

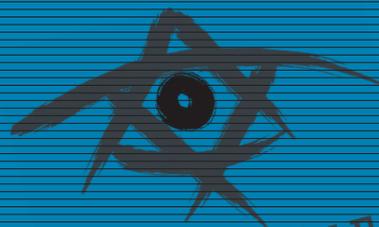


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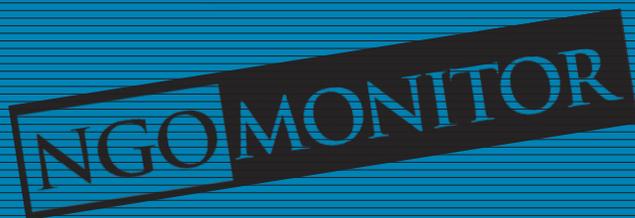
Shir Hever

The Economy of the Occupation

A Socioeconomic Bulletin



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BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL



PRIVATE FUNDING OF RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGY IN ISRAEL

Shir Hever
Economy of the Occupation

Socioeconomic Bulletin № 29-30

**PRIVATE FUNDING OF
RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGY IN ISRAEL**

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Introduction



Civil society organizations are often seen as representatives of grassroots movements, as defenders of human rights and of democratic values.

In Israel, civil society organizations are at the center of an internal political struggle. While Palestinians are risking life and limb in a struggle for freedom from Israeli occupation and apartheid, the struggle within Israeli society is mostly fought with money and via funding organizations which promote certain ideologies.

After the First Intifada beginning in 1987, human rights organizations in Israel multiplied. The outbreak of the second Intifada in October 2000 saw the collapse of the Israeli “peace camp,” which ceased to be a mass movement (Gordon, 2003). It left in its wake several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which filled

some of the void left by the movement. These NGOs continue to advocate for ideas that have become associated with the “left” in Israeli society: human rights, social projects, the end of Israel’s occupation and Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. In the process, these NGOs provide employment to a few thousand Israelis, creating an “activist sector” (Laor, 2010; Feldman, 2011).

There are also a few organizations which promote Palestinian rights, full equality within Israel to all citizens, the memory of the *Naqba* (the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948) and social welfare.

On the other side of the Israeli political map, there are right-wing NGOs which advocate a neoconservative agenda, which in Israel is expressed by continuing rule over the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), limiting the civil rights of Palestin-

ian citizens of Israel and forming a stronger state, which is less impacted by separation of government branches and by civil liberties. These organizations exert influence over government policies by providing advisors to political parties, Knesset members and ministers (including the prime minister), as will be discussed below in further detail.

Such organizations have launched a wide-reaching campaign against the “left” NGOs, treating social NGOs, human rights NGOs and policy-impacting NGOs as if they were the same, and all part of a conspiracy to steer public opinion in Israel into directions chosen by foreign donors (NGO Monitor, 2011c). This campaign became more vocal and forceful following Israel’s 2009 elections, in which the Israeli parliament and government became more right-

wing than ever before. The current Israeli government has adopted the rhetoric of the right-wing NGOs. For example, Minister of Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya’alon called Peace Now¹ a “virus” (Moalem, 2009). Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman called Adalah,² Yesh Din³ and Breaking the Silence⁴ “terrorist organizations” (Medzini, 2011).

Meanwhile, the Israeli parliament has commenced a rapid process of legislation designed to hinder the work of such NGOs (Yaakobi-Keller, 2011).

This raises a series of questions which this study will attempt to answer. Who are the right-wing NGOs? Why have the left-wing and center NGOs been chosen as targets and why is the attack coming now? Who is funding the right-wing NGOs and why?

Methodological Comment

¹ An anti-occupation NGO.

² An NGO which undertakes legal action to protect the rights of Palestinian citizens in Israel.

³ An NGO which uses legal action to expose and oppose violations of the Israeli law by colonies and the Israeli military in the West Bank.

⁴ An NGO which publishes testimonies of Israeli soldiers about their service in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

This paper will not include a comparison between right-wing and left-wing NGOs. The focus of this paper is solely the right-wing NGOs, and there is no attempt here to create a balanced or comparative narrative. The reason for this focus is that follow-up and criticism of left-wing NGOs is already widespread, with entire organizations dedicated to the task. Left-wing and human rights NGOs are more transparent than right-wing NGOs and their donors are easier to identify. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the economic and political interests of right-wing NGOs and their attack against left-wing and human rights NGOs.

Role of Civil Society in Israel/Palestine and the oPt

●

Professor Naomi Hazan defines civil society as those organizations which are “independent from the state, but engage the state.”⁵ Of course, actual independence of civil society organizations is an ideal which rarely stands the test of reality.

Global civil society has seen a spectacular growth following the end of the Cold War (Van Rooy; Phil, 1997). This is surprising, considering the role played by civil society actors during the Cold War, funded by state and private actors to promote ideas

relevant to the Cold War (especially those considered “Western”). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, why increase funding to organizations that help fight a public opinion war against a defeated enemy?

Scholar Johano Strasser offers an interesting explanation for this—civil society has become a pressure valve which helps the developed world deal with the social duress caused by capitalism. While modern production methods reduce the need for labor, the middle class can find employment in the “third sector.”⁶ Although average

⁵ In her address in the conference “Challenges to Democracy, Eruption and Erosion,” in the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, October 25th-27th, 2011.

⁶ The “third sector” refers to all non-profit organizations, and is not the same as “civil society” (which has a stronger social and political connotation), but there is a great deal of overlap between them. While Strasser wrote about the third sector, his insights are useful for analyzing civil society as well, and will be used in this context here.

wages may be lower, there are other benefits (such as work satisfaction, or being posted in a poor country with low living costs) which compensate (Strasser, 2003). Civil society provides

Israel's third sector's size is double the average in developed countries, and depends almost entirely on foreign funding.

cheaper consultancy and reports than private companies, giving organizations such as the UN a way to reduce costs.

“Free-trade” policies pushed upon developing countries usually create more benefits to developed economies than to developing countries (and sometimes cause severe damage to developing economies). International aid can also be seen as a (very) partial mitigation of that effect, and a tool that helps the stronger economic powers maintain a semblance of fairness in international trade and the image of philanthropy even though their corporations exploit the developing world (de Waal, 1997; Stiglitz; Charlton, 2006).

So following the Cold War a picture emerges in which civil society is

funded by developed countries, but spends a great deal of its efforts in developing countries.

Israeli civil society is an interesting phenomenon seen against this backdrop. Israel is considered to be a developed country (and is a member of the OECD), but has a very large third sector. As of

2011, there were an estimated 52,000 third sector organizations in Israel. In 2002 they accounted for 7.2% of the GDP in Israel, and for 8.5% of all wages paid (Israeli Center for the Study of the Third Sector, 2005). The third sector in Israel is estimated to have double the relative weight compared to the average of developed countries (Reut Institute, 2008).

These figures do not include large organizations such as the Jewish National Fund, the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization, which have traditionally operated outside of official government departments, but also not as private companies. These organizations do not provide reports on their funding and operations like other NGOs, but their third-sector nature allows them

to channel funds for projects designed only for Jews, without the transparency which exists in the budgets of governments and NGOs.

A comparison with the third sector in the oPt is in order. In the oPt, the third sector has become the most important sector of the economy. 2,126

NGOs were registered in the oPt in 2009. In 2008, Palestinian NGOs reported that 78.3% of their revenue came from external aid (DeVoor & Tartir, 2009). Palestinian NGOs often face strict conditions on their funding. Donor definitions of certain Palestinian political groups as terrorist organizations limit the political freedom of these organizations (Ma'an, 2011).

Israeli human rights NGOs, by comparison, receive close to 95% of their funding from foreign donors (Berkovitch & Gordon, 2008). This means that the local ratio of funding for human rights issues in Israel is even lower than in the oPt!

Two important conclusions can be drawn from this. One is that the NGO sector is very vulnerable in Israel because of its foreign funding de-

pendency, especially regarding NGOs with policy impacting or human rights focus. It helps to understand why the right-wing NGOs concentrate their attack on that sector, and it also helps to understand that for many Israelis

*U.S donors send most of their money to Israel.
European donors prefer projects in the oPt.*

in the “moderate left,” activism is not merely a political choice but also a source of livelihood.

The second conclusion is that the civil society sphere in Israel and the oPt is yet another arena in which international interests clash. Donors choose to support NGOs not merely out of kindness, but also to promote certain interests.

