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[Dublin] LAW 2013: Boycott Israeli Goods Day of Action Sat, 23 February 2013, 2:00PM (The Spire, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1)

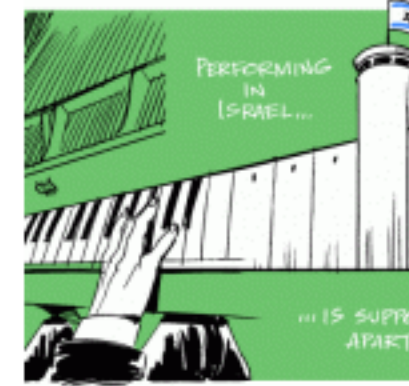
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2012 Summary of the Cultural Boycott of Israel

The year 2012 was an amazing year full of many successes in the campaign for the cultural boycott of Israel. This summary focuses on the cultural boycott with an emphasis on musical artists and groups.

The fall of South African apartheid was preceded by the movement by artists of conscience to boycott "Sun City." A similar anti-apartheid movement is rapidly growing, and musicians increasingly do not want to perform in Israel.

The Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, Habima, Batsheva, and the Cameri Theater continued to be sent to perform abroad as "cultural ambassadors" for Israel. This year people who oppose apartheid gathered in many cities to raise awareness of the complicity of these artists. Almost all Batsheva performances were protested. Demonstrations took place in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Italy, throughout the UK and in Edinburgh, Scotland.



January, 2012: The Tuneyards cancel their gig in Israel. The lead singer Merrill Garbus is a signatory of the Artists Against Israeli Apartheid pledge. [1]

Jacques Rancière, acclaimed French intellectual and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Paris (St. Denis) writes that he will not violate the boycott, and cancels plans to give public readings at Tel Aviv University. [2]

February, 2012: Award winning singer-songwriter Cat Power (Chan Marshall) cancels her gig in Tel Aviv, tweeting, "MUSIC IS HEALING AND IT IS NOT HUMANE IF ALL CANNOT HAVE THE CHOICE, THE RIGHT, TO ATTEND. H E L P. A W A R E N E S S 'S" [3]

New York indie band The Pains of Being Pure at Heart announce they will not play Israel. Israel's "Walla" press reports the cancellation was political. [4]

Grammy-winning jazz singer Cassandra Wilson was scheduled to be the featured performer at the Holon International Women's Festival. Just days before her sold out performances, she politely bowed out, saying "As a human rights activist I identify with the cultural boycott of Israel." [5] Wilson received letters of thanks signed by solidarity groups from around the world.

Israel TV uses the term "refuseniks" to refer to Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, U2 and Coldplay. The term implies that these artists have a political reason to refuse to perform in Israel. [6]

March, 2012: The cultural boycott moves to New York City as Batsheva attempts to present Israel's pretty face through dance. Adalah-NY volunteers are ready with their own performance outside the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Palestinian dancer Hana Awad writes, "Exhibits and performances by Palestinian artists are systematically banned, sabotaged, and closed down by the Israeli occupation. Artists themselves are targets of violence, arbitrary arrests, and deportations." [7]

Actors and artists sign onto a letter asking Shakespeare's Globe in London to withdraw its invitation to Habima, and refuse to be complicit with human rights violations and the illegal colonisation of occupied land. Thirty seven artists sign, including the highly acclaimed Academy Award, Emmy and Golden Globe winning Emma Thompson. [8]

Staying true to punk rock, Zdob si Zdob from Moldavia keep Israel off their four plans. Punks Against Apartheid wrote a letter to the band in January, asking them to respect the boycott. [9]

April, 2012: The six member Irish band Dervish agrees to respect the cultural boycott, cancelling a series of planned shows in Israel, stating: "At the time we agreed to these performances we were unaware there was a cultural boycott in place. We now feel that we do not wish to break this boycott," and adding, "Our decision to withdraw from the concerts reflects our wish to neither endorse nor criticise anyone's political views in this situation." [10] Fullset, also from Ireland, announce that they had not been aware of the cultural boycott, and cancel their concert in Israel on the back of the Dervish cancellation. [11]

The Mediterranean Delight International Bellydance Festival was slated to take place in Marrakech, Morocco. When it was uncovered that the festival was sponsored by an Israeli belly dancer, a campaign against normalization successfully shut down the show. Belly dancer Noor refuses to participate in the Israeli backed festival, and it was relocated to Greece. [12]

Qatar cancelled the Music and Dialogue Festival which featured Israeli musicians, scheduled for April 30 - May 4, marking another milestone for the growing anti-apartheid movement. [13]

