

THE ANTI-SEMITIC BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL

**Substance,
Goals,
Counterstrategies**

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#1

Foreword

■ Since 2005, the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) campaign has drawn much public attention, especially in the Anglo-American world. In Germany, too, activists using the label “BDS” have sought to disrupt economic, political, and cultural ties to Israel. Their main goal is to isolate Israel politically, economically, and culturally by calling on businesses, consumers, artists, and athletes to end all forms of cooperation with Israel or Israelis. The campaign has attracted prominent supporters, including South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, U.S. philosopher Judith Butler, and Pink Floyd front man Roger Waters. The world-famous physicist Stephen Hawking was also a supporter.

At the heart of the campaign is the narrative that Israel alone is responsible for the conflict with the Palestinians. This one-sided attribution of guilt, together with repeated untruths about the Jewish state and its conflict with the Palestinians, creates a distorted view reality.

The campaign not only aims to damage relations between Germany and Israel, but also strives for the international isolation and ultimate destruction of the Jewish state. The attack on Israel’s right to exist sits at the very core of the BDS campaign.

This aggressive agenda runs counter to the activists’ claim that BDS is a non-violent peace initiative. Violent anti-Semitic attacks continually occur in conjunction with BDS activities. This has become a particularly serious problem at universities in the U.S. and Great Britain. Furthermore, BDS has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with anti-Semitic terrorists.

BDS has had limited success in Germany partly because calls to boycott Israel recalls memories of the Nazi boycott and its slogan, “Don’t Buy from Jews.” However, the shadow of Nazi history is no guarantee that the boycott will never gain popularity in Germany. It is vital to halt the efforts of BDS before they cause serious harm.

The campaign against Berlin's pop-culture festival in the summer of 2018 offers an example of how BDS has successfully put artists under pressure. As in the year prior, BDS activists called for a boycott of the festival because the Israeli embassy contributed to the travel costs of an Israeli artist. Like in 2017, several artists decided not to participate,¹ with some performers cancelling due to BDS activities.² These events demonstrate the serious threat BDS poses. We must act to avert further damage. Although BDS activists belong to a small, radical minority, their activities are in line with pervasive anti-Semitic sentiments and one-sided portrayals of Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians.

This publication should enable local officeholders and civil servants, as well as civil society actors, to better understand the campaign, its goals, nature, and practices. This is especially important as BDS activists increasingly seek public funding and space for their campaigns. At a time when anti-Semitism and hatred of Israel have become increasingly socially acceptable, it is critical to emphatically oppose this dangerous propaganda. It is equally important to emphasize that the activists in this campaign are only a minority and their radical positions in no way represent all those striving for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Their demands, which aim at the destruction of the Jewish state, are not a legitimate position within this controversy.

The campaign should not be lent credibility through invitations and admittance into public discourse. On the contrary, it must be made clear that the BDS campaign weakens exchange and dialogue and ultimately poses a danger to Jewish life in Germany, as anti-Semitic incidents have repeatedly occurred in connection with BDS.

Deidre Berger

1 www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/bds-gegen-berliner-pop-kultur-festival-diese-sogenannte.1079.de.html?dram:article_id=421635

2 www.spiegel.de/kultur/musik/pop-kultur-festival-berlin-gruetters-kritisiert-boykott-aufruf-durch-bds-a-1164249.html

#2

What is BDS?

■ Boycotts of Jews and the Jewish state have a long and infamous history dating back to the 1920s. During the interwar period, Arab organizations used boycotts in an effort to deprive Jews in Palestine of their livelihoods. The first systematic, unified boycotting efforts came in October, 1945—even before the establishment of the state of Israel—with the Arab League’s decision to boycott³ the Yishuv.⁴ The boycott was later expanded as Arab states prohibited doing business with companies that did business with Israel.⁵ These resolutions are still in force today.⁶

The most recent attempt to use a boycott to harm the Jewish state and ultimately destroy its economic foundation goes back to 2005. In a Palestinian Civil Society Call, some 170 Palestinian organizations declared an economic, political, academic, and artistic boycott of the state of Israel under the name BDS.

BDS stands for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions. The “boycott” targets goods produced in Israel as well as Israeli cultural and economic institutions. Israeli sports teams are also boycotted and excluded from sports associations in protest against supposed crimes by the government in Jerusalem.⁷ Under the heading of “divestment,” the campaign calls on banks, businesses, and investment funds to withdraw all their capital from Israel and refrain from any future investments.

Under “sanction,” BDS seeks to persuade governments and international organizations to break off diplomatic relations with Israel and to impose political and economic costs. The demands of the campaign are based on historically and politically unjustified allegations against the Jewish state.

Israel is accused of, for example, having pursued ethnic cleansing tactics in the course of the state’s founding and then the systematic racial discrimination against its Arab citizens.⁸ The activists draw parallels between the situation in Israel and South Africa’s apartheid regime.⁹

These defamatory claims are at the root of the BDS campaign’s three basic demands. Its founding documents call for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to be upheld until Israel:

3 For a complete overview, see Gil Feiler (2002): *From Boycott to Economic Cooperation. The Political Economy of the Arab Boycott of Israel*, pp. 21-64.

