Welcome to the new academic year, and a new newsletter from the PSC YSC!

We want to create a space for student Palestine societies and young members of PSC across the UK to publish their news and connect. We want to celebrate and promote your campaigns and provide regular updates on the situation of Palestine activism across the UK.

We hope to include feature articles each month, with a focus on Palestinian voices, in addition to dedicating a space for those students campaigning for justice in the UK.

We want to build on our connection, cohesion and unity as a youth movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and make sure that everything any of us do is amplified so that we can build on our successes, learn from our failures and work more closely together in the fight for human rights and justice.

In solidarity,

Palestine Solidarity Campaign Youth and Student Committee
DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: NATIONAL STUDENT RALLY

As we know, UK Universities remain deeply complicit in Israel’s brutal oppression of the Palestinian people. Collectively, they invest over £450+ million in companies that aid Israel’s violations of Palestinian human rights.

At campuses across the country, students are launching campaigns to get their institutions to divest from all complicit campuses. And they’re winning. We have invited student activists, sabbatical officers and academics to talk about their campaigns for the next 12 months. Our closing speaker, BDS Movement co-founder Omar Barghouti, will speak about the importance of student activism in Palestine solidarity.

Join us on Wednesday 6th October 2021 at 6pm!
Register: https://bit.ly/PSCStudentRally

Solidarity with the Palestinian people is crucial, now more than ever, especially on campus. The YSC is committed to helping Palestine student society's nationally grow their campaigns, and provide practical and legal support wherever we can.

Palestine student society's are fundamental to the broader Palestine solidarity movement. We really encourage all of our young members and supporters to get as involved as they can in the coming academic year to build the biggest and broadest movement for Palestine.

Please get in contact with PSC if you need any help with your campaigns. We will do all we can to assist you where necessary.

Contact PSC: info@palestinecampaign.org
REPORT: STUDENT DEMO

On the day of the 16th anniversary of the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), hundreds of students took to the streets of London to demand that UK Universities end their complicity in Israeli apartheid. The noisy demonstration swept through the campuses of SOAS, Birkbeck, LSE and KCL, where student activists spoke of their inspiring campaigning work.

They reminded us that Israeli apartheid can only be maintained because of the complicity of our government and our institutions. This includes UK universities. UK Universities collectively invest over £400m in companies complicit in Israeli violations of international law.

Along with investments, UK universities maintain partnerships, programmes, and ties with complicit Israeli institutions. For example, a plethora of UK universities have ties to the Technion in Haifa, which functions as the R&D wing of the IDF, developing military technology to be deployed to oppress Palestinians.

At the demonstration, representatives from a range of campaigning organisations, working on ending UK Universities role in oppression, also spoke to support student’s demands. This included Stop the War Youth and Student, CAAT Universities Network, and the Young Greens.

While the demonstration was a unifying display of solidarity – there’s so much more we need to do. PSCs Youth and Student Committee is working hard to prepare students to campaign for divestment during the next academic year.
THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND CALL FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

In recent months the situation for Palestinians on the international stage has deteriorated under the Trump Administration’s relentless drive to dehumanise and dispossess the Palestinian people through both its attempts to retrospectively legalise Israel’s illegal occupation of the West Bank and its savage budget cuts to the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

However, globally, there have also been positive developments in terms of increased levels of vocal support for Palestinian human rights from grassroots anti-racist movements such as Black Lives Matter, trade unions, and key figures in progressive politics, especially in the United States.

At the Palestinian level, the recent election victory of Joe Biden in the US presidential elections has led to the de-facto collapse of intra-Palestinian peace talks between Fatah and Hamas, as Fatah and its internal security forces in the PA seek to double down on their security collaboration with Israel in the hope of gaining favour with the incoming Joe Biden presidency which they see as being more sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. With Israel more entrenched than ever in its decades-long occupation of Palestinian territory and riding high on its recent normalisation deals with UAE, Bahrain and Sudan, the prospects of meaningful negotiations between the occupier and the occupied remain bleak.

However, further afield, there are reasons for cautious optimism for the global solidarity movement. Despite the deafening silence, if not outright hostility, shown by mainstream political leaders here in the UK towards Palestinian human rights, the BDS movement, seeking the end of the occupation, return of Palestinian refugees, and end to discriminatory laws and policies targeting Palestinians in modern-day Israel, continues to grow in strength and chalk up successes.

The support of national trade unions in the UK, and prominent progressive politicians in the US such as Ilhan Omar, are helping to mainstream the Palestinian struggle against dispossession, occupation and oppression. We must continue the fight for freedom, justice and equality for all, learning the lessons from the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and calling for our public institutions and pensions to divest from companies complicit in Israel’s human rights abuses.

Each and every one of us must mobilise our collective efforts to stand up against oppression, recognising our recent successes as well as setbacks. Though the struggle for justice always faces obstacles and barriers to overcome, we must unite and continue our struggle with the steadfastness and resilience demonstrated by the Palestinians in the face of their plight.
Palestine Solidarity Campaign, in conjunction with academics, Palestinian students, PalSocs and a variety of other groups are campaigning to ensure that we can continue to hold Israel to account for its grave violations of international law without illegitimate disruption on our campuses.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism conflates criticism of the policies, practises, and constitutional order of the State of Israel, with antisemitism.

Unfortunately, the adoption and subsequent deployment of the IHRA definition at some universities across the UK is underlining our ability to hold Israel accountable for harming Palestinians. This obscures the nature of antisemitism and harms the fight against all forms of racial discrimination.

However, the campaign to push back on adoption of the definition and centre justice for Palestinians is gaining strength. There are a number of high-profile examples where the proposed adoption of the IHRA definition was successfully opposed because of its harm to both academic freedom and the right to campaign for Palestinian justice. The most prominent recent example of this occurred at University College London (UCL), where in February 2021 the university’s academic board voted to support rescinding the university’s previous adoption of the IHRA definition.

As part of our growing campaign, we’ve just launched a website with the British Committee for Universities of Palestine (BRICUP) and Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JfJfP) https://noihradefinition.co.uk/ where we’ve compiled information and resources such as a campaigns toolkit for students, university staff and others to get involved in opposing the definition. We would encourage you to get involved in this campaign and if there are plans to introduce the definition in your university, contact us immediately via the links on the website and we will do all we can to help you run a successful campaign on your campus.