

November 24, 2010



Electronic Intifada and Ali Abunimah Factsheet

BACKGROUND ON ELECTRONIC INTIFADA

- Electronic Intifada (EI) is a major online media outlet active in promoting the Palestinian agenda with news articles and commentary.
- Founded in 2001 to counter Israel's "orchestrated media campaign to spin news reports to its own advantage."
- Presents itself as a "needed supplement to mainstream commercial media" and "the prevailing pro-Israeli slant in US media coverage."
- Publishes articles promoting the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) effort against Israel.
- Ali Abunimah is co-founder and executive director of EI.
- In December 2010, Maureen Claire Murphy, managing editor of Electronic Intifada and a former Al-Haq employee, was subpoenaed by the FBI to appear before a Federal Grand Jury for her work with the Palestine Solidarity Group.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: MECCS AND THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT

- The funding sources for EI are not fully transparent.
- Between 2006 and 2009, €150,000 was provided by the Dutch government from ICCO, a Dutch inter-church development organization. (ICCO receives 95% [p. 135] of its annual budget from the Dutch

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government [89. 7%] and the EU [6.1%.]) In 2010, ICCO provided another €50,000 in “support from private funds.” [ICCO website]

- El is a project of the Middle East Cultural and Charitable Society (MECCS). MECCS, a Massachusetts-based NGO, claims its primary purpose is “education and the elimination of discrimination.” It operates as an umbrella organization for smaller projects such as El, Palestinian film festivals, and cultural projects. [MECCS Form 990-EZ 2009, p. 2]
- MECCS’ total revenue in 2009, including donations, was \$383,843. \$183,760 was given to El (p.2). [MECCS Form 990-EZ 2009, p. 1, 2]
- Beginning in 2008, MECCS has held a financial account in Jordan. [MECCS Form 990-EZ 2008, p. 3]
- MECCS does not have a website, and issues no annual reports. There is no list of employees or donor information available online.
- El maintains that it is “powered primarily by voluntary work from its four founders and a loose network of correspondents, technical people, and photographers”. (El FAQ webpage) In 2009, Abunimah was paid \$36,000 by MECCS for his work at El in 2009. [MECCS Form 990-EZ 2009, p. 11]
- Crossroads Fund, devoted to “social and economic justice in the Chicago area,” awarded \$6000 to MECCS projects in 2009: \$1000 to El and \$5000 to the Chicago Palestine Film Festival. [Crossroads website, 2009 grantees] Crossroads’ stated mission is funding “low income, minority, and/or women constituents.” [Crossroads Form 990 2008, p. 2]
- MECCS’ current and past directors and officers promote extreme anti-Israel agendas and anti-Semitic rhetoric.
 - Omar Fayez, current officer of MECCS, has written, “Today, more than two thousand years after the birth of Christ, the Christians of Palestine are once again being threatened by the Jews.” [“History Repeats Itself,” Media Monitors Network, August 29, 2001]
 - Daniel McGowan, past officer of MECCS and whose commentary is published by El, defends Holocaust revisionism/denial [“What Does Holocaust Denial Really Mean?,” Dissident Voice, February 17, 2009], claimed in a film that “the 9/11 attacks were simply a reaction to our pro-Israel policies” and that “the Israelis have driven the Palestinian Arabs into the sea” [Deir Yassin Remembered website], and called

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Nobel Prize laureate Elie Weisel “a fraud.” [Rense.com, February 26, 2005] He is the Director of Deir Yassin Remembered, which was a project service of MECCS.

- Donald Veach, current officer of MECCS, signed a boycott petition against Israel. [Al-Jazeera Cross Cultural Understanding website]

ALI ABUNIMAH, CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EI

- Abunimah is a leading advocate of the one-state solution. To actualize this, he says “coercion is necessary,” and dismisses Jewish concerns of living under an Arab majority as “irrational, racist fears.” [“Israeli Jews and the One State Solution,” EI website, November 10, 2009]
- He acknowledges that in a one-state solution “we couldn’t rule out some disastrous situation” for Jews. [Lecture at 2009 Campus BDS Conference at Hampshire College]
- Labels PA President Mahmud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad as “collaborators”, and PA participation in peace talks as “collaboration.” [“Why Israel Won’t Survive,” EI website, January 19, 2009] Collaboration is punishable by death in the PA and Gaza.
- In a conference in Madrid on the one-state solution, Abunimah refers to Peace Now as a “right-wing Zionist racist group.” [Arab World Geographer, Vol 10, No 1, 2007]
- On his personal Twitter account, Abunimah accuses Israel of ethnic cleansing, calls Israeli settlements “Jim Crow colonies,” refers to the Shin Bet (Israel’s General Security Service) as a “death squad,” and calls people of color “schwarzers.”
- Says Zionism “is one of the worst forms of anti-Semitism in existence today,” claiming that it “dehumanizes its victims, denies their history, and has a cult-like worship of ethnoracial purity”. He also wrote “That is something Zionism shares with anti-Semitism, a disdain for actual Jewish culture and life as it existed.” [Personal Twitter account]
- Refers to Israel’s self-defense policy in Gaza as an “attempted genocide.” [“Why Israel Won’t Survive,” EI website, January 19, 2009]
- Holocaust references appear frequently in his comments. He calls Gaza a

