouti and Sourani engage deeply: a history of Palestinian-led nonviolent tactics, the lineage of BDS with other grassroots movements, and human rights and international law. Because the BDS Call is relatively short and will be referred to throughout the rest of the paper, I will quote it in full here.

**Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel
Until it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights**

9 July 2005

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel's Wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal; Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision. Thirty eight years into Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank

(including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank by means of the Wall. Israel is also preparing – in the shadow of its planned redeployment from the Gaza Strip – to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. 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.

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and

Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine; and

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions; and

Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression;

We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Endorsed by:

The Palestinian political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations below represent the three integral parts of the people of Palestine: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel.⁵⁶

The first theme I explore in this paper is the argument that BDS is a Palestinian-led global movement which uses tactics of nonviolence. The BDS Call claims that the movement is

⁵⁶ For a full list of signatories, see BDS Movement, "Palestinian Civil Society Call."

initiated by “representatives of Palestinian civil society,” signifying that the movement is both led by Palestinian organizations that represent the Palestinian people.⁵⁷ The Call suggests that there are three parts to the Palestinian people: those living under occupation, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and Palestinian refugees. As Baroud demonstrates, the Palestinian-led nature of the movement is important as it allows the movement to claim to be representative of Palestinian desires and rights, specifically the right of self-determination. Nevertheless, the BDS Call’s audience is “international civil society and people of conscience around the world” who are requested to participate in BDS actions until “until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law.”

The BDS Call states that there are three primary tactics which international civil society and “people of conscience” can engage in to place pressure upon Israel: enacting boycotts and divestments and pressuring international states to enact sanctions against Israel. Importantly, the BDS Call designates these tactics as “nonviolent punitive measures,” suggesting that while these tactics do not use physical force, they are meant to economically “punish” and morally isolate Israel in the international arena until it complies with international law. The nonviolent nature of these tactics is highly important to activists who attempt to demonstrate the movement as nonviolent, as Baroud does.

The second theme of BDS as being in a lineage with previous movements around the world which were successful is seen within the BDS Call’s references to South Africa in three

⁵⁷ Some Palestinian BDS activists, as demonstrated in Caballero’s research, do not feel that BDS represents their wishes. Some suggest that Palestinian civil society organizations do not necessarily represent the people they claim to and, sometimes BDS leaders actively suppresses the opinions of activists which do not align with BDS claims. Caballero, “De-Shelving,” 78-79.

contexts: recalling prior actions by the international community towards South Africa; stating that the BDS movement is inspired by the South African anti-apartheid efforts; and that Israel should receive the same treatment as apartheid South Africa did. First, the BDS Call speaks to the international community, recalling its participation in the “struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions.” The BDS Call describes these efforts as the international community “historically shoulder[ing] the moral responsibility to fight injustice.” Second, the BDS Call aligns the BDS movement with the South African anti-apartheid movement, suggesting that the BDS movement was “inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid” as well as the international solidarity movement which accompanied this struggle. Third, the BDS Call suggests that the actions of boycott, divestment and sanctions ought to be applied to Israel “as they were applied to South Africa in the apartheid era.” This suggests some level of comparison of Israel and South Africa, at the very least in the sense that both states should be treated the same. I will return to these various references to South Africa and South African anti-apartheid in my chapter on Omar Barghouti.

The third theme is the BDS Call’s emphasis on international law and “the universal principles human rights.” The opening of the document suggests that achieving Israel’s compliance with international law and human rights is the primary goal of the movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel *Until* it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights” (emphasis mine). The BDS Call continues to list a variety of violations of international law Israel has committed, including its continued construction of the “colonial Wall,” a wall built both around and on parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, despite the a 2004 advisory opinion by the International

Court of Justice declaring the wall illegal per international law.⁵⁸ The BDS Call also suggests that Israel's continued occupation of "the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights," is accompanied by the building of "Jewish colonies" and de facto land annexation. It further claims that Israel committed the international crime of ethnic cleansing in 1948 with the creation of the Palestinian refugee population, and continues a "system of racial discrimination" against Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel.⁵⁹ The Call continues to state that while the international community of states has, through United Nations resolutions, "condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal," they have been ineffective in forcing Israel to "comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine."

After outlining the variety of violations of international law the BDS Call claims Israel has committed, it defines what would constitute Israel complying with international law. First and foremost, it declares that Israel must recognize the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Self-determination, as explored briefly in the first chapter, is the right for the Palestinian people to determine their own political, economic and cultural destiny, and has been enshrined in multiple United Nations resolutions on Palestine. The BDS Call suggests that Israel can be in line with international law by ceasing occupation, granting equal rights to Arab-Palestinian

⁵⁸ The wall referenced here is often called the "security barrier" in Israeli rhetoric and simply "a wall" or "the wall" by the International Court of Justice. See International Court of Justice, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories Advisory Opinion," July 9, 2004, accessed September 9, 2014, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6>.

⁵⁹ The idea of an "entrenched system of racial discrimination" could suggest some form of apartheid, although the BDS Call does not state that Israel is an apartheid state. This is a claim made by a variety of BDS activists, including Omar Barghouti whose claims of apartheid I will return to shortly.

citizens of Israel, and allowing and aiding refugees to return to their homes and properties per UN Resolution 194. Raji Sourani echoes many of these demands in his essay on international law, and suggests further that international states are obligated force Israel to comply.

These three themes, which appear in BDS activists' writings beyond those explored in this essay, are rooted within the framework of the BDS Call as not only requesting international civil society and "people of conscience" to participate in BDS actions, but suggesting that these actions are morally obligatory. After mentioning the memory of international solidarity against South African apartheid, the BDS Call states,

Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era.

The idea of moral consistency, which denotes the need for people to respond to similar situations with similar actions, is placed within the context of the world's previous mobilization around South Africa. This suggests that if global "people of conscience," who have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, wish to be consistent in their actions, they must treat Israel as they did South Africa. This can be done through enacting BDS nonviolent tactics of boycott, divestment and sanctions. The suggestion of BDS as a morally just movement is echoed, sometimes more clearly than others, in the texts of the three BDS activists I explore. I will think further about how the rhetorical structures engaged by Baroud, Barghouti and Sourani suggest the BDS movement as a moral movement in my conclusion. While neither of the three actors

does an explicit exegetical reading of the BDS Call, they each engage and develop further the themes outlined by the document. It is thus an important document to keep in mind when thinking about each activist's arguments.

CHAPTER II: THE BDS MOVEMENT'S HISTORIAL ROOTS IN RAMZY BAROUD'S "PALESTINE'S GLOBAL BATTLE THAT MUST BE WON"

Ramzy Baroud opens his essay "Palestine's Global Battle that Must be Won" with a narration of an Israeli military squad encroaching on the unarmed, "restful, largely Christian-Palestinian" community of Beit Sahour in 1989 during the First Intifada. The residents of Beit Sahour had been participating in a civil disobedience campaign, which included refusing to pay taxes and the soldiers, Baroud tells his audience, were engaged in a raid "aimed at forcing Palestinians to pay taxes."⁶⁰ While the raid was successful, resulting in the acquisition of Palestinians' goods, such as furniture which was then sold in Israeli auctions, and the arrest of many of its inhabitants, Baroud suggests, "The Israeli military may have thought it won a decisive battle, but on that day a star near Bethlehem shone in the night sky of Palestine, connecting past and present, inspiring hope that people, despite the many years of occupation, still had much power..."⁶¹ The reference to Bethlehem's biblical past with all its plausible

⁶⁰ Baroud, "Palestine's Global Battle," 3. For more information on the Beit Sahour tax raid and civil disobedience campaigns during the First Intifada, see Miriam Ward, "No Taxation without Representation," *America* 161, no. 20 (1989): 464-465. Anne Grace, "The Tax Resistance at Bayt Sahur," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no. 2 (1990): 99-107. For the oral history Baroud for his narration, see Staughton Lynd, Sam Bahour, and Alice Lynd, eds., *Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians* (New York: Interlink Pub Group Inc, 1998), 276.

⁶¹ Baroud, "Palestine's Global Battle," 5.

allusions to Christian sensibilities, is an example of the rhetorical tools Baroud suggests to his reader regarding the just nature of Palestinian nonviolent resistance.

In this chapter, I will conduct a close reading of how one BDS activist addresses the issue of BDS as a nonviolent movement rooted within the history of previous Palestinian nonviolent initiatives. Baroud's article is exemplary of the writings of other BDS activists because of its emphasis on Israeli violence contrasted to Palestinian nonviolence. However, Baroud's article is particularly notable in that he attempts to largely divorce the historical Palestinian resistance movements from violent actions.⁶² Baroud's focus on the nonviolent, grassroots nature of Palestinian resistance and his downplaying of both violent action and traditional Palestinian political leadership like the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), suggest that Baroud attempts to convince his readership of the nonviolent nature of Palestinian resistance and, further, that BDS fits within this legacy. Building this history is an attempt to demonstrate the BDS movement as both legitimately Palestinian and legitimately nonviolent.

Ramzy Baroud is a US-based Palestinian and internationally syndicated journalist and author. He serves as managing editor of the *Middle East Eye*, and co-founder of *PalestineChronicle.com*.⁶³ Born in Gaza to a refugee family originally from the town of Beit Daras in what is now the state of Israel, Baroud left Gaza to move to the United States.⁶⁴ He is

⁶² Ilan Pappé, for example, speaks about Palestinian violent resistance. See Pappé, *A Modern History of Palestine*.

⁶³ "About Ramzy Baroud," *Politics for the People*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://ramzybaroud.net/about/>. *Middle East Eye* is an independent online newspaper dedicated to reporting balanced news on the Middle East. See "About," *Middle East Eye*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/about-middle-east-eye-1798743352>.

⁶⁴ Ramzy Baroud, *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story* (London; New York: Pluto Press, 2010), xiii.

currently a Ph.D. scholar at the University of Exeter's European Center for Palestine Studies, which is directed by Israeli revisionist historian and fellow BDS activist Ilan Pappé.⁶⁵ Baroud is the author of three books, *Searching Jenin: Eyewitness Accounts of the Israeli Invasion*, *The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronicle of a People's Struggle*, and *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story*, and he frequently writes articles about the BDS movement.⁶⁶

Baroud's essay is the opening chapter to an edited volume of essays entitled *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, which I turn to briefly here as the book itself provides context for how to read Baroud's essay. *Generation Palestine* is edited by Rich Wiles, "a documentary photographer, author, and film maker based in the UK and Palestine."⁶⁷ It was published in 2013 by Pluto Press, a London-based independent publishing house that describes itself as "one of the world's leading radical publishers, specialising in progressive, critical perspectives in politics and the social sciences."⁶⁸ The press itself suggests a couple of important elements for the perspective of the book. Its position as a publishing company in London which primarily prints English-language books suggests that *Generation Palestine* is likely intended for an English-speaking, western audience. Further, the political nature of the press suggests that the book caters to a particular set of political leanings, specifically "progressive," liberal politics.

⁶⁵ "About Ramzy Baroud." The European Centre for Palestine Studies, "About the Centre," *University of Exeter*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/iaais/research/centres/palestine/>.

⁶⁶ A collection of Baroud's articles on BDS can be found on his website *Politics for the People*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://ramzybaroud.net>.

⁶⁷ "About," *Rich Wiles Photography*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.richwiles.com/en/about.html>.

⁶⁸ "About Us," *Pluto Press*, accessed May 7, 2015, http://www.plutobooks.com/page/about_us.

