

Unmasking

BDS

“The BDS Movement... is unacceptable and must be most strongly condemned. The argumentation patterns and methods of the BDS Movement are antisemitic... and inevitably kindle memories of the Nazi era.”
(Motion adopted by the German Parliament, the Bundestag, on May 17, 2019)

contents

- 04** **US says NO to BDS**
Ted Cruz and Ted Deutch spearhead the battle
 • by Steve Linde
- 06** **Germany's antisemitism commissioner fights hatred against Jews and Israel**
 • by Orit Arfa
- 09** **New antisemitism presents new challenges**
 • by Linda Gradstein
- 12** **Terrorists in Suits: Unmasking BDS's support for terror**
 • by Maayan Hoffman
- 16** **World leaders speak out against BDS**
- 18** **Boomerang: Economic pressure hits BDS campaigners**
 • by Benjamin Weinthal
- 21** **Fighting BDS online**
 • by Ilanit Chernick
- 24** **Christians who stand with Israel combat BDS**
 • by Brian Schrauger
- 26** **International legal network sets back BDS across the globe**
 • by Yonah Jeremy Bob
- 28** **We don't need no education**
 • by Liat Collins
- 31** **Concert – Together for Israel**
 • by Alan Rosenbaum



Editor: **Steve Linde**
 Business Development Manager: **Reut Levy**
 Graphic Designer: **Daniela Gleiser**
 and **Michal Torkia**
 Copy Editor: **Elli Wohlgelernter**

THE JERUSALEM POST



SIMA VAKNIN-GIL

Winning the battle against BDS

In October 2015, the Israeli government acted upon the need take action against the boycott campaign, otherwise known as BDS, against the State of Israel, and called upon the newly-formed Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy to lead this initiative.

The government's decision to assign a dedicated ministry to address a very real challenge Israel's national security with a proactive approach was a vital, needed and long overdue.

The goal of the boycott campaign, even if it's not officially declared as such, is to dismantle the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Nothing less. They hide, camouflage, and cloak their true intentions through lofty language of "human rights" and "liberalism" while portraying Palestinians as victims, but never perpetrators. These hidden messages are intertwined in their actions, speeches and protests with the express aim of targeting Israel.

For three years, the Ministry of Strategic Affairs has been directing the struggle against the delegitimization campaign and its calls for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel. The campaign, led by a rigid pro-Palestinian agenda, is carried out by groups and operatives with deep ties to terrorist groups and rife with unbridled antisemitism and hostility towards Israel.

Things have begun to change. BDS and its true intentions have been exposed, and as a result, began suffering a series of blows. Legislation against BDS has been passed in 27 US states, bank accounts have been shut down, and crowdfunding websites refuse to host BDS for its ties to terror. The campaign's failures are not in any one field. Economically, academically, legally, and culturally BDS is suffering great losses. Its precarious situation is the product of coordinated and effective campaign by a network of pro-Israel organizations alongside the Israeli government.

This is not enough. Fostering a country's foreign relations in the 21st century requires modern ways of thinking and action that go far beyond "classical" diplomacy. Even though BDS is on the defensive, it will continue to try, and sometimes succeed, to win hearts and minds. Whereas the boycott campaign may not pose an immediate existential threat, letting

it go unchallenged will haunt generations to come. Like a steady stream of water against a wall, BDS has the potential to permeate and create fissures before finally leading to collapse.

It is important to note that BDS is not a few unorganized groups muddling around, but rather, a well-organized and coordinated campaign comprising hundreds of organizations around the globe. In the face of its ongoing pressure, it is necessary to conduct an aggressive, broad, sustained and holistic strategy to ensure that BDS stays on the defensive.

“

BDS and its true intentions have been exposed and as a result began suffering a series of blows

Sima Vaknin-Gil

”

This means we need to be continuously learning. We have to identify emerging threats, develop sophisticated and creative methods of action, become more familiar with legal frameworks, and identify their Achilles' heel.

The learning curve our ministry went through in the beginning led us to conclude that three areas avenues in which to advance – expose BDS and its ties to antisemitism and terrorism, inhibit its ability to raise funds, and share the truth about Israel for the world to see.

Despite the many achievements of the ministry, both large and small, I could not ignore the constant gut feeling that in order to eradicate this phenomenon from the root, we must not only continue with existing and proven methods, but also supplement them with complementary actions to achieve even greater success.

Israel's struggle over its image as a democratic, Jewish, legitimate and liberal state in the public discourse in Western countries has deteriorated since the delegitimization campaign abegan in 2001 with the Durban Conference, and took off in 2005 with the founding of BDS.

The Palestinians cleverly managed to convince the world that they are the sole victims. They portray themselves as weak and downtrodden with no rights, while Israel is the product of white colonialism with worldviews and policies no longer acceptable in today's world. They are the good and we are bad. And there are those who buy this simplistic narrative without asking too many questions.

In an age where facts and knowledge are less important than one's public image, there is little reason to counter the accusations against Israel in the prism of historical justice. In an age when the public is divided into camps, right vs. left, hawk vs. peacenik, there is no place for complex explanations. There is no room for shades of gray.

In an age of ignorance and superficiality in public discourse, it is easy to mobilize broad audiences who feel deprived with catchy slogans and lies, even if they have no connection to reality. In an anti-establishment era such as ours, it is not enough to win the support of a country's leadership; we must reach its people as well.

Explaining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of its historical roots and geopolitical situation is a task that is destined to fail. Instead, the fight against the delegitimization campaign must be based on a broad method attacking the false narrative that Israel is the arch villain and Palestinians are the noble victims.

The Ministry of Strategic Affairs has been, and will continue to be, successful alongside our friends throughout the world in changing the narrative and containing the phenomenon. At the same time, it must continue, and even increase, its scope of activities. We need to ensure that Israel's image problem does not pass the point of no return.

In order to turn the tables around, or at least to bring about a significant change in the existing equation, a process of a different magnitude is required. It will require all of us – the government and civil society in Israel and abroad – to act together in a coordinated fashion. Only a clear definition of the threat and the continuation of a series of complementary actions in the political, public and civil spheres will lead to a shift of the equation in our favor.

Sima Vaknin-Gil is the outgoing director-general of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

US says NO to BDS

Senator Ted Cruz and Rep. Ted Deutch spearhead the battle in Congress

• By STEVE LINDE

No country has taken a stronger stand and action against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement than the United States, both in Congress and in the 50 states – 27 states, from New York to South Carolina, have already passed regulations using their own finances to block BDS activists from accomplishing their goals.

The battle against BDS is being led by the pro-Israel community in the US, and it is important to note that it remains a bipartisan issue bringing together Republicans and Democrats. Two of its most powerful warriors are Ted Cruz, the Republican senator from Texas who ran for president in 2016, and Ted Deutch, a Democrat from Florida in the House of Representatives.

In exclusive interviews, Cruz and Deutch were clear that they both consider the BDS movement not just anti-Israel, but antisemitic too.

“Boycotts and other attacks on the livelihood of Jews have been part of antisemitism for centuries, and BDS is one of the latest manifestations,” Cruz said. “It is an antisemitic movement that seeks to delegitimize and destroy the Jewish State, and deserves to be condemned. The United States and our allies, meanwhile, should stand with Israel and ensure that it has what it needs to defend itself diplomatically and militarily.”

Deutch agreed.

“The BDS movement is rooted in the antisemitic belief that the only Jewish state in the world doesn’t have a right to exist,” he said. “There is a clear difference between political speech critical of any government’s policies and advocacy for a policy that results in the end of the Jewish state. Efforts to delegitimize Israel or treat Israel differently than every other country in the world cross that line into antisemitism.”

Cruz expressed hope that an anti-BDS resolution that he drafted with Senator Tim Kaine, a Democrat from Virginia, would

soon be passed by the Senate.

“I recently introduced a resolution with Senator Kaine that condemns all antisemitism, including boycotts targeting Jewish businesses,” said Cruz. “It has over 50 cosponsors in the Senate, and I hope that the Senate will soon pass it and condemn these manifestations of antisemitism in one voice.”

Cruz pointed out that “there’s a long tradition of senators coming together to combat BDS. In 2015, I penned a letter with Senator Gillibrand to Federica Mogherini, which was signed by 36 senators, condemning Europe’s efforts to impose labeling restrictions that would’ve amounted to a de facto boycott of Israel.”

Mogherini has served as High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy since November 2014.

Asked what he had accomplished in his battle against BDS, Deutch responded: “Boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning Israel are counter-productive toward achieving a peaceful, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have supported legislation to condemn the BDS movement, and considered legislative options for pushing back against it. I have also pressed the Department of Education to seriously address antisemitism on our college campuses.”

Cruz said he was proud that his home state had taken a lead in the fight against BDS.

“There is no question that we’re seeing a dangerous rise of antisemitism around the world, and it must be condemned in all forms,” he said. “In 2017, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed anti-BDS legislation into law, which sent a powerful message that Texas stands with Israel and will not do business with or invest certain public funds in companies that participate in this discriminatory economic campaign that intentionally seeks to delegitimize and destroy the Jewish state.”

Florida’s Governor Ron DeSantis led a high-level delegation to Israel in May, and came out strongly against BDS during a visit to Ariel University.

“There is no place for BDS in the State of

“

It is an antisemitic movement that seeks to delegitimize and destroy the Jewish State

Ted Cruz

”

Florida – don’t worry about that,” he said, noting that he had helped in the successful battle to get Airbnb to drop its boycott of Jews in the West Bank. “Lo and behold, because of our leadership and the leadership of others, just recently Airbnb reversed its discriminatory policy.”

Deutch said that as a member of the Task Force for Combating Antisemitism, he believed prejudice against Israel and Jews could not be tolerated in Florida or anywhere else in the US.



▲ Ron DeSantis, Florida Governor

(Courtesy)



▲ Senator Ted Cruz: Boycotts and other attacks on the livelihood of Jews have been part of antisemitism for centuries. (Kamil Krzaczynski)

“We can’t allow antisemitism to continue unchecked,” said Deutch. “Whether from the political Left or Right, from white supremacists or anti-Zionists, hatred of Jews will only spread unless we speak out. At the same time, it is unacceptable when groups manipulate this violent hatred of Jews for their personal political gain. When you weaponize issues like antisemitism and support for Israel, you make the Jewish community and the state of Israel less safe.”

Cruz said President Donald Trump’s decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem sent out “a powerful message” to Israel’s enemies.

“Last year, President Trump relocated the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, where it should be,” said the Texas senator. “Jerusalem has been Israel’s capital since the founding of the modern state of Israel, and it’s been the eternal capital of the Jewish people for over 3,000 years. Moving the US Embassy to Israel’s rightful capital sends a powerful message to those who wrongly seek to delegitimize Israel. The United States and the state of Texas unequivocally stand with Israel.”

The picture is not entirely rosy, though. At least two Congresswomen, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, both of whom have hailed their Middle East roots, have openly endorsed the BDS movement.

Tlaib, a Democrat from Michigan, said she sought to highlight “Israel’s violations of the Palestinians’ human rights,” while Omar, a Democrat from Minnesota, said she was providing an alternative view to the mainstream US position squarely supporting Israel.