4 This was the term for the Jewish community in Palestine before the founding of the state of Israel.

5 Feiler, p. 34.

6 www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33961.

7 www.bds-kampagne.de/themen/

8 See the German translation, www.bdsmovement.net/call#German.

9 Ibid.



1. ceases the occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantles the wall;
2. recognizes the fundamental rights of Arab-Palestinian citizens to full equality;
3. respects, protects, and promotes the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties, as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

The three BDS demands constitute nothing less than an assault on the very existence of the Jewish state. A closer analysis of the three points' content, and the resulting actions of BDS activists, will make their motives abundantly clear.

**Demand 1:
BDS opposes Israel's right
to exist**

The demand for an end to "occupation and colonization of all Arab lands"¹⁰ in the BDS mission statement is a blatant attack on Israel's existence. The phrasing refers not only to the West Bank, but to the entire territory of the Jewish state.

The German branch of the BDS campaign apparently recognized that an open demand for the destruction of the Jewish state would not gain majority support in Germany. Therefore, a watered-down version was created especially for Germany, calling for "ending the occupation and colonization of the Arab lands occupied in 1967 and dismantling the wall."¹¹

However, both versions are published on *BDS Germany's* internet site. The original text, which demands withdrawal from all "Arab lands," is supported by 29 German organizations,¹² while the milder version has 19 supporters.¹³

A closer look reveals that the milder German version is merely a tactical maneuver. All of the organizations that endorsed the German statement have also accepted the original international version. By supporting both statements, BDS supporters in Germany have intentionally left unclear which statement they consider binding. When criticized, they can always claim to have demanded only withdrawal from the territories occupied after the Six-Day War.

**Demand 2:
BDS ignores Israel's democratic character**

All Israeli citizens, regardless of religion, enjoy inalienable rights and equal opportunities. Arab Israelis hold positions as members of parliament, diplomats, and constitutional court judges. The BDS campaign's demand for "full equality" insinuates discriminatory treatment in Israel in order to substantiate the comparison with South African apartheid. Regrettably, prejudice and discrimination against minorities are a factor in all Western democracies, and Israel is no exception.

¹⁰ www.bds-kampagne.de/aufruf/aufruf-der-palstinensischen-zivilgesellschaft/.

¹¹ www.bds-kampagne.de/aufruf/deutschlandweiter-bds-aufruf/

¹² www.bds-kampagne.de/aufruf/aufruf-der-palstinensischen-zivilgesellschaft/.

¹³ www.bds-kampagne.de/aufruf/deutschlandweiter-bds-aufruf/

However, while many Arab Israelis claim unequal treatment, a survey by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation found that over 60% of Arab Israelis have nonetheless a positive view of Israel.¹⁴

**Demand 3:
BDS instrumentalizes refugees**

BDS demands the return of all Palestinian refugees.¹⁵ Here, it must be emphasized that, unlike all other refugee groups, refugee status among Palestinians is essentially inherited from generation to generation. As a result, the number of people considered to be refugees has grown more than fivefold since 1948. From the 500,000 - 750,000 Palestinians who left their homeland voluntarily or under duress during the course of the War of Independence, to the now five million refugees today¹⁶ If these “refugees” were permitted to settle in Israel, it would spell the end of Israel as a Jewish state.

The BDS campaign’s concern in this matter is not, however, the fate of the refugees themselves; no criticism has been voiced over the fact that these refugees have lived in Arab lands for decades in miserable conditions and are often prohibited from working or obtaining citizenship in their respective countries. Rather, for BDS, refugees are only of interest when their fate can be instrumentalized against Israel.

From the analysis of these three demands, it is clear that the BDS campaign, despite its claims, has no interest in a peaceful settlement of the conflict. On the contrary, the demands for withdrawal from “all Arab lands” and for a return of all “refugees” shows that even the German branch of the campaign ultimately seeks to deprive the Jewish state of its means of existence. Even if activists claim to support the German version of the boycott demands, which refers to the 1967 borders, the demand for unconditional right of return aims to end Israel’s existence as a Jewish state.

14 www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Survey-60-percent-of-Arab-Israelis-have-positive-view-of-state-506150.

15 www.bds-kampagne.de/aufruf/auf-ruf-der-palstinensischen-zivilgesellschaft/

16 www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees

#3 BDS in its Own Words

Omar Barghouti (2004):

 The two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is really dead. Good riddance! But someone has to issue an official death certificate before the rotting corpse is given a proper burial and we can all move on and explore the more just, moral and therefore enduring alternative for peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Mandate Palestine: the one-state solution. . . . The current phase has all the emblematic properties of what may be considered the final chapter of the Zionist project.”¹⁷

Ahmed Moor (2010):

 But I view the BDS movement as a long-term project with radically transformative potential. I believe that the ultimate success of the BDS movement will be coincident with the ultimate success of the Palestinian enfranchisement and equal rights movement. In other words, BDS is not another step on the way to the final showdown; BDS is The Final Showdown. This belief grows directly from the conviction that nothing resembling the ‘two-state solution’ will ever come into being. Ending the occupation doesn’t mean anything if it doesn’t mean upending the Jewish state itself.”¹⁸

As’ad Abu Khalil (2012):

 The real aim of BDS is to bring down the state of Israel... That should be stated as an unambiguous goal. There should not be any equivocation on the subject. Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of the State of Israel.”¹⁹

17 www.electronicintifada.net/content/relative-humanity-fundamental-obstacle-one-state-solution-historic-palestine-12/4939

18 www.mondoweiss.net/2010/04/bds-is-a-long-term-project-with-radically-transformative-potential/.

