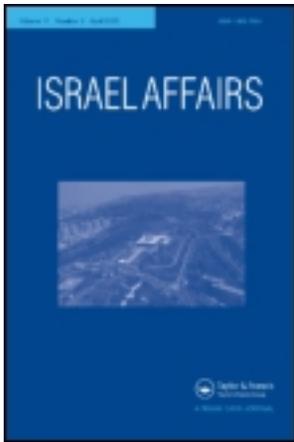


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### The BDS message of anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, and incitement to discrimination

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## The BDS message of anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, and incitement to discrimination

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The language may be deceptively conciliatory but the meaning of the BDS message is of intransigence. The rhetoric of this movement conceals a programme of 'resistance', a call to destabilize the status quo through unremitting public agitation over a long period. It rejects the premises of the Oslo agreements including the possibility of a negotiated peace with Israel or any form of reconciliation, and its message combines anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism. The movement is all the more dangerous because under the guise of a quest for justice its advocates skilfully conceal the strategic objective of isolating and destroying the Jewish state and perhaps also Jews who individually and collectively identify with the State of Israel.

**Keywords:** Israel; anti-Semitism; BDS; boycott; divestment; de-legitimization

When we think of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement images come to mind of violent demonstrators in tee shirts noisily tossing Israeli products off the shelves at stores such as the Carrefour in France. Similarly, we recall countries such as Norway, whose national pension fund sold off the stocks of successful Israeli corporations from its portfolio, or the refusal of pop stars to perform in Israel. Despite the fact that such demonstrative gestures are not entirely effective, they represent 'the propaganda of the deed'. 'Material activism' makes news, influences public attitudes, and encourages others to participate. The BDS movement has its own distinctive message and political programme. Its adherents make no pretence of supporting Palestinian reconciliation with the Jewish state but openly call for the politicide of Israel, which they seek to destroy and replace with a single Palestinian state ruled by a Muslim majority. The advocates of BDS accuse Israel of being a racist and apartheid state, hence a criminal entity that has neither a legitimate place in the community of nations nor a *raison d'être*. If justice must be done, Israel should be destroyed and replaced. This constitutes BDS's basic, literal message and provides the unifying and guiding principle of the movement.

What is the meaning of the boycott? According to Pascal Markowicz, a legal advisor on the task force opposing the boycott for the umbrella organization of French Jewry (CRIF), the boycott is the new battlefield of the media and legal war

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which has been declared against Israel. Similarly, a background briefing paper which the CRIF published on the subject of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions, the BDS initiative, cites the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 16 July 2009, ruling that the boycott of a French mayor preventing the sale of Israeli food products in the municipal cafeteria represented 'incitement to an act of discrimination'.<sup>1</sup> This definition is significant because it links the act of boycotting to incitement and discrimination, revealing a relationship which generally has been overlooked. In fact, French jurisprudence from 1881 has recognized the boycott as a type of provocation to discrimination on a national, racial, or religious basis.<sup>2</sup> Thus, under European and French law, the relationship between boycotting and incitement to discrimination is recognized officially. Accordingly, Michael Ghnassia, co-author of the CRIF pamphlet, has stated that 'the calls for boycott are neither peaceful nor even legal',<sup>3</sup> thus challenging BDS activist Omar Barghouti, who righteously claims that the boycott provides a moral means of seeking redress of injustice.

Anthony Julius, a distinguished lawyer and Deputy Chairman of the British law firm Mishcon de Reya, describes the meaning of boycotting in his path-breaking book, *Trials of the Diaspora*:

What happens when people are boycotted? The ordinary courtesies of life are no longer extended to them. They are not acknowledged in the street; their goods are not bought; their services are not employed; invitations they hitherto could rely upon dry up; they find themselves isolated in company. The boycott is an act of violence, although of a paradoxical kind – one of recoil and exclusion rather than assault. The boycotted person is pushed away by the 'general horror and common hate'. It is a denial amongst other things, of the boycotted person's freedom of expression ... To limit or deny self-expression is thus an attack at the root of what it is to be human. Of course, freedom of expression must incorporate freedom of address. It is not sufficient for the exercise of my freedom of expression simply to be free to speak. What matters to me is that people should also be free to hear me. There should at least be the possibility of dialogue. Boycotts put a barrier in front of the speaker. He can speak but he is prevented from communicating. When he addresses another, that other turns away. The boycott thus announces a certain moral distaste; it is always self-congratulatory ... Boycotting is thus an activity especially susceptible to hypocrisy. It implies moral judgments both on the boycotter and boycotted.<sup>4</sup>

According to Julius, the boycott is an act of violence. It should also be noted that the process which he describes is nearly identical in content to that of de-legitimization, through which a member of the international community is deprived of its rights and prerogatives – not the least, the right to be heard. Independently, Markowicz, Gnassia, and Julius refute the BDS argument that boycotting is a moral, legal, and non-violent method of protest.