▲ Ted Deutch, Democratic member of the US House of Representatives for Florida (Flickr)

“When I see Israel institute laws that recognize it as a Jewish state and do not recognize the other religions living in the country, and we still hold it up as a democracy in the Middle East, I almost chuckle,” Omar said.

Asked what their message was to the Israeli people as Israel celebrates its 71st anniversary, both Cruz and Deutch played down such radical views, saying that the US is committed to defending the Jewish state from all threats against it, including BDS.

“The United States stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel in commemoration of 71 years of independence,” said Cruz. “It has been seven decades since Prime Minister

“

Boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning Israel are counter-productive toward achieving a peaceful, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Ted Deutch

”

Ben-Gurion made his historic declaration of independence and President Truman gave his historic recognition. I’m proud to say that America continues to stand unshakably with our allies.”

Deutch pointed out that “Israel has withstood 71 years of wars, unending security threats, global delegitimization campaigns, and existential threats. But the story of Israel is the story of hope. The United States Congress’s commitment to the bilateral strategic relationship and Israel’s security to defend itself from evolving threats remains firm and unwavering. Personally, I am a proud Zionist who strongly defends our close connection to Israel, which are based on shared values.” ♦

An exclusive interview with Dr. Felix Klein

Germany's antisemitism commissioner fights hatred against Jews and Israel

• By ORIT ARFA

BERLIN – In 2018, Dr. Felix Klein jumped at the chance to take on Germany's new position of Federal Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight Against Antisemitism. For four years prior, he had served as the Special Representative for Relations with Jewish Organizations and Issues Relating to Antisemitism, so the transition was a natural one.

Contrary to what his last name and position may suggest, Klein was raised in a Protestant household in Darmstadt by a German, Romanian-born father and German-born mother. Klein recalls growing up with Jewish classmates, and his best friend in college was a Canadian Jew. In 1986, he spent a month in Haifa on tour as a violinist and developed a love for Israel, which he visits about twice a year.

Recent headlines suggest that Klein has his work cut out for him.

Antisemitic incidents are on the rise, including a spate of physical assaults against Hebrew-speakers on the streets (mostly by refugees or German nationals of Arab or Muslim descent) and antisemitic bullying in schools. On social media, a once dormant extreme right-wing is rearing its ugly head. The German government itself has come under scrutiny for not doing enough to hold by its national mandate to safeguard Israel's security.

Klein made news on May 25 when came out in German media recommending that Jews in Germany avoid wearing a kippah in public due to the rise in antisemitism.

"I cannot advise Jews to wear the kippot everywhere all the time in Germany," Klein



▲ Dr. Felix Klein, Federal Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight Against Antisemitism. *(Courtesy)*

said, adding that he had changed his mind on the subject.

"I made this statement in order to trigger a discussion in the German public about the security of the Jewish community," Klein told me, saying his statement should be understood more as a call to action. "It is my aim that the German society understands the fight against antisemitism as a common effort. The first step is to raise general awareness of the problem. I came to this opinion after the presentation of the official figures regarding the big increase of antisemitic crimes in 2018, including attacks against persons wearing kippot in public. If we join forces in civil society and in government, I am optimistic that we can successfully fight antisemitism and effectively protect the Jewish community."

In his position, Klein can only make recommendations and leverage his ties with the government to implement programs and changes. On June 6, his office will set

up a new commission for the fight against antisemitism between the federal government and federal states to push forward issues of prevention and education.

Klein would prefer not to rate what source of antisemitism poses the greater danger: Islamic antisemitism, traditional ethnic right-wing antisemitism, or radical Left antisemitism expressed as anti-Zionism.

"I fight every form of antisemitism; there is no lighter or less dangerous antisemitism," Klein said in an interview at a beer garden located near the German Parliament building. "We have to fight it everywhere. There's a red line and we have to fight it in every form, whether it's BDS or right wing or anti-Zionist. If you make a prioritization, then you immediately get into a discussion of one group played out against the other – that Germans say it's the Arabs, migrants and refugees; and they say it's the right-wingers. That's a useless discussion and I'd like to avoid that."

The German government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism which states that denial of Israel's right to exist is a modern-day form of antisemitism.

"Knowledge of that definition is necessary in the police academies; lawyers should know it, and also teachers because it gives orientation," says Klein. "It's legally non-binding, but it's very helpful in raising sensitivity."

However, he believes more has to be done to systematize the application of this definition. Perpetrators of antisemitic attacks – from vandalism to physical assaults – are often not fully known to authorities. In a recent survey, 90 percent of reported antisemitic expressions were attributed to the "right wing," with many cases categorized as such by default.

"There were cases in which police attributed in a demonstration organized by Islamists the showing of the Hitler salute to the 'right-wing' category. I wouldn't put it there."

One of Klein's first call to action was to set up better monitoring and reporting systems to identify sources of antisemitism across the German federal states and to tailor prevention programs accordingly.

"In an area with mainly Muslim perpetrators, we have to intensify our work on integration courses and also with Muslim associations and with the mosques. When we have right-wing antisemitism in other parts, then we have to do more in our political education work."

As for the new Muslim Arab population, which studies reveal carry the antisemitic views of their homelands, Germany's special relationship with Israel, in addition to Germany's democratic values, are already being embedded in integration courses. However, education in the home often competes with that.

"We have the situation, which we cannot really solve, in that many families with Arab backgrounds get satellite television from Arab countries where antisemitic narratives are very common – in soap operas, in news about anything that happens in Israel, and in Gaza and in Ramallah, of course. They have a certain antisemitic bias that's being directly transported to families in Germany, and then often young people take those opinions in schools."

Satellite television cannot be outlawed; however, he is pleased that social media giants are obliged to ban hate speech, according



▲ A kippah demonstration in front of a synagogue in Berlin

(Reuters)

to German legislation.

"The Internet is a major source for it because in real life people traditionally would hesitate to express antisemitic views because they would think that someone would contradict or get resistance. On the Internet, you can post whatever you like, in the beginning at least."

“

When someone says that Israel is an apartheid state, that's antisemitism because 'an apartheid state' by definition cannot be legitimate

Felix Klein

”

In this case, hate-speech also includes expressions of Islamophobia, which Klein believes is often related to antisemitism: "I think that many antisemites also hate Muslims."

What about antisemitism emanating from Muslims?

"When the antisemitism comes from Muslims themselves, then in most of the cases it's related to Israel."

Klein agrees with the "3D" designation put forth by Natan Sharansky when it comes to differentiating between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism: Demonization, Delegitimization, and Double standards.

"For me, that is the case when someone says that Israel is an 'apartheid state.' That's already antisemitism because an 'apartheid state' by definition cannot be legitimate."

As a non-partisan appointee by the Merkel government, Klein enjoys the luxury of critiquing the German government itself across political parties. It recently come under scrutiny for what are perceived as anti-Israel attitudes or measures. These include funding of NGOs with proven ties to BDS; Germany's voting patterns in the United Nations when it comes to Israel; and Germany's insistence on holding on to the Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

On May 17, a parliamentary vote tempered



Germany 1939



Paris 2019

“In the future, no event with BDS-involvement will be tolerated on the premises of the Bundestag. We will now have to find a feasible way how the federal government should implement the decision of the Bundestag

Felix Klein

”

some concerns. Backed by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s governing coalition consisting of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU), and the Social Democrats (SPD), along with the Free Democrats (FDP) and the Greens in the opposition, the Bundestag adopted a non-binding anti-BDS resolution which called the movement antisemitic, a move praised by Israeli leaders and the pro-Israel and Jewish community.

“The vote is a strong political statement against the BDS movement, condemning its aims and methods as clearly antisemitic,” Klein said, days after the vote. “In the future, no event with BDS-involvement will be tolerated on the premises of the Bundestag. We will now have to find a feasible way how the federal government should implement the decision of the Bundestag.”

Klein is thankful that BDS – which the government now officially considers a permutation of the Nazi-era boycott of Jewish goods, is not as widespread a phenomenon in Germany as it is in other countries.

“I would welcome if other European countries adopted similar measure,” he said.

In a more controversial vote in March, the Free Democrats (FDP) issued a parliamentary motion aimed at curbing German voting

patterns in the United Nations condemning Israel. All political parties aside from the FDP and the right-wing AfD (Alternative for Deutschland) voted against it, with the governing coalition citing improper parliamentary protocol as the reason for the negative vote. Klein said this does not reflect the government’s lack of commitment to Israel.

“I understand the criticism. I’m very unhappy that the FDP motion didn’t have a majority vote because of parliamentary rules.”

Regarding Iran, Klein is fully aware of the nuclear ambitions of the antisemitic regime. “We think the JCPOA would be a possibility to contain that. I know that Israel is against that and we don’t know how the story would end. So the methods are different, but I also think we should be aware of the danger of Hamas and Hezbollah gaining ground here in Europe and also in Germany.”

As for the German government’s hesitation to label Hezbollah’s “political wing” as a terrorist organization, such a matter – including that of labeling products made in Jewish areas of the West Bank – is a pan-European issue.

“Personally, I think it’s very difficult to define the difference between a political and military wing of an organization. Germany

is not alone in the world; there is a European discussion about that. It would be better to have a common European position regarding that matter. I know the discussion is not finished.”

Germany must also carefully monitor funding to NGOs in the Palestinian territories as well as textbooks of UNWRA-based schools.

“It’s a big problem for everyone, not only public but private partners. I think we have to stop accepting funding when there is an organization that is openly against the right of Israel to exist. That’s unacceptable.”

In German civil society as well, media, schools, and universities should examine portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that may subtly or outright demonize Israel.

At the end of the day, Klein doesn’t want to dwell only on the negative, such as the portrayal of Jews as Nazi victims and current day victims. He’s encouraged by the flowering of Jewish institutions and culture (and Israeli restaurants, as an Israeli food lover) throughout Germany.

“What’s effective is to increase knowledge of Judaism in Germany – to raise awareness that Jewish culture is an integral part of our diverse German culture, and whoever attacks that attacks the whole culture.” ♦

New antisemitism presents new challenges

• By LINDA GRADSTEIN

The German Parliament recently passed a strongly worded resolution calling the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) “antisemitic,” and the same week three fires were intentionally set at two Chabad houses in Massachusetts. It was a reminder that as much as governments can try to legislate against antisemitism, it seems to be on the increase in both Europe and the US.

Antisemitism has been around for hundreds of years. But the rise of populism, along with social media, presents new challenges for those trying to fight what is called the “new antisemitism.”

“The new antisemitism is the old antisemitism repackaged, revitalized and supercharged by social media,” said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean and director of Global Social Action Agenda of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a leading Jewish human rights organization with over 400,000 family members. “The hat is still there, but it is a different wrapping for a different generation.”

Cooper, who has been working in the field since the 1970s, used to visit refuseniks in the former Soviet Union. He said the government used to try to make a distinction between antisemitism, which was actually illegal, and anti-Zionism.

“They would say, ‘We don’t hate Jews, we hate Zionists,’” Cooper recalled. “I’ve been at this for 42 years and not much is new, but it is amazing how the old tropes find new meaning and new power in different audiences for different cultures.”

