

Defeating Denormalization of Israel

by Jerry Gordon (April 2018)



Daniel Diker is the Director of the Program to Counter Political Warfare at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA). He is a former Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress. He is also the editor and co-author of *Defeating Denormalization—Shared Palestinian and Israeli Perspectives on a New Path to Peace* published by the JCPA. I had the opportunity to interview Dan Diker during a recent visit to the US. The discussion covers the Soviet Russian origins of the Palestinian Authority's political warfare campaigns including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, or BDS. They were developed by Palestinian Authority and its allies in the West seeking to delegitimize and demonize the Jewish

nation of Israel. Denormalization refers to the attempt to divide Israel from the international community by depicting it as a South African-type of apartheid state. This is compounded by lies and libels from Palestinian Authority leaders and spokespeople presented before international forums including the United Nations. We discuss the development by the State of Israel of a leading edge public diplomacy program to counter Palestinian political warfare using legal, economic and high tech social media messaging and intelligence analysis. Diker reveals the research developed by the JCPA and US sponsors supporting the eponymous US Taylor Force Act and related Knesset legislation. They are endeavoring to end US and other foreign donor funding of hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the so-called "pay for slay" program incentivizing Palestinian terrorism against Americans and Israelis. We characterize this effort as "entrepreneurially-driven counter-terrorism." Diker provides a brief preview of "Defeating Denormalization."

Jerry Gordon: Dan, what is the Program to Counter Political Warfare at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs?

Dan Diker: We have noticed at the Jerusalem Center, for some years, an assault on Israel's legitimacy as the nation to the Jewish people. It is known as BDS, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, delegitimization, anti-normalization and the identification of Israel as an apartheid state. All of these accusations represent a 21st Century version of Soviet style political warfare which is a non-military, multi-front warfare using finance, economics, legal, political, diplomatic and historical methods in order to uproot Israel as the nation of the Jewish people. These campaigns have been designed to cause an implosion of national confidence in Israel and isolate it internationally as a 'leper' state among the

nations. Therefore, we see it in the way observers of traditional Soviet-style political warfare saw it as a complement to terror and military warfare.

Gordon: How far back does that Russian model go in terms of history and how did the U.S. combat it during the Cold War?

Diker: First of all, the Soviet political warfare against the West was really the main feature of the Cold War following the Second World War. The Russians have been particularly skilled at propaganda information warfare. Everything—from creating conflict within the society of adversaries similar to what the Russians have been accused of doing in the last election in the United States. As former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a great expert on Russian politics recently observed on CNN, the Russians have excelled at creating internal divisions in America through what has been called fake news, fake narratives, internet-driven bots reporting fake results on polls and other forms of propaganda warfare. This is precisely what we have seen in the PLO and later Palestinian Authority strategy fighting Israel's ongoing war for security and legitimacy.

Gordon: Can you give us some examples of the kind of campaigns that we are talking about that the Palestinians are conducting to delegitimize and demonize Israel, particularly in their effort to gain world acceptance of the Palestinian state?

Diker: The Palestinian Authority, which is a subset of the PLO and its leading faction, the Fatah movement, under the stewardship of Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, otherwise known as Abu

Mazen, have excelled since the days of Arafat in the 1970s in creating propaganda warfare against Israel. More recently, this has expressed itself in Mahmoud Abbas speaking in international forums and insisting that Israeli Rabbis call for poisoning of Palestinian water supplies, that Israel sterilizes Palestinian women and undertakes experiments on African refugees. These are equivalent to the early 19th Century blood libels in Damascus. We have been witness to Palestinians using the media to create a completely false reality. One example was faking the death of Muhammad al-Durrah, the 12 year old boy who allegedly was shot by IDF troops in September 2000 that started the Second Intifada. We know now, with ninety-nine percent certainty, that Al Durrah was shot by Palestinian snipers if he was killed at all. There are several investigations that concluded that (the shooting of) Al Durrah was staged. Another example was the so-called Jenin massacre in 2002. In fact, we have intelligence videos of Palestinians who apparently had been killed being carted away on stretchers and then falling over and getting up and running away. These are just two small examples of an organized premeditated campaign to position Israel to the outside world as the incarnation of evil—especially through the Israel Defense Forces whose purity of arms doctrine and commitment is without parallel in the international community.

Gordon: Who are some of the international allies in this Palestinian political warfare against Israel that we in the West should be concerned about?

Diker: We have been observing for some years now what is called the Red-Green Alliance. This is an alliance of Islamists and very far-left radical organizations particularly in Europe and increasingly on North American university campuses that are of concern.

For example, the Islamist Hamas has become the poster child for the political warfare campaign by anarchists and far left BDS organizations on campuses in the US. Palestinian ex-pats, such as Professor Hatem Bazian at the University of California Berkeley Law School, has been very active in promoting and advocating lies, libels and slander about Israel as an apartheid state. He also called for an “Intifada” or violent uprising in America. It is an example of these types of political warfare campaigns that cast Israel as the modern incarnation of former racist apartheid South Africa. The truth is very different. Israel is a liberal democracy that guarantees by law equality to all of its Christian, Muslim and Jewish citizens. Despite its democratic character, Israel has been assaulted in this political war.

This attempts to recreate what Yasser Arafat tried to do in the 1970s at the United Nations—which is to demonize Israel as having no right to exist as a nation state in his “Zionism is racism” speech at the international body. He promoted the libel that Israel is by definition an apartheid state. These politically grotesque distortions have intended to assault Israel’s self confidence as a nation and isolate it internationally.

Gordon: Speaking about human rights, we also have the UN and its agencies being used by the Palestinians and their allies to conduct political warfare against Israel. What has Israel done to combat it?