At the same time, the reality of the boycott reveals an additional level of meaning. In 1984, the Information Department of the Jewish Agency launched a campaign to bring about the repeal of the infamous UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 3379 'Zionism is Racism'. In this endeavour, it commissioned several studies, among them one by Ehud Sprinzak, then an Associate Professor at

the Hebrew University, describing the practical effects of de-legitimization, which resemble those of being the target of a boycott. Sprinzak explained that the distinguishing characteristic of the new defamation campaign against Israel (and the new anti-Semitism) was a process of dehumanization. When brought to its logical conclusion, this undertaking deprived Israelis and Jews of their commonly accepted human rights. His central thesis was that a 'qualitative change ushered in the anti-Zionism of the 1970s, a change arising from the fact that Zionism has ceased being an object of delegitimation and had become an object of dehumanization'.<sup>5</sup> He described the end result of this process:

The loss of legitimacy effectively means the loss of the right to speak or debate in certain forums. When a political entity is subjected to widespread de-legitimization, whatever its spokesmen may have to say on a given concrete subject, even when no particular principle is at stake, *is perceived as irrelevant*. They are no longer accepted as partners in legitimate discourse, for they themselves are illegitimate. Their position resembles that of patients in a closed mental institution: once committed by the professional board of review, they are treated as mentally incompetent, no matter how cogently they may express themselves.<sup>6</sup>

If one goes beyond the terminology and considers the effective meaning of the political war which Israel and its supporters must confront, it is possible to note a distinct coherence of content which combines elements of hatred, incitement, and discrimination all at once. Essentially, the boycott is part of the de-legitimization process and should be considered in this broader context.

### **Immediate historical background**

The BDS movement emerged from both long-term and short-term developments. The long-term developments were related to the consequences of Arafat's 'war of terror' (the so-called Al-Aqsa Intifada) and the Durban Conference of 2001. The main short-term events that gave the movement impetus were Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 and the subsequent construction of the Security Barrier. Only if one intentionally ignored Palestinian responsibility for the terrorism campaign and rejected Israel's right to assure the security of its citizens, would it be possible to regard Israel's acts of self-defence as a form of wilful aggression. Of course, if one took the position that Israel has no right to exist, and that its civilians are fair targets, then everything would make sense.

While the idea singling out Jews for boycott and segregation is as old as the existence of the Jewish Diaspora, during the past decade a sequence of events has made it particularly current. At the July 2000 Camp David summit PLO chairman Yasser Arafat concluded that he would not be able to achieve his real strategic goal of Israel's destruction through peaceful negotiations, evidenced *inter alia* by his dismissive rejection of Ehud Barak's far-reaching territorial concessions. Members of the Palestinian leadership later disclosed that upon his return Arafat decided to launch what became known as the al-Aqsa Intifada. In fact, a member of the Arabic language press reported that Arafat, soon after his return, told a press conference (in Arabic) that he did not intend to sit in Hell and drink coffee

with Anwar Sadat. It is noteworthy that during that summer, Israeli intelligence detected the Palestinian preparations for war, and that the Israel Defence Forces were being readied for confrontation. (Thus, it is clear that Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount on 28 September 2000 could not have been the real cause of the 'intifada', although it gave the Palestinians an excellent pretext.) Those events were the background for a new round of deadly violence and Palestinian terrorist attacks against large numbers of innocent Israeli civilians, though it failed to demoralize and bring about the collapse of Israeli society as Arafat hoped.<sup>7</sup>