In the past year alone, there have been two shootings in synagogues: in October, a gunman killed 11 people in the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh after posting antisemitic comments, and in April, a gunman opened fire in Poway, California, while shouting antisemitic slurs, killing one woman.

In Europe, experts say antisemitism is rising almost everywhere – French officials said antisemitic incidents had increased by 74 percent, while in Germany officials reported an increase of 60 percent.

Sharon Nazarian, senior vice president of International Affairs of the Anti-Defamation



▲ The casket of Irving Younger, 69, a victim of Saturday's synagogue shooting, is carried to a waiting hearse after his funeral at Rodef Shalom Temple in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S., October 31, 2018.

(Reuters)

League, says that antisemitism today is coming from both the right and left.

“There is an amalgamation of historic classic antisemitism from extreme right-wing groups and white supremacist groups, with a new antisemitism coming from extreme left-wing parties personified in Jeremy Corbyn of the (UK) Labour party,” she said. “A third force has been there historically but is manifesting itself in new and powerful ways,

“

The new antisemitism is the old antisemitism repackaged, revitalized and super charged by social media.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper

”

and that is Islamist antisemitism in Europe connected with violent acts of terrorism.”

She called the three forces together a “perfect storm.”

Most Jewish scholars of antisemitism say

that BDS is a form of antisemitism.

While BDS says that it is aimed at ending Israel’s “occupation” of the West Bank and Gaza Strip through an economic boycott, most say it has morphed into a rejection of Israel’s right to exist.

Cooper says that at the World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, former Canadian Justice Minister and Attorney-General Irwin Cotler launched the “three D’s” of “double standards, demonization and delegitimization of Israel” (based on Natan Sharansky’s original model.)

He said that if any of those three were found in criticism of Israel, it could be defined as antisemitic.

“BDS is definitely antisemitic,” Rabbi Cooper said. “It is not designed in any way to help Palestinians but only to hurt Israel.”

Nazarian has a slightly different take on BDS.

“The original people behind the idea and the origins are antisemitic,” she said. “But not every person who supports BDS is antisemitic, and it would be wrong for us to have a blanket labeling of every person who supports it as antisemitic.”

For example, she said, many young people on college campuses in the US see BDS as



▲ Youth attend the annual March of the Living at the former Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz on May 2, 2019.

(Kacper Pempel/Reuters)

“When pre-college youth, both Jews and non-Jews alike, witness the absolute horror of antisemitism first hand, we see that it makes them more committed to fight all forms of hatred”

Shmuel Rosenman

”

a valid form of civil disobedience.

In some ways BDS has failed. Despite calls for a boycott of this month's Eurovision contest in Tel Aviv, all of the performing groups came to Israel. With the exception of Iceland's decision to display a Palestinian flag, BDS failed to keep people away.

On campuses, efforts to boycott Israeli academics or cultural offerings have also failed. Yet, says Nazarian, BDS has succeeded in making many Jewish college students wary of expressing support for Israel, or being open about their Jewish identity for fear of being ostracized by BDS supporters.

Both Cooper and Nazarian agree that social media has enabled antisemitism to spread much further and faster than before. That, along with the mass movement of people for economic and other reasons, has led to an increase of xenophobia and antisemitism.

The solution, many agree, is education. Shmuel Rosenman, international chairman of

the March of the Living, which has brought almost 300,000 young people to former concentration camps in Poland, says that as the survivors of the Holocaust are dying, the memory of the Holocaust is fading.

A recent study in the US found that 45% of the younger generation has never heard the word “Auschwitz,” or has ever read the story of a Shoah survivor.

He says Holocaust education is one of the best ways to fight antisemitism.

“The world is moving to the right all the time, and many people do not have patience for someone who is not from the same group,” he said in an interview. “It's easy to blame Jews and others for this.”

He said that government declarations such as the one from Germany do little to counter antisemitic attitudes. Instead, education about the Shoah and antisemitism is needed, especially before college, where antisemitic sentiments are on the rise.

“When pre-college youth, both Jews and non-Jews alike, witness the absolute horror of antisemitism first hand, we see that it makes them more committed to fight all forms of hatred,” Rosenman said. “We are not teaching history. We are transferring the stories of bitterness, hatred and antisemitism from the survivor to the next generation. We do not teach hatred but that you must do justice.”

The number of non-Jews joining the March of the Living continues to grow as well. This year almost 5,000 non-Jews from Poland, Germany, Austria and even Japan joined the march in Poland and then visit Israel.

The participants learn not only the history

of antisemitism before the Holocaust, but also that antisemitism is still alive today.

“After the March of the Living they come to Israel and reach a deeper understanding of the significance of their Jewish roots,” says Rosenman. “After they complete their journey, they have a toolbox to understand what causes antisemitism and how to combat it, especially using social media.” ♦



▲ Rabbi Abraham Cooper associate dean and director

(Courtesy)



▲ Sharon Nazarian Senior Vice President, International Affairs for the Anti-Defamation League

(Courtesy)



ADAM MILSTEIN

Today's antisemitism: A three-headed monster

Antisemitism is as old as the Jewish story itself. As Jews, we've lived with the threat of radical groups trying to eradicate our people for centuries. From Egypt to Poland to Persia, the Jews have experienced unbelievable persecution. Today in the 21st century, antisemitism is still alive and growing, even here in America.

Despite years of persecution, a few things have always kept us strong: our beliefs, our values, our culture, our history – and our homeland, Israel.

History has shown that antisemitism does not discriminate. As novelist Norman Mailer once said, “When the time comes, they won't ask what kind of a Jew you are.” Nobody asked the congregants at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh or at the Chabad of Poway.

It doesn't matter if you go to synagogue every day, every week, once a year, or you haven't been since you were a child. It doesn't matter whether you affiliate with one political party or another. And it doesn't matter if you consider yourself an American Jew, or an American who just happens to be Jewish.

When we see antisemites acting out their hateful bigotry – as we've seen from Pittsburgh to Poway to the halls of Congress – we are confronted with a choice: do we condemn the evil and hope for the best? Do we turn our backs on the future of our people and allow history to repeat itself? Or do we fight back?

For me, the choice is clear.

Today's antisemitism manifests as a three-headed monster that spews its vile bigotry through the radical Right, the radical Left, and radical Islam. Each one of these hateful heads poses a real threat not only to Jewish people and to Israel, but also to the US and the Western world.

In recent years, North America has joined Europe in witnessing a growing alliance between radical Muslims and radical leftists. Radical Muslims stone women and detest feminism, execute

gays, systemically oppress minorities, and disregard basic human rights. On paper, the radical left should be appalled by this ideology, but these unlikely allies turn a blind eye to the tenants of radical Islam because they share common hatred for Western influence in the world, pluralistic nationalism, and Jewish power.

Just as the radical Left has a history of vilifying Israel, the nation-state of the Jewish People (and the Jews who support it), the radical Right has colluded with radical Muslims to spread its pure hatred of Jews and the desire to brutally subjugate – or murder – the Jewish people.



For too long we have behaved as if antisemitism is merely distasteful, but not a danger.

The recent deadly attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway make the stakes clear for us all



Adam Milstein

This isn't the first time. Grand Mufti of Jerusalem al-Husseini conspired with Hitler less than 80 years ago. Today, the rhetoric of neo-Nazis and radical Muslims echo one another as both groups continue to spew hateful conspiracy theories and centuries-old antisemitic tropes.

The only way to defeat this monster is to put aside our internal political differences and band together as proud,

courageous Jews.

But how? The struggle is two-fold.

First, we must learn all we can about those who seek to destroy us. That means investing in research capabilities and drawing on the latest technology to uncover the antisemitic networks online and off. Then, we must use this knowledge to expose their unlawful activities and better protect our Jewish institutions in partnership with law enforcement.

Second, we must fight the alarming encroachment of antisemitism from the extreme fringes of our politics into the mainstream. We must be vigilant, calling out antisemitism wherever we see it. We must also educate the public about the dangerous and insidious nature of seemingly minor antisemitic comments. We must call out hate wherever we hear it, whether its spewed by Louis Farrakhan, Rep. Rashida Tlaib or David Duke.

For too long we have behaved as if antisemitism is merely distasteful, but not a danger.

The recent deadly attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway make the stakes clear for us all. Anyone who exhibits or espouses antisemitism must be immediately called out and held accountable.

Jews don't have to be like sheep led to the slaughter. Unlike Jewish communities in the past, we have human and civil rights, and the ability to fight back.

We are a proud people with a long memory, and lucky to live in a time with a strong and thriving Jewish state. We no longer have to be afraid and passive. We must switch from defense to offense. To defeat antisemitism, we must be proactive and fight this head on. If we don't, history shows that the results could be catastrophic.

Adam Milstein is an Israeli-American real estate investor and philanthropist. He and his wife, Gila, founded the Adam and Gila Milstein Family Foundation, and he is a co-founder of the Israeli-American Council, where he serves as chairman of the board. ♦

Terrorists in Suits

Unmasking BDS's support for terror

• By MAAYAN HOFFMAN

In March, the German government canceled an event and deported convicted Palestinian terrorist Rasmea Odeh from speaking in its capital.

Odeh had been slated to speak in Berlin at a conference organized by the pro-Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions group Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East. However, German authorities revoked her visa and banned her from the Schengen Area that is comprised of 26 European nations, citing immigration fraud.

According to Berlin-based attorney Norman Nathan Gelbart, the German government acted to remove Odeh based on information about her terror-connected past that they were provided by various organizations, including the Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

Odeh was a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and was responsible for a 1969 bombing that killed two students – Leon Kanner and Eddie Joffe – in a Jerusalem supermarket. She was also convicted by the Israeli authorities for a second bombing at the British consulate.

“Local authorities took this knowledge, and they released an order to prevent her from appearing at the event,” said Gelbart. “She is affiliated with a terror organization, so local authorities looked for the easiest way to get rid of her.”

He noted that if governments are provided with significant, trustworthy information they can act, “and this is what happened.”

And this is what continues to happen, according to the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, largely thanks to a report the ministry published in February.



▲ The Report, “Terrorists In Suits,” exposes over 100 connections between so-called human rights NGOs and designated terror organizations

(Ministry of Strategic Affairs)

RASMEA ODEH

(Ministry of Strategic Affairs)



The German government prevented convicted Palestinian terrorist Rasmea Odeh from speaking in Berlin in March, based on information provided by various organizations, including the Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

SHAWAN JABARIN ODEH

‘Terrorists in Suits’ revealed that Shawan Jabrin, a senior PFLP activist who served several prison terms in Israel for his involvement in terrorism, today serves as director-general of the boycott-promoting organization Al-Haq.



(Ministry of Strategic Affairs)

SALA KHAWAJA

(Ministry of Strategic Affairs)



Salah Khawajah, a top BDS leader in Ramallah, said in an interview with Palestinian TV that the Ministry of Strategic Affairs report ‘is the worst thing that could happen to BDS.’



▲ Yossi Kuperwasser, intelligence and security expert
(Courtesy)

The report, “Terrorists in Suits,” revealed more than 100 links between terror groups and organizations promoting Israel boycotts, including the employment of 30 current and “retired” terror operatives. It showed how these terrorists use these BDS organizations to whitewash their true activities against Israel and reported on efforts by terrorist operatives to use a “human rights activists” persona to mask their true selves. By doing so, these individuals obtain legitimacy and money from Western countries to finance activities to boycott and delegitimize Israel.



