

November 24, 2010

Electronic Intifada and Ali Abunimah Factsheet

Background on Electronic Intifada

- Electronic Intifada (EI) is a major online media outlet very 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.

Financial Resources: MECCS and the Dutch government

- The funding sources for EI are not fully transparent.
- An unknown amount is provided by the Dutch government via a [3-year funding commitment](#) from ICCO, a Dutch inter-church development organization. (ICCO [receives](#) 95% [p. 135] of its annual budget from the Dutch government [89.7%] and the EU [6.1%].)
- EI 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" (p. 2). It operates as an umbrella organization for smaller projects such as EI, Palestinian film festivals, and cultural projects.
- MECCS' total revenue in 2009, including donations, was [\\$383,843](#) (p.1). \$183,760 was given to EI (p.2).
- MECCS does not have a website, and issues no annual reports. There is no list of employees or donor information available online.
- EI maintains that it is "powered primarily by [voluntary work](#) from its four founders and a loose network of correspondents, technical people, and photographers". In 2009, Abunimah was paid [\\$36,000](#) by MECCS for his work at EI in 2009 (p. 11).
- [Crossroads Fund](#), devoted to "social and economic justice in the Chicago area," [awarded](#) \$6000 to MECCS projects in 2009: \$1000 to EI and \$5000 to the Chicago Palestine Film Festival. (Crossroads' [stated mission](#) is funding "low income, minority, and/or women constituents" [p. 2].)
- MECCS' current and past directors and officers promote extreme anti-Israel agendas.
 - Omar Fayez, current officer of MECCS, warned "Today, more than two thousand years after the birth of Christ, the Christians of Palestine are once again being [threatened by the Jews](#)."
 - Daniel McGowan, past officer of MECCS and whose [commentary](#) is published by EI, [defends Holocaust revisionism/denial](#), claimed in a [film](#) that "the 9/11 attacks were simply a reaction to our pro-Israel policies" (2:48) and that "the Israelis have driven the Palestinian Arabs into the sea" (10:40), and called Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel "[a](#)

- [fraud](#).” 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.

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.”
- He acknowledges that this could lead to the [eradication of the Jewish people](#) in Israel, saying “we couldn’t rule out some disastrous situation” (4:43).
- Labels PA President Mahmud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad as “collaborators”, and PA participation in peace talks as “[collaboration](#).” Collaboration is punishable by death in the PA and Gaza.
- 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 “dehumanize its victims, denies their history, and has a cult-like worship of ethnoracial purity” (Twitter, October 26, 2010). He also [wrote](#) “That is something Zionism share with anti-Semitism, a disdain for actual Jewish culture and life as it existed.”
- Refers to Israel’s self-defense policy in Gaza as an “[attempted genocide](#).”
- Holocaust references appear frequently in his comments. He calls Gaza a “[ghetto for surplus non-Jews](#),” compares the Israeli press to “[Der Sturmer](#),” and claims “Zionism is not atonement for the Holocaust, but its [continuation in spirit](#).” He calls Gaza a “concentration camp” and [repeated a claim](#) that IDF statements are the words “of a Nazi.”
- [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.”
- Abunimah is a [founding steering committee member](#) of [Al Awda](#), the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition.

EI on BDS

- EI 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.
- EI’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.
- Publishes BDS articles and statements by [PACBI](#), [War on Want](#), [ICAHD](#), [Sinn Fein](#), [Omar Barghouti](#), and [Al Awda](#).
- [EI 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.”

- EI contributor Adri Nieuwhof testified at the Russell Tribunal on Palestine as a “[lead expert](#) lead expert on public contracts regulations and the French multinational [company], Veolia.” Abunimah [publicized](#) this as BDS against “Israel’s light railway,” which Veolia is helping to construct.
- 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.” 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.

Analysis of articles published in EI

- EI submissions use [apartheid](#) rhetoric, and accuse Israel of [ethnic cleansing](#), [Judaizing](#) Jerusalem, and [genocide](#).
- Laurie King-Irani, co-founder and contributing editor at EI, advocates using [universal jurisdiction](#) against Israeli officials in foreign courts.
- In an EI article, 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.”
- Nigel Parry, co-founder of EI, [justifies Palestinian violence](#) against Israeli settlers, 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.”
- 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 “ongoing genocide.”
- Hasan Abu-Nimah [criticizes the US](#) for “aligning itself completely with the racist, ultra-right government of Israel, which is itself violating every possible clause of international law.”