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QueerUP!
Shame on NU Pride and Huskies for Israel
for Hosting Islamophobic, Pinkwashing Bigot Michael Lucas

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Boston, MA - This evening, QueerUP (Queers Undermining Pinkwashing) undertook a direct action in protest of NU Pride, an undergraduate LQBTQ organization, and Huskies for Israel, the undergraduate Zionist organization, for hosting infamous pinkwasher and Islamophobe Michael Lucas at Northeastern University.¹ QueerUP is an independent group of Boston-area trans and queer identified people and allies who refuse to support the Israeli occupation and colonization of Palestine. We are outraged by the appropriation and exploitation of queer voices to distract from and legitimize the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.²

NU Pride and Huskies for Israel brought Lucas to speak at the student center at Northeastern University. Some of Lucas’ most outrageous statements include:

- "Israel is the only country in the Middle East that supports gay rights, while its enemies round up, torture, and condemn gay people to death.”³
- "It totally escapes me how gay people can side with burqa-wearing, jihad-screaming, Koran-crazed Muslims.”⁴
- "I have a problem with people separating terrorists from the world that breeds them, from the world that they were derived from, which is the world of Islam.”⁵
- “… the homosexual and Jewish communities should unite against Islam.”⁶
- “The Koran is today’s ‘Mein Kampf.’ By the way, ‘Kampf’ and ‘jihad’ are, respectively, the German and Arabic words for ‘struggle.’ If enough Germans had burned Hitler’s book before the Nazis overpowered Germany, perhaps the Germans wouldn’t have wound up having to rebuild their entire country over the ashes of countless millions of dead. So I salute Charles Merrill for his artistic and social bravery in burning a Koran.”⁷

² While QueerUP stands in solidarity with Palestinians and all those working to support Palestinian liberation, including Students for Justice in Palestine, we are not affiliated with any SJP chapter.
● “This monstrosity [the Cordoba House, an Islamic cultural center dubbed the “Ground Zero Mosque” by Islamophobes] is designed as a demonstration of political Islam’s ascendancy.”

● “I hate Muslims, absolutely. It’s a horrible, horrible religion. It’s a plague… they’re stuck in a horrible lie, brainwashed from birth to death. And now they have been stuck in time since the 7th century. They have not contributed to civilization in any way, in any field — political thought, science, music, architecture, nothing for century after century. What do they produce? Carpets. That’s how they should travel because that’s the only way they travel without killing people.”

Lucas has also attacked Orthodox Jewish communities, calling them “the anal warts on the body of Israeli society,” “vermin,” and “the Hassidic scourge.” In addition to these public statements, Lucas filmed scenes in his gay porn film “Men of Israel” among the ruins of the ethnically cleansed Palestinian village of Lifta.

Trans and queer communities should recognize what oppression, violence, and discrimination at the hands of government and military forces looks like. The state of Israel razes Palestinian homes, constructing settlements upon the rubble. It has also constructed a separation wall, effectively separating Palestinians from their own families, villages, and land. Palestinians --often children under age 18-- are subjected to midnight raids, arrested by the Israeli military, held in Israeli jails without charge, beaten, and denied medical care. Palestinians are prevented from moving and travelling freely, forced to pass daily through militarized checkpoints, and arrested when they travel on the “wrong” side of segregated roads. Israeli officials have referred to choking off food supplies as putting Palestinians “on a diet,” and to slaughtering young Palestinians as “mowing the grass.” Indeed, Israeli forces have bombed hospitals, offices, and apartment buildings, and have killed protesters by firing live rounds at them. When we refer to conditions of occupation, colonization, and apartheid, these are sadly only a small sample of what we mean.

Pinkwashing is a propaganda technique used by the apartheid state of Israel and its supporters to promote Israel’s “progressive” record on gay rights in order to obscure and justify the ongoing occupation and apartheid in Palestine. Claims that “Israel is a sanctuary to the LGBT community” and assertions of gay Palestinians seeking and finding refuge there are used to cast the state of Israel as a savior and protector of queer people in the Middle East, when in fact Israel offers only cages, systematic oppression, violence, and a swift deportation to any Palestinian, queer or otherwise.

The intended result of this strategy is to implicitly justify the actions of Israel in the Middle East, particularly Palestine, from the more brutal and violent aspects of the occupation, to foreign policy rhetoric on the necessity of U.S. support for Israel and condemnation of nations such as Iran. Pinkwashing is not limited in use by the

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9 http://mondoweiss.net/2013/02/unveils­pinkwashing­documentary.html.
10 http://mondoweiss.net/2013/02/unveils­pinkwashing­documentary.html.
11 http://www.jewcy.com/jewish­sex­and­love/gay_porn_mogul_israel.
12 http://maxblumenthal.com/2011/02/money­talks­nakba­porn­kingpin­michael­lucas­bullies­the­lgbt­center/.
13 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/apr/16/israel.
14 http://consortiumnews.com/2012/11/16/likening­palestinians­to­blades­of­grass/.
Israeli government and is widely employed by organizations and individuals in the U.S. and Israel.

On the part of the Israeli government, pinkwashing falls under the umbrella of the larger “Brand Israel” campaign, which is a concerted marketing strategy, conceived of in 2005, and officially started in 2006, aimed at improving Israel as a brand abroad, especially in the U.S.\(^\text{17}\) Pinkwashing appropriates queer voices and struggles, especially those of queer Palestinians, to garner support for the Israeli regime and its settler-colonial project. Israel, as the self-styled savior of all gays in the region, also seeks and all too often finds the support of queer people and organizations in the U.S., and around the world. By marketing itself as a hub for international gay tourism,\(^\text{18}\) it also gains the financial support of many in these communities. This normalization of Israel as a fun gay tourism destination normalizes the myriad forms of oppression being perpetrated by the state.

QueerUP refuses to be complicit in this process. As a U.S.-based organization, we are living and working on colonized land. Many of us are settlers in this country, and beneficiaries of settler colonialism. We have a responsibility and are committed to challenging our own settler nation and others, including Israel. We will not let our name, our struggles, or our communities be used to promote and normalize apartheid, colonization, and occupation. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and will not tolerate those who seek to justify their continued colonization. For these reasons, we voiced our opposition to Lucas, speaking at Northeastern University today.

**Lucas’ pinkwashing, outspoken Islamophobic bigotry, and support and exploitation of the Israeli occupation are not excusable. This man has no place speaking about gay rights given his support of the violation of the rights of all Palestinians, and he does not speak for us.**

We are appalled that NU Pride, “an undergraduate student organization at Northeastern for the spectrum of sexual and gender orientations and expressions,”\(^\text{19}\) decided to host Lucas, a speaker who is notorious for his pinkwashing, anti-Muslim and anti-Orthodox Jewish hate speech. NU Pride should be ashamed of supporting a man who uses the same kinds of hateful language in racist, anti-Muslim, and anti-Semitic ways that has been used to do violence to queer communities for generations, and is still being used today. This violence cannot be excused when it comes from a queer person, and there is no justification for its use on Muslim, Palestinian, or Orthodox Jewish people, queer or otherwise. In supporting Lucas and his film at Northeastern, NU Pride is supporting the structures of oppression and privilege that have and continue to harm *all* queer people, in large and small ways, every day.

\(^{17}\) [http://electronicintifada.net/content/behind-brand-israel-israels-recent-propaganda-efforts/8694](http://electronicintifada.net/content/behind-brand-israel-israels-recent-propaganda-efforts/8694).


\(^{19}\) [http://www.northeastern.edu/lgbtqa/community/organizations.html](http://www.northeastern.edu/lgbtqa/community/organizations.html).