Indeed, an analysis of the area of donations to Israeli human rights NGOs found that U.S.-based donors spent 77.7% of their funding on organizations which focus on human rights issues within Israel itself, and only 22.3% on organizations dealing with human rights issues in the oPt. European donors, by contrast, spent 25% of their donations on organizations dealing with Israeli human rights

issues and 75% on organizations dealing with oPt-related human-rights issues (Berkovitch & Gordon, 2008).

The interests of European governments in supporting the peace process, or at the very least the appearance of a peace process (for as long as possible), in the hope of forestalling a

violent eruption, has been described and written about in detail (European Union, 2011). However, the interests poised to intensify the conflict, prolong the occupation, sharpen inequalities and justify repression of Palestinians deserve a closer study, which this paper will try to help understand.

Government Treatment of NGOs

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The Israeli government wields a massive and powerful military and security apparatus almost unrivaled in the world. The state budget for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs alone (which can stand as a proxy for Israel's expenditure on public relations) was almost NIS 1.6 billion in 2011, dwarfing the combined budget of all human rights and left-wing⁷ NGOs by a factor of a hundred (Israeli government, 2011). In light of this, the Israeli state treatment of human rights and left-wing NGOs appears paranoid and irrational.

The government's actions speak of its view that Israeli civil society orga-

nizations pose a serious threat to its policies. The government is concerned that even small and underfunded organizations could publish embarrassing facts, and that such publication could undermine its legitimacy and international support.

Yet by the very fact of repressing (or attempting to repress) dissenting voices, the Israeli government gives more material for civil society organizations to publish, strengthening the same international criticism which the government was initially trying to prevent.

The Israeli government accordingly does not have a coherent strategy for dealing with the challenges posed

⁷ The term "left" is used in the Israeli context, and includes Zionist left-wing organizations or organizations promoting dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, even if these organizations would not be considered leftist in other contexts.

by civil society. Lacking such a strategy, many policymakers have tried

Israel's security agencies work against critical NGOs, even when the activities of these NGOs are legal.

to give credibility to the accusations of right-wing NGOs that civil society criticism is a conspiracy funded by enemies of Israel in an attempt to undermine Israel's status (regardless of the reasons for such criticism, and regardless of whether it is justified) (Harkov, 2011).

Politicians who believe such a conspiracy, or pretend to believe it, cannot then leave the arena only to the right-wing NGOs. If an unseen "enemy" coordinates the campaign against Israel, this "enemy" must be fought.

The head of Israel's secret police, or ISA, announced in 2006 that the ISA will work against "subversive" organizations, even if those organizations commit no crimes (Laor, 2007; Izenberg, 2010). This was a clear and official statement that the Israeli security forces will be employed to limit the freedom of expression in Israel.

In 2010 the ISA admitted for the

first time that it conducts surveillance against international activists in the West Bank (Levinson, 2010). That year it was also revealed that the ISA conducts surveillance against candidates for Muslim religious posts in Israel. The ISA argued that regulations which permit it to conduct this activity are state secrets, and thus refused to reveal them (Eldar, 2010).

Several examples exist of how the state attempts to suppress civil society activities:

Military intelligence: The Israeli military intelligence department, *Aman*, has formed a special military unit charged with collecting information on left-wing and other organizations operating in Western countries. This unit coordinates its activity with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In fact, the Israeli military intelligence is thus recruited to help the Israeli government justify its policies, by using espionage methods against civil society activists (Ravid, 2011a). Ironically, the creation of this new unit is an example of the use of the military

to silence political debate, one of the key criticisms directed at Israel by the same civil society organizations which have come under secret surveillance.

Clarification talks: The Israeli secret police often invite Israeli activists for a “conversation.” The invitation is arranged by the police and activists are strongly encouraged to cooperate, although what punishment they may receive should they refuse is unknown, and they are not presented with an arrest or interrogation warrant. Although the ISA has no official authority to enforce political conformity in Israel, in practice no legal instance exists to protect citizens from the organization (Hass, 2010).

Attacks against Palestinian NGOs: Although this paper deals with attacks against Israeli NGOs, one must remember that political activism and freedom of speech are permissible (officially) only for Israeli citizens. Palestinians living under Israeli occupa-

tion in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip⁸ were never allowed to organize public protest. The Israeli authorities published regulations forbidding the right of demonstration, and prohibiting groups of ten or more people to assemble for the purpose of hearing a political speech (Gordon, 2008a). Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem are restricted in their rights, despite the fact that Israel annexed East Jerusalem, and are not considered Israeli citizens. An example of this was the closure of the Palestinian Media Center in May 2009 (Refworld, 2009).

To give but one example out of many, the Palestinian organization *Stop the Wall* has been targeted by the Israeli army for daring to criticize Israeli occupation policies and for exposing facts about the Separation Wall through the organization’s publications. In 2009-2010 Jamal Juma, the organization’s coordinator and Mohammad Othman, its youth coordinator, were both arrested and held for months without charges. Af-

⁸ Although Israel maintains control over Gaza through economic restrictions and a military siege, the Israeli authorities adopted a “remote control” model for Gaza, which no longer includes direct military intervention to prevent demonstrations or mass arrests.

ter their release, the offices of Stop the Wall⁹ were raided by the Israeli army

Palestinians in the oPt and Palestinian citizens have never enjoyed freedom of speech.

and materials and computers were destroyed (Al-Jazeera, 2010). Another raid of Stop the Wall's office in Ramallah, in which laptops, hard-drives and photos were seized, took place on May 8th, 2012 (Stop the Wall, 2012)

Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, who comprise approximately 22% of all Israeli citizens, are only slightly more free to express political opinions. Restrictions, surveillance and punishment for political activism have been implemented against Palestinian citizens of Israel since the founding of the Israeli state (Cohen, 2006). A more recent example is the imprisonment of Ameer Makhoul, who was secretly arrested in 2010 (the

press was issued a gag-order), prevented from seeing a lawyer, and eventually sentenced to nine years imprisonment on charges of "espionage", with the main evidence against him

being his own confession, which was extracted through torture, as well as "secret" evidence his lawyers were not allowed to examine. It should be noted that Ameer Makhoul was the General Director of Ittijah¹⁰—the Union of Arab Community-Based Associations and the Chairman of the Public Committee for the Protection of Political Freedoms. He was probably targeted by the ISA for his efforts to expose Israeli repressive policies, the lectures which he gave in different countries around the world and the articles which he published criticizing Israel's actions (Lendman, 2011).

When it comes to right-wing NGOs, however, the government

⁹ Stop the Wall is a grassroots movement uniting the struggle of the popular committees in the villages, refugee camps and cities struggling against the Wall and the settlements, together with the efforts of Palestinian civil society.

¹⁰ *Ittijah* is the network for Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Israel.

tends to turn a blind eye to violations of Israel's NGO laws and transparency regulations. NGOs which openly collect funds in defiance of Israeli law to rebuild illegal outposts¹¹ in the West Bank or by monitoring the movement of the Israeli army in the West Bank in order to prevent the evacuation of these outposts. At least in one proven case, such an NGO even received a tax-exemption benefit from the Israeli tax authorities (Blau, 2012a).

The recent change in Israeli policy is that repression of freedom of speech and protest is expanding to

include Jewish Israeli activists. This expansion is not a qualitative but merely a quantitative change in Israeli policies. However, it is seen as a qualitative change by external observers, who were willing to believe that Israeli repression against Palestinians in the oPt is "temporary" (until the occupation will eventually end), and that repression against Palestinian citizens is merely an "anomaly." The expansion of repression to include Israeli Jews is yet another mask taken from the face of the authoritarian nature of the Israeli regime.



Danny Dannon

¹¹ Although all Israeli colonies in the West Bank are illegal according to international law, Israeli law makes a distinction between "settlements" approved by the government and "illegal outposts" which are illegal even under Israeli law.

Parliament Treatment of NGOs



Government action to curb civil society activism has been sporadic and disorganized, lacking in a coherent strategy.

(Ikhud Leumi), Danny Dannon (Likud), Zeev Elkin (Likud), Tzipi Hotovely (Likud), Yaakov Katz (Ikhud Leumi), Fania Kirshenbaum (Yisrael Beiteinu), Yariv Levine (Likud), Alex Miller (Yisrael Beiteinu), Zvulun Orlev (Habait Hayehudi), Meir Shitrit (Kadima) and Ronit Tirosh (Kadima).

Israel's parliament has put the repression of critical NGOs as a high priority.