Following this setback, the Palestinians and their supporters initiated a major campaign of political warfare whose purpose was to attain the goals which they could not achieve through terrorism, violence, and the 'armed struggle'. The World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance took place between 31 August and 7 September 2001 in Durban, South Africa, at the height of the Palestinian terrorist campaign. For Israel and the United States, Durban was an ambush. Among the new developments was the revival of accusations of Israeli racism and the practice of apartheid. At Durban, Israel's adversaries made great efforts to produce a final text which would deny the uniqueness of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism as a human rights issue. During the sessions of the NGOs it also became clear that one of their central goals was to restore the UNGA 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Since the Soviet era this propaganda formula had represented a harmful libel whose purpose was to destroy Israel's legitimacy.<sup>8</sup> By reviving these slogans in Durban the Palestinians and their allies in the Arab world and in the West, with the active support of many NGOs, indicated their clear determination to delegitimize the Jewish state and to seek its destruction through incremental political steps. Several years later, the BDS movement would adopt these slogans and make them part of its message.

In due course Sharon became prime minister (from 2001 to 2006), and during his administration several new developments took place which transformed the situation on the ground. On 27 March 2002 a Palestinian terrorist murdered 30 Israelis and injured another 140 during the Passover Seder at a Netanya hotel. Viewing this latest massacre of innocent civilians as the last straw, Sharon launched Operation Defensive Shield (1–11 April 2002), taking the war to the centres of Palestinian terrorism. As part of the war against Palestinian terrorism, in July 2003 the Sharon government began construction of the Security Barrier, aimed at reducing Israel's vulnerability to the high number of deadly Palestinian suicide bombings launched from the West Bank and to prevent the Palestinian Authority from turning the areas under its control into springboards for attacks on Israel.

Lisa Taraki, a faculty member at Bir Zeit University and a founder of the BDS movement, wrote that the Palestinians did not initiate the boycott movement. According to her,

The initial call was made in the UK in April 2002, at the height of the Israeli assault upon Palestinian cities and towns ... The British initiative was not a call for a blanket boycott of the Israeli academic community, but was a restricted call for

a moratorium on European research and academic collaboration with Israeli institutions.<sup>9</sup>

Two years later, in July 2004, the International Court at The Hague ruled that according to international law the construction of the Security Barrier was illegal. During the same year, the Palestinian cause gained a big boost when the US Presbyterian church endorsed its cause and joined the divestment movement. A year after the International Court's decision, on 9 July 2005, a group of Palestinian activists, joined by 170 signatories, met in Ramallah and launched the BDS movement.<sup>10</sup> Among the drafters and signatories were Omar Barghouti and Lisa Taraki. By choosing the anniversary of the court decision this group laid claim to higher principles, morality, and international law, and proclaimed that their goal was to force Israel to submit to justice, their justice.

### **BDS's message and the convergence of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism**

In order to understand BDS's message, it is necessary place it in historical and geopolitical context. One of the major components of the BDS message and its terminology is the amalgamation of Jew-hatred with the rejection of the Jewish state, or 'Convergence'.<sup>11</sup> American historian Jeffrey Herf introduced this term in his description of the policy of Nazi Germany on the eve of World War II when it proclaimed its enmity toward the Zionist enterprise. In addition to tracing the historical origins of this significant development, Herf also explained its geopolitical context, which is essential to our understanding of the BDS message:

As war approached, the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, which focused on the danger such a state [that is a Jewish state] would oppose to Germany, increasingly supplanted the view of Palestine as a place in which Germany could dump its unwanted Jews. With German aggression and expansion, Germany now had many millions of Jews in its grasp, rather than only Germany's 500,000. Palestine was too small and now too inaccessible to offer a solution through deportation. War meant a search for allies among the Arabs. The hostility to the goal of the Jewish state, which had been there from the outset and was now reinforced by a search for Arab allies, led to a pristine moment of convergence of anti-Semitism with antagonism both toward Zionism's end goal and to any further emigration to Palestine.<sup>12</sup>

The precedent of Nazi Germany clearly shows that the amalgamation of anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism was part of the policy of seeking support in the Arab world by bringing it into a war against a shared enemy. Ultimately, this 'breakthrough' would be followed by others.