19 www.web.archive.org/web/20160427221237/www.english.alkhbar.com/node/4289

Zaid Shuaibi (2013):



Freedom, justice, return of refugees, and self determination

tion [sic.] in general require a rejection of normalization and greater resistance against Israel's multi-tiered system of oppression which includes occupation, colonization, and apartheid. In contrast, Oslo and the peace process is a normalization project without resistance to an ongoing project of ethnic cleansing. . . . An absolute majority of Palestinians today is calling for abandoning this suicidal Oslo track."²⁰

#4

How Does BDS Operate?

■ BDS uses a wide variety of strategies to achieve its goals. The campaign not only runs publicity campaigns against institutions and individuals, but also joins groups with other political aims, such as refugee work or LGBT rights, in order to spread awareness of BDS' demands and positions. Presence in other political groups also aims to lower public inhibitions towards BDS and make the campaign's demands seem more legitimate. Local activists also support international calls for a boycott and participate in BDS global days of action, including the annual *Israeli Apartheid Week*. BDS activists even oppose projects and events that encourage dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians unless the participants first explicitly denounce the "Israeli occupation," "colonization," and "apartheid," thus unconditionally submitting to the radical BDS agenda.

For example, participants in the BDS campaign on the West Bank opposed a peace demonstration by Israeli and Palestinian women in October 2017, claiming that Palestinians should only meet with Israelis if they "unite with them to oppose Israeli oppression."²¹

The following concrete examples illustrate how BDS operates.

Case Study: The Campaign against SodaStream.

The best known and, from the point of view of BDS activists, most successful campaign has been against SodaStream. Headquartered in Tel Aviv, SodaStream is the world's leading producer of sparkling water makers, selling its products in 46 countries.

²⁰ www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28813/Palestinian-Agency-And-New-Campaigns-In-The-Arab-World-An-Interview-With-Zaid-Shuaibi-On-The-Fourth-Annual-BDS-Conference

²¹ www.deutschlandfunk.de/demonstration-gegenwind-fuerpalaestinischesche.1773.de.html?dram:article_id=397923

The company previously had a factory in the Israeli industrial zone of Mishor Adumim, which lies in the disputed area of the West Bank. In 2014, 500 of the 1300 employees were Palestinians from the West Bank. They received the same wages as their Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Israeli colleagues. Only the location of the factory on the West Bank led activists to initiate a campaign against SodaStream. The German branch of BDS also took part in the campaign, with demonstrations against the company in Berlin, Bonn, and Hanover. The anti-SodaStream activities gained publicity in part because American actress Scarlett Johansson, who had done advertisements for SodaStream, was pressured to end her cooperation with the company. However, she vehemently defended her work and did not succumb to the pressure.²²

Nonetheless, as a result of prolonged international pressure, the company relocated the factory to Israel proper. The last Palestinian workers were dismissed in 2016. Yet, even after relocating its production facility, BDS continued its international campaign. By choosing a new location in the Negev Desert, advocates accused SodaStream of displacing Bedouins. However, the campaign failed to mention that the Israeli government promotes the location of factories in the Negev in order to combat high unemployment rates among Arab-Israelis.

This example clearly demonstrates that the welfare of Palestinians and Arab-Israelis is not the primary focus of BDS campaign activists. Rather, BDS aims to harm Israeli companies, regardless of the companies' actions, in order to damage and ultimately bankrupt them through the boycott.

Case Study: The Instrumentalization of the Refugee Debate

As previously mentioned, BDS activists try to improve their agenda's image by joining other political movements and alliances. In Berlin, BDS supporters joined the alliance "My Right is Your Right," which advocates for the rights of refugees. The participation of the group "F.O.R. Palestine" was particularly disturbing in this context. The group, which has signed both the German and the international BDS manifestos,²³ has frequently gained attention for its aggressive behavior, openly calling for Israel's destruction and applauding deadly knife attacks on Israeli citizens.²⁴

22 www.spiegel.de/panorama/leute/scarlettjohansson-verteidigt-werbevertrag-fuersodastream-a-958982.html

23 www.bds-kampagne.de/aufwurf/aufwurf-der-palstinensischen-zivilgesellschaft/

24 The group states on their website, "We are in solidarity with the struggle of the youth on the streets of Al-Khalil, Al-Qud and Bethlehem who are rising up against armed intruders with stones and kitchen knives. . . All forms of resistance are legitimate because their resistance is legitimate." www.for-palestine.org/en/on-the-nature-of-violence-resistance-and-solidarity