The current Netanyahu government is constrained between its own right-wing ideology and right-wing base of support on the one hand, and its sensitivity to world public opinion and dependency on international legitimacy on the other (Shavit, 2011).

The Israeli parliament, the Knesset, however, has 120 members, some whom made a clear choice to promote the former interest over the latter.

These Knesset members include: Ophir Akunis (Likud), Uri Ariel

This group of Knesset members has embarked on a campaign to bombard the Knesset with bills designed to intensify the repression of dissenting voices in Israel through extensive legislation efforts. These bills attempt to change the status of non-Jewish citizens in Israel, to intensify the occupation of the oPt and to curb civil liberties of Israeli citizens (Coalition against Racism in Israel, 2011b). The government has given its support to

the majority of these bills, putting the weight of the coalition behind them.

A large portion of these bills target civil society organizations. Drafted to hinder civil society organizations (all of them promoted by the Knesset members mentioned above, and not including many other bills which are not directly related to civil society organizations), the bills include:

“Boycott Law”: The bill stipulates that anyone calling for boycott against Israel or Israeli colonies will be liable to prosecution for compensation. NGOs would lose their recognized legal status if they would support boycott. The bill was passed into law in July 2011 (ACRI, 2011). The law’s official name is “Law to Prevent Harm to the State of Israel By Means of Boycott, 2011.”

“Disclosure of Foreign Support”: The bill originally stipulated that any person or organization receiving support from a foreign state would have to disclose at the beginning of every statement that they receive funding from a foreign state, or suffer se-

vere punishment. It was changed to merely increase the (already existing)

The “Boycott Law” allows companies to sue any Israeli who supports the boycott.

requirements for individuals and organizations to disclose their support by foreign states. The focus of support from foreign states, rather than by private foreign donors, is important and will be discussed below. The bill was passed into law in February 2011 (Ibid.). The law’s official name is “Law of Obligation of Proper Disclosure for Those Supported by a Foreign State Entity—2011.”

“Incitement Prevention Law”: The bill determines that anyone publishing a statement against Israel’s existence as a Jewish and democratic state will be arrested. The bill passed a preliminary reading in May 2009, but has not yet been put to vote by the Knesset (Ibid.). The official name of the bill is “Correction—Restriction on Publishing Incitement to Deny the Existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State—2009.”

“Infiltration Prevention Law”: The bill stipulates that infiltrators entering Israel through the border with Egypt (i.e. African refugees) would be imprisoned for up to three years. They could also be put on criminal trial and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Anyone helping an asylum-seeker or who gives one shelter would also be imprisoned for five years (the part of the bill targeting NGOs). The bill passed its first reading in March 2011 (Ibid.). The bill’s official name is “Bill to Prevent Infiltration (Judging Violations) (Correction No. 3 and Standing Orders)—2011.”

The “Naqba Law” allows the government to withhold funding from organizations that commemorate the Naqba.

“Libel Prevention Law”: There are in fact three bills which were promoted to limit freedom of speech in the name of preventing libel. The first two increase compensation which can be demanded in case of libel six-fold if the libel was not published in order to cause harm (to NIS 300,000), or fifteen-fold if it was intended to cause

harm (to NIS 1.5 million). These two bill were united into one and passed the first reading in November, 2011 (Ibid.). The third bill stipulates that the libel law will also be applied to cases when people speak against the state of Israel or its institutions, and to allow a member of a group to sue for libel compensation against someone who spoke against the group. This bill gained approval of the Ministerial Committee for Legislation in July 2011.

“Naqba Law”: The bill’s original wording called for imprisonment of those who commemorate the Palestinian Naqba. The bill was softened to merely authorize the Minister of Finance to withhold government funding from any organization

that commemorates the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948, the Naqba. The bill allows the minister to withhold funding from organizations which promote activities against the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, or as a democratic state. The bill was approved into law in March 2011 (Lis, 2011a). The law’s official name is “In-

dependence Day Law (Correction—Restricting Marking Independence Day or the Founding of the State of Israel as a Day of Mourning)—2009; Law of the Budget Foundations (Correction No. 40)—2011.”

“*NGO Investigation Committee*”: This is not actually a bill, but a proposal that the Knesset establish a committee to investigate the funding of organizations (and to create a sort of public trial against them). The bill was associated with organizations such as Breaking the Silence, B’tselem, Machsom Watch and the Alternative Information Center, but no right-wing organization was put on the list of potential organizations to be investigated (Bender, 2011). The proposal was eventually rejected by the Knesset in July 2011 (ACRI, 2011).

“*NGO Law 1*”: The bill stipulates that NGOs would not be allowed to receive more than NIS 20,000 from foreign state entities. The bill chose to focus only on funding from foreign states (see discussion below). The bill was incorporated into the “*NGO Tax*” bill and received government support

in November 2011, but the government withdrew its support of the bill later that month (Ibid.).

“*NGO Law 2*”: The bill stipulates that any NGO which promotes lawsuits against Israeli officials abroad will be closed. The bill was submitted (but not yet voted on) in June 2010 (Ibid.). The discussions on this bill and the previous one (“*NGO Law 1*”) were suspended in order to stave off international criticism against Israel when in September 2011, the Palestinian Authority appealed to the UN for recognition of statehood, but were resumed again in November 2011 (Lis, 2011b). Resumption of the legislation process was by direct instruction of PM Netanyahu (Yahni, 2011).

“*NGO Tax Law*”: This bill stipulates that funding from foreign states to NGOs would be taxed at a rate of 45%, except NGOs which receive state funding from Israel. The government supported this bill in November 2011, but withdrew its support later that month after the Attorney General declared that he would refuse to defend the law in the High Court (Ibid.).

“Safeguarding Israel’s Values Law”:

This bill stipulates that any company or NGO whose activity “harms Israel as a Jewish state” would be closed. The bill was sent for revisions to the Ministerial Committee for Legislation in November 2010.

Bill for Encouraging Settlement:

While not a bill designed to limit left-wing or right-wing NGOs, this bill aims to grant a 35% tax break for donations to organizations that promote Zionist causes and Zionist settlement. The bill was formulated in February 2012 and quickly gained government support. The law aims to discriminate in favor of right-wing NGOs. It passed its first parliamentary vote within ten days and passed into law in May 2012 (Lis, 2012a; Lis, 2012b; Lis, 2012c; Lis, 2012d).

The law’s official name is “Correction to Income Tax Regulation (Promoting Settlement)—2011.”

These bills indicate a concentrated effort by Israel’s Knesset to restrict (and perhaps eliminate) the ability of civil society organizations to express criticism of government activities. These bills, if passed, have another effect of exposing the intolerance of the Israeli government and parliament to dissenting voices. The anti-boycott law, for example, drew international criticism even from Israel’s closest allies. This could partially explain the reason that many of the bills above were eventually rejected, as it is possible that the Knesset, and especially the government, was concerned about the possible detrimental effect to Israel’s international image.

Collaboration between Government and NGOs

●

The dominant economic ideology in the Israeli government is neo-liberalism, which assumes that private interest is a more effective motivator for efficiency than government institutions (Laffon, 2002). The assumption that the “government cannot do anything well” seems to be at odds with extreme nationalism, authoritarian tendencies and strict government controls over freedom of speech. However, prominent neo-liberal thinkers of the past three decades formed a strong alliance with neo-conservative politicians, combining conservative ideas, which strive to limit civil liberties in the name of “security,” “family values,” and “preservation of our way of life,” with neo-liberal ideas which promote removing regulation, lowering taxes

and cutting welfare in the name of the right to private property and the “free market.”

The Israeli government relies on right-wing NGOs to conduct public relations for it.

This alliance entails a distribution of labor between the government and the private sector. The private sector is allowed to operate in more aspects of social life (health, education, transportation, etc.) while the government is left-wing with the role of policing, imprisonment and defense (Bauman, 1998).

Eventually, private companies also begin to offer their services to the government in the areas of security, policing, imprisonment and defense (Singer, 2002).

The process by which the state re-

linquishes its authority and responsibilities to private actors is known as privatization, but the process isn't limited to private companies taking over government functions; it also includes NGOs taking over government functions.

Over the past three decades, Israeli governments have encouraged NGOs to take over activities which were previously under government responsibility (Hasson, 2006). NGO charity has been allowed to replace state welfare programs (Vertzberger; Katan, 2005; Ramati-Navon, 2006).