Independently, in September 2007, Ben Cohen, an analyst for the American Jewish Committee, wrote a perceptive pamphlet, *The Ideological Foundations of the Boycott Campaign against Israel*.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the BDS ideology, he identified 'the thematic overlap between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism' which, similar to Herf's 'Convergence', found that 'the most disturbing aspect' of the BDS movement was 'the insistence that [the] Jewish state be quarantined as a necessary step toward its elimination'.<sup>14</sup> He observed that 'the de-legitimization strategy waged against Israel today, and particularly its apartheid component,

owes much to the Soviet Union', describing Moscow's anti-Israel incitement, particularly the damaging after-effects of the 'Zionism is Racism' resolution – a Soviet initiative sponsored by Somalia and passed by the General Assembly 10 November 1975. This measure reflected the presence of Soviet domestic anti-Semitism, its embrace of the Arab cause abroad, and the anti-colonial idiom used to express that policy.<sup>15</sup>

The accusation of this message was particularly harmful because it reduced the essence of convergence into a deceptively simple propaganda slogan which carried a big lie that hid quintessential messages of incitement behind self-righteous pretences of anti-racism and anti-apartheid struggles. In Cohen's words:

What the current advocates have in common with their Soviet precursors is their invocation of the word 'apartheid' as part of a strategy to secure Israel's isolation and reverse its international legitimacy; at the same time, their version strives for greater respectability, insofar as it has been purged of the nakedly anti-Semitic foundations upon which the Soviet anti-Zionists based themselves. Instead, the concentration is on the supposed similarities between apartheid and Zionism in terms of state structure and government policy. The shift is one reason why the apartheid analogy has been able to slip from the margins into the mainstream discourse in the West.<sup>16</sup>

Cohen thus identified the link between the Soviet-initiated resolution of 1975 and the BDS message of today calling for the destruction of Israel. (For the sake of historical accuracy it should be noted that article 19 of the Palestine National Covenant of 1964 already contains the term 'racist' as an anti-Zionist pejorative; but then the PLO's founding fathers, let alone the architect of its creation, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, had long been associated with Moscow or under its spell.)<sup>17</sup> It is noteworthy that Soviet terminology has contaminated the mainstream discourse to such an extent that US President Jimmy Carter uses it indiscriminately in his book *Peace, Not Apartheid* to propagate the BDS position.<sup>18</sup> Because we can identify the lineage of the epithets of convergence, it is possible to state without hesitation that Carter cannot be the mature elder statesman he claims to be, and by his choice of language he has brought himself into disrepute.

While the proponents of BDS assert that they seek justice and oppose violence, it is evident that hatred and violence must be part of their programme, particularly if they reach a point when they cannot attain their goals peacefully. In fact, the violence against European Jewry at the beginning of the millennium resulted directly from the new, ideologically charged environment:

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada, or the Second Armed Uprising, in September 2000, European Jews have undergone a security crisis without parallel in the post-1945 period. In part, this was the result of a dramatic increase in anti-Jewish incidents recorded in nearly every European state, intimately related to the troughs and peaks of conflict in the Middle East.<sup>19</sup>

This correlation indicates that the effects of the new ideological tone – which became part of the Durban programme – can be outright violent. They are no longer confined geographically to the Middle East but have spilled over into Europe and the American college campus. In the case of European violence against

Jews, particularly in France, one may observe the anti-Semitic dimension of convergence, accompanied by a level of violence not seen for generations. It should not be surprising that, despite loud professions of moral superiority, an ideology that amalgamates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism has no constraints.

### **The geopolitical dimension of the hate campaign**

The BDS message also has a geopolitical dimension. We have pointed out that both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union used messages based on convergence to advance their respective programmes of penetration into the region by cultivating Arab allies. Such ambitions include empire-building, establishment of spheres of influence, conquest of new markets, and, of course, development of new opportunities related to the exploitation of oil. Several examples will demonstrate that there is a direct nexus between geopolitical ambitions in the Middle East and the incitement to hatred and violence.

From its inception, the Zionist enterprise forged special relationships with several major powers successively, and these patrons provided relative security as well as other solid advantages. The first was Britain, which issued the Balfour Declaration and maintained control of Palestine until 1948 in its capacity as the League of Nations' mandatory power for the country. Then there was the Republic of France, which aided the 'illegal Jewish immigration' to Palestine, denied by the British in contravention of their mandate to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. During the immediate post-war era, French policymakers were delighted to help push the British out of the region, as was Stalin, who for a brief moment sold crucial weapons and lent diplomatic support to the nascent State of Israel in its fateful war for survival. Similarly, the United States endeavoured to push Britain out of the region. Ultimately, the French became the second power with which Israel had a special relationship until President Charles de Gaulle brutally slammed the door in his infamous press conference of 17 November 1967, where he derided the Jews as 'an elite people, self-assured and domineering'. This well-staged outburst ended the period of grace which Jews had enjoyed during the post-war era. After this event, the public expression of anti-Semitic views became acceptable.<sup>20</sup>

There can be no doubt that geopolitical motives influenced the attitude of French policymakers. De Gaulle wanted to become a player on the world stage by creating a European group led by France that would counterbalance the US preponderant influence, then at its height during the Cold War era. The actual push for a regional European-Mediterranean grouping dates from a geostrategic decision made by the French government in the 1960s.