Generation Palestine is compiled into four sections entitled “Part I: BDS: The Historical Context,” “Part II: The Palestinian Call for BDS,” “Part III: Economy, Academia, and Culture,” and “Part IV: Activists and Activism.” Each section is composed of a variety of essays advocating on behalf of the BDS movement and calling upon their audience to join the movement. Baroud’s essay appears in Part I: The Historical Context, notably followed by essays on the South African anti-apartheid movement, the Indian liberation movement, and the US civil rights and black liberation movement.⁶⁹ The arrangement of the book in this fashion suggests to the reader that the BDS movement is rooted within both Palestinian history and the legacy of other movements, a theme I will return to in the next chapter on Barghouti.

In his essay, Baroud argues that the types of nonviolent resistance, such as boycott, called for by the contemporary BDS movement have historical precedence, or “indigenous roots within Palestine’s history of resistance against oppression.”⁷⁰ Throughout the essay, he highlights nonviolent civil disobedience and boycotts as the most persistent “common thread in Palestinian revolts,” especially during the 1930s resistance against the British Mandate and Jewish immigration as well as the First Intifada in the 1980s, and he downplays instances of Palestinian violent resistance. Two rhetorical elements persist throughout Baroud’s article: the historical use and effectiveness of nonviolent techniques in Palestinian resistance, and that these nonviolent forms of struggle were more often than not grassroots initiatives led by “ordinary Palestinians,” not necessarily traditional Palestinian leadership. This grassroots approach allows Baroud to

⁶⁹ See Kassrils, “Boycott, Bricks,” Prabir Purkayastha and Ayesha Kidwai, “India’s Freedom Struggle and Today’s BDS Movement,” in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 18-33, and Kali Akuno, “The US Civil Rights and Black Liberation Movement: Lessons and Applications for the Palestinian Liberation Movement,” in *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, ed. Rich Wiles (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 47-56.

⁷⁰ Baroud, “Palestine’s Global Battle,” 5.

divorce Palestinian resistance history from actions (both violent and nonviolent) initiated by political leadership and instead frame nonviolent actions by Palestinians as initiated by the people.

Baroud argues that this legacy of nonviolence resistance and its initiative by everyday Palestinians finds its new, evolved form in the BDS movement. This suggests to Baroud's reader that the BDS movement represents not only the desires of contemporary Palestinians, but those of Palestinians over time, desires that are most often actuated through nonviolent resistance to early Zionist and Israeli violence. Recalling Kaldor's suggestion that global civil society (Baroud's primary target audience) is composed primarily of organizations and individuals who do not advocate violence, the plausible effect of Baroud is to demonstrate the contemporary BDS movement as historically entrenched in nonviolence and reshape the image of Palestinians as a historical nonviolent people.

ISRAELI VIOLENCE AND ZIONIST COLONIALISM

Baroud's article opens, as noted before, with the tax raid in Beit Sahour. This narrative is exemplary of how Baroud's narrative contrasts Palestinian nonviolence with Israeli violence. In order to convince his reader that Palestinians have a legitimate cause for their resistance against what Baroud describes as "Israeli oppression," it is important for him to demonstrate how this oppression manifests. Baroud describes what he calls a "fear-provoking scene" of the Israeli military encroaching upon Beit Sahour with a variety of military mechanisms, "armoured Israeli military vehicles," "thousands of soldiers," "military helicopters" to force unarmed Palestinian residents to pay taxes. He juxtaposes this Israeli military force to Palestinian nonviolence, stating,

On the other side, in this once restful, largely Christian-Palestinian town, residents remained home. No fighters in military fatigues awaited the arrival of tanks at street corners. No guns. Not a semblance of armed resistance. But in Beit Sahour, true popular resistance was afoot. Indeed, Beit Sahour in 1989 was a focal point of collective action and boycott. It was a war without guns, like most of the activities carried out by rebelling Palestinians during the First Palestinian Intifada, the uprising that began in 1987. But Beit Sahour took the strategy of civil disobedience – refusing to pay taxes, boycotting the Israeli occupation and all its institutions – to a whole new level, reminiscent of the legendary Palestinian strike of 1936.⁷¹

Notably in this passage, Baroud emphasizes Beit Sahour's Palestinian residents' unarmed, and thus presumably nonviolent, resistance to Israeli armed, and thus violent, attempts to collect taxes, taxes which Baroud claims were used to perpetuate Israel's "military apparatus." After demonstrating the unarmed nature of these Palestinians' resistance, a resistance Baroud suggests is rooted in Palestinian history and exemplary of the First Intifada, Baroud continues to describe the tax raid as Israel's attempt to "teach Beit Sahourians" and all other Palestinian communities engaged in civil disobedience and boycott "a lesson, thus the exaggerated military crackdown and awesome show of force."⁷² For Baroud's reader, this initial narrative juxtaposes a narrative of the violence of Israel against the nonviolence of Palestinians, thus suggesting that Palestinians are victims in the face of Israeli violence. Further, the example of Beit Sahour demonstrates the

⁷¹ Ibid., 3.

⁷² Ibid., 4.

two important elements of Baroud's argument: the historical engagement of Palestinians in nonviolent acts of resistance as well as the grassroots, people-led nature of this resistance.

From 1989, Baroud then turns back in history to describe early Zionist immigration to Palestine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and British colonization of that land. He states,

Jewish immigration to Palestine began gathering pace in the late nineteenth century, and what was initially perceived to be innocent immigration – whether prompted by religious callings or induced by the continued persecution of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe or the pogroms of Russia – had morphed into a multifaceted colonial scheme, with intense diplomacy and fervent military build-up. Much had changed since the first wave of Zionist immigrants arrived in 1882, to populate, among other communities, the first Zionist colony established five years earlier.⁷³

Baroud continues to state that Palestinians at the time began “to warn that the Jewish immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not the typical seekers of religious salvation and escapees of oppression. They were part of the Zionist programme to conquer Palestine, all of it, and displace its people.”⁷⁴ Here, Baroud suggests an intent on the part of immigrants to not only take over the land, but intentionally uproot and “displace” the native peoples. Baroud supports his assertion that early Jewish immigration to Palestine was colonial in nature by outlining how these immigrants were influenced to follow the “Zionist colonial programme” by Theodore Herzl's book *Der Judenstaat* (often translated as *The Jewish State*).

⁷³ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Organizations like the “London-based” Jewish National Fund purchased “Palestinian lands for Jewish-only use,”⁷⁵ resulting in the construction of “thirsty Zionist colonies” between 1880 and 1914. He goes on to suggest that these actions by Jewish immigrants, who Baroud categorizes as “mostly European nationals,” were part of a “greater imperialist project involving world powers.” He refers to the Sykes-Picot agreement between Britain, France and Russia, which sought to divide the previous territories of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, including Palestine, among the colonial powers.⁷⁶ The formal connection between Zionism and larger European colonial impulses, Baroud suggests, was the Balfour Declaration a “secret formal letter” by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to prominent “British Zionist” Jewish leader Walter Rothschild, which, Baroud states, “promised Palestine as a national home for the Jews.”

Baroud’s suggestion of Jewish immigrants’ *intent* (as a whole community, not as individuals) to assume control of the land of Palestine and his continued reference to Jewish connections to London and the British Empire, the imperial governing body, are meant to bolster Baroud’s claims of Zionism as a colonial project. Margaret Kohn describes colonialism as “a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” and is particularly defined by a transfer of a population to the new land “as permanent settlers while

⁷⁵ Ibid. It is important to note Baroud’s uses of language in this section. Baroud suggests that early Zionists were bent on “conquering Palestine, all of it, and exclude and displace Palestinian inhabitants from that land.” Then, Baroud suggests that the Jewish National Fund was purchasing “Palestinian land.” The first quote suggests that Palestinians were an indigenous group being pushed from their land; the second reinforces the idea that Palestinians were the legitimate, rightful proprietors of said land being purchased. For Baroud’s readership, the description of the land as Palestinian, accompanied with his description of Zionism as a colonial project, suggests that Palestinians possess some rightful ownership or were disenfranchised from their rightful ownership.

⁷⁶ For a full text, see, Edward Grey and Paul Cambon, “The Sykes-Picot Agreement, 16 May 1916,” in *Documents on Palestine*, ed. Mahdi Abdul Hadi (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007): 32-33.

maintain political allegiance to their country of origin.”⁷⁷ While Baroud notes that early immigrants were from Eastern Europe, he moves quickly to placing emphasis on relationship between Jews with connections to Britain. This move, while subtle, suggests that Jews were the “permanent settlers” of Britain’s colonial project.

As in his description of Beit Sahour, Baroud’s purpose here is to demonstrate to his reader who the opposition is (in this case, Zionist settler colonists and the British), what egregious actions they committed (being part of a colonial scheme seeking to “conquer Palestine” and displace its people), and why these action are unjust. Baroud’s argument attempts to appeal to a contemporary audience who believes that colonialism is wrong. History has largely condemned colonialism, as seen in the dissolution of many colonial powers and the formal and repeated condemnations of colonialism by the United Nations since 1960.⁷⁸ In 1960, the United Nations passed the *Declaration Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, which reaffirmed the right of colonized people to self-determination.⁷⁹ The anticolonial movement lasted throughout the 1960s to early 1970s, resulting in the creation of over a hundred of new states, many of which became part of the United Nations General Assembly. As Sam Moyn, Professor of History and Law at Harvard University, points out, this victory over

⁷⁷ Margaret Kohn, “Colonialism,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2012, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/colonialism/>.

⁷⁸ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 99.

⁷⁹ For the full declaration see, The United Nations, “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, December 14, 1960,” *The United Nations and Decolonization*, accessed March 1, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>.

colonialism is held in high regard, especially by contemporary human rights advocates.⁸⁰ By labelling Zionism a colonial project, particularly one aligned with the condemned colonial ambitions of the British, Baroud seeks to legitimize Palestinian resistance against Zionism, resistance that is tenable given the general international consensus that colonized peoples possess the right to self-determination.⁸¹

After outlining the colonial intent of early Zionism and the later violent actions of the Israeli military, Baroud then turns to how Palestinians have historically reacted to these forces. As seen in the example of Beit Sahour, Baroud is interested in highlighting examples of Palestinian nonviolent resistance, such as boycotts, over time. Not only does Baroud assert that these acts of nonviolent civil disobedience were the most persistently used types of resistance used by specifically Palestinian civilians – he seeks to show these examples as precursors to the BDS movement. For example, Baroud first provides an anecdote of how Palestinians in the 1920s reacted to the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration,

The shared anxiety caused by Balfour’s letter...and a growing awareness of the colonial project that was underway began inspiring the collective resistance of Palestinians, whose non-violent civil disobedience campaign at the time was most progressive in its design and outreach, even by today’s standards. The Arab response to the letter was highly

⁸⁰ Moyn suggests that the anticolonial movement was more a movement about self-determination than human rights. See Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 84-119.