In the past decade, a stronger phenomenon has emerged of NGOs providing services of “hasbara” (“public diplomacy” in Hebrew)—Israel’s code-name for pro-Israeli propaganda. NGOs are, of course, free to promote different agendas and ideologies, and it is not surprising that organizations which seek to justify Israeli policies exist. What is surprising is that the Israeli government allows itself to rely on such organizations to form part of its official public relations machine.

One of the best examples of this is the decision to award the Ir David Foundation (Elad) the authority to

manage the national park in the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan. This national park is used by Ir David to try and prove that the biblical King David was an historical figure, and that his kingdom in ancient Jerusalem justifies the Israeli occupation of the region and efforts to Judaize it (and to expel the indigenous Palestinian population through various means). The controversial, right-wing NGO was given authority by the state to manage the area and to define the narrative that is presented to tourists, schoolchildren and other visitors (Hasson, 2011a).

Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a conference in February 2010, aimed at forming a network of NGOs, activists, media workers and academics to help Israel spread its message (Ronen, 2010).

Israel’s Minister of Education Gideon Sa’ar gave a supportive speech at the annual conference of *Im Tirzu* (see below), lavishing praise on the organization (Im Tirzu, 2010a).

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs page on the “campaign to defame Israel” has only one external link—to an NGO called “The Meir Amit Intelli-

gence and Terrorism Information Center” (the financial reports of this NGO could not be found in the Israeli NGO Register), which published a report against Israeli Apartheid Week (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010).

The “Birthright” project is a privately-funded NGO (see below), which tries to convince Jews around the world to support Israel by offering them free trips to Israel, where they receive free tours. This organization receives extensive cooperation from the Israeli government, and soldiers in active duty participate as tour guides for the project. Israel’s Minister of Public Diplomacy Yuli Edelstein gave a speech at a Birthright convention in which he called the organization a “miracle” (Edelstein, 2011).¹²

In fact, the Ministry of Public Diplomacy, a new ministry created by the current government in Israel, is a key element in relations between the government and right-wing NGOs promoting Zionist ideology. The ministry’s Hebrew name is translated to “ministry of explanation [hasbara] and the diaspora.” The name suggests

When NGOs work so closely with the government, the line between them and the government is blurred.

that the government’s target audience for its diplomatic efforts are not foreign governments, but Jewish communities around the world which could support Israeli policies not only with funding (Arad, 2012), but also with diplomatic support.¹³

¹² Incidentally, one of the major funders of the Birthright project is Charles Bronfman, a billionaire whose family made its fortune in the liquor business (see: http://www.forbes.com/billionaires/list/#p_1_s_a0_All%20industries_All%20countries_All%20states_Bronfman; and http://birthrightisrael.haaretz.com/friend_1.asp). Bronfman has also donated money to “The People-to-People Program,” a program which promotes normalization between Israelis and Palestinians (<http://people-to-people.org/contact/contact.html>).

¹³ This instrumental view of Jewish communities outside Israel, which are encouraged by the Israeli government to demonstrate their support for Israel, could explain the rise in recent

Eytan Gilboa, a Professor at Bar-Ilan University and senior researcher at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (see below), published in 2006 an article titled “Public Diplomacy: The Missing Component in Israel’s Foreign Policy,” in which he laments the danger from UN and NGO criticism against Israel, and calls on the government to fight back with the same tools and to employ American concepts of public relations strategies (Gilboa, 2006). Three years after publication of the article, a ministry with the same name was founded to do precisely that—mobilize NGOs to support the pro-Israel agenda.

The government has also come to rely on right-wing NGOs for information on the Palestinian media. A role which was performed in the past by the Israeli intelligence services has been partially taken over by privately-funded NGOs: MEMRI and Palwatch. The Prime Minister’s

office publishes press releases on the Palestinian media based on information from these organizations (Ravid, 2012a).

Of course, the positions of right-wing Knesset members are not identical to positions of right-wing NGOs. In a statement by NGO Monitor (see below), legislation against the funding of left-wing and human rights NGOs was criticized as “not effective solutions (NGO Monitor, 2011b).”

A right-wing organization called Mattot Arim publishes a bi-annual survey of activities by Israeli parliament members, ranking them according to how much they did to expand colonization in the West Bank (Lis, 2011c). Although this organization is registered in the Israeli Knesset,¹⁴ it is not registered as an NGO and reveals no information to the public about its staff or its funding.

NGOs may apply to the government to request exemptions from disclosure of their list of donors. An

years of several “not-in-my-name” Jewish organizations (IJAN, 2011). These organizations claim that being Jewish does not necessarily make them supporters of Israel and Israeli policies.

¹⁴ <http://oknesset.org/agenda/1/>.

appeal of the Association for Freedom of Information in Israel to disclose the list of NGOs which received such exemption revealed, after a prolonged legal struggle, that 16 NGOs have received such exemption. Almost all of them are right-wing organization. In-

terestingly, the Ir David Foundation (see below), one of the largest NGOs in Israel, which does not fully report its donors and has been the main reason for the appeal for information, was omitted from the list of exempt NGOs (Hasson, 2012c).



Yuli Edelstein

Why are NGOs Perceived as a Threat?



The political discourse in Israel often invokes the term “existential threat.” Israel’s political discourse is much more concerned with predictions of the state’s

largest and most discriminated group is Palestinians, who have organized many different forms of resistance including violent struggle, diplomatic efforts and non-violent protest.

Critical NGOs are accused of treason, for exposing abusive policies of the Israeli government.

The role of Palestinian civil society in this struggle is central, because of its power to provide resources for grassroots

demise than such discourse in other countries. Four of the most commonly mentioned threats to Israel are the chance of war, Palestinian resistance, the global movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and international legal action against Israel.

activists, because of its important economic role in the Palestinian economy and because of its ability to form connections with the international community (Hanafi & Tabar, 2004).

The resistance to Israel’s policies of repression, occupation and discrimination comes first and foremost from the victims of these policies. The

The most visible connection between Palestinian civil society and international activism has been the 2005 call for BDS, which came from Palestinian civil society organizations and has inspired a global BDS movement (Barghouti, 2011). BDS action

has already begun to threaten the Israeli economy, and played a partial role in the bankruptcy of Israeli companies (the most famous recent case was the bankruptcy of the Agrexco company, which was a target of widespread campaigns in Europe for its involvement in the occupation (Palestinian BDS National Committee, 2011). Israeli officials have already begun to recognize the threat to the Israeli economy from BDS (Sadeh, 2011).

Furthermore, Israel's occupation and continued denial of the Palestinian refugee right of return are in violation of international law,¹⁵ and there is thus also a legal challenge against Israeli policies.

Israel's belligerent policies in the region, and the repression of Palestin-

ians, have also kept it isolated in the Middle East. Israel's many wars with its neighbors (most of which were initiated by Israel) cultivated large-scale popular support for military action against Israel.¹⁶

In light of these four threats, the threat posed by Israeli left-wing and human rights NGOs seem negligible. Is a scenario in which Israeli NGOs succeed in changing Israeli policies by their own power truly realistic? The answer is clearly no.

In those cases in which Israeli NGOs actively try to challenge Israeli policies, their role is only supportive—documenting, publishing information and providing (limited) resources to Palestinian and international activists and lawyers.

¹⁵ See text of the Fourth Geneva Convention: <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380> and the text of UN resolution 194: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/65/IMG/NR004365.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹⁶ Judging by headlines in Israeli media and comments by Israeli politicians, one would think that Iran is the greatest military threat against Israel and that Iran plans to bombard Israel with nuclear weapons in the near future. However, so far no outbreak of violence between the two countries has occurred, except possibly several attacks on Iranian research and military facilities, for which Israel didn't take official responsibility. When this paper was written, it seemed more likely that if hostilities break out, they will be between the U.S and Iran (and not including Israel). Therefore, this issue is left-wing outside of the discussion.

However, the Israeli government and Knesset treat the Israeli left-wing and human rights NGOs as if they were an “existential threat” to Israeli policies, and dedicate enormous efforts to limit their activities.

The reasons for this are first, that Israeli NGOs are easy targets. Israeli citizens fall under the jurisdiction of Israeli law, and laws can be legislated against them. Living in Israel, they are exposed to more risks of violent attacks by right-wingers,¹⁷ so it is sometimes enough to stir a debate about left-wing and human rights organizations to put their NGO staff members at risk, even without completing the legislation process.