Case Study: BDS Guards Inspect Department Store Shelves

On November 11, 2015, the European Commission issued guidelines for labeling Israeli products from the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Under the EU mandate, products from the disputed regions must be labeled with their specific place of origin. Articles such as fruit, vegetables, poultry and eggs, and cosmetics are to be labelled, for example: "West Bank (Israeli settlement product)." The national governments of EU member states bear responsibility for implementing these guidelines. The European Commission justified this action with the claim that EU citizens had the right to know a product's exact origins before deciding whether or not to purchase it. AJC warned at the time that this decision would be a boost to the international boycott campaign against Israel.²⁵

As the BDS campaign in Bremen demonstrates, AJC'S warning was well-founded. There, BDS supporters dressed in white overalls patrolled various shops and department stores marking Israeli products with stickers reading "Warning! This product could come from an illegal Israeli settlement."²⁶

Such actions aim to create a climate of fear. Department stores feel compelled to remove Israeli products from their inventory and others avoid stocking them in the first place.

The famous Berlin department store KaDeWe, for example, took Israeli wines off its shelves for a short time. However, following massive protests, the store restocked the wines and later claimed it had misinterpreted the EU guidelines.

There are numerous political and economic arguments against this labeling requirement.

Jürgen Hardt, foreign policy spokesman for the CDU/CSU in the German Bundestag:

 In light of the anti-Israel movement that wants to boycott products from the settlement zones, this measure is wrong. It is quite probable that it will be instrumentalized for the purposes of anti-Israel campaigns. It is to be feared that retail chains will be pressured by the campaign and will generally refrain from including products from the West Bank or East Jerusalem in their inventory. This would also affect Palestinian workers employed in the settlement areas."²⁷

25 www.ajcberlin.org/de/media/berichte/die-eu-richtlinien-zur-kennzeichnung-von-israelischen-waren-aus-den-umstrittenen

26 www.juedische-allgemeine.de/article/view/id/29164

27 www.cducsu.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/kennzeichnung-israelischer-siedlerprodukte-fuehrt-zu-stigmatisierung

Double Standards

There are over 200 unresolved territorial conflicts worldwide. Examples that are relevant for EU international trade include the Western Sahara conflict with Morocco (products from Western Sahara are labelled as originating in Morocco), the Tibet issue in China, and the Northern Cyprus conflict. Despite these and many other examples, the EU's labeling guidelines address only one state: Israel. This policy discriminates against Israel and makes clear that the actual intention behind the guidelines is not consumer protection as claimed, but the exercise of political pressure against the Jewish state.

One-Sided Establishment of International Borders

The border question is a crucial element in any future peaceful settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This issue can only be resolved through direct negotiation between the two conflicting parties. Yet, with these guidelines, the EU presupposes the final border without taking into account changes to reality on the ground since 1967.

Questionable Boycott Symbolism

The product labeling requirement reminds Jews - not only in Israel, but also in Germany - of the boycotts during the Nazi period.

EU Guidelines at the Expense of Real Agreement and Palestinian Workers

According to various estimates, between 30,000 and 50,000 Palestinians work in Israeli companies in the West Bank. This means that five to ten percent of working age Palestinians are employed by Israeli businesses.

Palestinian workers are paid at least 4500 NIS (approximately 1000 Euros) per month, in accordance with Israeli minimum wage laws. In contrast, a teacher working for the Palestinian Authority earns 1500 NIS per month and a Palestinian construction worker around 1250 NIS.

The employment of Palestinians in Israeli businesses is not only of economic importance to the territories, whose economy has been devastated by systematic corruption and mismanagement, it is also one of the few chances for everyday encounters between Israelis and Palestinians.

#5

BDS and Anti-Semitic Incidents

Despite repeated BDS claims that the campaign only seeks to criticize Israel's politics, BDS events are all too frequently accompanied by anti-Semitic violence. A U.S. study has proven this connection as it pertains to college campuses. The AMCHA Initiative in the U.S. showed that anti-Semitic incidents increase at universities when BDS is active on campus.²⁸ Campaign activists are not afraid to attack Jewish students who are not openly critical of Israel.²⁹ Outside the U.S., violent attacks have taken place in the context of BDS activities as well. The link between BDS and anti-Semitic incidents is largely due to the fact that participants in the campaign have a high tolerance for anti-Semitism.

An article on the Berlin BDS group in Berlin's *Tagesspiegel* newspaper reports: "The third activist in the group is Eva Meier. She considers Gaza to be an 'Israeli concentration camp' and accuses Israel of 'genocide' against the Palestinians. Speaking in a pub, Meier explains that you can't just call people who say 'Jews are shit' or 'I hate Jews' anti-Semites. You have to see if they are opposing Israel's policies and just don't have the right vocabulary for it."³⁰

Case Study 1 South Africa

In Johannesburg, South Africa, massive threats of violence occurred during a BDS demonstration against the Israeli Trade Expo in March 2015. Some of the participants yelled "We'll kill you" and "You Jews don't belong in South Africa." For security reasons, the trade fair participants had to leave the venue through emergency exits.