⁸¹ The alignment of Zionism with colonialism is not a new argument. Yasser Arafat made a similar move, equating Zionism with colonialism and racism in his inaugural speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, a year prior to the General Assembly’s resolution declaring Zionism a form of racism (which was repealed in 1991). For Arafat’s speech, see Yasser Arafat, “Address to the UN General Assembly, 13 November, 1974,” in *Documents on Palestine*, ed. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, vol.3, (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007): 35-44.

political and well structured. The political aspect of that popular resistance was channeled through the Palestine Arab congresses in the years 1919-23. In conjunction with heightened political organisation, peaceful mass protests were held to underscore the unity between the political elite and Palestinian society. Notable amongst these early marches were the political rallies of 27 February and 8 March 1920 and various acts of civil disobedience on 11 March, which included ‘holding unsanctioned public protests in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa, in addition to closing their shops and submitting petitions to British authorities.’ Despite the eruption of violence on several occasions, including the bloody 1 May 1920 [*sic*]⁸² clash which resulted in the killing of 48 Arabs and 47 Jews, the overall resistance campaign remained inclusive, popular, non-violent, and politically coordinated with representatives from Palestinian communities throughout the country...⁸³

This passage highlights two important features of Baroud’s argument: that Palestinians were historically engaged in nonviolent acts of resistance and that these acts were driven by the will of Palestinian civil society. In this passage, Baroud emphasizes types of nonviolent resistance, such as strikes, mass protests and “various acts of civil disobedience,” which he argues defined 1920s resistance. While Baroud does mention that there were violent interactions between Arabs and Jews, he largely downplays violent interactions which included Palestinians.

Here it is notable to think about how Baroud narrates the violence of 1921. First and foremost, Baroud uses a passive statement, “the eruption of violence,” which does not denote a

⁸² The clash Baroud refers to takes place in 1921, not 1920. See Pearlman, *Violence*, 33.

⁸³ Baroud, “Palestine’s Global Battle,” 6-7.

particular instigator. This history of the violence of 1921 is largely contested. Consider for comparison the parallel narratives of this instance in *Side By Side*. The Israeli narrators suggest that a May Day procession in Jaffa, which was organized by Jewish immigrants, “was attacked by an Arab mob that moved on to the immigrants’ houses in the Ajami quarter of Jaffa, which for the Arabs symbolized Jewish immigration to Palestine. The unrest spread from there to the nearby Jewish neighborhoods... During the riots of 1921, a great deal of property was looted and forty-seven Jews were killed...”⁸⁴ This Israeli narrative suggests that Arabs were the aggressors in the conflict and neglects to mention Arab deaths. The Palestinian narrative in the same book states, “The uprising that broke out in Jaffa in 1921 followed large demonstrations held by Jewish communists marking Labor Day on May 1... Clashes broke out between the two groups. When the police dispersed them, some marched on to the Arab neighborhood of Manshiyyeh, where they clashed with the Arabs who thought that the demonstration was directed against them.”⁸⁵ The Palestinian narrative, which suggests that the riots began because of a misperception, continues to note that Arabs instigated violence in other towns and were suppressed by the British.⁸⁶

These alternative narratives help to bring to the surface Baroud’s consistent restraint in attributing violent action to Palestinians historically. Rather, Baroud is interested in drawing a narrative which highlights Palestinians as committed to nonviolent actions, such as boycotts and strikes, largely because Baroud’s purpose is to suggest that BDS is inspired by Palestinian

⁸⁴ Adwan, et al., *Side by Side*, 32.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35; Pearlman, *Violence*, 33.

history, but not those elements that are violent in nature. As suggested by Hallward, in order for BDS to main its claim to being a nonviolent movement it is important not to associate the movement with violence in any way.⁸⁷

Of course, Baroud is primarily interested in showing his audience that there were instances of nonviolent Palestinian resistance in the past, a history largely downplayed in the western media and scholarship on modern Israel.⁸⁸ These nonviolent acts, Baroud argues, defined Palestinian resistance as a whole: “the overall resistance campaign remained inclusive, popular, non-violent and politically coordinated.” These attributes are exemplary of Baroud’s argument that nonviolent Palestinian resistance was a people’s movement channeled through an elite leadership – two parties Baroud suggests were in “unity” and produced a collective response to British colonialism and Zionism.⁸⁹ Baroud’s consistent reference to the general populace suggests that these nonviolent efforts were desired by the Palestinian people and funneled through their leadership, yet, this suggestion is only effective if Palestinian violence is scrubbed from the historical narrative.

⁸⁷ Hallward, *Transnational Activism*, 19.

⁸⁸ Julie Norman, “Introduction,” in *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy*, ed. Maia Carter Hallward and Julie M. Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.

⁸⁹ Pearlman demonstrates that this unity was not necessarily the case. She suggests that while the elite were able to coordinate some actions, and even prevent violence from the top in preference of methods of diplomacy and civil disobedience, they were often not perceived as the leadership by the general populace. It was thus much harder for elites to control violence when it occurred from the bottom up. See Pearlman, *Violence*, 32-33.

NARRATING NONVIOLENCE IN “THE FIRST REVOLUTION”

Baroud then turns to what he calls the “First Revolution” of the 1930s. He suggests that between the 1920s and 1930s, “...Palestinian leaders began realising the nature of the daunting struggle ahead. Violent Zionist provocations and harsh British reprisals to Palestinian resistance seemed designed to demoralise the public...” citing the increasing numbers of Jewish immigrants and the concurrent “military development” occurring during the 1930s. Baroud mentions that the spike in Zionist immigration correlated with the “rise of Nazi power in Germany, which,” he suggests, “no doubt played a role in convincing even greater numbers of Jews to follow the Zionist directive.”⁹⁰

In response to rising immigration and British colonialism under the British Mandate, Baroud states, on May 8, 1936, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) composed of “all five Palestinian political parties” initiated a general strike. Baroud describes the “First Revolution” as follows:

Employing means of civil disobedience – as exemplified in its cry of ‘No Taxation without Representation’ – the 1936 uprising aimed to send a stern message to the British government that Palestinians were nationally unified and capable of acting as an assertive, self-assured society in ways that could indeed disturb the matrix of British mandatory rule over the country. The first six months of the uprising, which lasted under

⁹⁰ Baroud, “Palestine’s Global Battle,” 7-8. It is not clear what Baroud means here by “Zionist directive,” especially in the context of Jewish emigration in reaction to rising Nazism and antisemitism in Europe. A “directive” is an authoritative direction or order, thus suggesting that Baroud is claiming that Jewish immigrants to the land of Israel during this period were convinced by Zionist ideology in light of increasingly dire circumstances in Europe. While this may be the case in some circumstances, it is not clear that all Jewish immigrants immigrated for ideological reasons.

different manifestations and phases for three years, was characterised at the outset by a widely observed general strike that was essentially a boycott of working within and supporting the structures and mechanism of British mandatory rule... Starting in the 1920s and extending to the late 1940s, Palestinians and their leaders resorted to various forms of resistance, beginning with political mobilisation, and ending with mostly ineffective (although with some notable exceptions) military attempts at defending Palestinian towns and villages as they fell before the Zionist military machine, backed or facilitated by colonial Britain. But within that period, Palestinian society was made to discover its own inner strength as a collective, employing strategies that predicated on the boycott of British and Zionist institutions.⁹¹

Two things immediately stand out from this narrative. The first is Baroud's allusion to American history. Generally, the acts of Palestinian resistance which occurred between 1936 and 1939 are referred to as the "Arab Revolt"⁹² or the "Arab Rebellion."⁹³ However, Baroud chooses to name these acts a "Revolution" against the British government. Baroud frames this revolution as Palestinians' attempt to demonstrate themselves to the British as "nationally unified and capable of acting as an assertive self-assured society." This narrative, and its naming, has a potential resonance with an American audience whose own national narrative is of a young nation seeking independence from the British. And the reference to the canonical slogan of the American Revolution.

⁹¹ Ibid., 8-9.

⁹² Adwan, et. al., *Side by Side*, 87.

⁹³ Pearlman, *Violence*, 39.

The second element that stands out in Baroud's description is that it only highlights the first few months, "May until October 1936," of the "revolution." Wendy Pearlman points out that not only did some Palestinian Arabs engage in "armed activity" during the period of the strike, which only increased as the British failed to submit to demands for the cessation of Jewish immigration, but that the next two years were largely defined by violence. "From July 1937 until mid-1939, nonviolent protest was minimal and violence engulfed the country."⁹⁴

Here, I am mostly interested in asking why Baroud tells this narrative of nonviolence, even when he is clearly aware that violent resistance was a facet of Palestinian reactions against British colonialism and Zionism. The first significant aspect of Baroud's narrative for his reader is that he engages in a revisionist history of sorts, demonstrating that Palestinians did engage in nonviolent resistance actions. By recalling these acts of nonviolence, Baroud is able to demonstrate that they existed and potentially reframe the image of Palestinians away from one of always engaging in violent actions and towards an image of Palestinians as resisting nonviolently. The second significant aspect of this narrative is that it leaves the reader with a sense that Palestinians resisted against Zionist and British aggression with mostly nonviolent actions, actions which laid the foreground for BDS nonviolent action. This history functions to provide the reader with an image of Palestinian, popular, grassroots nonviolent resistance, an image that Baroud will later suggest is mirrored and improved in the BDS movement.

⁹⁴ Pearlman, *Violence*, 43. The increase in violence eventually prompted the British Government to send the Peel Commission to find out the causes of the disturbances. In 1937, the Peel Commission suggested a partition plan. Pearlman, *Violence*, 48. For excerpts from the Peel Commission's report, see "Summary Report of the Palestine Royal Commission ("Peel Commission")," in *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 1, ed. Mahdi Abdul Hadi (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2007): 332-351.

LEADERSHIP AND “THE PEOPLE’S INTIFADA”

Baroud’s description of the First Intifada follows the same line of argument as his description of the “First Revolution,” emphasizing the nonviolent tactics of resistance rather than violent ones, as well as demonstrating that these initiatives were driven by the Palestinian public. Baroud frames the First Intifada as “featur[ing] a wide range of resistance strategies which were predominately unarmed. Amongst these, boycotts of various guises again figured prominently, such as that of the story of Beit Sahour.”⁹⁵ Giving figures of how many Palestinians died at the hands of the Israeli military, Baroud again downplays instances of Palestinian violence. This narrative of nonviolence suggests to Baroud’s reader yet another example of Palestinians historically preferring unarmed resistances strategies. Baroud’s exclusion of violent tactics that were utilized during the First Intifada supports this image of Palestinian nonviolence to an important end - Baroud’s reader is not encouraged to think about Palestinian violence. This exclusion of Palestinian violence is accompanied by an emphasis on Israeli state-sponsored, military violence, highlighted through Baroud’s narrative of the death and injury of Palestinian civilians, including children.⁹⁶

One of the other distinct features of Baroud’s narrative of the First Intifada is that he largely divorces it from its leadership. Calling it “The People’s Intifada,” Baroud suggests that the First Intifada was a “grass-roots” movement that “required a form of organisation, sufficient enough to give it an articulate political voice, but nominal enough to avoid the traps of political

⁹⁵ Baroud, “Palestine’s Global Battle,” 11.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 11.

centralisation which often mar popular revolts.”⁹⁷ The grassroots nature of the First Intifada was certainly an important aspect of the movement. Many times, resistance campaign actions would be coordinated by a town’s local Palestinian leadership. Caballero’s research among Palestinian BDS activists suggests that among older activists who were involved in the First Intifada, the Intifada is largely remembered and revered for its leaderless quality.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, the First Intifada was heavily directed by the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), which was intimately connected to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).⁹⁹ Comprised of a variety of Palestinian political parties, the UNLU frequently released communiqués directing Palestinian resistance actions, both nonviolent (such as strikes, boycotts, and acts of solidarity) and violent (such as armed encounters with Israeli military).¹⁰⁰ These communiqués were largely influential in directing local Palestinian actions. Further, while the PLO was a visible and notable leadership during the First Intifada, supported as the representative by around ninety percent of the Palestinian population and recognized as the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁹⁸ From his interviews with BDS activists, Caballero notes, “Time and again the Palestinians who recalled the first Intifada stated that the uprising was sustained because it was a people’s movement, not the traditional leadership’s... They recalled that it was the first time the people of Palestine were taking charge of the struggle.” Caballero, *De-Shelving*, 50.