De Gaulle's government and bureaucracy decided to revive the model of the pre-war French empire (in which the population of many colonies was primarily Muslim). After ending the war in Algeria, he chose his moment to realign France's foreign policy in a manner which would respond to the political preferences of its former colonies and to those of the Arab world. French policymakers decided that

France's association with Israel had become too close, and that it would be in its interest to follow a more independent policy and to re-establish its 'traditional ties' in the Arab world and to seek new markets there.<sup>21</sup> Behind closed doors, de Gaulle is reported to have stated quite bluntly: 'There are a hundred times more Arabs than Jews in the Mediterranean basin.'<sup>22</sup>

Generally speaking, countries with ambitions in the region sought to supplant those that enjoyed special relationships. Thus, for example, Nazi German propagandists condemned Britain's imperialist presence, accusing it (on account of its Puritan ethos) of being Jewish in spirit and dominated by Jewish bankers. In its efforts to penetrate the Middle East, Germany attacked this supposed special relationship and alleged cultural affinity. The same applies to the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s. In all of these cases, geopolitical ambition was aligned with propaganda efforts. In the words of a perceptive observer of Soviet affairs:

The Kremlin, of course, had a strategic aim throughout the Middle East and the Arab world: to widen its power in the region, undermine Western strength there and so build up a staging area for future expansion into the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the Islamist regime in Iran, with its grand ambitions in the Middle East and beyond, has been a major sponsor of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist propaganda. In this context, we may understand Tehran's motives and its dominant and malicious role in bringing about the outcome of the Durban Conference and spreading its anti-American message.

Not the least, the European Union and its members have their own geopolitical ambitions in the region. These have found expression in a preference for the 'soft power' approach as embodied, for example, in the Prodi Plan, presented in an October 2003 address in Alexandria titled 'Sharing Stability and Prosperity' highlighting a vision of a greater Mediterranean Basin where European and Arab harmony and cooperation would prevail.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, several EU members have applied the soft power approach by funding NGOs in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. These agencies function as front groups whose task is to undermine Israel's political culture, divide its people, and destabilize its democracy. Recently, for example, the Israel-based NGO Monitor discovered that the *Electronic Intifada* website receives substantial European funding via a Dutch NGO, the Interchurch Organization for Development and Cooperation (ICCO), which in turn receives 95% of its budget from the Dutch government and the EU. The Interchurch Organization has been supporting the *Electronic Intifada* website at least since 2007. Therefore, via indirect routes, the EU and its proxies fuel the diffusion of the hate-filled BDS message.<sup>25</sup>

Within the larger geopolitical picture, disrupting America's special relationship with Israel and promoting the Arab cause is a matter of *realpolitik*. According to American political commentator Steven J. Rosen,

The strongest external force pressuring the U.S. government to distance itself from Israel is not the Arab-American organizations, the Arab embassies, the oil

companies, or the petrodollar lobby. Rather it is the Europeans, especially the British, French, and Germans, that are the most influential Arab lobby to the U.S. government.<sup>26</sup>

The European governments pursue this policy because they consider it in their direct interest, which also includes the dissemination of the BDS message. They want to reduce, if not eliminate, Washington's foothold in the region in order to replace it, particularly at a moment of opportunity when the Obama administration has been unsteady and uncertain of America's place in the world.

While the story of foreign intervention in the region continues, more recently Muslim leaders have 'sold' their own plans to the Europeans and the Americans and have been disseminating their own message throughout the whole world. They engage in *dawa*, whose original meaning is a 'call' or 'invitation that God and the prophets address to the people to believe in Islam, the true religion'.<sup>27</sup> Their religious and political message is aligned with geopolitical ambition on a global scale. Muslim Brotherhood affiliates in Europe, for example, have been playing a more active role in the cooperative international effort to delegitimize Israel, as have been senior Fatah and PA officials, and both have been collaborating with the BDS movement.<sup>28</sup> This development suggests the delegitimization campaign against Israel, of which BDS is a part, may well assume an increasingly religious aspect.