Singer Macy Gray responds to a letter written to the Red Hot Chili Peppers asking them to boycott apartheid Israel. Gray reaffirms her commitment to justice when she tweets to activist Tali Shapiro (Boycott From Within) "Nvr give up the good fight Tali. Yer a great human." [14]

May, 2012: Huzama Habayeb, a Palestinian novelist, led an overwhelmingly successful academic boycott effort involving the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. The Center's planned book project titled Memory of a Promise: Short Stories by Middle Eastern Women was cancelled because nearly half of the authors (13 out of 29) withdrew their literary contributions in protest of the inclusion of two Israeli authors celebrated amongst institutionalised Israeli literary circles. Habayeb wrote "My overly conscious heart was heavy. I cannot accept, ethically and morally, that my voice be shared equally with writers who reflect the voice of an obnoxious occupier" [15] Regarding the large number of authors who refused to participate, the center's Director Kamran Scott Aghaie writes, "On balance, the net result is that the book project is no longer viable. Therefore, we are discontinuing publication of this volume." [16]

Slumdog Millionaire author Vikas Swarup cancels his appearance at the International Writers Festival in Israel. [17] The Indian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel (INACABI) had written to him in February. [18]

Shakespeare's Globe in London hosted Israel's National Theatre Habima. A twitter campaign using #loveculture developed by Israel's UK embassy was transformed into #loveculture hate apartheid, and made global trends. As Habima performed The Merchant of Venice, streets were filled with people, signs, and Palestinian flags outside the Globe. Inside, numerous people peacefully held banners, and mentioned Palestine throughout the performance. British actor and audience member, John Graham Davies arose, delivering Shylock's famous line during the trial scene, saying "Hath not a Palestinian eyes?" - for a moment the production almost lost its balance. Davies was then promptly removed by hired security personnel. [19]

June, 2012: Israeli advisor to the Red Sea International Classical Music Festival, tells Haaretz "I can testify that more than once projects have been cancelled or postponed based on their 'Israeliness.' And again - these things are not said crassly, no one will say, we are conducting a boycott. The word boycott doesn't exist, but the political situation of Israel also impacts this field." [20]

Grammy-Award winning tabla player Zakir Hussain of India cancels his gig in Israel. Hussain was contacted by the INACABI. [21]

Pulitzer Prize winner and highly acclaimed author Alice Walker declines the publishing of the Color Purple by an Israeli publisher, stating: "It is my hope that the non-violent BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement, of which I am part, will have enough of an impact on Israeli civilian society to change the situation." [22]

July, 2012: When a celebration promoting Israeli culture in Switzerland attempts to include the Palestinian dance troupe Juthor, they withdraw. Organizers of the International Folklore Encounters Festival, Fribourg had intended to bring Juthor onto the stage together with the Israeli group Shalom Israel. [23]

Rocker Serj Tankian releases Occupied Tears, raising awareness about Palestinian life under occupation. [24]

Ottawa musical group Three Little Birds sing Apartheid on CTV Morning Live, and are subsequently attacked by pro-Israel media watchdog HonestReporting Canada. [25]

Nino Katamadze's five concert tour was quietly canceled, Katamadze was contacted by Boycott From Within, and plans for a five concert tour in November were scrapped. [26]

Anti-apartheid fans of Hollywood actors Bruce Willis and Jean Claude Van Damme were relieved they cancelled their planned visit to Tel Aviv, where they were scheduled to attend a local premiere screening of their latest film Expendables 2. [27]

Controversial reggae artist Sizzia Kalonji cancels his gig in Israel after tweeting his disappointment that Obama had awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Israeli President Shimon Peres. [28]

August, 2012: The importance of the cultural boycott was emphasized when reports reassured disappointed and, at times, angry Israeli fans that the cancellations of concerts in Tel Aviv by the Swedish Cardigans [29] and by Lenny Kravitz were for reasons not related to the cultural boycott of Israel. [30]

Highly successful protests of Batsheva take place in Edinburgh, Scotland. [31]

An Israeli website announced that English electronica big beat group Prodigy would perform in Tel Aviv. Emails from Prodigy's manager showed claims the band would perform in Israel were completely false. The same site also made false claims that Jennifer Lopez and Bruce Springsteen would perform in Israel in 2012.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg-South Africa, Student Representative Council passed a resolution that calls for the full cultural and academic boycott of Israeli institutions, stating they "will not participate in any form of cultural or academic collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions and will not provide any support to Israeli cultural or academic institutions." [32]