⁹⁹ The UNLU was a leadership cohort uniting the “institutional framework of popular committees” which were the local communities on the ground directing people’s actions on the ground. The UNLU was comprised of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Fateh, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Communist Party. While the UNLU largely organized many actions during the Intifada, they were largely directed by the PLO, the most popular political organization at the time. Pearlman, *Violence*, 103-104.

¹⁰⁰ For the pamphlets released during the intifada by the UNLU (as well as pamphlets from Hamas), see Aharoni, et al., *Speaking Stones*.

legitimate Palestinian leadership by the United Nations, Baroud only mentions the PLO once when he refers to the PLO's leader Yasser Arafat's signing of the Oslo Accords.¹⁰¹ Baroud's exclusion of the fact that a body of elite leaders drove many of the initiatives in the First Intifada is largely due to the fact that he perceives this leadership as being poor representatives of the Palestinian people. With the signing of the Oslo Accords, Baroud suggests,

...the Intifada's uncomplicated, yet poignant message was to be co-opted and corrupted by those who wished to use its achievements for personal and factional gains... A secret peace accord that was signed between Arafat and the Israel leadership was promoted as a victory for the Intifada. Far from it: the Oslo Accords further confused Palestinian objectives as a small clique of political leaders who were mostly detached from struggling Palestinians on the ground hijacked the Palestinians' decision-making power.¹⁰²

For Baroud, the power of the First Intifada, as he suggests of the First Revolution before it, was that it was driven by the collective will of the Palestinian people. When he does mention leaders, such as the PLO's Arafat, he suggests that these leaders used the mobilization of the Palestinian people in order to forward their own political power, not the will of the Palestinian people. Baroud concludes his discussion of the First Intifada declaring,

The central tenets of the First Intifada – civil disobedience and boycott, grass-roots Palestinian-led mobilisation, education, collective and inclusive resistance strategies, and

¹⁰¹ Baroud, "Palestine's Global Battle," 11.

¹⁰² Ibid.

internationalisation of the struggle – are principles that would, in later years, go on to help shape the Palestinian-led international campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel.¹⁰³

In this statement, Baroud shows his reader how his history of nonviolent resistance in prior movements is important to BDS. He suggests that the First Intifada (and the First Revolution before it) provided BDS with examples of tactics and strategies of civil disobedience, as well as a frame for the movement as a Palestinian grassroots initiative. The significance of the transition here from past history to the contemporary BDS movement is that in his outlining of prior Palestinian history as nonviolent and Palestinian-driven, Baroud provides his reader with a framework with which to approach BDS. If BDS engages in nonviolent actions, as its predecessors did before it, then it is legitimate and demonstrates a continuation of the will of former Palestinian actions.

PALESTINIAN-LED GLOBAL RESISTANCE

In his section on the BDS movement, entitled “Lessons Learned: The Development of BDS,” Baroud outlines how the BDS movement was conceived in light of the historical narratives he provides in the first part of the essay. This section is notable in that it highlights Baroud’s concern with tension in the BDS movement as being a Palestinian-led initiative that now aims to foster and guide global civil society’s actions. While appealing to the international community through the United Nations and third-party states is a tactic Palestinians and their leadership have used historically, the BDS movement’s turn to international civil society brings with it new challenges, particularly the fear that the movement’s goals may be appropriated and

¹⁰³ Ibid., 12.

reinterpreted by the international community. Baroud addresses this tension in two ways: he frequently clarifies and reiterates the Palestinian nature of BDS leadership and desires, then suggests that these Palestinian desires can be achieved through global civil society's solidarity through action.

For example, Baroud first describes a new segment of Palestinian society emerging as leaders after the disappointment of the Oslo peace process and the violence of the Second Intifada. He suggests that this “younger generation of Palestinian leaders” were “products of an ever-active civil society” who re-envisioned Palestinian resistance as a global movement. Baroud states,

Learning from the mistakes from the past, the new efforts seemed coordinated but not centralised, articulated into political demands but not politically manipulated; equally important, while uniquely Palestinian in its leadership, the new movement was universal in its values, and both global and inclusive in its approach. Many Palestinians knew well that a first step towards true freedom was reversing the process of isolation – by breaking away from the localised version of the struggle imposed by their leadership, and by leading an international campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, so that Israel would realise that colonization, oppression and military occupation should be costly. Once more, ordinary Palestinians led the way.¹⁰⁴

Baroud here identifies this new relationship between Palestinians and a global audience, emphasizing that Palestinians retain leadership but have also shaped a movement that was “universal in its values.” Echoing his previously mentioned disenchantments with Palestinian

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 12.

political leadership and his desire to align BDS with previous “people’s” movements, Baroud suggests that the new leadership was “coordinated but not centralised,” aligning this leadership more closely with grassroots efforts and less with a traditional, centralized leadership like the PLO.

Baroud goes on to describe the growing number of relationships built between international activists and Palestinians during the Second Intifada, claiming that these connections enabled new outreach to the world. “The aspirations of the Palestinian people were being regularly communicated globally – despite the persisting information blockade caused by inherent mainstream bias within the mass media – but also experience of other nations that directed popular revolts against colonial oppression were again being channeled back to the new generation of Palestinians...”¹⁰⁵ Baroud is careful to note that these aspirations were Palestinian in origin, despite the non-Palestinian nature of those who were communicating their message globally. These inspirations and new relationships, Baroud claims, led to the institution of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), a campaign calling upon the international community to boycott Israeli academic institutions and cultural events,¹⁰⁶ and then to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

Quoting the Call, Baroud suggests that “The Palestinian message was clear and decisive. Its universally rooted values and grounding within civil society deprived the arguments often used by Israeli apologists from any substance. Supporters of human rights and justice throughout the world finally had a platform from which they could advocate for Palestinian rights whilst

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁶ See *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://pacbi.org/>.

practicing strategic direct action and practical solidarity.” The last part of this statement suggests what “universal values” the BDS movement engages: human rights and justice. Baroud introduces an important point that I will explore more deeply in my analysis of Sourani: that human rights and justice are the language with which BDS is able to engage the global community to mobilize on behalf of Palestinians.

What is most important about Baroud’s section on the BDS movement is where it lands in the rest of his narrative – at the end of a long road of nonviolent Palestinian resistance against Israeli oppression. Placing the story of BDS after describing other nonviolent resistance campaigns subtly suggests to Baroud’s readers the continuity he wants us to see from the beginning of his essay: the nonviolent, distinctly Palestinian roots of the BDS movement. Baroud concludes, “The historical strategy of boycott has been developed, and given a high-profile inclusive international platform...BDS has opened up whole new ground for the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and human rights which is based on universally recognized principles.”¹⁰⁷ This statement suggests two things. The first, as has been outlined throughout this chapter, is that BDS is rooted in a Palestinian history of nonviolence. The second is that Baroud constructs BDS as a new platform to achieve “freedom, justice and human rights,” “universally recognized principles” which Baroud suggests are the basis of the concepts defining and animating the “Palestinian struggle.” This wording suggests that the Palestinian struggle is not simply employing universal values, but is demonstrative of them.

Concluding this analysis of Baroud’s historical narrative of Palestinian popular resistance up to its present form found in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, three things

¹⁰⁷ Baroud, “Palestine’s Global Battle,” 16.

can be surmised. The first conclusion is about history. I have demonstrated throughout this analysis that by outlining the nonviolent nature of Palestinian resistance strategies and suggesting that these strategies have historically been the desires of the Palestinian populace, Baroud suggests that the roots of the BDS movement are found within Palestinian history. For Baroud, these roots suggest a form of legitimacy for the BDS cause, demonstrating that it is not simply a manifestation of contemporary Palestinian desires or a new political strategy for obtaining self-determination, but rather a historically consistent phenomenon. Baroud uses the rhetoric of history to suggest to his readers that the BDS movement is legitimate because it represents the will of the Palestinian people not just in the contemporary world but over time.

The second conclusion regards nonviolence as a discursive tactic. Baroud uses a variety of tools to paint a picture of Palestinian history as nonviolent. These tools include emphasis on Palestinian nonviolent actions in contrast to Zionist/British colonialist/Israeli violent actions, as well as silence in regard to Palestinian violence. It is important not to forget that the primary purpose of Baroud's history is meant to primarily highlight Palestinian nonviolent action – thus he is justified in his focus on examples of Palestinian nonviolence. Nevertheless, these nonviolent actions are told on a backdrop of opponent state-sponsored violence and a history which excludes mention of Palestinian violence. This has consequences for a reader, who is given only a partial story of Palestinian resistance. This nonviolent history is meant to encourage readers to join the nonviolent BDS movement, which Baroud articulates as a legitimate historical tactic used to fight against Israeli aggression. By contrasting Palestinian nonviolence with Israeli violence, the reader is prompted to conclude that Israel is a violent, unprovoked aggressor.

The third conclusion regards how Baroud understands the role of the international community. One of the primary purposes of Baroud's article is to demonstrate BDS and other

Palestinian nonviolent movements as primarily led by Palestinian grassroots initiatives. This is fundamental, as Baroud wishes for these movements to represent the will, the collective conscious, and the desires of the Palestinian collective people, not the will or desires of a smaller, elite group of Palestinian leaders (such as the PLO) nor the international community, even those internationals who support the BDS cause. Were these movements to not represent the will of the Palestinian people, they would no longer be legitimate as representing the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, Baroud emphasizes the need to have non-Palestinians as allies of movement, demonstrating their solidarity through morally justified actions, in order to be more effective in pressuring Israel. It is for this reason that Baroud writes his article in order to convince non-Palestinians to join the cause without allowing them to usurp the Palestinian will driving the movement.

In order to convince non-Palestinians to participate, Baroud suggests that the movement is “universal in its values,” and influenced by the example of other nonviolent movements. This appeal to the “universal” nature of BDS is important for Baroud in order to relate the movement to non-Palestinians. It places the Palestinian narrative within frameworks non-Palestinians can relate to, such as the fight against colonialism or the language of justice and human rights.

CHAPTER III: INVOKING SUCCESSFUL HISTORICAL MOVEMENTS: OMAR BARGHOUTI'S "SOUTH AFRICAN MOMENT"

Activists in the BDS movement rely on the movement's echoes and resemblances to other nonviolent movements, especially those that successfully used the tactic of nonviolence to achieve political goals today considered morally just. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s statement "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," opens Raji Sourani's article "Why Palestinians Called for BDS."¹⁰⁸ Archbishop Desmond Tutu suggests that experience of the South African anti-apartheid movement "bears such remarkable parallels with the struggle of the Palestinian people for their freedom from oppression and injustice imposed on them by successive Israeli governments."¹⁰⁹ In an open letter from author Alice Walker to musical artist Alicia Keys encouraging Keys not to play a concert in Tel Aviv, Walker refers to the Montgomery bus boycott, suggesting to Keys, "We changed our country fundamentally, and the various boycotts of Israeli institutions and products will do the same there. It is our only nonviolent option and, as we learned from our own struggle in America, nonviolence is the only

¹⁰⁸ Sourani, "Why Palestinians Called for BDS," 61.