Knesset Member Danny Dannon said that “stopping the funding of the organizations is a first step in removing the negligible affliction of the extreme left-wing from the Israeli society (Bar-Zohar & Lees, 2011).” His statement reveals that although the extreme left-wing is considered “negligible,” it is still an “affliction” that must be removed, and that the attack

on NGOs is part of a campaign to achieve this removal.

Second, right-wing NGOs, which receive more funding than left-wing and human rights NGOs and which enjoy more influence over Israeli politicians, see the left-wing and human rights NGOs as their opposite counterparts. The same belief which right-wing NGO workers have in the power of their publications and advocacy efforts leads them to perceive power and importance in publications and advocacy efforts by left-wing and human-rights NGOs. Right-wing NGOs then use their influence over politicians to portray left-wing and human rights NGOs as significant threats.

Finally, increasing international criticism against Israeli policies creates a feeling of isolation and siege in the Israeli political sphere. The increased political tensions which result inevitably lead to less tolerance toward pluralism of ideas in Israel, and critical voices from within are more easily painted as “traitors (Levy, 2010).”

¹⁷ Hagit Ofran, chairwoman of Peace Now, received death threats (Rosenberg, 2011).

Who are the Right-Wing NGOs?



This report does not focus on all of the right-wing organizations operating in Israel and the oPt, but a partial selection of organizations. The organizations below were selected because of their prominent presence in the Israeli media, their relatively substantial funding and/or their stronger influence.

The reports filed by these organizations with the Israeli Corporations Registry at the Israeli Ministry of Justice have been collected from the Corporation Registry (over 1,500 files) and were used as the main source for all information below. If additional information was used, or a study was quoted, a reference was added. Furthermore, the Israeli Corporations Registry failed to find reports for the Ir David Foundation (Elad), despite repeated requests and although it is

one of the largest NGOs in Israel and closely tied to the government. Also, no recent financial reports for 2008 and onward were available on Ateret Cohanim. In both cases, some of the reports were obtained through the Guidestar website, which keeps copies of NGO reports.

Before considering the wages paid by the NGOs below, one should consider that according to Guidestar, an organization which promotes NGO transparency, the average wage of the top five earners in NGOs in Israel in 2012 was NIS 8,777, and the top wage was on average NIS 20,523 (Majer, 2012).

Anti Defamation League (ADL) is an odd member in this group as it is officially an anti-racist organization and thus should be classified as a hu-

man rights organization. Founded in 1984 as a sister organization to B'nai B'rith, the organization clarified from the start that its anti-racism goal is not universal, but strongly tied to promoting the interests of the Israeli state as a Jewish state. Its four goals were registered as: (1) promoting mutual understanding between the Jewish community in the U.S and the Israeli public, (2) to promote the actions of B'nai B'rith abroad in *hasbara* and organizing support for Israel's policy and needs, (3) fight against anti-Semitism in all its forms, (4) fight against the Arab Boycott.¹⁸ However, because of the organization's own Zionist ideology, it fails to fight one important aspect of anti-Semitism, namely the claim that all Jews are Zionists and accomplices to actions of Israel. In 2006 the goals were revised: (1) deepening contacts and mutual understanding between Jewish communities abroad and the public in

Israel, (2) developing attachment between policymakers and law enforcers abroad and their counterparts in Israel, (3) fighting anti-Semitism and racial or religious discrimination and against boycott against Israel and its residents, (4) distributing NGO materials, materials of ADL U.S and other organizations in the fields of education, combating terrorism and racism to various audiences, (5) bringing delegations of trend-setters, journalists, and people involved in culture, education, religion, economics and security to understand the Israeli reality, (6) developing a young leadership in Israel and the diaspora to advance values of tolerance and mutual respect in a multi-cultural society. The new goals highlight the contradiction between ADL's universal message and its uncritical support of a racist state. The response of the Corporations Authority to the change of goals was to state that the first two goals are already

¹⁸ The Arab Boycott, not to be confused with BDS, was a state-level agreement of Arab countries to boycott Israel and also companies that trade with Israel. During the 1990s it all but unraveled, and only a handful of countries still observe it. Unlike BDS, it is not a rights-based call and is not focused on the rights of Palestinians or on international law.

TABLE I: WELL-KNOWN RIGHT-WING NGOS OPERATING IN ISRAEL

NGO Name	Official Purpose (taken from the organization's official documents)	Founded	Notes	Hebrew Name
ADL—Israel	Foster ties between Jewish Communities and policymakers in the world and the Israeli public, fighting anti-Semitism and discrimination and fighting boycott against Israel and its population. Influencing public opinions.	1984	This is a branch of a very large U.S organization which presents itself as an anti-racism organization. It defends Israel from criticism in the U.S and Europe. A film Defamation, came out about the U.S organization (Shamir, 2009).	הליגה נגד השמצה— ישראל
Ateret Cohanim	Purchasing assets and liberating them in Jerusalem. Managing assets in Jerusalem and especially the Old City. Helping families in need. Founding and restoring synagogues.	1981	The organization buys East Jerusalem real estate from Palestinians and settles them with Jews.	עטרת כהנים
Eretz Ysrael is Mine—No Partition	Promoting the "Whole Land of Israel" idea. Educating the children of Israel in Israel and the diaspora, to the Jewish national idea and Israel heritage.	1988	An organization dedicated to expanding the colonization of the West Bank (and formerly Gaza) and preventing future withdrawals.	ארץ ישראל שלי— ללא חלוקה
Im Tirzu	Promoting the spirit of Zionism in Israeli society.	2007	Although not the biggest organization, it is perhaps the most vocal right-wing NGO in Israel.	אם תרצו—ציונות להיות או לחדול
The Institute for Zionist Strategies	Education, research and public opinion research, distributing the results of the studies and studies by other organizations. Support education and research and the education of leaders in all parts of society. To publish and support the publication of education and research works. To manage and support seminars in Israel and abroad.	2004	An NGO which hires many high-ranking officials as researchers.	המכון לאסטרטגיה ציונית
Ir David Foundation (Elad)	Strengthening the Jewish ties to Jerusalem throughout its generations by means of tours, instruction, population and publications. Scholarships for religious studies, cultural activity on Jerusalem and Jewish values, helping Jewish institutions in Jerusalem. Tours in Jerusalem.	1986	Ir David works with the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to take over Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem and with the Israeli government to promote tourism in East Jerusalem, presenting it as a Jewish city and erasing Palestinian history.	אלעד
Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs	To conduct research, publications, educational materials and position papers on public policy issues, strategy, diplomacy, government, economics and society, Jewish tradition and the Jewish people and to publish the results.	1976	One of the best-funded NGOs in Israel.	המרכז הירושלמי לענייני ציבור ומדינה
Keren Keshet—The Rainbow Foundation	To strengthen ties between all Jews and ensure that Jewish culture will be preserved and strengthened, keeping Jewish traditions in practice.	2000	The fund, started by one of Israel's biggest billionaires, preserves ties between Jewish communities and promotes Jewish identity, but also funds other right-wing NGOs.	קרן קשת
NGO Monitor	Conduct scientific and public research into the activities of international organizations and organizations in the areas of the PA that deal with the Israeli-Arab conflict, and how these activities reflect the organizations' stated purpose.	2007	NGO Monitor is dedicated to attacking left-wing and human rights NGOs in Israel, and especially their source of funding. Among international right-wing activists, it is possibly the most well-known right-wing NGO.	העמותה לאחריות ארגונים לא ממשלתיים
The Reut Institute	To promote education, research, thought and analysis about the future of Israel. Establishing thought groups that will define alternatives in order to realize the vision of Israel as a Jewish, democratic and prosperous state. To publish the insights and understandings achieved by the research groups to policymakers and the public in Israel and the world.	2004	An academic "think-tank" focused on suggesting policy to the Israeli government, but has taken a turn to focus on Israeli "hasbara" (propaganda) in the world, and promoting Israel's image.	מכון ראות—מחזון למדיניות
Shalem Center	To organize seminars, to encourage and develop human creativity.	1991	A heavily-funded right-wing "think-tank" promoting neo-conservative thought.	מרכז שלם
SOS Israel	Against giving up territory to the Arabs, remind the public of the divine right of Jews over the Land of Israel.	2003	Gives financial incentives to Israeli soldiers to encourage them to take right-wing actions.	המטה להצלת העם והארץ

conducted by legally-ascertained bodies, and that ADL should not interfere in government activities. This demonstrates ADL's enthusiastic association with the goals of the Israeli government, further reflected in ADL's response to the Corporations Authority, in which it argued that its activities are already coordinated with government officials and are intended to support and strengthen Israel. This convinced the Corporations Authority to approve the new goals.