### **The purpose and function of the BDS message**

Before relating directly to some texts that convey the BDS message, let us devote some attention to its basic political programme. The professed objective of BDS is to lay siege to Israel. Beyond the specific agenda of isolating Israel and disrupting its commercial and cultural ties, there is a larger goal: to shift the consensus of world opinion against Israel. At present, Israel enjoys widespread goodwill and respect in the West. Accordingly, the strategic objective of BDS activists is to destroy the generally favourable consensus among non-Jewish supporters of Israel and to undermine the relationship between Jews and Christians. Similarly, BDS activists strive to convert Jewish intellectuals to their cause and use them to split the Jewish consensus and thus shield themselves from accusation of anti-Semitism and 'intellectual terrorism'.<sup>29</sup>

In the context of political warfare, organizations such as J Street in the United States and J Call in Europe may serve the purpose of undermining Jewish support for Israel. Shifting the consensus in favour of the Palestinian cause has been a major strategic goal for the long term. Thus, visits to North America and communication through the various media – especially the spoken word – have become an essential part of the BDS war of information. They comprise a form of political *dawa*.<sup>30</sup>

Writing in *Al-Jazeera* on 19 January 2006, Eyad Kishawi, an American member of the BDS movement living in San Francisco, explained that because

the BDS movement was decentralized, the coherence of its outlook was a matter of vital importance:

The most important fabric of any mass movement is its coherence of outlook. In this context, coherence translates to consistency of strategic goals, coordination of action and an agreement in analysis that is used for expanding the movement and recruitment of qualitative talent. Coherence allows proponents of Divestment to propagate the same messages in different institutions at different geographical locations, across all sectors until a critical mass is achieved resulting in a marked shift in consensus and eventually the balance of powers. Coherence is essential in a decentralized movement because a battle victory at one institution is immediately transferable to another carrying the same objectives. In this case, all efforts invested in the movement should point largely towards the strategic goals. In addition, the movement requires an analysis of Israel that is consistent with the indigenous narrative of the Palestinian people, if it were to further the struggle of a people with whom it stands in solidarity.<sup>31</sup>

This message, therefore, is a matter of supreme importance for the BDS movement because it provides the organizing principle that gives it direction and holds its members together. Decentralization offers flexibility and, according to Kishawi, affords some shelter from the law enforcement authorities. He disclosed that 'Proponents of Divestment have agreed that [the] movement's decentralization will achieve maximum outcome, especially in light of US governmental targeting of activists and Israeli extra judicial and illegal activities'.<sup>32</sup>

In doing so, the BDS movement took its cue from the American Tea Party movement, which chose the model of the decentralized organization. It used the recently published book *The Starfish and the Spider: the Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations*<sup>33</sup> as its guide. Its authors, Ori Brafman and Ron A. Beckstrom, liken the decentralized, leaderless organization to the starfish which can regenerate itself continuously, as opposed to the hierarchical model symbolized by the spider. The characteristics of the starfish model are that people are a movement's main asset; it operates like a neural network; ideology is the glue holding it together; and its values *are* the organization. Using this model, Tea Party activists succeeded in changing the American political landscape. The BDS movement aspires to do the same.

### **The BDS message and its content**

Because of the coherence of the BDS message, several themes constantly recur in its leaders' statements. The following statement by Kishawi is particularly relevant because it emphasizes the geopolitical focus described above, namely the targeting of the 'special relationship':

The strategic goal of the US-based [BDS] movement is to peacefully disrupt the continuity and evolution of Zionist ideology and its aspiration to achieve regional and global dominance by shifting politics from the realm of discourse to the realm of material activism. It views the need to organize in the US, the primary monetary supporter of Israel, as crucial and aims to dismantle the exclusionary-racist character of Israel as the primary manifestation of Zionist ideology by occluding

mobility of capital. The starting point in this effort is to mount material resistance to offset US governmental and corporate support through political isolation, divestiture, boycott and calls for ending US aid to Israel.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, the prominent BDS activist, Omar Barghouti, who lives in Ramallah, asserts as follows:

If the State of Israel is a permanent and autonomous colony [*colonie de peuplement*], it should be replaced by a secular democratic state offering its citizens equal rights, [both] to the Palestinians (including the refugees) *and* to the Israeli Jews. This type of state is the only one which can reconcile *ethically* that which appears [to be] irreconcilable: the inalienable rights, recognized by the UN, to self-determination, to repatriation and equality, of the indigenous people of Palestine according to international law, and the *acquired* and internationally recognized rights of the Israeli Jews to coexist – as equals and not as colonists – on the land of Palestine.<sup>35</sup>

One should carefully note Barghouti's choice of words. He does not consider Palestinians and Jews to possess equal claims to equal rights in his new Palestine, because the Palestinian Arabs possess their rights *de jure*, while the Jews, the colonists, acquired their rights *de facto*. It is also a falsification of history to claim the Palestinian Arabs were the 'first nation', in Palestine, to use the Canadian term. The Jews were. Furthermore, Barghouti chose the word 'coexist'. To coexist is not the same as to live in peace. Coexistence does not mean peace, but the postponement of hot war while permitting a state of undeclared war using all means short of actual war. Indeed, the term 'coexistence' belongs to the Soviet lexicon.

The following is an authoritative definition of coexistence by Boris N. Ponomarev, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and head of its International Department:

In the Leninist concept, the peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems is a necessary element of the strategy of the international proletariat in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. The policy of peaceful coexistence is a special form of the class struggle in the international arena. It not only does not hold back the revolutionary struggle but promotes its upsurge. The principle of peaceful coexistence does not extend and cannot extend to the class struggle in the capitalist countries, to the ideological struggle, and to the struggle of the oppressed people against their enslavers.<sup>36</sup>

In light of the real meaning of this terminology, what at first sight appears to be a generous invitation actually represents a form of double-speak. Likewise, one may ask whether the PA, after signing agreements with the State of Israel and gaining real concessions, is currently conducting an undeclared war against Israel along the lines of outlined by Ponomarev.

According to Barghouti, Israeli oppression takes three forms:

- The prolonged occupation and colonization of Gaza and the West Bank [i.e. Judea and Samaria], including East Jerusalem;
- The legalized and institutionalized system of racial discrimination against Israel's Arab citizens;

- The persistent refusal to recognize the rights of the Palestinian refugees, first and foremost their right to reparations and to return to their places of origin, recognized by Resolution 194 of the UN General Assembly.<sup>37</sup>

The language may be deceptively conciliatory but the meaning of the BDS message is one of intransigence. The sampling of theses and grievances reveals its distinct outlook. The rhetoric of this movement conceals a programme of 'resistance', a call to destabilize the status quo through unremitting public agitation over a long period. It rejects the premises of the Oslo agreements, including the possibility of a negotiated peace with Israel or any form of reconciliation. The BDS movement has received generous patronage from interested parties within and outside the region which seek to advance their own geopolitical ambitions. These include foreign governments which frequently work through the intermediaries of NGOs and, more recently, the Muslim Brotherhood. The BDS combines anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism. It is all the more dangerous because, under the guise of a quest for justice, its advocates skilfully conceal their strategic objective, namely the isolation and destruction of the Jewish state and perhaps of all Jews who individually and collectively identify with the State of Israel.

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### Notes

1. Pascal Markowicz, La délégitimation de l'Etat d'Israël par la campagne de boycott BDS, unpublished manuscript, 2010. Michael Ghnassia and Pascal Markowicz, *Le Boycott d'Israel: Que dit le droit?* (Paris: CRIF, 2011), 23. See also Pascal Markowicz, La jurisprudence en France concernant la discrimination et le boycott, *Actualités*, January 18, 2011.
2. *Le Boycott d'Israel: Que dit le droit?*, 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 20. The following passage serves as an example of the self-serving BDS claim to moral superiority: 'Anchored to a long tradition of non-violent popular resistance in Palestine and largely inspired by the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, it [the BDS movement] is based on the principle of the *universal* rights of man like the civil rights movement in the United States. It firmly rejects any form of racism, notably antisemitism and Islamophobia.' Omar Barghouti, *Boycott, Désinvestissement*,