▲ Dr. Shai Har-Zvi, Executive Director of Research, Ministry of Strategic Affairs
(Courtesy)

who served several prison terms in Israel for his involvement in terrorism. Today, Jabarin is director-general of the boycott-promoting organization Al-Haq. The organization describes itself as “an independent Palestinian human-rights organization [that] monitors and documents human-rights violations by all parties to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.” Jabarin recruited al-Haq activists who were involved in terrorism and served a prison sentence.

There is Zaher Birawi, a Hamas activist who is believed to still be associated with

senior Hamas officials, including Ismail Haniyeh, and prominent BDS activists from Britain.

Another example is Muhammad Sawalha, a former senior Hamas military operative. He was associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, was a member of the Hamas political bureau between 2013 and 2017 and met with the organization as recently as this year.

Sawalha, however, has another face. He is part of – and in some cases founded – civil organizations in Britain, including the Muslim Association of Britain, the International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza and the British Muslim Initiative (BMI). He has promoted BDS and was involved in organizing flotillas to Gaza.

Sawalha and Birawi both try to portray themselves as unaffiliated with Hamas.

Har-Zvi noted that a senior BDS leader from the headquarters in Ramallah, revealed in the report, Salah Khawaja said in an interview with Palestinian TV that the ministry’s report “is the most dangerous that could happen to BDS.”

Har-Zvi explained that while several of the BDS leaders are accusing the report of being “propaganda” or “hasbara,” so far, none of them have said it is incorrect.

Now, the ministry is working to expand the report .

“You cannot separate BDS and terror organization,” said Brig.-Gen. Yossi Kuperwasser, an Israeli intelligence and security expert and a fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. “Almost every BDS organization is manned by people who are terrorists or ex-terrorists. They are all over the place. This is just an extension of their efforts to destroy Israel.”

Kuperwasser said he believes the recent decision by the United States to deny entry to BDS founder and anti-Israel activist Omar Barghouti was also tied to “Terrorists in Suits.”

In April, Barghouti was stopped at Ben-Gurion Airport and prevented from boarding a plane to the US even though he had valid travel documents and had been invited by the Arab American Institute to Washington to participate in several speaking engagements and educational programs.

“Almost every BDS organization is manned by people who are terrorists or ex-terrorists. They are all over the place. This is just an extension of their efforts to destroy Israel

Yossi Kuperwasser

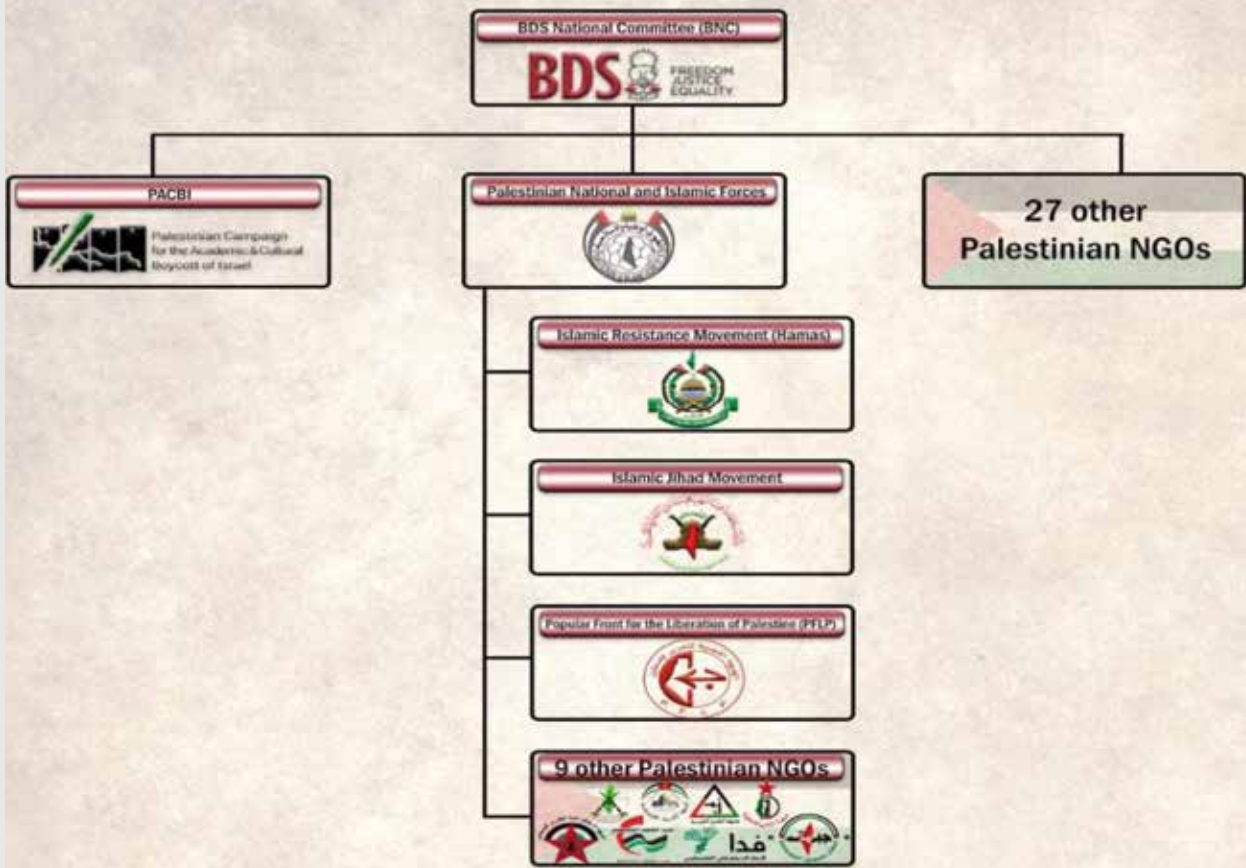
“Terror does not work in the West. Therefore, they do BDS....What we have done is unmask their real identities.”

The report uncovered, for example, Shawan Jabarin, a senior PFLP activist

the terrorist group, also heads the “Support Committee for the Boycott of Israel,” which was established in 2017 as part of the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad.

Birawi was at a joint meeting between

The BDS National Committee Coalition



▲ Since its founding, the PNIF has consistently called for boycotts of Israeli products and it continues to regularly promote BDS, according to the Ministry of Strategic Affairs' report *(Ministry of Strategic Affairs)*

The Qatar-born Palestinian reacted to the ban by saying that it is “ideologically and politically motivated,” and that it is “part of Israel’s escalating repression against Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights defenders in the BDS movement for freedom, justice and equality.”

However, Kuperwasser said he believes Barghouti was denied entry because he has ties to terror.

“Otherwise, why was this frequent flyer [to the US] now not allowed to enter?” Kuperwasser asked. “Finally, some people are waking up that this BDS is nothing but an extension of terror.”

He said many people in the West believe BDS activists are on par with leaders such as Nelson Mandela, who carried out nonviolent acts of defiance against the South African government and its racist policies, or Mahatma Gandhi, who employed nonviolent civil disobedience to lead India to independence and inspire movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.

“This is not the case with BDS,” said Kuperwasser. “These activists believe violence is not enough. Boycotts are a complimentary tactic to their armed attacks against Israel.” ♦



▲ Omar Barghouti, founder of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel and a co-founder of BDS *(Reuters)*

WORLD LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST BDS

MIKE PENCE

"In the wake of Airbnb's decision to ban Jewish homes in Jerusalem and the West Bank, we made it clear, the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement is wrong and it has no place in the free enterprise of the United States of America."

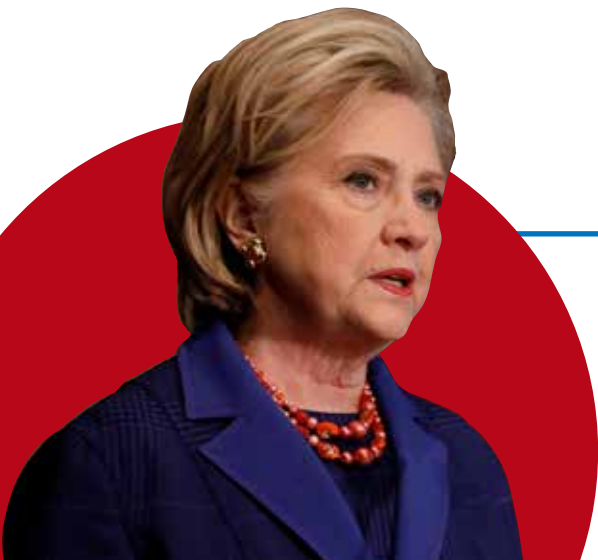
– US Vice President Mike Pence



HILLARY CLINTON

"I am writing to express my alarm over the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, or BDS, a global effort to isolate the State of Israel by ending commercial and academic exchanges. BDS seeks to punish Israel and dictate how the Israelis and Palestinians should resolve the core issues of their conflict. This is not the path to peace."

– Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton



ELAN CARR

"The administration is unequivocally opposed to the BDS movement, and to the idea that somehow there can be movements organized to deny Israel its legitimacy and not to allow Israel to participate in economic commerce in the world. Sure, that is hatred of the Jewish state and that is hatred of the Jewish people. And that's something that is very clear and that is our policy."

– US Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism Elan Carr





EMMANUEL MACRON

"BDS will not be accepted in France. I object to any efforts to boycott Israel, and consider such attempts antisemitic. France has already condemned boycotting Israel, and I have no intention of changing this position."

– French President Emmanuel Macron

BILL DE BLASIO

"Maybe some people don't realize it, but when they support the BDS movement, they are affronting the right of Israel to exist and that is unacceptable. Israel at its core is there to shelter an oppressed people. That is why I am here to make a simple, clear, progressive case for the state of Israel. We must confront the threat to progress that is BDS."

– New York City Mayor Bill De Blasio



THERESA MAY

"I couldn't be clearer: The Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions movement is wrong, it is unacceptable, and this party and this government will have no truck with those who subscribe to it. Our focus is the opposite – on taking our trading and investing relationship with Israel to the next level."

– British Prime Minister Theresa May

JUSTIN TRUDEAU

"In Canada, we have to recognize that there are things that aren't acceptable, not because of foreign policy concerns, but because of Canadian values. It's not right to discriminate or to make someone feel unsafe on campus because of their religion, and unfortunately the BDS movement is often linked to those kinds of frames."

– Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau



Boomerang: Economic pressure hits BDS campaigners

• By BENJAMIN WEINTHAL

For the first time since its formal establishment in 2005, the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement has encountered a set of countervailing forces that is depriving it of funding platforms, and branding it as an enabler of terrorism. A checkered and sporadic attempt to blunt the BDS movement existed prior to 2016, but that fragmented approach has now been replaced with a high-intensity, systematic counter-movement.

In interviews with top representatives of Israel's ministry of strategic affairs; the prominent Israeli lawyer Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, founder of the Shurat HaDin Israel Law Center; and Gerald Steinberg, president of NGO Monitor, a picture emerges of the dramatic setbacks met by BDS organizations over the last three years.