¹⁰⁹ Tutu, "Foreword," xiii.

path to a peaceful future.”¹¹⁰ The allusions made by BDS activists comparing BDS to other transnational, generally nonviolent, movements and to key figures like Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela are plentiful. BDS activists highlight the similar experiences of oppression, as well as examples the tactics of these successful movements after which the BDS movement should model itself.

Comparing BDS to other transnational movements is also an important rhetorical tactic to align BDS in the lineage of other movements. By drawing these comparisons, BDS activists suggest to their readers that those who supported or would support these former movements because they believed them to be just and right should support the BDS movement as well because it is based upon the same principles. The BDS Call, as shown in chapter one, compares BDS explicitly to South African anti-apartheid, suggesting that world support for BDS as global civil society did for South Africa is a demonstration of “moral consistency,” behaving towards similar situations in similar ways.¹¹¹

Both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former ANC minister Ronnie Kasrils have compared BDS to the South African anti-apartheid movement extensively; Prabir Kurkayastha and Ayesha Kidwai have compared BDS to the Indian liberation movement; and Alice Walker and Kali Akuno have drawn comparisons between BDS and the US civil rights movement. I will here focus on a Palestinian activist, Omar Barghouti, who utilizes these same transnational comparisons in service of BDS goals.

¹¹⁰ Alice Walker, “Open Letter from Alice Walker to Alicia Keys,” *US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*, accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.usacbi.org/2013/05/open-letter-from-alice-walker-to-alicia-keys/>.

¹¹¹ BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call.”

Barghouti is a co-founder of the BDS movement, and one of the most visible spokespersons for BDS in western countries.¹¹² He frequently gives talks about BDS at a variety of United States universities,¹¹³ and is featured in a variety of interviews about the BDS movement, including *Democracy Now!*, the *Daily Vox*, and the *Middle East Monitor*.¹¹⁴ He has written op-eds for *The New York Times* and *The Nation*,¹¹⁵ and published a book entitled *Boycott, Divestment Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* in 2011 with Haymarket Books, parts of which I will analyze in this chapter.

Haymarket Books is a publishing house based out of Chicago. Like Pluto Press, Haymarket describes itself as “a nonprofit, radical book distributor and publisher, a project of the

¹¹² It is difficult to find a reliable source with Barghouti’s biographical information. A variety of internet sources suggest that Barghouti was born in Qatar, grew up in Egypt, and moved to Ramallah as an adult. However, I have not found reliable information to support this biography.

¹¹³ Barghouti’s speeches on BDS are sometimes met with vocal opposition. His talk with Judith Butler at Brooklyn College was met with calls to restrict the talk. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg stated that to restrict the talk was to restrict academic freedom, notably suggesting that the protestors should “go to North Korea” to escape disputes. See, Josh Nathan-Kazis, “Mayor Bloomberg Backs Brooklyn College in Flap Over Boycott Israel Panel - Israel,” *The Forward*, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://forward.com/news/israel/170665/mayor-bloomberg-backs-brooklyn-college-in-flap-ove/>.

¹¹⁴ “Boycott, Divest From, and Sanction Israel?: A Debate on BDS with Omar Barghouti and Rabbi Arthur Waskow,” *Democracy Now!*, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://www.democracynow.org/2010/3/4/bds>.; Omar Barghouti, “Omar Barghouti: The Full Interview,” *The Daily Vox*, interviewed by Raeesa Pather, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/omar-barghouti-the-full-interview/>. “Omar Barghouti, Founding Member of BDS Movement, Calls on Celebrities to Rally around International Campaign to Boycott Israel,” *Middle East Monitor - The Latest from the Middle East*, interviewed by Hanan Chehata, accessed May 2, 2015, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/resources/interviews/2311-omar-barghouti-founding-member-of-bds-movement-calls-on-celebrities-to-rally-around-international-campaign-to-boycott-israel>.

¹¹⁵ Omar Barghouti, “On Academic Freedom and the BDS Movement,” *The Nation*, December 14, 2013, accessed May 2, 2015, <http://www.thenation.com/article/177596/academic-freedom-and-bds-movement>.

Center for Economic Research and Social Change. We believe that activists need to take ideas, history, and politics into the many struggles for social justice today. Learning the lessons of past victories, as well as defeats, can arm a new generation of fighters for a better world.”¹¹⁶ The Chicago-based Center for Economic Research and Social Change is itself a non-profit organization which hosts a variety of publishing projects including Haymarket Books, *Mondoweiss*, and the *International Socialist Review* amongst others. The Center states that its focus is education to make a better world through “highlighting alternative voices, especially those that have been pushed to the margins.”¹¹⁷ Like Pluto Press, Haymarket Books publishes books intended to provide a progressive voice, in this case to an English-speaking, American audience. This suggests that Barghouti’s book is intended largely for a western audience. However, as with *Generation Palestine*, its publication in English lends itself to be read more broadly.

Barghouti adamantly argues that Israel constitutes an apartheid state like (although not identical to) South Africa. He also strongly suggests that the BDS movement is modeled after the South African anti-apartheid movement. He is frequently criticized by opponents for drawing those comparisons. I choose to look at Barghouti’s comparisons particularly here because of 1) his frequency in invoking the idea of South Africa, 2) his complicated and multifaceted comparison of Israel to South Africa and BDS to South African anti-apartheid, and 3) his use of comparisons of BDS to historical movements more generally as discursive structures to make the BDS movement feel more familiar, reasonable, and just to his audiences.

¹¹⁶ “About Us,” *Haymarket Books*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.haymarketbooks.org/about>.

¹¹⁷ “About,” *CERSC*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://cersc.org/about.html>.

ISRAEL AS AN APARTHEID STATE

One of Omar Barghouti's most frequent and ardently contested positions when speaking on behalf of BDS is his declaration that Israel is an apartheid state. Apartheid is a system of legalized racial discrimination in which one racial group dominates another, "systematically oppressing them."¹¹⁸ It is historically associated with and linguistically based on the system of racial hierarchy, segregation, and discrimination in South Africa against black and colored South Africans by the white Afrikaner government. The South African apartheid system's dissolution in 1994 is largely attributed to a global anti-apartheid movement, which advocated for boycotts, divestments, and sanctions against South Africa.

In this chapter, I explore the contours of Barghouti's comparisons of Israel to South Africa as constituting apartheid, using this as a starting point to think more deeply about how Barghouti and other BDS activists engage with the comparison of the BDS movement to other historical global movements, particularly the anti-apartheid movement. Looking closely at Barghouti's book *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*, I argue that BDS activists like Barghouti draw comparisons between the BDS movement and other movements like South African anti-apartheid for three reasons. The first is that BDS activists see a similarity between the situations of Palestinians and other oppressed peoples. Barghouti argues frequently that while Israel and South Africa are not the same, Israel exhibits many similar discriminatory policies and perpetrates policies that Barghouti suggests violates the International

¹¹⁸ United Nations. "Nelson Mandela International Day, July 18," accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/apartheid.shtml>. United Nations, "International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid," *United Nations*, July 18, 1976, accessed May 7, 2015, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201015/volume-1015-I-14861-English.pdf>.

Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.¹¹⁹ The purpose behind this comparison is that if Israel is indeed an apartheid state, the international community must enact measures, such as sanctions, to demand that Israel cease the practices that constitute apartheid.

The second is that the BDS movement models itself largely on other movements that were successful. The South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS activists and Barghouti claim, serves as a model for the BDS movement because the BDS movement is premised off the same tactics of calling for boycotts, divestments and sanctions as South Africans did. Further, the anti-apartheid movement was able to mobilize a global public to rally around its cause.¹²⁰ It is therefore an apt model for BDS activists seeking to do the same.

The third reason is because movements such as anti-apartheid, the US civil rights movement, and the Indian national movement carry with them moral capital. By moral capital I suggest that movements which were successful and are considered “right” or “just,” and are remembered largely as movements that primarily utilized tactics of nonviolence, are understood

¹¹⁹ United Nations, “Suppression and Punishment of Apartheid.”

¹²⁰ Thörn notes that the study of the anti-apartheid movement as a new social movement has largely focused on the west. He worries about this, as he suggests that this is an example of Eurocentricity, stating, “...it must be recognized that new social movements in the West partly emerged out of the global context of de-colonization, and that the collective experiences and action forms of the anti-colonial struggles in the South were extremely importance sources of influence.” While my paper is mostly focused on how the BDS movement speaks to western audiences, Thörn’s suggestion reminds us that that the South African movement, like the BDS movement, was not solely influenced by western thinking. An expansion of my research could certainly look at BDS in its global context. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, 5-11. For a detailed look at South African anti-apartheid divestment campaigns in the United States, see Soule, *Contention*, 80-103.

as ethical models for activism, particularly by western audiences.¹²¹ The BDS Call, for example, suggests that if people supported South African anti-apartheid, they must too support BDS for the sake of “moral consistency.”¹²² This demand for moral consistency is frequently invoked by BDS activists and Barghouti who suggest that BDS too is right and just and that those who supported or believe in the justness of these others movements must come to support BDS as well.

BARGHOUTI ON APARTHEID

Barghouti suggests that Israel is an apartheid state per international law as specifically defined under the “International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.” During South African apartheid, the political system that ruled the country from 1948 until 1994, the United Nations passed multiple resolutions condemning it, and in 1976 the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted the “International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid,” a multilateral treaty condemning apartheid, both in its

¹²¹ In a discussion of Martin Luther King, Jr., Clayborne Carson, notes that the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. in particular has become ingrained in popular American culture. The celebration of King with the establishment of a national holiday in his honor indicates this, although Carson warns that the narratives provided of King are “innocuous, carefully cultivated image...as a black heroic figure.” Carson suggests that King should not be remembered as the “sole indispensable element in the southern black struggles of the 1950s and 1960s” but as a complicated figure. Clayborne Carson, “Martin Luther King, Jr.: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle,” *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 2 (September 1, 1987): 448–54. See also, Sir Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹²² BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call.”

South African form and all similar forms, as a crime against humanity.¹²³ In his chapter “Our South African Moment has Arrived,” Barghouti cites this document, which defines apartheid as

‘similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practiced in southern Africa’ which have ‘the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination of one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them, in particular by means of segregation, expropriation of land, and the denial of the right to leave and return to their country, the right to a nationality and the right to freedom of movement and residence.’¹²⁴

After stating that the roots of Israeli apartheid in Zionist ideology,¹²⁵ Barghouti claims that Israel constitutes an apartheid state because it perpetrates many of the aspects of apartheid as defined by international law, particularly the “International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.” He provides examples that he believes demonstrate that Israel practices racial discrimination against its own Palestinian citizens on the grounds that because of their nationality, they are discriminated against while those of “Jewish” nationality receive special rights and benefits. He states,

¹²³ United Nations, “Suppression and Punishment of Apartheid.”

¹²⁴ Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*, 200.

¹²⁵ Ibid. Barghouti states, “The conceptual origins of Israel's unique form of apartheid are found in political Zionism, a racist European ideology that was adopted by the dominant stream of the Zionist movement (World Zionist Organization, Jewish Agency, Jewish National Fund, among others) in order to justify and recruit political support for its colonial project of establishing an exclusive Jewish state in historic Palestine... Zionist forces and later the state of Israel forcibly displaced between 750,000 and 900,000 Palestinians from their homeland and destroyed hundreds of populated Palestinian villages in an operation termed “cleaning the landscape” that lasted until 1960.”

