

Europe's role in the 'Jewish State' law

☆The Times of Israel- November 27, 2014

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In the debate on the proposed "Jewish state law," much of the criticism erases the context that brought this issue to the political center at this time. Claims of "racism" and "discrimination" that have echoed through the media and in the Knesset reduce an important and complex issue to simplistic and misleading slogans.

This initiative cannot be understood without considering the ongoing campaigns to erode and eventually erase the essential Jewish framework of Zionism. For a number of years, anti-Zionist political groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have sought to reverse the definition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, and replace it by a state "of all of its citizens." Many of these NGOs receive major foreign government funding, both directly and through church aid agencies, to promote this objective under the facade of human rights and democracy. They are also very active in demonization campaigns around the world, which single-out Israel for boycotts and other political attacks.

For example, an Israel-based group known as [Zochrot](#) (Remembrance), which accuses Israel of "ethnic cleansing," among other libels, held a film festival on the "Nakba and Return" at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque on November 27-29. Such events and the advertising campaigns that surround them promote the Palestinian myth of a "right of return," which, if it were implemented, would end Israel's existence as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Zochrot's activities demonizing the Jewish state are funded by organizations (including many "humanitarian" church groups) who in turn receive money from the governments of the UK, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland.

Similarly, [Adalah](#), an Arab-Israeli NGO funded by the EU, Germany, Sweden, Christian Aid, as well as the New Israel Fund, also promotes an agenda that consistently demonizes the Jewish state, in principle and regardless of borders. Using their generous foreign funding under the façade of human rights, Adalah submits statements and provides frequent "testimony" before United Nations committees, and sends numerous "reports" to journalists and diplomats.

Adalah condemns the Law of Return, the Israeli flag, Hatikva, the Menorah as the national symbol, the Jewish National Fund, and other targets that reflect the Jewish history and culture. According to Adalah and its allies, financial benefits for former soldiers are discriminatory because they exclude Israeli Arabs who do not serve in the military. However, this is their choice, while members of Israeli minorities, such as Druze, Bedouin, and an increasing number of Christian Arabs, serve and receive benefits identical to their Jewish counterparts. The misleading allegations of discrimination against non-Jewish citizens in these contexts are a form of political warfare.

Other NGOs with budgets totaling millions of pounds bombard the Israeli media and courts with similar allegations, covering a wide range of issues. For example, a number of lawsuits have been filed seeking to overturn the law dealing with land held by the JNF on behalf of the Jewish people, again claiming discrimination. In some cases, judges citing the 1992 Basic Laws (a form of constitution emphasizing individual rights) have endorsed these arguments, and, in the view of many Israelis, contributed to the erosion of the Jewish and Zionist identity.

Furthermore, claims that a Jewish state is somehow racist or a theocracy ignore the fact that the 28 members of the European Union (plus Norway and Switzerland), are Christian societies, with symbols,

define themselves as Islamic, and a number are, in fact, theocracies. Thus, the attempts to single out Israel for criticism are themselves highly discriminatory.

For all of these reasons, the political agenda reflects the importance of reinforcing Israel's fundamental Jewish and Zionist identity, based on the 1948 Declaration of Independence, which defines Israel clearly and repeatedly as "the Jewish state." And while different formulae exist in order to reach this objective, opponents who resort to false slogans such as "racism" are contributing to the problem.