Several days later, after a BDS demonstration, a supermarket that carried Israeli and kosher products was vandalized in the South African capital of Pretoria. Twenty-one young people who stormed the store were arrested.³¹

Case Study 2 Spain

In the summer of 2015, under pressure from the regional BDS group, the Rototom Sunsplash Festival near Valencia, Spain asked the American-Jewish reggae musician Matisyahu to distance himself publicly from Israeli policy. The organizers threatened he would otherwise not be allowed to appear at the festival. Matisyahu refused and his invitation to the festival was subsequently revoked. Only after substantial international pressure did the festival organizers restore the invitation, allowing Matisyahu to perform. However, during his concert, members of the audience called him a "murderer" and threw shoes and bottles at him.³² This case is particularly significant because the artist is not an Israeli citizen. He was attacked solely because he is Jewish.

28 www.amchainitiative.org/antisemitic-activity-schools-large-Jewish-report-2015

29 www.haaretz.com/jewish/MAGAZINE-how-the-bds-brawl-is-turning-jewish-students-off-israel-1.5379256

30 www.tagesspiegel.de/themen/reportage/anti-israel-kampagne-wie-bds-gegen-israel-hetzt/20573168.html

31 www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4639969,00.html

32 www.kleinezeitung.at/kultur/4805020/FESTIVALEKLAT_Juedischer-Starmusiker-mit-MoerderRufen-empfangen

Case Study 3 Germany

In Germany, anti-Semitic incidents have also occurred in connection with BDS activities. In March of 2016, pro-Israel activists held a demonstration in Berlin-Kreuzberg against the presentation of a biased film that provided only the Palestinian view of the separation barrier. The screening was part of an “Israeli Apartheid Week” organized by BDS members. The pro-Israel demonstrators were subjected to brutal insults during the protest. People on the BDS side yelled at the protesters, “You should all be gassed” and “Zionists, get out of our neighborhood!” Shortly after the demonstration ended, the pro-Israel demonstrators were pursued. People shouted, “off to the gas,” among other things, and gave the Nazi salute.³³ The same year, on the sidelines of the May 1st demonstrations, BDS activists took part in violent attacks on people showing the Israeli flag.³⁴

In Jena, on October 14, 2017, supporters of the BDS campaign protested a concert by the Israeli artist Kutiman.³⁵ As a deputy from the FDP in the Jena city parliament correctly pointed out, “what does this have to do with Mr. Kutiman? Nothing, really. Except that he’s Israeli.”³⁶

BDS and the Connection to Terrorism

BDS activists consider themselves to be part of a “civil resistance” movement. In some cases, however, they maintain contact with extremist and terrorist organizations and their sympathizers, especially the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Founded in 1967, the PFLP is an active terrorist organization known for its particularly brutal violence. In 2014, members of the organization murdered six worshippers in a Jerusalem synagogue and seriously injured two others using axes, knives, and a gun.³⁷

Such terrorist attacks have not prevented BDS activists from seeking contact with the PFLP. Shortly after this terrorist attack, a supporter of the BDS branch in Berlin read out a statement in which she called PFLP supporters “friends and comrades.”³⁸ BDS support groups also advertised an event with the well-known PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled in April 2016 in Wuppertal. Khaled, responsible for two airplane hijackings in 1969 and 1971, has been an icon of Palestinian terrorism and said in regard to talks with Israel, “The only negotiations are those with knives and weapons!”³⁹ Khaled also spoke to groups of supporters in Sweden, Austria, and South Africa. BDS Berlin read out a greeting to Khaled at a PFLP event in 2014.⁴⁰

The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), which coordinates global BDS activities and has considerable influence on BDS strategy and content, also doesn’t shy away from links with terrorist organizations.

33 www.berliner-zeitung.de/berlin/polizei/-ihr-sollt-alle-vergast-werden----polizei-ermittelt-nach-demo-in-kreuzberg-23683134

34 www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYv_MFvIMLY

35 www.twitter.com/van_Faren/status/919277997068378113

36 www.tlz.de/startseite/detail/-/specific/Israelkritische-BDS-Bewegung-in-Jena-nur-lose-organisiert-584929144

37 www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/world/middleeast/killings-in-jerusalem-synagogue-complex.html

38 www.tagesspiegel.de/themen/reportage/anti-israel-kampagne-wie-bds-gegen-israel-hetzt/20573168.html

39 www.bild.de/politik/ausland/terrorismus/terroristin-in-wuppertal-45465862.bild.html

40 www.bdsberlin.org/2014/08/31/rede-auf-der-gedenkveranstaltung-fuer-abu-ali-mustafa

#6

Politicians Against BDS

After all, the Council of Palestinian National and Islamic Forces, whose members include Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the PFLP, is also a member of the BNC.⁴¹

Campaign activists are also relatively uncritical towards Hamas, which stipulates the destruction of Israel in its charter. According to an activist quoted in the newspaper *Tagesspiegel*⁴², BDS does not consider Hamas to be an anti-Semitic terrorist organization.

■ In the last few years, all of Germany's democratic parties have taken clear positions against BDS. The following documents the most important comments, statements, and decisions by the parties.