Racial discrimination against indigenous Palestinian people who became citizens of the state of Israel was formalized and institutionalized through the creation by law of a "Jewish nationality" that is distinct from Israeli citizenship. No "Israeli" nationality exists in Israel, and the Supreme Court has presently refused to recognize one, as it would end the system of Jewish supremacy in the land.¹²⁶

He suggests further that the majority of land is held by agencies such as the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund which only allow Jews to benefit from this land and which "systematically confiscat[e]...Palestinian land."¹²⁷ He also argues that Palestinian refugees are not allowed to return to their land because they are not Jews, stating that they have been "denationalized." Barghouti uses the language of the Convention on Apartheid to provide his analysis of Israel as an apartheid state, suggesting to his readers that his claims have legal support.

While critics have argued that Barghouti is incorrect in his assessment of Israel as an apartheid state,¹²⁸ what is interesting for my purposes is that Barghouti's insistence on labelling Israel an apartheid state is meant to mobilize the international community to respond accordingly, enacting sanctions against Israel as they did South Africa. It is important to note, however, that while Barghouti suggests that Israel constitutes an apartheid state, the BDS Call does not clearly state that Israeli actions constitute apartheid. While the Call asks the international community to enact boycotts, divestments and sanctions as they did in South

¹²⁶ Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*, 200.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 201.

¹²⁸ For example, see Budick, "When a Boycott," 95-97.

Africa, the Call does not clearly label Israel an apartheid state.¹²⁹ While Barghouti's accusations of apartheid are echoed by other prominent BDS activists such as UN rapporteur Richard Falk, Ronnie Kasrils, Jimmy Carter, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, these claims are not a BDS "party line." Barghouti himself recognizes that claims of apartheid are not a doctrine of the BDS movement itself, suggesting in his chapter "The South African Strategy for Palestine,"

...for the question whether Israel should be subjected to boycotts, divestment, and sanctions in response to its persistent and grave violations of international law and Palestinian rights, proving that Israel is guilty of apartheid is not necessary; it is not required. Those who oppose Israel's racist and colonial policies but reject the apartheid charge, whether they view Israel's regime over the Palestinian people as being worse or better than apartheid, should still be able to recognize that Israel's intensifying criminality and impunity as well as the world's - mainly Western - complicity in excusing it demand that citizens act to put an end to them.¹³⁰

It is important for Barghouti to respond to those who criticize his assertions of Israel as constituting an apartheid state, especially those individuals inclined to support BDS but who disagree with Barghouti's assessment. While Barghouti believes that there is compelling, even

¹²⁹ Notably, the charter of PACBI, which Barghouti is a primary founder, does assert that Israel constitutes an apartheid state. See PACBI, "Call for Academic Boycott."

¹³⁰ Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*, 64.

undeniable, evidence that Israel perpetrates apartheid policies, he is aware that this assessment may be polarizing to his readership.¹³¹

SOUTH AFRICA AS AN EXAMPLE

If Barghouti recognizes that while some BDS activists or would-be activists may disagree with his assessment of apartheid, this does not mean that he does not see South Africa as a compelling example for how the international community should interact with Israel. Barghouti demands what he calls the “South African treatment,” the enactment of “mass boycotts” from outside partners supporting Palestinians' internal struggle.¹³² Barghouti sees South Africa as an example in two senses. The first is that Barghouti claims that South African anti-apartheid efforts of boycott were successful in creating results, namely the end of apartheid. He suggests, “Boycotts...work in reality and principle, as was shown in the South African anti-apartheid struggle.”¹³³ In this sense, BDS should model itself upon the South African anti-apartheid movement in order to produced similar results.

¹³¹ In another chapter, Barghouti claims that charges of apartheid have been ignored because they are an “explosive subject that has every potential to invite the vengeful wrath of powerful pro-Israel lobbies.” Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*, 199.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 64-65.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 173. There are many debates questioning whether boycott and divestment efforts were indeed what resulted in South Africa's dissolution of apartheid. See Crawford, “How Sanctions Work,” 4-6.

Related to this example is the second: the necessity for Israel to be perceived by the international community as a pariah state, as South Africa was, demanding that sanctions be placed upon Israel until it complies with international law.¹³⁴ Barghouti states,

No colonial settler regime, from Northern Ireland to Algeria to South Africa, ever gave up power voluntarily or through persuasion, history teaches us, without effective, persistent, and ever-evolving resistance, coupled with massive and sustained international solidarity, the oppressed have little hope in ending injustice and achieving real peace (*sic*). Our sixty-two years of experience with Zionist colonial oppression and apartheid have shown us that unless we resist by all means that are harmonious with international law - particularly civil resistance - in order to force Israel into a pariah status in the world, like that of South Africa in the 1980s, there is no chance of advancing the prospects for a just peace.¹³⁵

Barghouti here suggests that it was only when the international community came to treat South Africa as a pariah state that change occurred and “just peace,” by which Barghouti means peace based upon the achievement of justice for the oppressed people, was realized.¹³⁶ If Israel is treated similarly, Barghouti contends, that state will be compelled to change.¹³⁷ Barghouti thus

¹³⁴ Ibid., 14, 177. Barghouti’s alignment of BDS with anti-apartheid is tactical in denoting the similarities between situation and, thus, demand for similar treatment.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 177.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 173.

¹³⁷ Many opponents to the BDS movement, such as Alan Dershowitz, have expressed concern about the BDS movement making Israel a pariah state, arguing that this mission is meant to delegitimize the Israel in the eyes of the world and subsequently dissolving or destroying the state. See Dershowitz, “The Attempt to Strangle.” Barghouti responds to this claim by stating that the BDS movement is interested in delegitimizing Israel’s policies of colonialism and

suggests that South Africa serves not only as a model for the BDS movement but also as a model of how the international community should behave towards states like Israel perpetrating similar actions in order to achieve justice.

It is important to emphasize that Barghouti does not believe that South African apartheid and what Barghouti claims is Israeli apartheid are the same. Responding to critics who suggest that charges of apartheid towards Israel are incorrect because Israeli occupation is different from South African apartheid or because Israel does not perpetrate crimes of apartheid, Barghouti suggests that charges of apartheid are not exclusive to South Africa per international law. He states that apartheid is not “a trademarked occurrence,” and that South Africa is “cited not as a condition but in recognition of its status as a historical precedent.”¹³⁸

ALIGNING BDS WITH OTHER MOVEMENTS

Barghouti’s understanding of Israel as an apartheid state has important consequences for understanding how he relates BDS to other transnational movements, particularly South African anti-apartheid. Specifically, Barghouti understands the comparison of Israel to South Africa, BDS to anti-apartheid, as profoundly compelling and true. As we turn to how Barghouti’s comparison of BDS to other movements functions and capitalizes on the moral capital of other movements, it is important to remember that this comparison is not simply lip service.

discrimination, as anti-apartheid did to South Africa, but not that these acts of delegitimization are done with the aim of dissolving the state itself, but to delegitimize Israel’s policies. “BDS strives to delegitimize Israel’s settler-colonial oppression, apartheid, and ongoing ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian people, just as the South Africa boycott was aimed at delegitimizing apartheid there. In no other boycott against any state has the preposterous claim been made that this nonviolent tactic is intended to end the very physical existence of the target state.” Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*, 15-16.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 199.

Barghouti and other activists often compare the BDS movement with other transnational movements, which fought to achieve justice for a variety of oppressed peoples, particularly the anti-apartheid, the US civil rights, and Indian liberation movements. Many of these movements, particularly their nonviolent elements, are esteemed within western communities in particular as models of how nonviolent movements ought to look like. Similarly, all of these movements, as demonstrated in the introduction to this chapter, have largely recognizable leaders, such as anti-apartheid's Nelson Mandela, the US civil rights movement's Martin Luther King, Jr., and India's Mahatma Gandhi, the latter two who engaged in explicitly nonviolent action. Remembering from the introduction that one of the primary ways that BDS activists communicate with global peoples is through local contexts and examples that carry particular resonance, it is important to think about how Barghouti engages comparisons with other movements as a way to create a relationship between the BDS movement and his audience. Aligning BDS with other transnational movements provides BDS with a moral legitimacy, suggesting that if global people supported these other movements, they must come to support BDS too.

One way that Barghouti suggests this comparison is through his consistent reference to South Africa, even when he is not engaged in a particular discussion of South African anti-apartheid or talking about Israel as an apartheid state. Sometimes when speaking about how BDS activists deal with particular problems, such as when non-Palestinian activists attempt to impose their agenda upon BDS, Barghouti suggests that Palestinian BDS activists reject this “as a colonial and patronizing attitude...just as much as our South African anti-apartheid comrades did in the past when similar situations presented themselves.”¹³⁹ Consistent comparisons to South

¹³⁹ Ibid, 219.

Africa serve as a constant reminder to Barghouti's readers that the BDS movement is like the South Africa movement.

Similarly, Barghouti and other BDS activists frequently quote important figures within the other movements, particularly Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi. Notably, each of these figures is a recognizable example within western contexts and hold particular privilege within western imaginations as beacons of right and just action because they are advocates of nonviolence against oppression. Given that many BDS activists, including Barghouti, have the expressed mission to relate BDS to familiar contexts, these comparisons serve to make BDS both relatable and palatable to non-Palestinian audiences. An interesting example can be found in Barghouti's speech to the Nonviolent Resource Center in Santa Cruz. In his speech entitled "Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions – Israel: The Legacy of MLK and Mandela," Barghouti discusses the movement in an attempt to convince his audience to enact boycotts and divestments, and encourage their governments to invoke sanctions. Although Barghouti does not make strong or elaborate comparisons between BDS and South African anti-apartheid or the US civil rights movement, he does frequently quote Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. as inspirations. At one point, Barghouti states that "Alice Walker said Rosa Parks would have supported BDS,"¹⁴⁰ and infers that King would have done the same.¹⁴¹ While Barghouti's actual comparisons between BDS and the US civil rights movement are fairly loose,

¹⁴⁰ If Barghouti is referring to Alice Walker's article "Supporting Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions Against Israel," in which Walker suggests that contemporary peoples should enact boycott tactics as occurred in the US Civil Rights movement, Barghouti is misquoting Walker. When speaking about Rosa Parks, Walker suggests that contemporary actions against Israel "would look like the granddaughter of Rosa Parks." Alice Walker, "Supporting Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Against Israel," *The Huffington Post*, accessed May 22, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alice-walker/supporting-bds-boycott-di_b_603840.html.

¹⁴¹ Barghouti, "The Legacy of MLK and Mandela."

what is important is that Barghouti suggests to his audience, an American audience gathering at the Resource Center for Nonviolence, that BDS is similar to the civil rights movement. Whether convincing or not, Barghouti's comparison is meant to suggest to his audience that if they believe that Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for a just cause, then they should also support BDS.

Previous movements, such as anti-apartheid and civil rights, do not only inspire BDS activists as examples of how the BDS movement should function: they are also invoked as rhetorical devices that provide a common ground between BDS activists and their audience. Even if an audience may have no familiarity with BDS or with Israel or Palestine, they may be able to relate to a similar situation, such as civil rights, which was successful in achieving equal civil rights for black Americans. The movements that BDS activists invoke were both successful in achieving their goals and, often subsequently, understood as morally or ethically correct. While BDS models itself largely off these movements because of their success and, often, perceived similarities to the Palestinian situation, BDS activists, like Barghouti, also often invoke the memory of these nonviolent movements to suggest to their audience that the BDS movement is in lineage with these movements and therefore should be supported by those who believe that those other movements were right and just.

