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USA/Palestine

BDS: Repression and Progress

- News from around the world -

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It wouldn't be surprising for, let's say, Fox News to fire a commentator for expressing support for the Palestinian struggle. But some fans of CNN, known for its 24/7 denunciations of all things Trump, might be taken aback that a "liberal" media outlet would take such action.

Professor Marc Lamont Hill was abruptly terminated by CNN not for on-air comments but for speech at the United Nations calling for a single democratic state in Palestine "from the river to the sea." Not only can't any such idea be discussed on CNN's airwaves, god forbid, but no one associated with the network can be allowed to utter it in public.

Such paragons of free speech as B'nai Brith International, and the director of Hillel at Temple University, demanded that the university immediately fire him. Professor Hill holds the endowed Klein College Steve Charles Chair in Media, Cities and Solutions at Temple. Although some members of the university's board and administration joined the chorus of denunciation, norms of free speech and due process "and the firestorm that would meet the attempt to get rid of him" appear to keep his tenured position secure for now.

For further information on this case, see "The Harsh and Unjust Punishment of Marc Lamont Hill" by David Palumbo-Liu, *The Nation*, December 4, 2018. [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) is raising funds to publish an ad demanding his reinstatement by CNN.

The vicious attack on Professor Hill follows the actions by the University of Michigan against Professor John Cheney-Lippold and Graduate Student Instructor Lucy Peterson, discussed in depth by Alan Wald [here](#).

These assaults, however, are also occurring in the context of significant advances by the BDS (boycott/divestment/sanctions) movement. Students on U.S. campuses are calling on universities to divest from corporations involved in Israel, despite Zionist smear campaigns targeting BDS supporters.

Recently Airbnb decided it would no longer profit from most illegal Israeli settlements on stolen Palestinian land. This followed an international campaign led by the #StolenHomes coalition. The Israeli government threatened retaliation, and in the ultimate absurdity, a group of Americans filed a "civil rights" lawsuit over Airbnb's action.

There have been other BDS successes, but the so-called Israel Anti-Boycott Act, a piece of bipartisan poison that would flush the First Amendment down the toilet for effective pro-Palestinian activism, is pending in the lame-duck Congress as we go to press. Where is our gridlock when we really need it?

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