Kerstin Griese (SPD), Head of the Committee on Labor and Integration in the German Bundestag:

The actions of the BDS movement come dangerously close to anti-Semitism. The SPD strongly supports expanding exchanges with Israel in all areas, ranging from trade, to science, to youth exchanges.⁴³

Sven-Christian Kindler (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), Budget-Policy Spokesperson for his Parliamentary Group:

BDS activists constantly attract attention with anti-Semitic incidents. [The Greens therefore strongly oppose] a boycott of Israel as an instrument of German and European policy.⁴⁴

Gitta Connemann (CDU), Christian Lange (SPD), Vice-Presidents of the German-Israeli Society:

We will not and should not tolerate the fact that the so-called BDS movement (boycott, disinvestment, sanctions) calls for a boycott of Israel and, in doing so, greatly harms German-Israeli relations.

41 www.bdsmovement.net/bnc

42 www.embassies.gov.il/berlin/AboutIsrael/the-middle-east/haherostendokumente/Die%20radikalislamische%20Terrororganisation%20Hamas.pdf

43 www.juedische-allgemeine.de/politik/anti-bds-ohne-gesetz/

44 Ibid.

Activists in the BDS movement have disrupted events in which Israelis appear and demonstrated in front of department stores where Israeli products can be purchased. 'Don't buy from Jews' has become 'Boycott Israel and don't buy Israeli products.' This is the same ugly, brutal language. Both are pure anti-Semitism! We should not relativize or ignore this hate, but must call it by name.⁴⁵

In November 2014, the leadership of the Die Linke party resolved not to support calls for a boycott of Israeli products and to make no room for such demands in the party.⁴⁶ At the CDU national conference in December 2016, the party adopted a motion opposing BDS and boycott efforts.⁴⁷

The same month, the SPD in Berlin also ruled out any cooperation with BDS.⁴⁸

In their state conference in Bavaria in October 2017, the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen opposed BDS, which they called "an anti-Semitic, anti-Israel, reactionary and anti-Enlightenment" movement.⁴⁹ The Green Youth also spoke out against any boycott efforts in October 2017.⁵⁰ In November 2017, the state organization of the Young Liberals in North Rhine-Westphalia took a clear position against BDS.⁵¹ In March 2018, the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen conferences of state delegates in Saxony⁵² and Lower Saxony⁵³ adopted motions against BDS.

The parliamentary groups of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in the Bundestag adopted a joint resolution opposing boycott efforts in January 2018.⁵⁴

In 2018, the state parliaments of Baden-Württemberg,⁵⁵ Berlin,⁵⁶ Thuringia,⁵⁷ and North Rhine-Westphalia⁵⁸ all took clear positions against BDS.

The youth organization of the German Trade Unions spoke out against the BDS campaign in summer 2018.⁵⁹

45 www.deutsch-israelische-gesellschaft.de/bund/im-fokus/category/bund/showme/80-jahre-novemberpogrome.

46 www.archiv2017.die-linke.de/partei/organe/parteivorstand/parteivorstaende-archiv/parteivorstand-2014-2016/beschluesse/handeln-auf-der-basis-unserer-programmatischen-grundsaeetze/

47 www.cdu.de/system/tmf/media/dokumente/cdupt16_sonstige_beschluesse.pdf?file=1

48 www.parteitag.spd-berlin.de/cvtx_antrag/gegen-jeden-antisemitismus-nieder-mit-der-antisemitischen-bds-bewegung/

49 www.gruene-bayern.de/nein-zu-antisemitismus-nein-zu-bds/

50 www.gruene-jugend.de/nein-zu-jedem-antisemitismus/

51 www.julis-nrw.de/beschlussammlung/solidaritaet-mit-israel-aktiv-gegen-antisemitismus-und-antizionismus/

52 www.gruene-sachsen.de/fileadmin/media/Beschluss_V3_GRUENE_Gegen_jeden_Antisemitismus_Nein_zur_BDS_Kampagne.pdf

53 www.gruene-niedersachsen.de/boykott-ist-keine-loesung-nein-zu-bds/

54 www.dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/19/004/1900444.pdf

55 www.landtag-bw.de/files/live/sites/LTBW/files/dokumente/WP16/Drucksachen/3000/16_3622_D.pdf

56 www.parlament-berlin.de/ados/18/IIIPlen/vorgang/d18-1061.pdf

57 www.parldok.thueringen.de/ParlDok/dokument/67720/antisemitismus_in_thueringen_konsequent_bekaempfen.pdf

58 www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/dokumentenarchiv/Dokument/MMD17-3577.pdf

59 www.jugend.dgb.de/++co++78eaa846-79f4-11e8-bfff-525400d8729f

#7

BDS in Universities

■ The BDS movement has also attempted to gain a foothold in universities with the aim to disrupt academic cooperation between German and Israeli institutions and ultimately put an end to such cooperation. So far, its activities at institutions of higher learning have largely been limited to inviting people close to BDS as speakers and signing petitions. Scholars teaching in Germany were among the signatories of the petition Anthropologists for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions.⁶⁰

In this context, the appointment of Professor of Islamic Theology Farid Esack to the Forum Humanum Guest Professorship at Hamburg University in the winter semester 2016/17 caused particular controversy. The South African scholar, chairman of the BDS movement in his home country, played a major role in ensuring that the University of Johannesburg ended its cooperation with Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

Esack also repeatedly made controversial statements; for example, he expressed understanding for the Islamist terror attacks in Paris in November 2015. On his Facebook page, he wrote:



I am not praying for Paris; I am not condemning anyone. Why the hell should I? ... Stop supporting and funding terror outfits, get out of other people's lands and continents, stop outlawing peaceful resistance such as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, to occupations, abandon your cultural imperialism, destroy your arms industry that provides the weapons that kill hundreds of thousands of others every year... The logic is quite simple: When you eat, it's stupid to expect that no shit will ever come out from your body. Yes, I feel sorry for the victims on whom the shit falls. But, bloody hell, own it; it's yours!⁶¹

Despite this stance being known, the Academy of World Religions appointed Esack to his position. The Advisory Board later distanced itself from the decision.⁶²

In summer 2017, BDS campaign activists disrupted a lecture by an Israeli Knesset member and a Holocaust survivor at Humboldt University in Berlin. Even though the activists were offered the opportunity to share their positions, they simply insulted the speakers. After the organizers expelled the BDS supporters from the hall, they acted out violently.⁶³

The fact that it has been difficult for BDS to gain a foothold at German universities can partly be attributed to the students themselves. In 2016, the student assembly at the University of Hannover and the student advisory council of the University of Leipzig⁶⁴ spoke out against BDS.

60 www.anthroboycott.wordpress.com/signatories/.

61 www.mg.co.za/article/2015-11-17-im-not-praying-for-paris-sa-academic

62 www.juedische-allgemeine.de/politik/boycott-und-resolution/

63 www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/antisemitismus-in-berlin-drei-israel-gegner-stoeren-veranstaltung-in-der-humboldt-uni/19974986.html

64 www.stura.uni-leipzig.de/sites/stura.uni-leipzig.de/files/dokumente/2016/07/bds_antrag_fsr_kuwi.pdf

In 2017, the student parliaments of the University of Duisberg-Essen⁶⁵ and Goethe-University in Frankfurt/Main adopted resolutions against BDS.⁶⁶ The general students' committee of the Technical University of Darmstadt⁶⁷ and the student parliament of Hamburg University⁶⁸ followed suit in November of the same year. In June and July 2018, students at the University of Oldenburg⁶⁹ and Humboldt University in Berlin⁷⁰ took similar actions.

In addition to student organs at specific universities taking positions against BDS, in 2016 the Jusos [young social democrats] University Group⁷¹ and the Free Association of Student Bodies⁷² took clear positions against BDS. Furthermore, the national membership assembly⁷³ of campus Greens in March 2017, as well as the national delegate assembly of the Ring of Christian-Democratic Students⁷⁴ in October 2017, took clear positions against BDS.

65 www.akduell.de/home/studium-freizeit/stupa-position-gegen-israel-boykott

66 www.asta-frankfurt.de/aktuelles/stupa-verurteilt-antisemitische-bds-kampagne

67 www.asta.tu-darmstadt.de/asta/sites/default/files/resolution-keine_zusammenarbeit_mit_bds.pdf

68 www.stupa.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Vorlagen/Legislatur_2017-2018/V1718-054_Antrag_Antisem_Stupa.pdf

69 www.facebook.com/130078354444629/photos/a.163277331124731.1073741829.130078354444629/250177829101347/?type=3&theater

70 www.vertretungen.hu-berlin.de/de/stupa/sitzungen/2018/07-02/3_antrag_rcds_bds.pdf

71 www.jusohochschulgruppen.de/meldungen/beschluesse/beschluss.html?&object=297

72 www.fzs-mv.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/reader-nach-der-55mv.pdf

73 www.campusgruen.de/aktuelles/10092188.html

74 www.rcdsrlp.wordpress.com/themen/beschluesse/verurteilung-von-bds-und-antisemitismus/

#8

BDS and Churches

■ As BDS activists point out themselves, churches are an appealing partner as they are often perceived as moral actors with political integrity; BDS hopes their cooperation with churches will help legitimize their goals.⁷⁵

The 2009 Kairos Palestine Document⁷⁶ is key for BDS activities in working with the church. The paper by Palestinian Christians attempts, among other things, to use theological arguments to explain why supporting the Palestinians is the duty of every believer. The initiators see the establishment of “a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel” as a way of expressing this support.⁷⁷

Furthermore, the paper argues Christians should “engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation.”⁷⁸

In Germany, the Catholic Church refrained from publicly judging the paper. However, Pax Christi fully embraces BDS.⁷⁹ The relevant Protestant organizations and associations, on the other hand, oppose the Kairos paper due to its one-sided view. Nevertheless, the paper has found an audience among smaller religious groups. For example, the Jerusalem Association of the Berlin Missionary Institute, the Rhineland Solidarity Church, and the Nuremberg Protestant Forum for Peace either support the paper partially or in its entirety. In addition, a Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network has been established in Germany, which by its own account explicitly supports BDS ac-

tivities.⁸⁰ A statement on the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War said that the network is committed to supporting “non-violent resistance to the Israeli policy of occupation, colonization and blockade of Palestinian territories—including measures like boycott, disinvestment and sanctions (BDS).” Elsewhere, the authors claim that the memory of the “Holocaust has been abused to justify the expulsion and oppression of the Palestinian people.”⁸¹ This is a classic secondary anti-Semitic trope. Supporters of the campaign also organized events in connection with the Protestant Church Conference in Berlin in 2017.