September, 2012: Noted British theater director Peter Brook and the Bouffes du Nord theatre troop of France honored the call to boycott Israel, cancelling planned performances for December at the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv. Brook wrote: "The fact that the Cameri Theatre has accepted to support the brutal action of colonisation by playing in Ariel [in the West Bank] has made us aware that in coming to your theatre we would appear as a support for that brutal action. This forces us to decline your invitation to perform in your theatre. The decision is entirely ours, and not to come to you, it is our free choice. We know that there are many amongst you and in your country who share our attitude and it is them we wish to support as well as the people of Palestine." [33]

The Red Hot Chili Peppers are asked to accept the anti-apartheid call, in a campaign that unites thousands in support for the cultural boycott of Israel. When the RHCP refuse to cancel their gig in Tel Aviv, internationally acclaimed Lebanese group Mashrou' Leila, tweets "we will not be opening for the red hot chili peppers on september 6 in Beirut." [34]

Palestinian film directors refuse to participate in the filming of 24h Jerusalem, and production is halted. Twenty directors, including Israelis, pulled out of the film project in support of the cultural boycott. Though it appeared to be a benign film about culture, it was actually funded in part by the Jerusalem Development Authority, an organization implicated in numerous violations of human rights and illegal activities against Palestinians. Enas al-Muthaffar, filmmaker, wrote: "I refuse to be part of a peace propaganda machine that continues to ignore Israel's cruel colonization of Palestine." [35]

A survey done in Britain finds that one in four support a full cultural boycott of Israel by musicians. [36]

October, 2012: Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker, Palestinian spoken word artist Remi Kenazi and Pink Floyd's Roger Waters join dozens of other cultural workers to call for Carnegie Hall to cancel the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's performance. [37]

Hip hop duo Rebel Diaz, artist Narcenio Hall and Cairo-based art collective Mosireen boycott the two-day 2012 Creative Time Summit in Manhattan because of the summit's partnership with an Israeli organization that is funded by the Israeli government. [38]

Ramallah-based Palestinian MC Boikutt, Syrian singer Lena Chamamy, Lebanese MC Malikah (Lynn Fattout), and Palestinian DJ Sotusura all pull out of the Salam Orient cultural festival in Austria, because it is sponsored in part by the Israeli embassy. [39]

Turkish band Baba Zula's concert in Israel was cancelled, while obviously not all cancelling performers have the courage to publicly state their reasons, it isn't a surprise when they don't rebok.

Remi Kanazi releases Normalize This! on youtube in support of the cultural boycott of Israel, explaining why normalization cannot lead to positive change.

November, 2012: The legendary Stevie Wonder (winner of 22 Grammy Awards and the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award) makes international news when he cancels a scheduled December performance at a Los Angeles fundraiser for Friends of the IDF (FIDF), an organization that raises money for the Israeli army. [40] His statement is posted on the website of his radio station, Radio FREE KJLH 102.3FM.

The Cape Town World Music Festival had to do without one of its star acts when Pops Mohamed boycotted the event because of co-sponsorship by the Israeli embassy.

Ten talented young harpists bow out of the International Harp Contest in Israel, leaving only 22 non-Israelis to complete in the increasingly unpopular state sponsored event. In addition, acclaimed harpists Naoko Yoshino and Park Stickney also quietly cancelled their performances for the Harp Contest. [41]

At least 10 international actors withdrew from the IsraDrama festival, following last minute appeals asking them not to collaborate with the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv which performs in settlements. [42]

Zebda, a popular band from France, releases One life less-(une vie de moins), which draws attention to Israeli occupation, Gaza, and how children are affected by apartheid. [43]

Electronica musician and DJ Carl Craig of Detroit quietly cancels his gig in Tel Aviv.

Ross Daly, Giorgos Xylouris, Giorgos Manolakis, and Kelly Thoma cancel plans to play at the Israeli state sponsored Jerusalem Oud Festival, stating "After all, we're musicians with feelings and sensibilities, not music machines which can operate under all and any circumstances." [44]

Roger Waters, musician and founder of Pink Floyd, explains the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in his address to the United Nations on behalf of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine: "It aims, as many of you know, to bring non-violent economic pressure to bear on Israel to force an end to its violations, an end to occupation and apartheid, an end to the denial of Palestinians' right of return, and an end to Palestinian citizens of Israel being required to live as second class citizens, discriminated against on racial grounds, and subject to different laws than their Jewish compatriots. The BDS movement is gaining ground hand over fist. Just last week I was happy to write a letter of support to the Student Government of the University of California, Irvine, congratulating them on demanding that their University divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation." [45]