- Sanctions: BDS contre l'apartheid et l'occupation de la Palestine* [Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions; BDS against Apartheid and the Occupation of Palestine], trs. Etienne Dobenesque and Catherine Neuve-Eglise (Paris: La fabrique, 2010) 23. Subsequently, an English version of this title has appeared: Omar Barghouti, *BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011).
4. Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 482–3.
  5. Ehud Sprinzak, “Anti-Zionism: From Delegitimation to Dehumanization,” *Forum on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel* 53 (May 1984): 2.
  6. *Ibid.*
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  8. See Joel S. Fishman, “The Cold-War Origins of Contemporary Anti-Semitic Terminology,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Jerusalem Viewpoints* 517 (2–16 May 2004); *idem*, “‘A Disaster of another Kind’: Zionism = Racism, Its Beginning, and the War of Delegitimation against Israel,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* V, no. 3 (2011): 71–88. <http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp517.htm>.
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  11. Jeffrey Herf, “Convergence: The Classic Case, Nazi Germany, Anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism during World War II,” *Journal of Israeli History* 25, no. 1 (March 2006): 63.
  12. *Ibid.*, 66.
  13. Ben Cohen, *The Ideological Foundations of the Boycott Campaign against Israel* (New York: AJC, September 2007).
  14. *Ibid.*, 1.
  15. Yohanan Manor, *To Right a Wrong: The Revocation of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 Defaming Zionism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Shengold, 1997).
  16. Cohen, *The Ideological Foundations*, 8–9.
  17. Bernard Lewis, “The Anti-Zionist Resolution,” *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 1 (October 1976): 54.
  18. Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).
  19. Cohen, *The Ideological Foundations*, 4.
  20. Raymond Aron, *De Gaulle, Israel and the Jews*, trans. John Sturrock (New York: Praeger, 1969), 9.
  21. For the official French position see Maurice Couve de Murville, *Une politique étrangère* (Paris: Plon, 1971), 463–75.
  22. Henry H. Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew in France, 1967–1982* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1987), 31.
  23. Gordon Brook-Shepard, *The Storm Birds: Soviet Postwar Defectors* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 260.
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27. Shammai Fishman, "Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat: A Legal Theory for Muslim Minorities," Hudson Institute, *Research Monographs on the Muslim World*, Series No. 1, Paper No. 2 (October 2006), 4.
28. Ehud Rosen, "The Global March to Jerusalem: Part of the International Campaign to Delegitimize Israel," *Jerusalem Viewpoints* (JCPA), no. 588 (March–April 2012). [http://jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=2&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=443&PID=0&IID=13056&TTL=The\\_Global\\_March\\_to\\_Jerusalem:\\_Part\\_of\\_the\\_International\\_Campaign\\_to\\_Delegitimize\\_Israel](http://jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=2&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=443&PID=0&IID=13056&TTL=The_Global_March_to_Jerusalem:_Part_of_the_International_Campaign_to_Delegitimize_Israel).
29. Barghouti, *Boycott, Desinvestissement, Sanctions*, 33.
30. In fact, Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi recently stated that championing the cause of Palestine was a religious obligation. According to this religious leader, some of those religious duties may be classified as follows: "Duty to Adopt and Champion the Rights of the Muslim Ummah: Such kind of duty involves championing the Cause of Palestine, Iraq, Kosova, Chechnya (and other places where Muslims are facing great ordeals), with the sincere intention to return back the usurped rights to their legitimate owners. Nowadays, we see the Jews, from the four corners of the world, championing and backing Israel, and we call on all Muslims in all parts of the world saying that it is high time to champion the rights of their Muslim Ummah." *IslamOnline.net*, February 22, 2010, [http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503544980&pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask\\_Scholar%2FFatwaE%2FFatwaEAskTheScholar](http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?cid=1119503544980&pagename=IslamOnline-English-Ask_Scholar%2FFatwaE%2FFatwaEAskTheScholar).
31. Eyad Kishawi, "Divestment from Israel in its Fifth Year: A History and Method for U.S. and European Activists," *Al-Jazeera*, January 19, 2006.
32. Ibid.
33. Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York: Portfolio, 2006).
34. Kishawi, "Divestment from Israel in its Fifth Year."
35. Barghouti, "Introduction," 25.
36. B.N. Ponomarev, "V.I. Lenin the Great Leader of the Revolutionary Era," *Kommunist*, no. 18, December 1969, as cited in *Brassey's Soviet and Communist Quotations*, ed. Albert L. Weeks (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987): item 1054, p. 205.
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