

From Ryan Mervin Bellerose to Associated Students of San Diego State University
(April 1, 2014):

Dear Associated Students of San Diego State University,

My name is Ryan Bellerose, I am a Metis person in Canada and an organizer in the Idle No More indigenous rights movement. It has come to my attention that you will soon be voting on a motion to divest from companies doing business with Israel. I urge you to vote no.

As an indigenous person who is extremely active in the indigenous rights struggle here in Canada, I strongly oppose the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement against Israel, which is behind the divestment campaign at your campus. BDS is an attack on the indigenous rights of the Jewish people, because it slanders them as colonizers and denies their rights to self-determination in their homeland. The Jews meet all the criteria of an indigenous people: they developed their culture, language, and religion in the land of Israel and maintained their unique identity and connection to this land for millennia. Those who challenge the indigenous status of Jews must understand that there is no statute of limitations on indigenous rights, and that colonizers cannot subsume indigenous status simply through conquest, lest the status of all indigenous peoples be similarly brought into question. As such, I stand in solidarity with Jewish rights to self-governance in their traditional lands and against the anti-Zionist BDS campaign, which often abuses and co-opts my people's struggle.

Do not be fooled by the BDS Movement's manipulative, empty rhetoric. If you truly support justice and human rights for indigenous peoples, vote no.

Sincerely,

Ryan Mervin Bellerose,
Organizer and Participant in INM Calgary

P.S. If you're interested in learning more about this issue, feel free to check out my articles:

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/on-the-theft-of-indigenous-struggles/>

<http://www.themetropolitain.ca/articles/view/1235>

<http://www.torontosun.com/2013/06/14/native-jewish-bond-thicker-than-water>