Barghouti's alignment of the BDS movement with other successful movements suggests to his audience that BDS is both morally necessary and has moral precedence. As such, those who supported (or deem worthy of supporting) other movements should come to give the same support to BDS.

CHAPTER IV: “THE OXYGEN OF MEANINGFUL LIFE: INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN RAJI SOURANI’S “WHY PALESTINIANS CALLED FOR BDS”

The third level of rhetoric that BDS activists often engage is on an international level, particularly regarding international law and human rights. As one of the primary goals of the movement is to mobilize global civic society, a highly diverse population, it is important for activists to find common ground upon which they can advocate Palestinian rights as a global concern. The global framework that BDS activists choose is international law, as there are a multiplicity of governing and judicial bodies, such as the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, which are recognized by the majority of states as holding international governing authority. Thus, international law is a framework that provides BDS activists with a common language to speak to the world public. Importantly, international law and other international governing bodies like the United Nations, have historically been highly involved in the ongoing discussion of the “question of Palestine,” and have passed many resolutions and laws that have deeply impacted, both good and bad, the rights of Palestinians. As such, international law is the foreground upon which many BDS activists seek legitimacy for the BDS cause.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Hallward states, “Palestinians turn to international law not only because they lack independent domestic judicial institutions, but also because their claim to statehood and independence lies in international law. Consequently, Palestinian human rights organizations see

There are two capacities in which BDS activists engage with international law. Many BDS activists suggest that BDS is justified based on the grounds of legal interpretations. Both Richard Falk and Omar Barghouti for example, suggests that Israel constitutes an apartheid state per international law and as such should be subject to sanctions until it complies with said law. Nidal al-Azza, resource coordinator for the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residence and Refugee Rights, argues for the recognition of the right of return for Palestinian refugees in order to fulfill the legal right of Palestinians as a people to gain self-determination. As I will explore shortly, Raji Sourani uses international law to argue that third party states are obligated to place sanctions upon Israel until that state ceases to violate international law, particularly humanitarian law and human rights.

Many activists also suggest BDS as a legitimate tool for achieving human rights, a concept that since 1948 has been initiated, enshrined, and protected within the international legal structure. Human rights, in their most basic form, intend to provide people around the world with basic rights such as the right to life and liberty, the right to fair trial, the right to basic necessities such as food and shelter and, since 1976, basic political and economic rights, including the right of self-determination.¹⁴³ The BDS Call asserts that BDS tactics should be invoked until Israel

the use of international law as an integral part of their struggle for self-determination and freedom from Israeli occupation. In addition, lacking material power in the form of a military or strong economy, Palestinians rely on the international community for support in advancing their political claims, and international law is one way of seeking to engage the international community.” Maia Carter Hallward, “International Law and the Case of Operation Lead: “Lawfare and the Struggle for Justice,” in, *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy*, eds. Maia Carter Hallward and Julie M Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 126.

¹⁴³ James Nickel, “Human Rights.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last revised November 8, 2014, accessed January 10, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-human/>.

complies with international law and protects Palestinians' human rights. Further, invoking human rights is one of the most common themes that exists within BDS activists' writings, both by those activists with legal backgrounds such as Sourani and Falk, and those without, such as Baroud, Barghouti and even western BDS allies like Roger Waters. Samuel Moyn suggests that human rights are largely conceived today as "the highest moral precepts and political ideals," especially by individuals in western communities.¹⁴⁴ As such, the rhetoric of human rights becomes an important tool for activists attempting to justify BDS. If they can demonstrate that Israel violates human rights, they can potentially convince their audience (who is assumed to believe in human rights as correct and just) of the validity of the movement.

Here, I will focus on an article by Raji Sourani, "Why Palestinians Call for BDS," which appears in *Generation Palestine*, because Sourani engages both with the legal dimensions of international law as well as the principle of human rights. Sourani is a human rights lawyer in Gaza Strip where he currently serves as the director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. After being repeatedly imprisoned by the state of Israel for his work on human rights, he was recognized in 1988 as a Prisoner of Conscience by Amnesty International. He was awarded the Right Livelihood Award in 2013, by the same organization "...for his unwavering dedication to the rule of law and human rights under exceptionally difficult circumstances."¹⁴⁵

Sourani's argument is particularly notable because it attempts to show human rights, along with justice, democracy and rule of law, as "universal principles" that the BDS movement

¹⁴⁴ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 1.

¹⁴⁵ "Raji Sourani (Palestine)," *Right Livelihood Award*, accessed May 7, 2015, <http://www.rightlivelihood.org/sourani.html>.

attempts to achieve. While Sourani's argument, trained as a human rights attorney, is unique from other activists, it is important as it attempts to position BDS as a movement that Sourani's readers should support if they see themselves as "people of conscience" who believe in human rights and international law. If they do so, according to Sourani, they should lobby their states to uphold international law.

SOURANI ON STATE IMPUNITY

Sourani's basic argument is that the international community of states have failed to uphold their obligations as High Contracting Parties to fulfill and protect international law. States, Sourani suggests, have allowed Israel to conduct illegal actions with impunity, such as its repeated violation of humanitarian laws set by the Geneva Accords, thereby violating Palestinians' human rights and denying them "justice." However, Sourani's argument does not simply suggest that states' failure to perform their duty to punish what Sourani sees as Israel's grave violations of international law has had consequences only for Palestinians. He claims that this granting of impunity for Israel undermines and threatens international law itself,¹⁴⁶ as well as the justice, human rights, and "shared humanity" of everyone globally.¹⁴⁷ Sourani proposes that BDS, when advocated for in a clear, consistent, and professional manner, is a "valid tool" to mobilize people around the world when their states fail to uphold the law, and that BDS is a "clear demand that existing international laws be enforced."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Sourani, "Why Palestinians Called," 63.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

Sourani's article, which frames BDS as legitimate through global concepts of international law and human rights, is notable because of Sourani's insistence that BDS is based upon and fights for "universal principles" such as "justice, [...] human rights, rule of law and democracy."¹⁴⁹ Sourani suggests that these are values shared by the global community (and presumably his reader) and argues that if we wish as a global community to protect and maintain these values as a whole, we must fight for Palestinians' rights. BDS is an effective tool for demanding justice for Palestinians and, further, the rights of all people globally.¹⁵⁰

In this chapter, I outline Sourani's case for the obligation of states to uphold international law. I argue that for Sourani international law delineates shared global values such as "justice" and "human rights" that bind international peoples together and obligates them to protect the rights of others. I suggest that Sourani argues on behalf of a shared moral system (denoting "right" versus "wrong" action) based upon the assumed legitimacy of international law. Sourani suggests that if we believe in the validity of international law as protecting shared values such as human rights, then we must act to protect these for all people and demand that our states do the same. Further, because the state-actor system has failed to change Israel's behavior, Sourani argues, BDS is a civil society targeted tactic that aims to make states comply with international law. Sourani's argument is not simply demonstrating that Israel violates international law and must be stopped on the principle of upholding that law: he goes further to suggest that the law itself upholds "universal principles worth fighting for," a global moral system obligating all peoples to one another (as well as states to the people of other nations). If Sourani's reader

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 70.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 70.

believes in these principles, so Sourani's argument goes, then they must support BDS, enabling global civil society to force its states to enforce international law..

Sourani devotes significant time in his article outlining the international legal principles that obligate states to uphold the principles of humanitarian law and international law itself. Sourani appeals to his readers' assumed belief that international law is legitimate as an authorized system for enforcing global principles, such as human rights. Sourani assumes that readers will find states' failure to fulfill their obligations to international law as egregious, and thus strive to find a way to compel states to do so, such as supporting BDS.

Sourani first outlines how Israel has consistently violated international law, violations that Sourani suggests have been "systematically documented" by professional lawyers and fieldworkers. He states,

Israel's long-standing belligerent occupation of Palestinian territory has been characterised by two interconnected realities: systematic violations of international law, and total impunity for those illegal acts. The result has been the victimisation and suffering of the Palestinian people, the so-called 'protected persons' of international humanitarian law. The Israel-Palestine conflict is perhaps one of the most documented conflicts in the world.¹⁵¹

Sourani goes on to argue that Israel has 1) violated humanitarian law and human rights, including committing what he calls "war crimes," such as the use of white phosphorous in Gaza in 2008; 2) violated United Nations and Security Council resolutions which have "repeatedly called for an end to illegal activity, as well as Israel's withdrawal to its 1967 borders;" and 3)

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 62.

continued construction of the “wall” despite the 2004 ruling by the International Court of Justice declaring the wall illegal.¹⁵² Sourani then suggests that, given the fact that all of these legal violations have been highly documented and reported in the international media,

No one can claim that they do not know what is happening in occupied Palestine. However, the international community of States has turned a blind eye. Despite all States’ legal obligation – *inter alia*, as High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 – to ensure respect for the law in all circumstances, and to search and prosecute those suspecting of committing grave breaches of the Conventions, nothing has been done... Simply put, Israel has been allowed to violate international law – and thus to undermine the international legal system – with complete, and pervasive, impunity.¹⁵³

Sourani’s statement, “No one can claim that they do not know what is happening in occupied Palestine,” suggests that because the international community of states knows, and are refusing to protect Palestinians. Sourani attempts to hold the international community accountable. Knowledge of Israel’s consistent legal violations, Sourani suggests, makes all parties complicit in Palestinian subjugation. Sourani here states that as the international community of states, despite their duty to uphold international law and investigate instances in which this law may be violated, has failed to hold Israel accountable, the international legal system itself has been undermined and “innocent civilians have paid the price.” Sourani continues to outline where in legal documents this obligation exists, highlighting in particular Common Article 1 of the four Geneva Conventions (1949), which outline humanitarian laws which protects noncombatants in

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 63.

wartime and in occupied territories. These suggest that states must uphold humanitarian law. Sourani emphasizes this obligation is not only for the parties involved, but also “third states, those not directly involved in the conflict.”¹⁵⁴ Sourani suggests that these states must use “enforcement measures,” such as sanctions, to ensure that violating parties cease the violation of international law.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: OBLIGATIONS AND MORALITY

After outlining these legal obligations, and stating that despite international civil society’s equation at the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa of “Israel’s illegal policies of occupation with racism and apartheid,” and demand for international sanctions, sanctions have not occurred, and Israel continues its policies.¹⁵⁵ Sourani then suggests that the international community has been complicit in Israel’s violations of international law. Notably, Sourani does not specify that this complicity resides with international states alone. He states,

Despite the unprecedented deterioration in the human rights situation, the international community has continued to grant Israel pervasive impunity...The international community has become complicit in these violations of international law...By failing to hold Israel accountable, the international community is undermining the rule of law, and encouraging Israel to commit further violations.¹⁵⁶

Sourani’s argument suggests that the “international community” as a whole is implicated in what he determines as Israel’s continued violation of Palestinians’ human rights and international law.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 64-65.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 66-67.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 68.

This turn is significant for Sourani's charge the international community, and particularly his assumed reading audience, to enact boycotts, divestments, and most importantly sanctions. If Sourani's reader believes that international law should be upheld and protected, they along with individuals everywhere are obligated to ensure that their state enforce sanctions against Israel. If they refuse this call, they are complicit, guilty of permitting Israel to commit these crimes.