Diker: Israel has taken very substantial steps. When we say Israel, we mean the government of Israel. Since 2016 it has

upgraded efforts to combat the international political warfare against the very existence of the nation state of Jewish people. The best example of this is the government of Israel, under Prime Minister Netanyahu, assigned a government ministry to fight BDS, directed by the Minister of Strategic Affairs and Public Security, Gilad Erdan. They established an office with a \$45 million budget and scores of employees. These include experts in communication, propaganda, public diplomacy, online graphics, social media and a number of intelligence analysts. The objective is to expose who are the perpetrators, and where are the hubs of this type of political warfare. This aggressive activity against the political subversion of Israel has resulted in recent legislation passed by the Knesset prohibiting those people leading the anti-Semitic multi-front assault against Israel from entering the country. This is justified as it has become a national security problem because BDS attempts to destroy Israel's international legitimacy. It is not a question of free speech; it is a question of people who uniquely target Israel as a country to be dismembered. they are doing it by every means possible and Israel is countering that.

Gordon: Here in the United States we have had a continuing problem on college campuses with exactly this campaign that you are talking about internationally. It prominently features groups like Students for Justice in Palestine and even Jewish Voices for Peace arguing for the deligitimization and demonization of Israel on campus. Why is that?

Diker: The American academic tradition has set an example for freedom of speech in the fair and peaceful exchange of ideas. The problem is that those freedoms that America is founded

upon have been raped and pillaged to the extent that they do not prevent BDS and delegitimization political warfare from exploiting the free exchange of ideas on campus and from silencing the voices of people who are friendly to Israel. These BDS and Delegitimization movements on campus have become highly anti-Semitic in character—even targeting Jewish students with violence and hate speech. At New York University, as one example, Students for Justice in Palestine sponsored a fake eviction notice campaign where they identified the names of Jewish-sounding students and posted eviction notices on their dorm doors. We saw this as one example of a national campaign by nearly two hundred branches of Students for Justice in Palestine. In truth they are not really Students for Justice in Palestine, but students for terrorism against Israel. They do this against Jewish students or pro-Israel students on American campuses.

Campus administrations are reluctant to take action against these Students for Justice in Palestine or the similarly radical and anti Israel Jewish Voice for Peace because they are afraid of generating a major conflict over the issue of free speech on campus. However, we see some administrations such as Fordham and Northeastern Universities that have taken strong positions. The President of Vassar College took a strong position arguing that the Students for Justice in Palestine are violating the free speech principle on campus and should be sanctioned. We are seeing some pushback from some American college and university administrations, but not nearly enough.

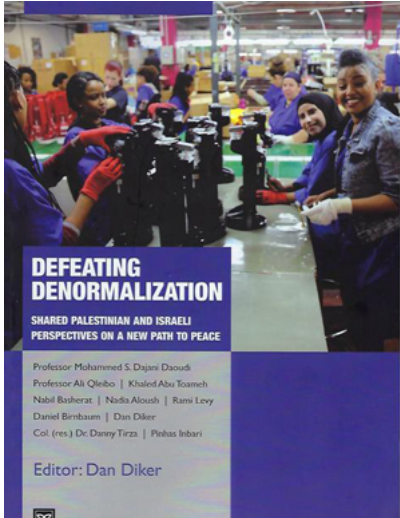
Gordon: At the recent AIPAC Plenary session in Washington, New York U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer spoke of the importance for Congress to pass the Taylor Force Act addressing the nearly \$403 million dollar Palestinian so-called “pay for slay”

program. Who was Taylor Force and how would the act named for him reduce U.S. funding for Palestinian terrorism?

Diker: The Taylor Force Act, which looks like it might become law in the United States, has inspired a similar law that will likely be passed in the Israeli Knesset. It was named after a very brave and patriotic young American named Taylor Force who was a military veteran and an MBA candidate at Vanderbilt University. He was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist in Jaffa just a few years ago when he was there with his business school class. The Palestinian Authority had been using foreign donor funds to pay terrorists like the one that murdered Taylor Force. The so-called "pay for slay" program provides a guaranteed stipend to their families of up to \$3,500 a month which is five to six times the average salary of a Palestinian worker. Even more problematic, we discovered that the Palestinian Authority in 2017 paid over \$315 million dollars to Palestinian terrorists who are incarcerated in Israeli prisons, or killed in terror actions as subsidies to their families. The Palestinians look at these incarcerated people or people killed while committing terrorist crimes as heroes. They look at them as POW's or martyrs, what are called in Arabic -Shahids, martyrs. We know them in the West as terrorists with blood on their hands. A gentleman in the United States by the name of Sander Gerber, who is a very successful hedge fund manager, and also a scholar on issues connected to terrorist financing. He has been the energizer and prime mover behind the campaign to get the Taylor Force Act passed by Congress.

Gordon: That is a credit to entrepreneurial counter terrorism. So *Kol Hakavod* to Mr. Gerber and the combined efforts of the U.S. Congress and the Knesset to make sure the world understands we can no longer fund Palestinian terrorism.

Diker: This is the most successful example of a public private diplomacy partnership to execute what you called very well, a counter terrorism entrepreneurial campaign. I think that this very much serves as a model for what public diplomacy should be on the part of Israel and its allies. It has been extremely successful and impactful with the laser-like focus of Mr. Gerber on this issue. Key to the success was the research done by General Yossi Kuperwasser of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.



General Kuperwasser has been a prime mover in Israel researching and exposing this phenomenon. Anyone interested can receive a free PDF file of the book at dyker@jcpa.org. The JCPA website is