A member of ADL Israel is Moshe Arad, former Israeli ambassador to the U.S and Mexico. In 2007, ADL conducted a joint conference with the Begin-Sadat Center (BESA, see below) on U.S-Israel relations.

Because B'nai B'rith [Sons of the Covenant] existed since the 19th century and played a role in the establishment of the ADL, the ADL had a source of funding from its inception. Unlike its international parent, however, which also took part in anti-racism activities concerning other minority groups (such as African Americans), the Israeli organization focuses on supporting the Israeli

regime, thereby acting to justify acts of discrimination committed in the name of Israel's "Jewishness." This tension became apparent during the 2001

The Anti-Defamation League obfuscates criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

visit of Abe Foxman from ADL U.S in Israel. With the Second *Intifada* in full swing, the protocol of ADL Israel reveals an argument about whether ADL Israel should take a similar approach to ADL U.S. regarding minority rights, and make a critical statement concerning Israeli government treatment of Palestinians. Abe Foxman argued that ADL should first deal with anti-Semitism. The ADL Israel's protocol from 2003 mentions that ADL Europe had cooperation with anti-Islamophobic organizations in Norway, and ADL U.S published an ad in the New York Times after the September 11 attacks in 2001 warning against harming mosques or Moslems. ADL Israel subsequently resolved to focus its efforts on *hasbara* in Europe.

ADL's main source of income was donations from ADL U.S (see below). ADL Israel was relatively low-funded until 1999-2000, when it received larger donations to buy its own building and could then accumulate an endowment. ADL was severely criticized for paying excessive wages to its management. The organization argued that it is part of an international organization with a large budget, but its administrative costs (represented mainly in wages to the managers) were over three times higher than the maximum approved rates for NGOs in Israel (NGOs are allowed to spend up to 32.5% of their budget on administration costs, but ADL spent about 96% in 2004-2005, and classified some of these costs under other sections in its financial reports). In 2009, for instance, the CEO received NIS 388,491, which was four times the Israeli average wage.

Ateret Cohanim was originally called "Torat Cohanim" and changed its name in 1982. The organization was founded as an institute for religious studies. During the 1980s and 1990s, there were multiple omissions

in the NGO's reports and financial reports were not submitted on time, culminating in repeated threats by the Ministry of Justice to shut down the organization.

In 1999 financial reports were finally released, revealing that the NGO owns property worth about NIS 18 million. In 2011 prices this comes up to NIS 24.37 million, a vast amount even for contemporary NGOs. In this report the NGO mentioned that its goal is "land redemption in the Old City of Jerusalem" (rather than religious education), revealing it as a colonial organization focusing on real estate. The NGO's charter was only officially changed in 2002 and the Israeli Corporations Authority approved these changes only in 2009. *Ateret Cohanim* was represented by the Yigal Arnon & Co. law firm, the same firm which represents the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (see below).

In 2005 *Ateret Cohanim* sent a letter requesting to keep many activities of the NGO (including the list of assets which it buys and organizations with which it collaborates) secret. In this letter the NGO also acknowl-

edged that it receives support from the state, in the form of volunteers performing their national service obligations by serving the NGO. In an additional letter

from 2006, the NGO admitted that it uses Palestinian in-

formants or middle-people in the process of acquiring assets, and pays these people cash without proper records (so as to keep their identities a secret).

Despite the fact that the NGO owned so much property, its income from rent was only about 1.5% of its total income, while donations comprised 93.75% of the income, demonstrating that the NGO worked to provide cheap housing for Jews in occupied areas of Jerusalem. In the reports of 2000-2001, rent income dropped to about a quarter, though the total assets continued to increase. In 2003, donations to the NGO more than quadrupled, while rent income tripled.

Ateret Cohanim set up three subsidiary companies (as of 2002) to handle the purchase and management of assets in East Jerusalem and as these

are registered as companies rather than NGOs, their financial reports were not added to those of Ateret Cohanim. By 2007 there were already nine subsid-

Using subsidiary companies and anonymous agents, Ateret Cohanim strives to Judaize East Jerusalem.

iary companies. A special investigation by the Israeli Corporations Authority concluded that the NGO must produce combined reports which include the reports of the subsidiaries.

Ateret Cohanim, however, provides “security services” to the residents living in its assets in East Jerusalem. Security guards who are paid by Ateret Cohanim guard the colonists and their houses in East Jerusalem.

Donations to Ateret Cohanim came mainly from Amana, the settlement organization of the Gush Emunim colonial movement which was set up to colonize the occupied Palestinian territories (Amana, 2012); and from the American Friends of Ateret Cohanim (see below).

Im Tirzu is the organization with the most media exposure in Israel and

with a relatively small budget compared to other right-wing NGOs. The organization constantly publishes accusations against people who criticize Israel. Im Tirzu are often at the center of controversy, such as when it participated in a campaign of Bank Leumi (Israel's biggest bank) to promote civil society organizations, a campaign which did not allow political organizations to participate (and yet Im Tirzu were allowed to participate, leading to protests) (Gurvitz, 2011a).

Im Tirzu has refused to be called a "right-wing" organization (Im Tirzu, 2011). Three of the seven members of the NGO in 2007 (including Ron Shoval) were registered as residing in Efrat, an extreme right-wing settlement.

One of the smallest right-wing NGOs, Im Tirzu's personal attacks against dissenting voices has rendered it a household name in Israel.

Im Tirzu's funding is another source of controversy, as the organization failed to report its donors until it faced threats of dissolution for improper disclosure. Upon revealing their sources, Im Tirzu revealed

that Yoav Horovitz donated NIS 74,180 to the organization, but did not specify which Yoav Horovitz gave the money. There are three people by that name in Israel, and one of them is an active member of the Likud Party who served as Netanyahu's personal staff head (Ibid.). In 2010, Im Tirzu reported different numbers on wage payments in two different reports, and kept the source for over 80% of its donations anonymous (Gurvitz, 2011b).

Im Tirzu is a much smaller NGO than the others mentioned in this report, and pays the smallest wages to its staff members. In 2010, however, the donations to the organization almost quadrupled to NIS 1.66 million.

A Facebook group called "Im Tirzu a Fascist Movement" was sued by Im Tirzu for libel. Im Tirzu demanded NIS 2.6 million in compensation, approximately 16 times its 2010 annual budget. The members of the Facebook group chose to defend themselves by arguing that Im Tirzu indeed qualifies as a fascist movement (Hasson, 2012a).

Ir David Foundation is considered one of the wealthiest right-wing NGOs, with a budget bigger than the combined budget of Israel's seven largest *left-wing* and human rights NGOs. However, the Ir David Foundation received a special permit from the Israeli NGO Registry to keep the names of its donors secret (Hasson, 2011b).¹⁹ In August 2012, an Israeli court ruled that the Israeli Nature and Parks Authority has wrongfully favored the Ir David Foundation in awarding the management of the national park in Silwan, and ruled that the Nature and Parks Authority should re-open the agreement and either begin a new tender, or go through due process in explaining why the Ir David Foundation should be exempt of a tender (Hasson, 2012b). Nevertheless, the Jerusalem Municipality decided to build a bridge to help the foundation with its archeological digs in Silwan, while restricting the movement of the local residents (Hasson, 2012d), and invest NIS 2 million in Ir David Foundation's shows in East Jerusalem, in addition to NIS 2 million

invested by the Ministry of Tourism (Hasson, 2012e).

The Institute for Zionist Strategies promotes extreme right-wing propaganda in publications and lobbying. Its attack against critical content in Israeli universities could be related to the recent decision by two Israeli universities, Haifa University and Tel-Aviv University, to implement *hasbara* courses in which students hear lectures by right-wing speakers and accumulate academic credit by learning to defend Israel's positions (Gurvitz, 2012; Tikkun Olam, 2012).

