

On Europe, terrorism and demonizing Israel: Time for a Reset



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If nothing else, European officials at least get credit for consistency. For decades, in war and peace, terror and calm, they have not flagged in the belief that they can engineer their vision of peace for Israel.

Having failed in so many previous attempts, the European move is another step in the effort to impose its preferred policies, via the labeling of products from the post-1967 “occupied territories” in order to create economic pressure on Israel. The next step would be to ban these products, and then to single out all Israeli items. (As perpetual victims, Palestinians are deemed to be exempt from contributing to peace, real or imagined.)

In this context, the claim by the European Union’s ambassador in Tel Aviv that labeling Israeli goods from beyond the Green Line isn’t a big deal was disingenuous. “You seem to be very proud of your own settlement enterprise,” Lars Faaborg-Anderson said in an interview with journalist Raphael Ahrens, “so why is this such a big problem?” His condescension was, to put it mildly, out of line.

The marking of products from beyond the 1949 armistice lines goes far beyond another awkward EU attempt to impose its ideas on Israeli democracy. Product labeling is the embodiment of a strategy to delegitimize Israel and the right of the Jewish people to sovereign equality. It is central to the political war embodied in BDS — boycott, divestment and sanctions — whose stated objective is not peace, but rather “the complete international isolation of Israel.”

To answer Faaborg-Anderson’s sarcastic question, this is the reason that EU product labeling “is this such a big problem.” Behind the facade of promoting peace, demonization is used to justify terror, including false war crimes accusations and BDS campaigns.

Although those promoting this agenda use different methods than the terrorists stabbing Israelis in Jerusalem, Petah Tikvah and Tel Aviv, they have the same goals.

This campaign is conducted through false-flag human rights and humanitarian groups, many of which are also funded generously by the EU and its member states. In addition to the echo-chamber of anti-Israel slogans, these organizations lobby the EU to adopt their anti-Israel agenda, for which they then get more taxpayer money to continue the cycle.

In a 2012 report entitled *Trading Away Peace*, 22 NGOs launched product labeling as the first step towards BDS. They called on the EU “governments [to] consider banning imports” of such products entirely. The “aid” organizations behind the report included Cordaid (Holland), Trocaire (Ireland), DanChurchAid (Denmark), MEDICO International (Germany), Christian Aid (UK) and FIDH (France) — all of which receive millions of euros annually from the EU.

Other EU-funded partner organizations have reinforced this efforts. The Coalition of Women for Peace, a leading BDS campaigner, continuously issuing statements supporting “the call for cultural and economic boycott, divestment and international sanctions to increase pressure on Israel from the international community.” CWP uses EU money to lobby the EU to cancel its trade agreements with Israel. For this, this organization received €247,668 from the EU in 2013 alone, through the EIDHR (democracy and human rights) program.

All of this is missing from Ambassador Faaborg-Andersen’s interviews and speeches. Indeed, in the face of the evidence, he continues to claim that the EU condemns any connection between the labeling of products and antisemitism, calling BDS “a repulsive, absolutely condemnable phenomenon.”

But the facts paint a different picture. While all European officials denounce antisemitism, the EU does not have a working definition to apply, including with regard to NGO funding. There is no comprehensive understanding of Jew hatred, or the use of the rhetoric of attacking “occupation” and Israeli “war crimes” as thin covers for hate.

In other words, while invoking the rhetoric of peace, the EU and its spokesperson in Israel, Ambassador Faaborg-Andersen, continue to promote policies and organizations that reinforce the conflict. Product labeling, which promotes boycotts and other actions that single-out and demonize Israel, is the facade for this process.

In the midst of another wave of brutal terror, this is certainly not the time for European political posturing. Taking at face value its claims to support the right of the Jewish people to sovereign equality, and to oppose antisemitism, the European Union is well advised to drop product labeling. At the same time, a full and independent investigation of their relationships with fringe groups that fuel the conflict is long overdue.