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“ghetto for surplus non-Jews”, compares the Israeli press to “Der Sturmer,” and claims “Supporting Zionism is not atonement for the Holocaust, but its continuation in spirit.” [Personal Twitter account] He calls Gaza a “concentration camp” and repeated a claim that IDF statements are the words “of a Nazi.” [“Why Israel Won’t Survive,” El website, January 19, 2009]

- On his personal Twitter account, he publicized a pirated list of Israeli soldiers allegedly involved in the Gaza War, containing personal details such as home address and ID numbers. The list encourages “people to seek out other such similar information, it is readily available... inside public officials’ locked cabinets.”
- Defends Hamas’ policy blocking ICRC visits to Israeli captive Gilad Shalit. [Personal Posterous blog, June 25, 2010]
- Abunimah is a founding steering committee member of Al Awda, the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition. [Google cache of expired Al Awda webpage]

ELECTRONIC INTIFADA ON BDS

- El has an extensive BDS section, including academic, consumer, cultural, and church boycotts, commercial divestment, and government sanctions against Israel. Issues reports on developments and “victories” in BDS. [El website]
- El’s “activism” section informs people of BDS and other efforts against Israel, and its action items” site includes appeals for supporting anti-Israel campaigns. It also maintains a list of websites promoting BDS worldwide. [El website, BDS section]
- Publishes BDS articles and statements by PACBI, War on Want, ICAHD, Sinn Fein, Omar Barghouti, and Al Awda. [El website]
- El believes that “through divestment, stopping capital investment in companies that do business in Israel, and boycott, not buying Israeli products, people can bring justice to the Israelis and Palestinians as well.” [El website]
- El contributor Adri Nieuwhof testified at the Russell Tribunal on Palestine as a “lead expert on public contracts regulations and the French

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multinational [company], Veolia.” (Russell Tribunal London Session agenda, November 20, 2010) Abunimah publicized this as BDS against “Israel’s light railway,” which Veolia is helping to construct. [Personal Twitter account]

- In November 2010, EI reported that a Dutch pension fund “divested from almost all the Israeli companies in its portfolio,” calling it an “indicator for the success of the international [BDS] campaign.” (EI website) A week later this was revealed to be a BDS hoax; investments were withdrawn from funds devoted to emerging markets because Israel had successfully joined the OECD. [“Another Israel Divestment Hoax,” Ben Cohen, Huffington Post, November 19, 2010]

ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN ELECTRONIC INTIFADA

- EI submissions use apartheid rhetoric, and accuse Israel of ethnic cleansing, Judaizing Jerusalem, and genocide. [EI website]
- Laurie King-Irani, co-founder and contributing editor at EI, advocates using universal jurisdiction against Israeli officials in foreign courts. (EI website) In an updated version of the article she writes, “One day soon, they’ll unplug that bastard [Ariel] Sharon, and flush.” [wakeupfromyourslumber.blogspot.com entry, September 16, 2010]
- King-Irani claimed that the September 11 attacks were “the biggest gift, wrapped up in silk ribbons and presented on a golden platter, that [the pro-Israel lobby] could ever hope to receive. A real day of victory and glee for them to see that now they have the entire US populace in the palm of their hands.” [“Letter from Canada,” September 12, 2001]
- Nigel Parry, co-founder of EI, justifies Palestinian violence against Israeli settlers [“The Message of the Mortars,” EI website, May 31, 2001], and draws a moral equivalency between Israeli counter-terrorism operations and Palestinian attacks against civilians, calling the targeting of Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin “Israel’s version of a bus bombing.” [“The ‘Targeted Killing’ of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin,” March 22, 2004]
- Parry calls for legal action against the American media, which promotes a “pervasive distortion” in favor of Israel, and calls Israel’s actions in Gaza an

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“ongoing genocide.” [“Time to Put the US Media on Trial for Complicity in Genocide?,” June 4, 2004]

- An article compares Israeli actions in Gaza to the Holocaust, describing them as “a slow and calculated genocide -- a genocide through more calibrated, long-term means... In many ways, this is a more sinister genocide, because it tends to be overlooked.” [“The Gaza Genocide,” March 2, 2008]
- El published a letter calling Hezbollah “hope and organization for those who are... watching Israelis hunt their children sick, watching US/Israel assassinate all good leaders,” and saying “Israel has lost its moral right to exist.” [“Differing Perceptions of Hezbollah,” July 24, 2006]

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