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# Taking the Offensive

## The Brandeis Brief

February 2014

When *The Chronicle of Higher Education* observes that the American Studies Association is now on the defensive, it is a sign that efforts by LDB and its allies are bearing fruit. While the ASA's anti-Israel boycott is bad news, the widespread backlash

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against the boycotters has turned the association's controversial resolution into a pyrrhic victory for anti-Israel activists. The good news from Santa Barbara, described below, confirms the trend: We are gaining traction and having an impact. The Brandeis Center resolved its pending legal complaint against the University of California at Santa Barbara when the university's chancellor agreed to strengthen protections for Jewish students there. This issue of *The Brandeis Brief* discusses continuing blunders by academic associations, such as the Modern Language Association, as well as forceful pushback by the Brandeis Center and others against the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel (BDS). The Brandeis Center has also just concluded its highly successful inaugural national law students' conference and is preparing for its first public event at Penn Law. You can read about both events, as well as a new essay by historian Harold Brackman, below.

## Articles

 MLA Logo

### **The MLA's Biggest Blunders**

**Kenneth L. Marcus**

*The Algemeiner*

The Modern Language Association (MLA) blundered repeatedly over its treatment of Israel in the run-up to its annual conference this month. Technically the 30,000 member association was not contemplating a resolution to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel (BDS) per se at this week's upcoming confab. Instead it was debating a halfway measure that insiders observe was intended to be a stepping-

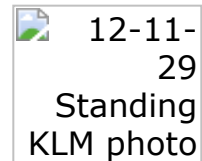
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### **Support LDB**

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The Louis D. Brandeis Center is a nonprofit organization supported by individuals, groups and foundations that share our concern about Jewish college students. Contributions are tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. To [support](#) our efforts to combat campus anti-Semitism, please contact us at [info@brandeiscenter.com](mailto:info@brandeiscenter.com).

**Can  
We  
Help  
You?**


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29  
Standing  
KLM photo

Kenneth  
Marcus

The Louis D. Brandeis Center stands ready if we can help you to combat anti-Semitism in higher education. [Please contact us](#) if you are a student or professor who needs our help. We are also available to provide technical assistance to university administrators who are interested in achieving legal compliance and best

stone to worse actions. But it did so in a way that should embarrass every one of its members. This was not just a mistake. This was five blunders rolled into one.

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## **The University of California at Santa Barbara**

### **UC Santa Barbara Strengthens Protections for Jewish Students**

*The Brandeis Blog*

The University of California at Santa Barbara has pledged to implement recommendations from the Brandeis Center, and in return LDB has agreed to withdraw its U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights Title VI complaint asserting that the university had created a hostile environment for Jewish students. "We are pleased with the university's response, and look forward to see it implemented so that all students - regardless of religious or ethnic identity - are protected from civil rights violations on campus," said LDB President Kenneth L. Marcus.

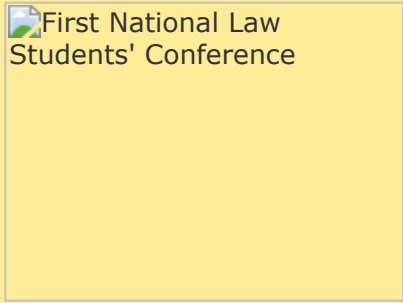
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### **Brandeis Center Holds First National Law Students' Conference**

Sitara Kedilaya, *The Brandeis Blog*

practices for eliminating campus anti-Semitism.

The Brandeis Center held its first National Conference for Law Students in Los Angeles on January 2nd and January 3rd. This is part of the Brandeis Center's [new initiative for law school chapters](#).

First National Law Students' Conference

The conference focused on educating and engaging law student members of the LDB law school chapters by offering a series of lectures and panel discussions presented by several distinguished attorneys and scholars. Students from the LDB law school chapters of UCLA, American University Washington College of Law, and the University of Pennsylvania were in attendance for the event. The conference concentrated on a variety of legal advocacy and policy issues pertinent to the Brandeis Center's mission, such as freedom of speech, advocacy for civil rights, and combating anti-Semitism.

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## The Crusade to Make "White Racism" Quintessentially Jewish

Harold Brackman, *The Brandeis Blog*



Dov Hikind

Last Purim, Brooklyn Assemblyman Dov Hikind "blacked up" in an incredible display of bad taste. Jews in particular were appalled, but there's a subgroup of Jewish professors who may have felt vindicated.

Practitioners of "the whiteness school"- prominent names include the late Michael Paul Rogin, Edward L. Goldstein, Jeffrey Melnick,

Assemblyman Dov Hikind

and Karen Brodtkin-argue that for performers like Al Jolson applying burnt cork was a strategy of ethnic assimilation. Not only Jewish performers but their first- and second-generation Jewish audiences are supposed to have derived a sense of belonging to the superior white American majority by application

of burnt cork that heightened the contrasting white skin color beneath the black mask.

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## **Backlash Against Israel Boycott Puts American Studies Assn. on Defensive**

**Peter Schmidt, *The Chronicle of Higher Education***

Peter Schmidt's article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reports that pushback from several quarters, including the prospect of litigation by the Louis D. Brandeis

Center, have put the American Studies Association on the defensive after the group adopted a controversial anti-Israel boycott resolution.

### BDS Protest

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## **LDB Staff Attorney Danit Sibovits to Headline Inaugural Event at LDB's Penn Law Chapter**

### Danit Sibovits

The new Penn Law chapter of the Brandeis Center will host its first public event on February 5, 2013, featuring LDB Staff Attorney Danit Sibovits. On the same day, LDB President Kenneth L. Marcus will address members of the American

University's Washington College of Law chapter in Washington, D.C.

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