December, 2012: The London-based Jazz group Portico Quartet, cancelled their planned concert for the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Israel. The band courageously voiced their support for the cultural boycott, linking fans on their Facebook page to the Palestinian BDS National Committee's website. [46]

Swedish virtuoso guitarist Andreas Oberg was congratulated for cancelling his planned gigs in Israel, honoring the call for a cultural boycott of the apartheid state. Oberg let fans know about his cancellation on Facebook. [47]

A campaign launched July to persuade Woody Allen to shoot his next film in Israel failed. The goals of the movie were to "enable Israel to enter the world's imagination in a way a billion dollars of hasbara (public relations/propaganda) couldn't possibly buy." In an open letter to Allen, he was asked "Would it not be more ingenious to develop a movie satirising Israel's desperate attempts to obscure its crimes against humanity?" [48]

Looking ahead to 2013: Bruce Springsteen's choice to refrain from playing Israel in 2012 is a welcome one to anti-apartheid campaigners. Multiple claims in the Israeli press, as well as several campaigns to pressure Springsteen to play Israel, confirm that there are still major efforts underway to convince The Boss to ignore the boycott in 2013.

Israel tends to ask bands who previously played in the apartheid state to return. Bands whose members are Kabbalists are also often invited to play in Israel. All artists are invited to respect the boycott, regardless of their spiritual commitments and if they have previously played in Israel. Campaigns are already underway to educate artists involved with Lollapalooza Israel about the boycott. The catchy "lollapartheid" has already been used to describe the festival.

Don't Play Apartheid Israel We are a group of 850 members, representing many nations around the globe, who believe that it is essential for musicians & other artists to heed the call of the PACBI, and join in the boycott of Israel. This is essential in order to work towards justice for the Palestinian people under occupation, and also in refugee camps and in the diaspora throughout the world.

Original posting here: <http://refrainplayingisrael.posterous.com/2012-summary-of-the-cultural-boycott-of-israel>

