



SJP Wants Justice, Not Hate

BY REBECA IBARRA

Brooklyn College's Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) club expected an adverse reaction from the pro-Israel advocates to the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) forum they would be hosting this Thursday, Feb. 7.

And they got it.

"They don't want people to know the truth," said Carlos Guzman, a film major and SJP member for over two years.

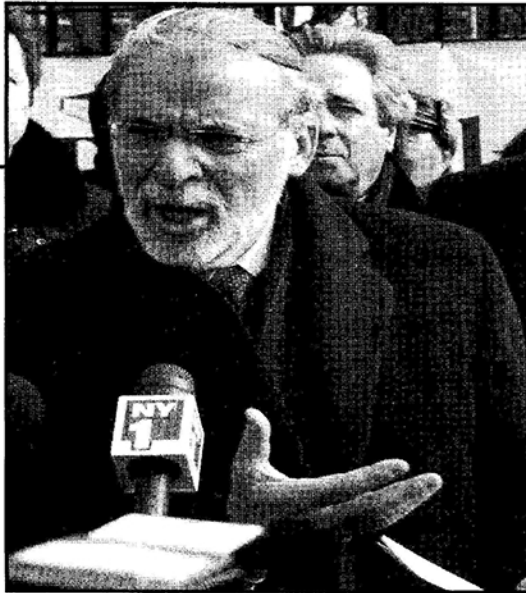
The BDS movement is a nonviolent tactic to end Israeli apartheid and seeks to hold Israel accountability to international law. Similar divestment strategies were employed in the 1980s to contribute to the end of apartheid in South Africa.

The Political Science department's decision to co-sponsor the event has been condemned by many, including Brooklyn College alumni Alan Dershowitz and State Assemblyman Dov Hikind; however, according to Guzman, their angry pleas have been misdirected.

The SJP has been in charge of organizing the event and raising funds to pay the main speaker Omar Barghout, a founding member of both the BDS campaign and the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel; therefore, critics like Dershowitz should be contacting the SJP, not the school, to voice their grievances or offer suggestions.

"We haven't received any emails, or calls, or anything like that," Guzman said, "because Alan Dershowitz would never agree to a discussion. Because he knows that he is on the wrong side of history. Because he knows that he is supporting a state that is suppressing and violating international law as well as humanitarian law and they are doing that with our tax dollars."

One of the main purposes



Dov Hikind's Not Buying It: President Gould states Political Science department co-sponsorship of SJP Rally does not indicate endorsement.
PHOTO: David Beltran

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of the forum – other than raising awareness of Israeli human rights violations committed against Palestinians – is to inform the public that the United States pumps billions of dollars into Israeli foreign aid each year, dollars that ensure Palestinian occupation and come out of American taxpayers' pockets.

"We are complicit in occupation and crimes against humanity as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as countless United Nations resolutions," Guzman said.

The BDS movement seeks to end Israeli apartheid in a nonviolent way.

Guzman doesn't believe violence will solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, he acknowledges that, according to International Humanitarian Law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, Palestine – as an occupied territory – has the right to defend itself, even if it requires the use of force.

"There would be no rockets being fired into Israel if there was no occupation," Guzman said. "Israel is the one who creates the violence. Israel is the one who

forces Palestinians to take up arms and fight."

"We are against oppression, human rights violations, and occupation," Guzman said. "It is state violence that we are against." Though BDS attackers like Hikind have labeled the forum "hateful," the SJP is steadfast in its assertion that this event is not about discrimination or hate; it is about human rights.

"It is not an anti-Semitic event. We are not against Jews. There are even a handful of Jewish groups co-sponsoring the event," Guzman explained. "The reason we got so many co-sponsors was to build solidarity [and] connect struggles. To make people realize that the Palestinian issue is not just a Palestinian issue. As SJP we are committed to bringing equality and justice to all peoples, not just Palestinians."

Barghout will not be the first controversial speaker to visit Brooklyn College. In 2011, writer David Horowitz gave a conference in which he referred to Palestinians as "morally sick."

Guzman was denied entrance to that event.

Guzman encourages students to remain open-minded, do their own research, and attend the BDS forum this Thursday.



Pro-Israel Supporters Condemn Poli-Sci Dept. and the BDS Movement

BY BEATA SAMELOVA

Controversy to the upcoming Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions on Israel event boiled over as outraged Pro-Israel supporters voiced their grievances in front of students, faculty, and news crews from around the city at the Bedford Avenue campus entrance last Thursday.

Students, faculty, activists, and members of the New York State Assembly joined in protest to condemn the Political Science department for co-sponsoring the Students for Justice in Palestine's (SJP) event, some saying that the department's involvement was a de facto endorsement of the BDS movement. Many even called for Brooklyn College President Karen Gould's resignation.

According to politicians and activists who spoke at Thursday's press conference, they were, "not opposed to people's right to speak." While the protestors disagree with the political or ideological position of the BDS speakers, Omar Barghout and Judith Butler, their primary complaint

was about the Political Science's involvement.

Melanie Goldberg, a pro-Israel student active on campus, described the situation as bizarre. "We never would have thought the department would endorse such an event. That doesn't make sense in academia."

In a college with a 30% Jewish student-body and active Israel advocacy, some students are worried that support of the panel would parallel with hostility towards their views. Assemblywoman Rhoda Jacobs said the BDS event was little more than "intellectual provocation," another reason why school authorities should stay out of political endorsement.

Bewilderment does not begin to describe the reaction felt by many pro-Israel students when they discovered that the SJP would be bringing, what some labeled as, two radical anti-Israel speakers.

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