The Ministry of Strategic Affairs, along with a growing pro-Israel community around the world has breathed new life and fire into both defunding and reducing financial contributions to BDS organizations.

"These [BDS] organizations are obsessed with eradicating Israel as a Jewish state," said Tzahi Gavrieli, director of the National Campaign for countering Delegitimization and acting director general for the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy.

Gavrieli explained that as the ministry investigated the entities, it found "links between designated terrorist organizations and these [BDS] organizations," which resorted to deception in an effort to conceal the connections. "In the values of 2019, you can't present yourself as a terrorist," said Gavrieli. "You need to have a human rights facade for a Western audience."

The ministry addressed this tactic in its 2019 monograph, "Terrorists in Suits: The Ties between NGOs Promoting BDS and Terrorist Organizations." The results of the one-two punch by the ministry – and the international pro-Israel community – against BDS organizations has revealed

that hardcore antisemitism and terrorism are integral elements of scores of BDS entities and individuals.

Without naming countries, Gavrieli cited the disturbing immorality involved when "states friendly to Israel are aiding groups that are involved in BDS."

One of the most telling examples of a humanitarian organization pumping funds into terrorism involved World Vision. In

“
In the values of
2019, you can't
present yourself as
a terrorist. You need
have a human rights
façade for a Western
audience
”
Tzahi Gavrieli

August 2016, Israeli authorities revealed that Mohammed El-Halabi, director of the international NGO's Gaza branch, siphoned \$7.2 million a year to the Hamas terrorist movement. According to the Israeli government, "more than half of World Vision's resources in the Gaza Strip – originating in aid money from Western states such as the United States, England and Australia – were transferred to Hamas to strengthen its terrorist arm."

After the World Vision terrorism connection was revealed, Australia and Germany swiftly suspended their funding to the NGO.

Gavrieli explained because of the nature of state funding, "We have taken it [the issue of BDS and terrorism finance] to the state level." Israeli Strategic Affairs

Minister Gilad Erdan, for example, has addressed foreign states' interior ministers and security service leaders.

"We are still in the process of communicating this message," said the high-energy Gavrieli, "We see positive results," he added, with scores of banks, online payment service accounts and other financial platforms having closed accounts of BDS groups due to concern over terrorism funding.

One holdout is the German Bank for Social Economy, which maintains an account for a hardcore BDS group. Erdan urged the bank to close the account. The Simon Wiesenthal Center included the Bank for Social Economy in its 2018 top-10 list of the worst occurrences of antisemitism.

Gavrieli stressed that the ministry "doesn't take all of the credit," because there are a number of "pro-Israel organizations waging war against delegitimization [of Israel] and BDS." He said that there has been a salient shift by states and NGOs, which previously ignored funding streams and bad actors, to tracking money trails due to terror finance.



▲ Tzahi Gavrieli, Acting Director General, Ministry of Strategic Affairs

(Courtesy)



▲ ‘Terrorist organizations have one foot in the terror world and one foot in the legitimate world. They cannot act without bank accounts,’ says Nitsana Darshan-Leitner (Courtesy)

The Strategic Affairs Ministry published another monograph in January, “The Money

“We see positive results with banks and other financial platforms that have closed accounts of BDS groups due to concerns over terrorism funding

Tzahi Gavrieli

”

Trail: European Financing of Organizations Promoting Boycotts Against the State of Israel.” Along with the sea-change in methodology targeting NGOs and BDS entities tainted with terrorism and antisemitism, the monograph has triggered a long-overdue public conversation about the nature of funding streams. The questions now being asked, according to Strategic Affairs officials, consist of: “Are these organizations connected to terrorism? Are these organizations antisemitic?”

Dr. Shay Har-Zvi, executive director of research in the ministry, said that the German authorities’ decision two months ago to deport the convicted terrorist and BDS activist Rasmia Odeh from Berlin was an important step and a clear message that the real face of the BDS activists is revealed. Har-Zvi cited an article on a pro-BDS website in the US a few months ago and said “they [BDS organizations] feel they are under pressure and lack money”

due to the counter-attacks.

Har-Zvi, who wrote a dissertation on Jordan’s policy toward Jerusalem, said the three stages of financed BDS are: state-sponsored BDS; philanthropy; and financial platforms and crowdsourcing that are the lifeblood of BDS activity. “We have begun to see that European countries have already started to reconsider their grants given to BDS organizations” with respect to unsavory NGOs, said Har-Zvi.

Governments and NGOs “should know if designated terrorist organizations are using a facade” to stoke BDS, said Gavrieli, adding that there is a need for “better due diligence.”

The unfolding anti-BDS movement led to the PGGM – the second-largest pension fund in The Netherlands – rescinding its blacklist of five Israeli banks in January. The Dutch pension group had blacklisted the five banks in 2014.

In December 2017, Denmark’s government

announced that it pulled the plug on funds to Palestinian NGOs because of their links to terrorism. “I am glad that Denmark understood that the Danish taxpayer should not finance, directly or indirectly, Palestinian organizations that have direct connections to terrorist groups,” Erdan said at the time. “I call on other countries in Europe to exercise the same moral responsibility and take similar steps.”

Following Denmark, Norway’s government announced in December 2017 that a “Boycott creates distance, while the Norwegian government believes in dialogue and cooperation to create mutual trust as part of the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

The Danish government funded the terrorist-linked NGOs via the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat in Ramallah. The now defunct controversial and non-transparent Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat was the main clearinghouse for EU funds to be funneled to NGOs.

Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, head of Shurat HaDin, works to expose the lack of due diligence, with a view toward winning high compensation for victims of terrorism and stopping the finance of proscribed terrorist entities.

Shurat HaDin has a track record of success against targets involved in illicit terror finance. In one case in 2017, the organization won a \$178.5 million judgment in US court against Iran and Syria for their material support of Hamas. The court ordered the Sunni terrorist entity to pay damages to the family of Chaya Zissel Braun, a baby girl with US citizenship who was murdered near a station of the Jerusalem Light Rail in 2014. Hamas publicly called the terrorist a “martyr” and a “son” of Hamas.

The Ramallah-based BDS National Committee (BNC) experienced the effectiveness of Shurat HaDin when the US-based online fund-raising platform DonorBox rapidly suspended and then closed its account due to suspected terrorism links. In December 2018, Darshan-Leitner’s organization sent an “emergency letter” to DonorBox, and the account was suspended within a week.

DonorBox tweeted after it closed the BNC’s account: “This council [BNC] is composed of a few organizations that the US govt does not allow us to do business with.”

In other words, the BNC is tainted by terrorism. “Now the name BNC is toxic,” said Darshan-Leitner.

“**Terrorist organizations have one foot in the terror world and one foot in the legitimate world. They cannot act without bank accounts**”

Nitsana Darshan-Leitner

She explained how “terrorist organizations have one foot in the terror world and one foot in the legitimate world. They cannot act without bank accounts. We have the opportunity to go after them.” Omar Barghouti, an Israeli resident and co-founder of the BDS campaign, runs the BNC.

BDS assaults on the legitimacy of Israel’s existence – or what has become known in anti-BDS circles as “delegitimization” – is the chief concern for Darshan-Leitner, Gavrieli and Har-Zvi.

Darshan-Leitner said the delegitimization attacks are prevalent on college campuses, where students are learning to become future “leaders” in government.

“The students are being brainwashed,” she said.

Steinberg’s NGO Monitor zooms in on ground-zero of the anti-Israel NGO world: European NGOs and their funding streams. Steinberg does, however, see progress in confronting the anti-Israel NGO sector. “For the last five or six years, the Israeli government has taken [these] NGOs seriously. It is raised at bilateral [government] meetings [with other countries]. That is a change. We see our work being highlighted.”

Steinberg sees the adoption by many European countries of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)

definition of antisemitism as important. “When a significant NGO like CMI [Crisis Management Initiative, a group based in Finland] says we abide by the IHRA definition, it can be held to those terms. CMI did it voluntarily and it is a good precedent for other NGOs.”

The recently elected Finnish MP Hussein al-Tae, a supporter of the Islamic Republic of Iran who served as an adviser for CMI covering Iraq, was embroiled in an antisemitism, racism and homophobia scandal in May. After revelations in the Israeli and Finnish media about his antisemitic Facebook posts, CMI scrubbed him from its website, and said he would likely not be reemployed. In response to NGO Monitor criticism, CMI accepted the IHRA definition of Jew-hatred that includes expressions of contemporary antisemitism, namely discriminatory attacks on the Jewish state.

Taken together, the Ministry of Strategic Affairs and the pro-Israel community in the Diaspora have reversed the BDS momentum from 2005. While still in its infancy, the counter-BDS movement has demonstrated tangible results in the ongoing economic war. In short, the BDS campaign is running scared.

Benjamin Weinthal is fellow for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. ♦



▲ Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, the founder of the Shurat HaDin Israeli Law Center (Courtesy)

Fighting BDS online

How DigiTell is working to change anti-Israel sentiments on social media

• By ILANIT CHERNICK

The fight against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, as well as against antisemitism, is not easy, especially on social media platforms where such sentiments are rampant and uncensored.

Lies about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are spread through propaganda – fake images and posts – with the gap between anti-Zionism and antisemitism growing ever smaller. The two are becoming interchangeable on social media, and in many respects it's been found that anti-Israel agendas encourage and strengthen antisemitic sentiments.

In a bid to fight BDS, hate speech and antisemitism online, the Strategic Affairs Ministry formed DigiTell, an independent network of pro-Israel social media influencers who play an integral part in defending Israel online and fighting against antisemitism.

According to Ido Daniel, director of digital strategy at the Strategic Affairs Ministry, the network spans six continents, with dozens of organizations, influencers and grassroots initiatives all dedicated to this cause.

"The ministry recognized there was a strategic gap in the fight against Israel's protractors," Daniel said. "As individuals they were doing great work, but there was a lack of a coordination and cooperation between them. The ministry has the 'luxury' of having the ability to bring everyone together to the same table, and from there the rest is history."

Daniel explained that the anti-Israel lobby "is working in a coordinated fashion, as we showed in the release of the Hate Net in June 2018, showing the close ties boycott groups share with each other. For instance, we have seen in the past that European anti-Israel groups have shared messaging, mottos and information to create unified campaign against Israel."

Asked about the threat that BDS poses online, Daniel said that they have founds "dozens if not hundreds of instances... of the anti-Israel camp spreading disinformation and hate speech."

The classic example, he noted, is a poster



▲ An anti-BDS poster calling on Palestinians to free Gaza from Hamas

(Strategic Affairs Ministry)

showcasing Israel with land marked as having been supposedly "taken away" from Palestinians, which is a fabrication unto itself, and contradicts international law and agreements reached with the Palestinian Authority." The anti-Israel lobby "deliberately ignore these facts in order to manipulate public opinion against Israel and its legitimacy, especially when dealing with its borders."

DigiTell's goal is to empower the pro-Israel activists online,

"We accomplish this through a number of ways," Daniel said. "First, hosting our annual conference to bring together DigiTell face to face interactions, get to each other better, create relationships and launch joint ventures together."

At the end of the day, he said, "they are not only colleagues but have become good friends." This is what makes this network so special.

The ministry also provides support in several ways to the DigiTell network.