The religious aid organizations Bread for the World and Misereor repeatedly appear in the context of BDS. Even if they themselves do not follow BDS, they frequently interact with organizations that take part in the campaign.

Bread for the World works with the NGO Coalition of Women for Peace, one of the leading organizations in the BDS campaign.⁸²

75 For details on the church and BDS, see also www.compass-infodienst.de/Sebastian-Mohr-Israel-Boyottkampagnen-in-den-deutschen-Kirchen.16270.0.html

76 Full title: “A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering.”

77 www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-us/kairos-palestine-document

78 Ibid.

79 This is found unequivocally in its “Appeal for a New Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: Time for a Renewed Commitment”: “In our view, the BDS movement is a legitimate form of nonviolent resistance,” www.paxchristi.net/de/news/appell-fuer-einen-neuen-israelisch-palaestinenischen-friedensprozess-zeit-zur-neuverpflichtung.

80 www.kairoseuropa.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/KPS-Appell-final.pdf.

81 Ibid.

82 “Despite statements to the contrary, Bread for the World has funded several NGOs that have taken part in BDS campaigns against Israel. According to documents received by the Israeli Register of

#9

Counter-Strategies

The two aid organizations jointly published a travel brochure for Israel and the Palestinian territories because, as the foreword states, they should be “considered related travel destinations.”⁸³ The brochure not only mentions the Kairos paper uncritically several times, but also refers to travel services that support BDS.⁸⁴

In September, the Protest Academy in Bad Boll was criticized for inviting several supporters of the BDS campaign to a multi-day conference it organized on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Despite strong criticism, even from the Protestant Church, the Academy insisted on holding the event.⁸⁵

Non-Profit Organizations, the Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP) and Who Profits received a total of 565,930 shekels (142,620 Euros) in 2012 and 2016 from Bread for the World. For 2017, through June 21, no figures are available publicly. www.mena-watch.com/mena-analysen-beitraege/ein-faktencheck-zum-faktencheck-des-wdr/

83 www.shop.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/images/2016-06-28_pilgern_2016.pdf.

84 Ibid.

85 www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article181605610/Antisemitische-BDS-Kampagne-Israel-Feinde-zu-Gast-bei-der-evangelischen-Kirche.html.

■ The content of the campaign, as illustrated above, and the examples of its activities, make clear that BDS is not a harmless campaign committed to peace. On the contrary, BDS actively opposes the idea of a two-state solution and, through its activities and connections to terrorist networks, fosters anti-Semitism and hatred. The case examples presented in this brochure show what awaits if BDS activists are not rebuked. The BDS campaign has been unable to take hold in Germany to the same extent as in the US and Great Britain. Nevertheless, the German campaign should not be underestimated.

Therefore, we propose four important steps that must be undertaken by politicians and civil society to prevent the anti-Israeli campaign from gaining ground.

1. Zero tolerance in dealing with BDS

BDS represents a radical minority in the political discourse on the Mideast conflict. By working against Israeli-Palestinian peace, the campaign actively opposes the dialogue on a two-state solution. In fact, because the BDS campaign has only had a negligible political voice in Germany, it is attempting to gain legitimacy as a supposedly equal partner in the discourse through public appearances.

2. No public space or funding for BDS

Public and municipal institutions, churches, and political parties should take care not to give BDS representatives a microphone through speaking invitations and meeting space. Anti-discrimination clauses could help with this. Israel is a strong democracy with an active and diverse civil society. This diversity of opinion should be taken into account during events on Israeli society or the Mideast conflict.

Frankfurt and Munich have shown how this can be done. In Frankfurt, BDS may neither be rented public space nor receive public funding. In Munich, the city parliament adopted a similar resolution on December 6, 2017. In Berlin, mayor Michael Müller unequivocally declared that he would personally see to it that BDS activists and their supporters receive no public funding and are given no access to public space.⁸⁶ Such clear positioning against BDS by those in positions of responsibility must be more frequent. The party-affiliated foundations must be certain that their funds, especially in Israel and the Palestinian territories, do not end up being used for BDS activities. The foundations, for example, could require grant recipients in the sphere of culture to sign agreements making this impossible.

3. No political alliances with BDS

BDS attempts to disseminate its views and achieve legitimacy by taking part in political alliances with socio-political and socially critical causes. We therefore recommend a zero-tolerance policy towards BDS in regard to political alliances. Because the campaign discriminates towards Israel, it should not, for example, be a partner against right-wing extremism. We also recommend that public funders avoid participating in or supporting political alliances, such as those against right-wing extremism, if BDS supporters are also participating.

4. Joint action by national and state governments

Some cities and states have already introduced measures against BDS. To ensure the effectiveness of these measures, all states and municipalities should take measures against BDS to prevent the campaign from having a role in political and social discourse and ensure that all loopholes are closed. The national government should also become more active and take measures against BDS.

⁸⁶ www.bz-berlin.de/berlin/berlins-buergermeister-mueller-will-staerker-gegen-anti-israelische-bds-kampagne-vorgehen/