- Notes:
- [1] 500 Artists Against Israeli Apartheid <http://www.tadamon.ca/post/5824>
- [2] Jacques Rancière cancelled his visit to Israel <http://thesip.org/2012/01/ranciere-cancellatio/>
- [3] BDS Victory: Cat Power cancels show in Tel Aviv <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora/bds-victory-cat-power-cancels-show-tel-aviv>
- [4] The Pains of Being Pure At Heart dismissed for political reasons <http://www.fox.com/2012/01/10/the-pains-of-being-pure-at-heart-dismissed-for-political-reasons/>
- [5] Cassandra Wilson cancels Israel show: "I identify with the cultural boycott of Israel" <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora/singer-cassandra-wilson-cancels-israel-show-i-identify-cultural-boycott-israel>
- [6] From Israeli TV see 1.50 min (Hebrew) at <http://www.mako.co.il/news-channel2/Channel-2-News/Article-066c02622978531018.htm>
- [7] NY Activists protest Batsheva Dance Company performance in Brooklyn <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/03/ny-activists-protest-batsheva-dance-company-performance-in-brooklyn.html>
- [8] Dismay at Globe invitation to Israeli Theater <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/29/dismay-globe-invitation-israeli-theatre?newsfeed=true>
- [9] Zdob si Zdob: Stand in Solidarity with Palestinians! <http://punksagainstapartheid.com/2012/01/zsz-open-letter/>
- [10] Heading boycott call, Irish band Dervish pulls out of Israeli concerts <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/all-abunimah/heading-boycott-call-irish-band-dervish-pulls-out-israeli-concerts>
- [11] <http://www.facebook.com/FullSetBand/posts/432263436801746>
- [12] Israeli Orientalist Festival in Morocco Bellyflops <http://www.kadaitcha.com/2012/04/21/israeli-orientalist-festival-in-morocco-bellyflops/>
- [13] Israeli-Arab Normalization Hits a Snag <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/israeli-arab-normalization-hits-snag>
- [14] The Blessings of 2012, an album <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=426830113999740&set=a.383361181679967.117866.100000182654841&type=1&permPage=1>
- [15] My 'No' says more, and matters more <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1894&key=txas>
- [16] Statement on the Cancellation of "Memory of a Promise: Short Stories by Middle Eastern Women" <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/mes/news/5111>
- [17] <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.114223273.00.html>
- [18] INACABI Appeal to Vikas Swarup: Boycott the International Writers Festival 2012 in Jerusalem! <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1827>
- [19] "Hath not a Palestinian eyes?": Protesters disrupt Habima performance at Globe <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/05/hath-not-a-palestinian-eyes-protesters-disrupt-habima-performance-at-globe.html>
- [20] Cultural boycott biling, but quietly, Israel Festival's classical music advisor admits <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/all-abunimah/cultural-boycott-biling-quietly-israel-festivals-classical-music-advisor-admits>
- [21] Zakir Hussain Cancels Performance in Tel Aviv <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1913>
- [22] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1917>
- [23] Palestinian group Juthor withdraws from International Folklore Encounters Festival in Fribourg <http://bit.ly/Y19nj>
- [24] Occupied Tears <http://youtu.be/9Qlyw64F5DM>
- [25] <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/07/canadian-band-attacked-by-israel-lobby-group-after-playing-song-lifted-apartheid.html>
- [26] Nino Katamadze Will Not Play Apartheid Israel <http://www.usacbi.org/2012/07/nino-katamadze-will-not-play-apartheid-israel/>
- [27] Expendables 2: Stallone, Willis and Van Damme will not come to Israel <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=%2F6%2F2553554>
- [28] Sizzia Tweets about Israel <https://www.facebook.com/notes/dont-play-apartheid-israel-sizzia-tweets-about-israel/446169305432463>
- [29] Tel Aviv Canceled! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! <http://www.carligans.com/?sid=default&bs=1>
- [30] Apartheid Israel: Lenny Kravitz is Not Boycotting Israel, Be Reassured <http://refrainplayingisrael.blogspot.com/2012/08/apartheid-israel-lenny-kravitz-is-not.html>
- [31] Hora, EIF 2012, Review <http://www.edinburghguide.com/festival/2012/edinburghinternationalfestival/noraEIF2012review-11441>
- [32] South Africa's Wits University student council unanimously passes boycott of Israel resolution <http://www.bdsouthafrica.com/2011/08/university-of-witwatersrand-student.html>
- [33] Peter Brook's Letter to the Cameri: "It is our free choice"
- [34] Lebanon's Mashrou' Leila cancels on Chili Peppers after latter refuses Israel boycott call <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/all-abunimah/lebanons-mashrou-leila-cancels-chili-peppers-after-lebanon-refuses-israel-boycot>
- [35] Jerusalem Development Authority implicated in Boycotted Film Funding. <http://www.kadaitcha.com/2012/09/04/jerusalem-development-authority-implicated-in-boycotted-film-funding/>
- [36] YouGov Survey Results http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/0kh4f1eb8/Jewish%20Chronicle%20Results%20120924.pdf
- [37] Open Letter from Artists to Carnegie Hall <http://adalahny.org/web-action/1002/open-letter-artists-carnegie-hall-cancel-israel-philharmonic-orchestras-performance>
- [38] Artists Cancel Creative Time Summit Appearances Over Israel "Partnership" [UPDATE 7] <http://hyperalergic.com/58499/artists-cancel-their-creative-time-summit-appearances-over-contractual-israeli-partnership/>
- [39] Three more Arab performers pull out of Austrian music festival due to Israeli embassy sponsorship <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/all-abunimah/three-more-arab-performers-pull-out-austrian-music-festival-due-israeli-embassy>
- [40] <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/all-abunimah/rights-groups-launch-petition-thank-stevie-wonder-cancel-israel-army>
- [41] Ten Harpists Bow out of Apartheid Israel Harp Contest <http://harpsofconscience.wordpress.com/2012/11/24/ten-harpists-bow-out-of-apartheid-israel-harp-contest-thank-you-for-having-a-conscience/>
- [42] <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0.7340.14313061.00.html>
- [43] One life less-(une vie de moins) <http://youtu.be/Cq2MpG4gQgk>
- [44] <http://www.rossdaily.gr/en/news/102-oudfestival>
- [45] <http://www.russelltrubronalpalastine.com/en/3140/roger-waters-speech-at-the-un>
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- [47] <http://refrainplayingisrael.blogspot.com/2012/12/andreas-oberg-respects-cultural-boycott.html>
- [48] <http://www.kadaitcha.com/2012/07/10/woody-allen-please-refuse-israels-hasbara-bribes/>

This piece was written by the international Don't Play Apartheid Israel collective, and first appeared online here.

Posted January 3, 2013 in BDS, BNC, Campaigns, Cultural Boycott, Hasbara, Human Rights, National Rights, Political Rights, Press releases, War Crimes.

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