"As an example, we recognized there was a lack of communication between online pro-

“The DigiTell network doesn't work for the government. They have been defending the State of Israel and the Jewish people for years”

Ido Daniel

Israel activists and government bodies, such as during the recent arson attacks in Israel's south," he continued. "As a result, we chartered a bus and took them – photographers and filmmakers – to see firsthand the damage done, and speak with officials in the field to receive their personal insights on the devastation

including with firefighters, local residents, national park rangers, the IDF – and even a now defunct Hamas terror tunnel. The DigiTell network then shared it under the hashtag #FreeGazafromHamas, which was, and is to this day, extensively used online.”

DigiTell has also been involved with many of the campaigns run by the pro-Israel movements. According to Daniel, this includes the release of a surprise campaign #NoWayToTreatAChild on the UN’s Universal Children’s Day, to raise awareness about how Palestinian groups “use children in their terror attacks and spread hate speech online, on TV, and in their school textbooks. We’ve seen more than eight million people reach for this campaign on Twitter alone.”

DigiTell was also involved in campaigns following Airbnb’s decision not to advertise homes in West Bank settlements.

The DigiTell network, Daniel told the Post, doesn’t work for the government. “They have defending the State of Israel and the Jewish people for years,” he said. “All we do is bringing them together and give them access to information they need”.

DigiTell activist Arsen Ostrovsky, a leading pro-Israel advocate and executive director of the Israeli-Jewish Congress, became involved in DigiTell “because it offers an outstanding and unique global platform that connects and empowers leading pro-Israel advocates from around the world in order to exchange best practice ideas and help amplify our collective message in support of Israel.”



▲ Ido Daniel, director of digital strategy at the Strategic Affairs Ministry
(Ben Moore)



▲ DigiTell launched an online campaign following the launching of Iranian missiles from Syria at Israel.
(Strategic Affairs Ministry)

Ostrovsky explained that the Internet has in many ways become a cesspool of antisemitic hate, where lies, willful distortion of truth and vilification against Jews and the State of Israel – manifested through the BDS Movement – are real, direct and intense. The attacks, which come from an array of different sources, are often coordinated and further exacerbated in today’s era of ‘fake news’ and real time posting. The sheer magnitude of such attacks spread quickly, making it impossible to keep up.

Although BDS has a minimal impact on Israel in practice – “which by all objective measures is thriving economically and diplomatically, albeit that is not from lack of effort from BDS activists” – the greater danger is that if left unchecked online, “the BDS Movement will continue to set the agenda and fan the flames of hatred and antisemitism.”

For Ostrovsky, the main the key challenge in combating BDS and the anti-Israel lobby online is trying to remain vigilant, “selecting which battles to fight or respond, while at the same time being proactive and setting a positive narrative.” By providing “such a unique global platform to exchange best practice ideas, DigiTell also allows us to calibrate our strategies in order to have a unified message that we can then amplify in fighting BDS and supporting Israel.”

Asked about combating misinformation and fake news spread by celebrity activists

such as Roger Waters and Linda Sarsour, Ostrovsky said that “although we are unlikely to alter the entrenched views of ‘activist celebrities’ like Roger Waters and Linda Sarsour, we nonetheless need to expose their lies, attacks and hypocrisy so that they do not go unanswered.”

He noted that “these celebrities have huge followings, but with many followers also unfamiliar with the nuances and complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or naïve in their support of the celebrities political views. It is therefore imperative to keep this group in mind in our messaging, as an opportunity to reach out, engage and educate them.”

Ostrovsky said that in the short time since DigiTell’s inception in early 2018, he has been involved in a number of the network’s “highly successful campaigns, including raising awareness over the Hamas-led Gaza riots in the past year, reinforcing the link between BDS and terror, as well as shedding light on Hamas abuse of Palestinian children with the #NoWayToTreatAChild campaign during the United Nations Universal Children’s Day.”

Ostrovsky emphasized that “it goes without saying our global network of pro-Israel activists [was] highly engaged during the Eurovision Song Contest and the period preceding it, to repel the highly intense attacks of the BDS Movement and in order to use the Eurovision platform to promote and reinforce the beauty and diversity of Israel.”

“

We stand stronger together. United we have millions of followers and with this comes the potential to counter the lies and antisemitism spread by the BDS

Hidde van Koningsveld

”

DigiTell activist Hidde van Koningsveld, based in Holland and chairman of CIJO, the biggest pro-Israel youth movement in the Netherlands, has made it his mission together with the organization to fight against anti-Israel hatred and antisemitism.

“We’re privileged to be a member of the DigiTell network, which enables us to work together with other pro-Israel activists from around the world and work on campaigns to fight the hatred the BDS movement is spreading around the world,” he said. “I got involved in DigiTell in March 2018, at the very first conference in Jerusalem.”

He noted that the threat of BDS is not economic. “The biggest threat BDS poses is the public relations field,” van Koningsveld explained. “BDS spreads lies about Israel that stick with ‘regular’ people on social media and even the mainstream media. We also saw this with Eurovision. All in all, Eurovision was an extremely successful event. We [the Netherlands] won, no country boycotted the event, the Queen of Pop [Madonna] performed during the final. Millions of people watched the Eurovision competition and the hotel rooms in Tel Aviv were fully booked.”

Van Koningsveld highlighted that “the only small success the BDS movement had in The Netherlands, after months of campaigning against Eurovision, was that some national newspapers repeated their false claim that the Tel Aviv Expo was built on a ‘destroyed Palestinian village.’” The activist said they “are working on countering this claim by providing factual information and asking

the newspapers to correct their articles.”

Attending the Strategic Affairs Ministry conferences has provided van Koningsveld with pro-Israel friends from around the world.

“As a Dutch youth organization, we used to have a relatively small reach,” he said. “It’s great to have friends all over the world who are facing the same challenges and share our work and strategies, to increase our reach and effectiveness.”

The advantage, he said, is that “We stand stronger together. United we have millions of followers, and with this comes the potential to counter the lies and antisemitism that’s being spread by the BDS movement. It’s great to have a large group of like-minded people to talk to about campaigns or your social media strategy.

“When we work together, we have more followers than these activists. This is why, as the pro-Israel community as a whole, we need to unite and set aside differences.”

When dealing with “famous” BDS activists like Waters or Sarsour who “spread hate against Israel, we need to closely monitor what they say and call them out on their lies and antisemitism.”

However, according to van Koningsveld, “that doesn’t mean we should react to every little thing they say. It’s also very important to proactively spread our own positive message about Israel.” He went on to explain that “each member of the network decides on their own campaigns and messages, but gets as much support as needed from the DigiTell network.”

Asked for tips, Daniel, Ostrovsky and van Koningsveld shared helpful advice for those not in DigiTell who are trying to fight the online anti-Israel bias.

Daniel emphasized that “every action counts,” and recommended pro-Israel activists to join social media, “from writing and liking pro-Israel comments, to reporting anti-Israel hate speech, sharing pro-Israel content, and following all of DigiTell’s member organizations social media pages as well, to stay up to date. The second thing, join Twitter and Instagram. It’s the new – and old, when it comes to Twitter – battleground for pro-Israel advocacy.”

Ostrovsky encouraged those in the midst of the social media battle “not to let the haters get to you, just tell the truth and try to broaden the conversation to convey a positive story about what you love most about Israel.”

Van Koningsveld’s most important advice to activists “is to reach out to other pro-Israel activists and work together. You can’t fight this battle on your own, because the BDS supporters are very loud and active on social media. Also: choose your battles. You don’t need to respond to every little lie people spread about Israel. Sometimes you ignore things, sometimes you can also choose to respond with humor, as I did when a BDS-supporting Dutch MP with a Palestinian flag got questioned by the Israeli police when walking around Temple Mount last Friday.” ♦



▲ Arsen Ostrovsky, executive director of The Israeli-Jewish Congress (Courtesy)



▲ Hidde van Koningsveld, chairman of CIJO, the biggest pro-Israel youth movement in the Netherlands (Courtesy)

Christians who stand with Israel combat BDS

• By BRIAN SCHRAUGER

Among Christians who stand with Israel, none comes so close to being monolithic in their support than evangelicals. A 2017 poll by Lifeway Research revealed that 67 percent of evangelical Christians have a positive perception of the Jewish state.

That is a lot of people. According to France's Sébastien Fath, there are about 630 million evangelicals in the world. In 2014, Pew indicated there were as many as 81 million just in the United States.

On the face of it, that translates into a huge support base for the modern Israeli state. By the numbers, there are 422 million evangelicals around the world, including 54 million in the US.

Figures like these have persuaded many Israelis to regard evangelical support as more significant than that of any single nation. While in Brazil in December 2018, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tweeted, "We have no better friends in the world than the evangelical community, and the evangelical community has no better friend in the world than Israel."

There is, of course, more to the story. The Lifeway Research poll indicated that a whopping 97 percent of evangelicals who support Israel have never visited it. Two-thirds do not have a Jewish friend.

Perhaps for these reasons alone, the primary focus of organizations that represent evangelical support for Israel do not focus on the global Boycott, Divestment, Sanction campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state and to cripple its economy. Instead, they



Thousands of Christian supporters of Israel march in Jerusalem in the annual Feast of Tabernacles parade

(Marc Israel Sellem)

concentrate on educating their constituents about the nation of Israel.

"The BDS movement relies on lies and bigotry to advance its agenda, we combat those by teaching the truth and preaching tolerance," says Shari Dollinger, co-executive director of Christians United for Israel (CUFI). "CUFI combats BDS through education and advocacy on campus, in churches and through social media. While we do not focus on specific conferences or events on BDS, it is an issue that is discussed at our major gatherings. Combating BDS is a core element of our policy agenda."

It is an approach that has borne significant fruit for CUFI. Its efforts in social media, special events across the United States, involvement on 330 university campuses, and television programming have garnered over six million members. And, says Dollinger, it "reaches tens of millions" every month.

Another global voice for evangelicals who support Israel is the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ). Founded by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein in 1983, 96% of its donors are Christians. Unlike most groups that represent Christians, however, its leaders are Orthodox Jews.

With a focus on raising financial support for social needs in Israel and sponsoring immigration of Jews to Israel, IFCJ's approach to educating its constituents is centered more on 'how' rather than 'why.'

"In just over 35 years we have raised more

than \$1.6 billion to provide support for the Jewish people and the State of Israel," says Yael Eckstein, the new president of IFCJ, who took over for her father in the aftermath of her father's unexpected death from cardiac arrest on February 6.

Eckstein, 34, adds that almost all of the funds were raised from Christians. The real objective, she explains, "is not fund-raising or even providing humanitarian aid." Instead, "our mission is bridge building, strengthening trust, communication and respect between Christians and Jews around the world. The Fellowship's more than one million donors are expressing their love for Israel and the Jewish people by providing humanitarian aid and comfort to those in need."

As for BDS, both Dollinger and Eckstein acknowledge the threat.

"BDS is an antisemitic movement aimed at doing through boycotts what the terrorists have failed to do with bullets, namely, destroy the state of Israel," says Dollinger. "It is a movement that seeks to normalize antisemitism. By wrapping themselves in the lexicon of human rights, the BDS movement seeks to make it acceptable not just to criticize this or that Israeli policy, but to question the Jewish right to self-determination. In fact, the movement is composed of antisemites who hide in plain sight."