The institute was founded by and employs prominent right-wing politicians, including the former head of the Yesha Council (the organization of colony municipalities), high-ranking Likud members and government ministers. The institute operates a "strategic forum" in which Dror Eydar, employed by the Prime Minister's Office and Yoav Hendel (Netanyahu's former head of *hasbara* operations) are members. The Institute for Zionist Strategies trained the two most

¹⁹ NGOs may fill a form and request a special allowance to keep certain donors secret.

prominent members of the *Im Tirzu* organization (see above). The institute fails to file timely and complete reports regarding its donors, although it did report donations from the Hudson Institute, which receives tax-benefits from the U.S governments and

federalism, cooperation and alliances. Its protocol from 1978 already demonstrates the strong concern of the group about the occupation, and the worry that a Palestinian state may one day emerge, This protocol defined the topic of having Arab members in

The wealthy and prominent Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs is a neocon think-tank.

was itself involved in promoting the U.S invasion of Iraq and is connected to senior members of the Bush administration. Starting in 2009, the Institute for Zionist Strategies received large donations from Roger Hertog, a U.S businessman who also funds Ir David Foundation's digging projects in Silwan, Birthright, the Central Fund for Israel (see below) and the George Bush Foundation (Blau, 2012d).

The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs is one of the oldest right-wing think-tanks operating in Israel. Founded in 1976 and originally called the Jerusalem Center for Federal Studies, it was set up to promote research and education on the issue of

the organization a "delicate question." In 1986 it changed its name and added "The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs" to the beginning of its name, and in 1997 shortened it to "The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs." The organization had projects to combat anti-Semitism and accuses Muslim groups of encouraging terrorism. In the protocol of the general meeting from 2010 the center also mentions direct participation in the struggle against "de-legitimization of Israel," thereby joining Israel's *hasbara* efforts.

In 1986 the center took part in promoting the "Neighborhood Restoration Program" which was associated with the Likud party (which was in power then) and with raising funds for the project. In 1988 the center received a large donation from the

Jewish Agency. The center proceeded to work on joint projects with Israeli governments, and had a Knesset Member as a fellow. Gerald Steinberg, founder of NGO Monitor, was also a fellow in the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Efraim Inbar, who became the director of the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center of Bar-Ilan University was another fellow. Another fellow is Yehouda Avner, former Israeli ambassador to the UK and Australia. A senior researcher in the center, Nadav Shragai, is also a journalist for the newspaper *Yisrael Hayom* (see below). Dore Gold, President of the center, was Israel's ambassador to the UN and a personal adviser to Netanyahu (Blau, 2012b).

The center shares an office building with NGO Monitor (see below).

The main donor to the center is the Center for Jewish Community Studies (CJCS), but the NGO also received donations from Keren Keshet (an or-

ganization for promoting ties between Jewish communities in the world), One Israel Fund (see below) and from the Claims Committee, the organization which handles compensation to victims of Nazi persecution and their descendants from the German and Austrian governments and from German and Austrian companies.²⁰

In 1998, the highest wage-earner in the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs made NIS 354,521, which was five times the average wage in Israel. Following that year wages were reduced, though still remained well above the average wage. In 2004-2007 Dore Gold as president received higher wages, in the range of 5-6 times the average wage.

Keren Keshet is an NGO whose goal is to promote ties and understanding among Jewish communities and to support the Israeli economy and Zionist values.

²⁰ See http://www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=about_us. Reparations from Germany to Holocaust survivors in Israel have been used for various causes and organizations that are not related to the survivors themselves. In 2011, half of Holocaust survivors still living in Israel said that they need money assistance to meet the basic necessities of life (TheMarkerOnline, 2011).

Though well-funded already from its establishment in 2000 with annual donations ranging from NIS 3-8 million, it has grown considerably in recent years. In 2006 the accountant of Keren Keshet was paid NIS 557,858, which is 6.2 times the average wage in Israel. In 2007 he received NIS

Keren Keshet claims to bring Jewish communities closer together, but also funds illegal colonies in the West Bank.

604,216, 6.6 times the average wage. In 2008 the accountant received NIS 638,257, 6.7 times the average wage. In 2009 he received NIS 681,067, 7.1 times the average wage.

Keren Keshet donated money to various educational and religious projects but also to development of the Israeli colonies in the West Bank, such as donating to a school in the northern West Bank colony of Ofra. It also participates in the funding of Birthright (see above).

Keren Keshet is closely tied to Keren Avikhai and Keren Dvora, which share in the costs of Keren Keshet's operations.

NGO Monitor focuses on publishing reports which directly attack left-wing and human rights NGOs. The organization started as a project of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (see above), but was separated from the center in order to minimize responsibility born by the parent organization. The NGO's legal name is "The Amuta for NGO Responsibility," but it uses the name "NGO Monitor" in its publications. NGO Monitor failed to make due

report in its documents about its ties to the Institute for Zionist Strategies and the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (see above). For example, the President of NGO Monitor, Gerald Steinberg, was a fellow in the Jerusalem Institute for Public Affairs.

NGO Monitor pays above-average salaries to several staff members and according to a 2011 protocol, has run into financial difficulties.

NGO Monitor claims that its donations come from the Center for Jewish Community Studies (CJCS, see below), but the CJCS itself reports that its donations were given to the Jerusalem Institute for Pub-

lic Affairs, not to NGO Monitor (in 2007). The NGO received much of its initial funding from Michael Cherney, a friend of Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who heads the extreme right-wing party Yisrael Beit-enu (Blau, 2012e).

NGO Monitor boasts that it convinced the Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal to work against ICCO, a large Dutch development organization, for supporting the *Electronic Intifada* website. NGO Monitor's documents were distributed to diplomats, journalists and law school faculty. NGO Monitor launched an attack, together with the Israeli newspaper *Jerusalem Post*, against the +972 internet magazine. Although the magazine employs only volunteer writers, its (scant) funding from the Heinrich Böll fund from Germany was attacked directly by NGO Monitor. It is possible that a +972 *Magazine's* article criticizing the political attacks against left-wing NGOs and exposing the fact

that right-wing NGOs are much better funded than left-wing NGOs was one of the reasons for NGO Monitor's attempt to target the magazine's source of funding (Sheizaf, 2012). NGO Monitor boasts that it successfully severed the link between USAID and the Geneva Initiative, convinced the Canadian government to cut funding to the Mada al-Carmel organization (a Palestinian research center in Haifa), prevented the organization Breaking the Silence from receiving the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, and convinced the New Israel Fund²¹ to publish guidelines which stipulate that it will not fund BDS-supporting organizations (NGO Monitor, 2011a). Focusing its efforts in countering critical messages about Israel, the organization has been particularly challenged when faced with Jews and Israelis who voice criticism of Israel's policies, and has coined the term "Jew-washing" to describe the way in which

²¹ The *New Israel Fund* (NIF) calls itself: "the leading organization advancing democracy and equality for all Israelis. We believe that Israel can live up to its founders' vision of a state that ensures complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, without regard to religion, race, gender or national identity."

critical Jewish voices help critics of Israel to avoid being called anti-Semites. The term “Jew-washing” helps NGO monitor to avoid responding to the

NGO Monitor proudly boasts of its successes in silencing criticism of Israel.

criticism itself, to undermine the legitimacy of Jewish critical voices and therefore to pave the way to accusing non-Jewish critics of Israel as “anti-Semites” (Haber, 2012).

More than any other organization mentioned here, NGO Monitor focuses on attacking civil society organizations, and has a strong influence on the Israeli Knesset and government (Yahni, 2011).

NGO Monitor works closely (and from its protocol, probably manages and funds) the Israel Academia Monitor: “IAM,” an extreme right-wing website which publishes a “black list” of professors whom it deems as “anti-Israel” based on lectures, petitions signed, etc. It invites students in Israeli universities to inform on professors with left-leaning opinions.²²

Although NGO Monitor state their goal to be transparency and responsibility in NGOs, it does not reveal the source of its donations. The organization asked for the privilege of keeping a donor secret. NGO Monitor does receive donations through the Jewish Agency and through an NGO set up by Shari Arison, one of Israel’s biggest billionaires and owner of Bank Hapoalim (Blau, 2012b).

The Reut Institute states its official purpose as promoting education, research and thought about the future of Israel as a “Jewish, democratic and prosperous” state. In the NGO’s code, however, the NGO adds another role—to conduct a dialogue with Jews around the world about the future of Israel, to train leaders in Israel and in the Jewish world and to appeal to the Israeli public and the Jewish public around the world. From the code, the NGO’s political stance becomes clearer as it sees (and promotes) an inherent connection between Israel and Jews around the world.

²² <http://www.israel-academia-monitor.com>.

In financial reports for 2004-2006, the Reut Institute didn't specify what proportion of its income came from donations. In 2007-2010, it stated that 100% of its income came from donations. However, the NGO mentioned that the New Israel Fund provided a large donation in 2006 (about NIS 1 million), and additional donations in 2007-2008 for NIS 300 thousand (combined). The 2007-2008 donations were not earmarked, but were for the general running costs of the organization. Despite its support of the right-wing Reut Institute, the New Israel Fund was severely attacked by Im Tirzu and by NGO Monitor (see above) as a "leftist" organization.

