

How European governments propel the boycott

war

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For over a decade, Israel has been the target of an intense political war, based on a strategy of delegitimization and waged through boycotts and lawfare cases. The intensity and scope of these attacks have increased steadily, particularly in Europe and more recently, in the United States and Canada. The current wave of anti-Israel BDS resolutions, particularly in academic groups such as the American Studies Association (ASA) and the Modern Language Association (MLA), are the latest assaults.

In responding and attempting to win this “soft-power war”, the emphasis has been on refuting myths of Palestinian victimization and Israeli aggression. It is necessary to expose the lies and false histories that are used to justify the singling-out of Israel and accusations of war crimes and other alleged moral violations. But these approaches are defensive and cover only one dimension of the battlefield.

To expand the counterattack, it is necessary to identify and then defeat the underlying mechanisms that propel this assault. The BDS campaign on university campuses, churches and the media has been carefully planned for more than a decade, and is [financed by hundreds of millions of dollars, euros, pounds, krona](#) provided to so-called “non-governmental [organizations](#)” (NGOs) that operate cynically under the façade of human rights and similar ethical principles. This huge budget provides the salaries, travel funds, advertising, public relations, and other activities of more than 100 NGOs, many of which are run by the same people in a constantly moving political shell game. In most cases, this deadly NGO funding is unreported and unsupervised.

Most of this money comes from Europe, usually involving taxpayer funds funneled through secret processes to organizations that operate under the banners of promoting human rights, humanitarian aid, democracy and peace. As a result, while the resolutions, panels, petitions and other forms of anti-Israel boycott warfare are taking place in the United States (the MLA meeting is in Chicago), the weapons and organization behind the assault is European.

For example, the group calling itself “Coalition of Women for Peace” runs a BDS framework that targets Israeli businesses and other institutions, as well companies that work with the Israeli firms. They are active throughout Europe, largely financed by two grants from the European Union, German political foundations, Holland, Norway and Sweden. In most cases, the funding process is hidden behind a heavy wall of secrecy. (CWP’s Facebook page features pictures of officials holding a PFLP flag — the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian is a terrorist organization, as recognized by the EU, and is responsible for numerous attacks against civilians.)

Beyond these widespread BDS attacks, every battle has a specific externally-funded NGO dimension. For example, the MLA boycott campaign is paid for, in part, by the Dutch Government. For a number of years, the Dutch have been a major source of income for an organization known as [Electronic Intifada](#) (EI), which is run by a Palestinian activist — Ali Abunimeh. On the surface, EI presents itself as a website and media organization promoting the Palestinian narrative of victimization and Israeli aggression. But EI’s main activities go far beyond blog posts. EI is a major part of the BDS war machine, and Ali Abunimeh is constantly appearing on campuses and other venues, particularly during “Israel Apartheid Week”. The “testimonies” for the MLA boycott resolution (which quickly collapsed under independent examination) alleging Israeli violations of academic freedom were provided by EI. Of course, there is no mention of Palestinian terror and other fundamental violations of human rights in this propaganda.

El's budget for this anti-Israel political warfare, including frequent abuses of the Holocaust, includes funding from [ICCO](#) – the Interchurch Cooperative for Development Cooperation – based in Holland, whose budget of over 100 million Euros annually is largely provided by the government ostensibly for international assistance. But ICCO is not subject to any supervision, particularly with respect to the abuse of these funds for the assault against Israel and the Jewish right to sovereign equality. Many of ICCO's activities and grants are secret, including to Electronic Intifada. (NGO Monitor research first exposed this ICCO-El connection, providing the information to Uri Rosenthal, who was the Dutch Foreign Minister at the time.)

The ASA boycott involved other anti-Israel NGOs — including Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP) and the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). PACBI is led by Omar Barghouti, whose activities in support of anti-Israel political warfare parallel those of Ali Abunimeh (ironically Barghouti spent a few years as a doctoral student at Tel Aviv University). Their main theme is to promote the exploitation of South African apartheid as a means of delegitimizing Israel – indeed the BDS movement grew out of the 2001 NGO Forum, held in Durban, South

Africa, in which the participants adopted a strategy aimed at “the complete international isolation of Israel as an apartheid state.” PACBI and Barghouti clearly have access to large budgets, but their donors have yet to be exposed.

Another wing of the BDS attack force, JVP, is based in the US, and has a million dollar annual budget to send a handful of zealots to provide the façade of Jewish support in such events. JVP's stated goal is to drive a wedge to divide the Jewish community over Israel, and supporting BDS warfare is a central goal. Who funds this divide and conquer strategy? [JVP's main funding sources are hidden](#); its donors remain completely anonymous.

While debating and refuting propaganda is important, it is also necessary to cut off the supply lines and resources available to NGOs such as CWP, Electronic Intifada, JVP, PACBI, and many more. To defeat the attacks, the funders/enablers in Europe and beyond must be exposed, and then held responsible for the actions of their clients and recipients.