According to Eckstein, "every human



▲ Yael Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews
(Courtesy IFCJ)

“
Every human being
is made in the image
of God – and God
loves justice. But
BDS is a perversion
of justice”

Yael Eckstein

being is made in the image of God – and God loves justice. But BDS is a perversion of justice, insulting the God-given dignity of the people of Israel. Its real driving force is antisemitism. In fact, BDS is the worst kind of injustice because it is masquerading as justice.”

Indeed.

On its website, BDS states its objective is “ending [Israel’s] occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall.”

The word “all” is the giveaway.

Even though it adds the sentence, “International law recognises (sic) the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Syrian Golan Heights as occupied by Israel,” BDS refrains from saying it endorses that limited claim. Its objective is “ending Israel’s ‘occupation and colonization’ of all Arab lands.”

In fact, then, its goal is nothing less than

destruction of the Jewish state.

The question for evangelicals who stand with Israel, and especially for organizations that represent them, is this: Are the arguments made by BDS and its proponents winning converts among those evangelicals? The answer is...

...Maybe.

According to the Lifeway Research poll, 76 percent of evangelicals who are 55 to 64 years old have a “positive” view of Israel.

But millennials, those 18-34 years old? The percentage of those with a “positive” view drops more than a third to 58 percent.

Why?

The vast majority of millennial evangelicals agree “that Christians should do more to love and care for Palestinian people.” A clear majority also believe “that Palestinian people have a historic right to the land of Israel.” Indeed, two-thirds believe “the modern re-birth of the State of Israel has been an injustice to the Arab people,” and that “modern Israel has been unfair to the Palestinian people.”

At the same time, about two-thirds deny the proposition “that the Christian church has fulfilled or replaced the nation of Israel.” On the other hand, 72 percent agree “that God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants was for all time.”

What emerges, then, are two concerns regarding the upcoming generation of evangelicals: they care about social justice for Palestinians, and they need some degree of shoring up about the plain meaning of promises God made to the Jewish people spelled out in the Bible.

John Haller is a trial attorney in Columbus, Ohio. He is also a well-known analyst of social-political trends in evangelicalism.

“Increasingly, today’s evangelicals are moving away from emphasizing biblical knowledge,” says Haller. “This does not bode well for evangelical support for Israel among the upcoming generation of evangelicals, both in the US and around the world. Evangelicals have stood with Israel because they know their Bibles. They know that the Torah proclaimed God’s blessing of the land to Israel as an irrevocable covenant. What is needed more than anything to stop the drift of millennial support away from Israel is clear Bible teaching on the subject.”

The greatest concern among millennial evangelicals is social justice, especially

as it applies to Palestinians. On the other hand, awareness of social justice for Israelis is all but absent.

That’s why CUFI has two initiatives focused on evangelical millennials: CUFI On Campus, an educational endeavor, and the Israel Collective that brings influential leaders of millennials to Israel to encounter social justice issues first hand.

For its part, IFCJ makes a point of its support for all Israelis.

“We are a humanitarian organization that supports all Israelis,” Eckstein notes. “The criteria we use to decide who receives aid is need, not ethnicity or religion.” By doing so, “we make it much more difficult for the BDS movement to spread its lies to Christians around the world.”

It doesn’t hurt that Eckstein herself is a millennial. “We are not building this organization on my personality,” she emphasizes, “but instead on our mission.”

On the other hand, “it definitely helps that I am a millennial woman leading this Jewish organization made up almost entirely of Christian supporters. When I talk to millennials, I’m speaking directly to my peers, in a common language and with a common cultural understanding.”

In short, the focus of today’s stand against BDS by Christians who support Israel is a fight to educate and communicate in the cultural language of evangelical millennials. It is a battle that has only just begun.

Brian Schrauger is editor-in-chief of the *Jerusalem Journal* and its primarily publication, *ChaimReport.com* ♦



▲ Shari Dollinger, co-executive director of Christians United for Israel
(Courtesy CUFI)



International legal network sets back BDS across the globe

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

A one-year-old international legal network called Legal Network Initiative (LNI) has set back efforts across the globe of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel.

The network is a cooperative partnership between the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, the International Legal Forum (ILF), and a wide range of pro-Israel legal professionals from all over the world.

Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdan launched the initiative at the first annual LNI conference in early 2018, along with the ILF's director, Yifa Segal, who is coordinating the efforts of the network.

This year's conference, set to take place June 18-20 in Jerusalem, includes international legal experts and high-profile keynote speakers including Dr. Felix Klein, federal government commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany; Elan Carr, special envoy for monitoring and combating antisemitism; and Irwin Cotler, Canada's former minister of justice and attorney general and current chair of the Raoul Weinberg Center for Human Rights.

I spoke to Segal as well as Angel Mas of Spain and Pascal Markowicz of France, two senior participants in the network, to get a feel for what kind of impact the network is having on the ground in areas where it operates.

"People can come from a local organization working on public relations, local media, or a legal organization," Segal said. "Then there are

those who work mainly as a private commercial lawyer...but are trying to do what they can to help" on the side, and "are very passionate" about fighting BDS.

LNI's goals include the empowerment of the global pro-Israel legal network through sharing information, expertise and advice. It will also establish an online platform of relevant case law, legislation and best practices for its members to use. Another benefit of the platform is to avoid duplicative efforts by enabling ongoing communication between members so that everyone knows who else is working on a given issue and what they have done to date. Also, LNI provides a mechanism of distributing grants for legal research.

Podemos party has used its presence in Spanish institutions to promote boycotts against the Jewish minority in Spain. Not only Israeli citizens and companies, but anyone who supports or associates with the Jewish state

Angel Mas

"It can be very instrumental for consulting on a legal issue," said Segal. "LNI's members' level of commitment varies. Sometimes they are more available than others." She noted that many view the network's activities as more exciting than their regular work, and that some participants eventually "bring their law firms on board and contribute pro bono time" in an even larger way.

The pro-Israel legal network has already bore fruit. Just this year for example, Airbnb reversed its decision to boycott Israeli listings in Judea and Samaria following intense pressure from at least several different LNI members on a number of different legal grounds.

Angel Mas of ACOM, a Spanish lawyer who is part of the network, said that the BDS issue in Spain is even more political than in other countries since BDS supporters had successfully penetrated both national and local parties dating back to 2015.

One of the parties in Spain's governing coalition, Podemos, was formed and financed by Venezuela's former president Hugo Chavez and Iran, and its founding members were leaders of the BDS movement, according to Mas.

The party takes "very hostile and aggressive action against the Jewish state, and the issue is one of its top priorities even though" its platform addresses other issues, he said.

Mas said that the party "immediately gave unqualified recognition to the Palestinian state," and that this was "the first issue they raised in the national congress."

Besides the party's prominence at the national level, he said it also controls the mayors'



▲ The Airbnb logo is seen on a mini-pyramid under the glass of the Pyramid of the Louvre in Paris
(Charles Platiau/Reuters)



▲ Yifa Segal, Director of the International Legal Forum (Courtesy)

“
French laws allow courts
to penalize those who
publicly and actively
boycott Israeli culture,
goods and sporting events

Pascal Markowicz

”

offices in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and all of Spain's main cities, numbering about 100 municipalities.

He said that the party has “used its presence in Spanish institutions to promote boycotts against the Jewish minority in Spain,” since it attacks “not only Israeli citizens and companies, but “anyone who supports or associates with the Jewish state. We had to take very prompt action...it was a matter of survival here... confronting initiatives, financed with our own taxes, which would exclude us from social, political economic and civic life.”

Anti-Israel NGOs in Spain are funded by millions in public subsidies per year, Mas said, and that to combat this, Jews in Spain needed to “create some lawfare and legal capabilities to confront the almighty state in court.”

By a combination of seeking to educate the political system that BDS does not advance peace and dehumanizes Israel and Jews, as well as lawsuits, he said that they succeeded in blocking most of the 2,000 anti-Israel initiatives and declarations which BDS supporters had planned.

An example he gave of a BDS initiative in Spain was local government officials, or NGOs with their backing, posting fliers on local stores saying that those areas were “apartheid free.” He said that Spanish Jewry knew this was code

for also free of them, not just Israeli products.

Although he said that even if his group did not succeed much in pushing back against BDS influence on social media, his group has won 40 cases against BDS declarations and has not lost a single case.

In addition, he said that in the three cases where government officials or NGOs appealed, his group won against the BDS initiatives also on appeal.

There are even four cases where complaints his group made to law enforcement have led to criminal investigations of BDS activities, the most famous of which relates to attempts to boycott musical star Matisyahu during a performance in Spain.

“At the end of the day, in Spain we live in a democracy, which guarantees no discrimination due to race, religion, belief or national origin, and clearly these declarations went against the constitutional mandate,” he said, adding that the BDS supporters have morphed their efforts to try to focus on academic boycotts and other forms of boycotts to avoid judicial scrutiny, and that his group will still need to adapt to such new tactics.

On another track, French lawyer Pascal Markowicz of CRIF said that French laws allow courts to penalize those who publicly and actively boycott Israeli culture, goods and sporting events.

One example he gave was the Alencon's trial in Normandy in which five boycott activists, including the deputy mayor, were fined by the local court in September 2013 for cleaning out Israeli fruits and vegetables at a local supermarket.

Markowicz said that this decision was later affirmed both by the Court of Appeals of Caen as well as by the French Supreme Court in March 2016, and it marked the first time that a political official was penalized by a court for efforts to delegitimize Israel.

If these stories are any indication of the anti-BDS network's success, that success is likely only to grow further in the years to come. ♦



▲ Angel Mas, President & CEO ACOM (Courtesy)



▲ Pascal Markowicz, head of the BDS legal taskforce of the umbrella group of French Jewish communities (Courtesy)

WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION

ROGER WATERS, WHO FOR YEARS HAS ACTED AS THE POSTER BOY FOR BDS, WAS INCLUDED ON THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER'S LIST OF TOP ANTISEMITES IN 2018.

WATERS, WHO PRESENTS HIMSELF AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, HAS DEVELOPED AN UNWARRANTED OBSESSION WITH ISRAEL WHILE IGNORING VERY REAL HUMAN RIGHTS INFRINGEMENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD.

IN RECENT YEARS, WATERS HAS AGGRESSIVELY TRIED TO PRESSURE ARTISTS AGAINST APPEARING IN ISRAEL ALTHOUGH ENTERTAINERS, SPONSORS AND VENUE OPERATORS HAVE ASKED HIM TO STOP MIXING MUSIC AND POLITICS. MADONNA, WHEN SHE APPEARED AS A GUEST ARTIST AT THE EUROVISION IN TEL AVIV, PRESENTED THE MESSAGE IN HER SONG "MUSIC MAKES THE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER."

► Roger Waters, draped with a Palestinian keffiyeh

(Reuters)



• By LIAT COLLINS

I think his hatred of Israel has literally driven Roger Waters insane – and it's not a pretty sight. There I was on Independence Day on May 9, peacefully binge-watching Israeli comedies on television and relaxing after the barrage of nearly 700 rockets that had been launched from Gaza on the South of the country at the beginning of the week when I made the mistake of checking Facebook to see what everyone else was doing. Amid the photos of friends at barbecues, the beach and hiking through gorgeous nature reserves, I came across a post by the British group Sussex Friends of Israel sharing a video by Waters. Bitter Waters.