Before turning to how Sourani discusses the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, it is important to first look at the global principles which he believes live at the heart of BDS, principles that he presumes his reader believes in. In particular, Sourani suggests that BDS is a way to enforce justice, human rights, rule of law and democracy. He declares that these are "universal principles." "The call for BDS must ring out as an impassioned cry for justice...Human rights, the rule of law, and democracy are not luxuries, they are fundamental necessities: the oxygen for meaningful life. These are universal principles worth fighting for."¹⁵⁷

The idea of "universal principles" underpinning the BDS movement is necessary for Sourani's argument for BDS to be taken up by people everywhere. Sourani, like the authors of the Call, suggests that there is a shared language found within the idea of human rights and international law that appeals to people globally. Sourani presumes that his reader too shares these values. As such, if this reader and people everywhere believe in these principles, they are obligated to uphold them. Sourani sees this obligation as not only having implications for Palestinians, but for peoples everywhere.

This is not a Palestinian issue; it is one of equality, of justice, and it affects us all, for it is our shared humanity that hangs in the balance. It is the stand that we as individuals take

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 70.

that defines us. We must continue to reject all forms of human rights abuses... Civil society has a huge role to play in this regard. It is through solidarity and principled opposition to human rights abuses that empires fall and real change is achieved.¹⁵⁸

Here, Sourani suggests that his reader has an obligation to not only fight for Palestinian rights, but that failure to do so has implications for the world as a whole. If global civil society fails to do so, Sourani suggests, we are not only complicit in the violation of human rights of others, but also in undermining of the international system of law that governs the world. Sourani suggests that BDS is based upon protecting the principles of human rights, justice, democracy and the rule of law, and it is for this reason that it is a legitimate mechanism to be used by the international community to ensure that Israel complies with these principles for the sake of the world.

Sourani's argument for "shared humanity" is notable because it suggests some kind of human sameness built upon the frameworks of particular values: human rights, equality, and justice. Talal Asad points out that language about human rights is central for shaping particular political actors. "It is important not to regard these discourses [of human rights and redemption] as merely legitimizing a priori positions of power, because languages of justice do not simply justify positions of power, they help to shape political actors."¹⁵⁹ While Sourani is primarily interested in convincing people to participate in certain actions (BDS), he is simultaneously building a common ground, of humanity, upon which his audience can relate with the cause. This is part of Sourani's "morality," a morality that is built upon an assumed obligation to human

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 70-71.

¹⁵⁹ Asad "Redeeming the Human," 140.

rights and international law. It is upon this morality that Sourani suggests BDS is built and legitimized.

Sourani opens his article describing BDS and its purpose:

The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement is rooted in the decades-old struggle for self-determination, the rule of law, and accountability. It is a mechanism used by individuals when their States fail them. It is a clear example of civil society acting as the conscience of the world, and standing up for human rights when those in power refuse to do so. BDS is a tool used, not to punish, but to promote compliance with human rights standards and the requirements of international law. It sends a clear message that violations of human rights are unacceptable, and that we, as concerned citizens of the world, will not reward those who are complicit in their perpetration.¹⁶⁰

Three things are notable in Sourani's opening paragraph which frames the remainder of his argument. The first is that Sourani suggests that States (and state bodies) have failed to uphold "human rights and international law." BDS, Sourani states, is a mechanism that can be used by individuals and global civil society to encourage international law to be upheld.¹⁶¹ Second, Sourani suggests that enacting BDS is a particularly moral or ethical act. He describes people who support BDS as "acting as the conscience of the world," "conscience" here meaning the

¹⁶⁰ Sourani, "Why Palestinians Called," 61.

¹⁶¹ Also here, it is important to note that Sourani roots BDS as "decades-old," suggesting historical precedence for the actions, although he does not yet state where this precedence comes from. Later in the same page, he states, "Whether BDS be directed towards the end of apartheid in South Africa, of military rule in Burma, or of Israeli occupation..." suggesting that BDS was used in a variety of global contexts. This suggests that BDS is not a Palestinian tactic only but also a global one. Ibid.

ability to discern right from wrong and choose right. He links “conscience” to human rights, suggesting that human rights are inherently right and should be protected. Third, Sourani argues that if we as a global public support BDS, we are choosing not to “reward” those who violate human rights. Implicit here (as argued above) is the converse suggestion, that if we do not enact BDS, we are, in some fashion, saying that violations of human rights are permissible. Sourani’s assertion about conscience presumes that the world community is bound by a particular global morality, a shared sense of right and wrong which is predicated upon the principles of human rights. Sourani assumes that his reader too believes in the moral efficacy of these rights, and that in order to be a person of “conscious,” we must fight to uphold them.

Sourani suggests that supporting BDS is a way to uphold these rights, stating that BDS “...is a powerful tool utilised by civil society to ensure that systematic violations of human rights end; to bring about a change in the overall system.”¹⁶² Here, Sourani asserts that BDS, even while being used in a Palestinian context of “Israeli occupation,”¹⁶³ is a way to change the reality of the world at large, helping to bring an end to human rights violations everywhere. Sourani states that BDS is legitimate because it is rooted in international law, the system which outlines and is meant to protect this global morality. “Equally, BDS must always remain grounded in international law; this must be its maker and guideline. BDS is not an exclusively political tool, or an exclusively morally judgment, it is a clear response to violations of international law, and it is this which provides its legitimacy.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Ibid., 61.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Two related elements stand out from Sourani's argument. The first is that in attempting to speak to a global public, Sourani roots his argument in a framework of international law which is binding upon international state bodies and presumably understood as the legitimate system of global governance by peoples everywhere. The language of international law is presumed as global common ground. The second element is that this international law is understood by Sourani as being comprised of shared principles, the first among them being human rights, which provide basic rights and enable a good life for people everywhere. Sourani uses both of these concepts, international law and human rights, to assert that if his reader believes in these principles they are obligated to fight to protect the human rights of people globally, and the violation of any individual's human rights, let alone a collective violation like Palestinians, jeopardizes everyone's human rights. Sourani suggests that the best mechanism to do this is BDS because it is based upon international law an effective tactic global society has used in the past to force their own states to themselves enforce international law. As it is based upon international human rights, Sourani suggests, it is thus a morally viable, and legally sanctioned, form of action that civil society can use to demand that states place sanctions upon Israel until it ceases its illegal actions.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION: BDS AND MORALITY

In his foreword for *Generation Palestine*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu draws parallels between both apartheid South Africa and Israel's consistent ability to act without punishment from the international community. He states,

...despite all appearances to the contrary, this is in fact a moral universe. Right and wrong matter. God is a God who is notoriously biased in favour of the downtrodden, the despised, the weak. This is after all the God of the Exodus, who sided with a rabble of slaves against their oppressive overlord. Ultimately right will prevail, justice will triumph. But humanity must play its role in this struggle. Much as with our case in South Africa, if Palestinians were to sit and wait for the democratic leaders of the western world to right their wrongs they may have to wait forever. It is in this context that Palestinians called for, and launched their Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign... The BDS movement is an essential component of Palestine's struggle, and humanity's struggle for justice and true human liberation – it must be supported by all of us.¹⁶⁵

While clearly stated from a Christian standpoint, Archbishop Tutu's suggestion of a "moral universe" in which "right will prevail, justice will triumph" is a helpful backdrop for thinking about how each of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions activists explored in this paper frame

¹⁶⁵ Tutu, "Foreword," xiii-xiv.

the BDS cause. While highly divergent in content and rhetorical style, I argue that there are three interrelated themes which appear in each activist's thought. While I do not claim that these themes are dogmatically consistent across the BDS movement as a whole, they suggest a few shared rhetorical strategies some BDS activists use when attempting to mobilize their audience on behalf of the cause.

The first rhetorical element shared by Baroud, Barghouti, and Sourani is that they each highlight the state of Israel's uses of violence in different capacities against Palestinians. Baroud aligns Zionism with colonialism and highlights the Israeli military's use of force against unarmed, nonviolent Palestinian protest efforts. Baroud claims that Israel is engaged in discriminatory practices against Palestinians, acting similarly to the apartheid state of South Africa. Sourani argues that Israel not only violates Palestinians' human rights, but also defies and ignores international law, all with impunity from other international states. Each of these thinkers is engaged in demonstrating rhetorically not only the need for BDS as a tactic for righting Israel's harms towards both Palestinians and the international community as a whole, but also demonstrating Israel as acting in the wrong on principle. While critics of BDS have worried extensively that BDS activists are engaged in "delegitimizing" the state of Israel, what I am more interested in here is thinking about how BDS activists' claims to Israel's violence are framed in opposition to Palestinian and BDS nonviolence. Israel is set up rhetorically as an opponent engaged in violence against whom BDS activists have a just cause.

This leads me to the second rhetorical strategy shared by each activist: the demonstration of the BDS movement and its supporters as largely engaging in forms of nonviolent resistance on principle and downplaying any resemblance of Palestinian violence. Baroud argues that Palestinians historically engaged in nonviolent tactics such as boycotts, and that the BDS

movement is rooted within these former struggles. Barghouti claims that the BDS movement is inspired by and in lineage with former movements around the world which successfully engaged in nonviolent forms of resistance and are seen as just by the international community. Sourani argues that the BDS movement is a valid way to compel Israel to comply with human rights because it is legitimized by international law. He advocates using the mechanism of this law to battle Israeli's legal violations. Each thinker promotes the use of nonviolent tactics in the form of boycott, solidarity and law by Palestinian and world-wide BDS activists to compel Israel to cease its violent practices. Within each essay, the nonviolent tactics of the BDS method are presented as the best way to combat Israeli violence.

This points to a third commonality among all three thinkers. Each attempts to demonstrate the BDS movement as a way of achieving justice, and suggests that the movement is legitimized not only because it is a reasonable response to the injustice of Israel's oppressive and illegal actions, but also because it engages nonviolent tactics as the means of achieving this justice. Using nonviolence is an example of taking the moral high ground in response to Israel's violence. Baroud's history of Palestinian nonviolence is not intended to simply show prior examples of Palestinian uses of boycotts. Rather, Baroud rhetorically aligns Israel's violent actions to Palestinian nonviolent responses, hinting that Palestinians and the BDS movement more generally are responding in a just way to Israeli injustice. Barghouti's alignment of Israel's actions of apartheid with his suggestion that historical nonviolent protestors such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. would have supported the BDS movement provides the BDS movement with a source of moral precedent. Sourani's counsel that Israel's injustices and violations of international law must be combatted by BDS tactics which are just and firmly rooted in international law suggests that there is a course of "right" action.

It is here that the presumed sensibilities of BDS activists' audience are vital. Each BDS activist's emphasis on nonviolence suggests that they believe their reader to be sensitive to nonviolence as a permissible, and perhaps moral or ethical, tactic for fighting injustice. The rhetorical strategy of contrasting Israeli violence to BDS nonviolence is an attempt by BDS activists to suggest to this audience that BDS is a reasonable and morally justified method for combatting Israel's actions and for achieving Palestinian rights. This morality is rooted in the consistently repeated notion of "universal principles." These, as I have suggested throughout this essay, are principles of nonviolence, human rights, and precedents of the world fighting on behalf of oppressed peoples. As suggested by the BDS Call, if "people of conscience" around the world are committed to upholding these principles, they must act with "moral consistency," supporting the BDS movement which embodies these principles and should thus be perceived as just and moral. It is through this rhetorical aligning of BDS with ultimately correct action that BDS activists aspire to mobilize peoples around the world, particularly in western countries, to enact boycotts, divestments and sanctions in the fight for Palestinian rights. Achieving these rights, as Tutu suggests, is not simply an attainment of justice for Palestinians, but an achievement of justice for humanity as a whole.

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