Bizarrely wearing a bath robe, with unbrushed hair and red-rimmed eyes, Waters began to spew his by now well-known BDS creed, expressing support for a Swiss petition to pull out of the Eurovision Song Contest in Tel Aviv.

Nobody should post a video on social media before they are fully awake and dressed. Even former superstars like the Pink Floyd singer. And they certainly shouldn't do it if they're going to liken Israelis to aliens – the extra-terrestrial kind, not the more familiar Jews as colonialists trope.

Waters starts out by saying he'd heard about the Swiss petition from his good friend Omar Barghouti. Barghouti is the leader of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel. Interestingly enough, his commitment to boycotting the country was not strong enough to keep him from studying at Tel Aviv University and even applying to do a doctorate there. Barghouti still has a lot to learn.

He reminds me of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas leaders who object to normalization but are happy to use Israel's top medical facilities. The PA's Jibril Rajoub, for example, is a (former?) terrorist and chairman of the Palestinian Football Association and of the Palestinian Olympic Committee, among other positions, who was suspended by the international football association FIFA last year following his call to burn Lionel Messi shirts to protest a (later canceled) friendly game between Argentina and Israel. He is currently reported to be receiving treatment at Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center. I repeat my call to end medical tourism for terrorists. This is not a gesture



▲ An inflatable pig with a Star of David painted on it was displayed during a Roger Waters performance of The Wall in Belgium in 2013

(Courtesy)

“To use the lyrics of one of his songs, Waters thinks he ‘can tell heaven from hell, blue skies from pain.’ But he can’t. He is clueless”

”

of humanity but insanity. Which brings me back to Waters and his video.

Scratching his face and staring at the camera, Waters declares that Barghouti's email reminded him of “three choice ‘Fs,’” the first being “Film.” “There's the film, and that film was the Invasion of the Body Snatchers, and Eurovision reminds me of the Invasion of the Body Snatchers, because it seems it may have been taken over by, um, I believe it was aliens. I know, it's giving aliens a bad name, but at the end of the movie, Donald Sutherland points at somebody like this” – Here, Waters points at the camera while making a silent scream face – “The body-snatchers are doing that

now, but normally what they're going is, ‘antisemitic!’” Waters yells.

Waters's “second F” is “Fable,” and he proceeds to parody The Emperor's New Clothes. “‘Mommy, mommy, why is the emperor of Israel parading his ethno-supremacist bullshit around naked?’ Enough with Netanyahu-hu-hu.”

The “third and final F” is “Faith.” As he taps his exposed chest, Waters declares Barghouti's message restores “faith in my fellow human beings, faith in their capacity for love and empathy,” because “136,000 of our Swiss brothers and sisters have signed and delivered a petition demanding that the Eurovision pull out of the finals in Tel Aviv.”

The ugly face of BDS was personified. As my brother put it, it looked like Waters had gone over to the Dark Side of the Moon. To use the lyrics of one of his songs, Waters thinks he “can tell heaven from hell, blue skies from pain.” But he can't. He is clueless.

Last year, backing conspiracists who claimed that reports of Bashar Assad's chemical weapons attack on Douma in Syria were staged, Waters called the White Helmets – the Syrian volunteer group nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for its search-and-rescue work – a “fake organization” producing propaganda for “jihadists and terrorists.”

Calling for the boycott of the Eurovision

does nothing to promote world peace or even regional peace. On the contrary. We don't need no Roger Waters. Israel's a free country and bashing the prime minister and government – even before a new coalition has been formed – is something of a national sport. Especially after massive rocket bombardments and increased threats of terrorism.

PINK FLOYD released its seminal album *The Wall* in 1979. Of greater importance historically, it was the year Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the shah in Iran. And of personal significance, I moved to Israel, singing along to Gali Atari and Milk & Honey's Eurovision-winning "Hallelujah."

A few years ago, when Waters issued a similar call for a cultural boycott, Israeli supermodel Bar Refaeli, proving she's not just a pretty face, demanded Waters remove a photograph of her used in the video art during his performances. "If you're boycotting – then go all the way," she tweeted at the time.

With poetic justice, while Waters rants about boycotts, Refaeli was one of the four hosts of the Eurovision at Expo Tel Aviv. Waters was bashing his head against a brick wall. More than 40 countries participated in this year's Eurovision, thousands of tourists arrived for the event, some 1,500 journalists flocked here to cover the show and surrounding events and an estimated 200 million viewers around the world watched the broadcasts.

Waters, who for years has acted as the poster boy for BDS, was included on the Simon Wiesenthal Center's list of top antisemites in 2018. Like other BDS supporters, Waters, who presents himself as a human rights activist, has developed an unwarranted obsession with Israel while ignoring very real human rights infringements elsewhere in the world.

In recent years, Waters has aggressively tried to pressure artists against appearing in Israel, although entertainers, sponsors and venue operators have asked him to stop mixing music and politics. Most recently, Madonna, when she appeared as a guest artist at the Eurovision in Tel Aviv, presented the message from her song "Music makes the people come together."

The BDS campaign singles out Israel for delegitimization. Were Spain, France, Cyprus or any other European country



▲ Madonna performs at the Tel Aviv Eurovision 2019

(Orit Panini)

with a simmering territorial dispute to win the Eurovision, there would not be an organized global campaign to prevent it becoming the host the following year. By pushing exclusively for the boycott of Israel, Waters is strengthening terrorism and backing those who want the Jewish state to disappear. Those who truly value coexistence, democracy and freedom, visit and make peace and music.

Admittedly, peace with the Palestinians seems far, far away, but demonizing one side of the conflict while the other gets away with murder doesn't bring it any

closer. I was encouraged by the kosher Iftar meal shared by Jews and Palestinians in Hebron, as The Jerusalem Post's Tovah Lazaroff reported. The event was organized and sponsored by the Judea and Samaria Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a joint Israeli-Palestinian group that aims to strengthen economic ties between Palestinians and Jews, to benefit all.

Watching Waters's video, I thought of another "F" word: "Falsehood." The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement presents itself as pro-peace and pro-Palestinian rather than anti-Israeli in nature. It also promotes a false analogy with South Africa in the apartheid era. This insults the memory of what black South Africans endured; defames Israel, where Arab citizens not only have the vote but can be elected to parliament and serve as judges; and feeds the lie that the Jewish people have no religious or historical connection to the Land of Israel.

Brick by brick, falsehood by falsehood, Waters is trying to build an invisible but dangerous wall between Israelis and the Palestinians. Not one built to keep terrorists out; a wall constructed to block normal, peaceful relations.

The much-troubled Waters is a fallen star. No wonder he's worried about aliens. ♦

“
Brick by brick, falsehood
by falsehood, Waters
is trying to build an
invisible but dangerous
wall between Israelis
and the Palestinians
”

Concert – Together for Israel

Our goal is to empower the pro-Israel network

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

Israel faces the long-term threat of delegitimization,” says Micah Avni, chairman of Concert – Together for Israel, an organization that has joined with the Israeli government and pro-Israel community to counter the delegitimization of Israel.

“While Israel thrives, and on many levels has never been stronger,” explains Avni, “there is a growing sentiment around the world that we don’t have a right to be here or to exist. If we sit back quietly and ignore that threat, it will continue to grow.”

Concert was established in 2016 by a group of concerned philanthropists, pro-Israel activists, retired generals and diplomats to counter the global Israel delegitimization movement and improve Israel’s standing in world public opinion.

“In 2016, over 100 disparate pro-Israel organizations and the Israeli government were all working independently, in an uncoordinated fashion, and as a result, having relatively little impact,” Avni explains.

In 2018, the Ministry of Strategic Affairs under the leadership of Minister Gilad Erdan entered into a long-term, strategic partnership with Concert in order to address this challenge.

Avni became involved in the struggle against delegitimization of Israel after his father, Richard Lakin, was brutally murdered by terrorists in 2015.

“After my father was murdered,” he says, “I became active on a number of issues. I was blown away by the tremendous impact of social media in spreading incitement for terror. I met with the big pro-Israel groups. I found organizations that were not working together, and I saw that with minimal work, if you are focused and people are working together, that you can have a tremendous impact. When I saw that the government was interested in this, I thought that I could take some of my knowledge and energy and push this forward.”

The goal of Concert, says Avni, “is to try to help enable the pro-Israel network to be more effective, to empower the network.” Avni

says that Concert is not a quick-fix organization. “Concert is a long-term project, which builds infrastructure, relationships, and trust,” he says. “It’s not something where you send out two tweets and you’re going to have results tomorrow morning. In today’s world that’s difficult for people to comprehend.”

Concert has its own network of donors and organizations that fund its activities, and receives matching funds from the Israeli government which “gives us leverage in what we are doing.”

Jewish organizations are ultimately happy to receive assistance from Concert. “If you are willing to take action and provide funding that can help them grow – and you are not getting in the way – then people are open to that,” says Avni.

One of Concert’s primary goals is to make sure that pro-Israel organizations and communities around the world have a significant say in these efforts, and help empower them in doing what they are doing.

Now that the research infrastructure is up and running, Avni says that Concert has started funding projects to bring opinion leaders to Israel this year. A lawyer by training and the founder and CEO of Peninsula Group, a publicly-traded Israeli commercial finance institution, Avni has undertaken the job on a voluntary basis, though he laughingly admits that it is “an intense volunteer position.”

Avni explains that Concert has a board of directors and shareholders who are responsible for overseeing the organization. He goes to great pains to point out that Concert uses completely legal means to attain its objectives – everything the organization does is legal and transparent. On the funding end, the government has oversight from the Ministry of Finance. A steering committee composed of government representatives oversees the company’s board of directors.

Avni points out that in today’s climate of rising antisemitism, the task of combating delegitimization is not easy. “There’s no silver bullet,” he says. “The idea to get people to work together to exchange information and ideas – to see what’s worked in one geography and another, or one type of ideology that hasn’t been done before.”



▲ Micah Avni: Our goal chairman of Concert – Together for Israel (Courtesy)

“

I was blown away by the tremendous impact of social media in spreading incitement for terror

Micah Avni

”

Avni says that while Concert needs to be aggressive and proactive in rooting out delegitimization of Israel, ultimately, “our ‘killer app’ is the positive message that Israel is a vibrant and free democracy committed to Jewish values and social justice.”

Concert’s ultimate goal is the continued permanent acceptance of Israel as a legitimate state in the world. “This will happen not because of Concert,” he says, but because of “how we act as a people, and as a state.”

Nevertheless, he adds, “Concert is going to have a massive impact in getting this message across.” ♦



State of Israel
Ministry of Strategic Affairs
and Public Diplomacy

TERRORISTS IN SUITS

New Government Report Reveals:



- Over 100 ties between BDS and designated terror groups
- The names of 30 BDS operatives, including murderers who served time in prison, who now hold senior positions within BDS-promoting NGOs

Find out more at 4IL [f](#) & [t](#) and join the **TerroristsInSuits** campaign today!

STOP THE BDS TERROR SCAM