The Reut Institute has become well-known in Israel for its "Israel 15 Vision," a detailed plan to place Israel among the 15 leading countries in the world. The plan focuses on reform in Israel's public services, government, investments in infrastructure and in Israel's periphery. As Reut's suggested reforms pay very little attention to the occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Palestinian right of return and

the deep inequalities in Israeli society (especially the discrimination against Palestinian citizens), it was therefore

The Reut Institute established a reputation as a "non-political" policy center, but then became a tool of Israeli hasbara.

considered in the Israeli public debate as a "non-political" organization (Reut Institute, 2009). However, with the strengthening of the BDS movement and growing criticism against Israel, the Reut Institute has taken a different turn and has transformed itself into an organization that promotes Israeli propaganda. Following Israel's killing of nine Turkish activists on the Mavi Marmara in May 2010, the Reut Institute published a document entitled "The BDS Movement Promotes Delegitimization of the State of Israel," a document which relies mainly on quotes by BDS supporters (Reut, 2010). In its report "2011: The Year We Punched Back on the Assault on Israel's Legitimacy" the organization tossed its academic language and replaced it with a political activist language, describing how joint work with NGO Monitor (see

above) was effective in undermining certain campaigns, without a discussion of the merits or faults of those

The Shalem Center offers prestigious and well-paid positions for advocates of right-wing policies.

campaigns (Reut, 2011). The Reut Institute report uses the term “price tag” to describe its efforts to combat “delegitimizers.” The term “price tag” has been associated with terror attacks by extreme Israeli right-wing against Palestinians (Abunimah, 2011b).

Shalem Center is a neoconservative research center and think-tank which funds right-wing academics in Israel in producing conservative materials. The organization was founded under the name: Malta—Institute for Theoretical and Human Studies, but in its explanations to the Corporations Authority it presented itself as a center for Jewish studies. In 1995 it changed its name to the Shalem Center—Center for National Policy.

Senior policymakers in Israel such as Omer Moav (senior economic advisor in the Ministry of Finance) and

Michael Oren (Israeli ambassador to the U.S) are also senior researchers in the Shalem Center and have tremendous influence on Israeli policies (Ilani, 2009). The NGO has conducted heavily-funded research on archeology in East Jerusalem, specifically the Ir David project which it conducted in cooperation with the Ir David Foundation (see above).

In 1999, the Corporations Authority conducted an investigation and found problems with the proper running of the Shalem Center—missing reports, excessive management costs and multiple members from the same family among the founders and the board. Another investigation in 2004 criticized the organization’s accounting, especially the high wages to management. In 2006, a third investigation conducted by an accounting firm found further misconduct in the NGO’s reports and activities, including large loans given out to senior workers. The Shalem Center argued in a response letter to the Corporations Authority that a vice president had embezzled the NGO funds and caused inconsistencies, and was sub-

sequently fired in 2005. The Shalem Center was forced by the Ministry of Justice to implement a rehabilitation program in 2006.

The Shalem Center is one of the better funded NGOs in Israel, and also pays some of the highest wages to its senior staff members. The fol-

lowing table shows that the wages of the top five earners in the NGO have been 2.8 to 4.8 times higher than the Israeli average wage in 1998, but have increased to a multiple of between 3.9 and 10.5 by 2004. In 2005, wages of the five biggest earners were reduced to about a third.

**TABLE II:
WAGES IN THE SHALEM CENTER FOR THE TOP FIVE EARNERS**

Year	Wages of the top five earners	Multiples of the average wage in Israel ²³
1998	NIS 245,726-498,752	2.8-4.8
1999	NIS 204,360-583,048	2.2-6.1
2000	NIS 306,911-661,871	3-6.5
2001	NIS 354,180-951,587	3.3-9
2002	NIS 328,750-657,565	3.6-7.4
2003	NIS 328,750-657,565	4-8
2004	NIS 328,582-883,972	3.9-10.5

²³ Assuming that the actual wage of the workers in the NGO was 20% lower for 1998-2001, because the NGO did not report the gross wage of the workers but rather the employment cost to the organization until 2001.

The main donor to the Shalem Center was the Tikva Fund, the same fund which funds the Institute for Zionist Studies (see above). In later years, it was replaced by The Shalem Foundation. The Shalem Foundation in the U.S was chaired by Ron Lauder (see above) until 2009. Smaller donations were given by the Nadav Fund (in Israel²⁴), from Canadian donors and from the U.S Embassy in Thailand.

In 1999 (and possibly sooner) it already owned assets worth over NIS 1.5 million, which were sold in 2004. It received donations in 1999 worth NIS 15.2 million (accounting for almost 99% of its income). It was also able to afford setting up a branch in the United States. Funding continued to increase rapidly and donations reached NIS 24.5 million by 2002. In 2005 donations suddenly dropped to about a fifth, and in 2006 they dropped to a fourth of that amount—leaving a much shrunken organization. In 2007 the Shalem Center signed a contract with the Shalem Center Inc. to share

management costs. The organizations also share their real estate.

SOS Israel is a very straightforward right-wing NGO, claiming in its statement of purpose that it “shall strive to propagate the claim that Israel in its borders as defined by the *Halacha* (Jewish religious law) belong only to the People of Israel.”

In 2003, the year of its founding, its budget was only a couple of thousand NIS. The organization declared donations of NIS 2,149 and a budget of NIS 2,043. These donations increased rapidly and grew by a factor of almost 400 in two years. Unlike most right-wing NGOs, most of the donations (about 60%) of SOS Israel come from Israeli donors (mainly from a donor named Menachem Karseninsky), and the rest from international donors.

The organization spends most of its budget on printing publications and pays no salaries to its workers.

SOS Israel organized a campaign to gather signatures of rabbis who

²⁴ The Nadav Foundation, funded by billionaire Leonid Nevzlin. For promoting “Jewish Peoplehood.”

forbid Jews from renting or selling apartments to non-Jews in Israel. They have appealed especially to municipal rabbis (The Coalition against Racism in Israel, 2011a). The organization gave NIS 1,800 to one soldier (Tsahi Kurtsi) who shot a Palestinian in the Kiryat Arba colony in January 2009. It also gave NIS 20,000 to each soldier who waved the sign: “Shim-

shon Battallion Does Not Deport from Homesh²⁵” (Eldar et al. 2009).

SOS Israel rewarded Israeli soldiers for refusing to evacuate illegal colonies.

The organization continues to receive endorsements from senior Israeli politicians, Knesset members and rabbis.²⁶

²⁵ Homesh was an Israeli colony in the northern West Bank which was evacuated in 2005 by Israel as part of the “Disengagement Plan.”

²⁶ A few examples of the people who endorse SOS Israel include: Rabbi Dov Lior (Rabbi of Hebron and chairman of the Rabbonei Eretz Yisroel Committee), Rabbi Yaakov Yosef (son of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Israel’s most famous and powerful rabbi), Dr. Elyakim Haetzni (well known lawyer), Colonel Moshe Yogev, Prof. Aryeh Eldad (Knesset member) and Uri Ariel (Knesset member). (see: <http://www.sos-israel.com/2678.html>).



Aryeh Eldad

Who is Funding the Right-Wing NGOs?

●

The right-wing NGOs operating in Israel are far better funded than the left-wing and human rights NGOs combined.

The organization “SOS Israel” (see above), for example, offered 1,000 NIS per day of jail time to Israeli soldiers who refuse to evacuate colonies. They gave 20,000 NIS to every soldier who demonstrated against colony evacuation, and NIS 1,800 in reward to Zakhi Kortzi, a soldier who shot a Palestinian in the Kiryat Arba colony. This organization is registered in Israel, despite its direct call to soldiers to defy military orders. Much of the funding of the organization comes from American donors, who receive tax benefits from the U.S government (Ibid.).

The Im Tirzu organization received a donation of NIS 375,000

from the Jewish Agency in 2009. The Jewish Agency is an organization which played (and still plays) a key role in Jewish colonization of Palestine, and is closely tied to the Israeli government (Jewish Agency for Israel, 2011). This was the biggest contribution to Im Tirzu that year. The money came originally from CUFI—Christians United for Israel, an organization headed by John Hagee, who has made several anti-Semitic statements in the past (Avital, 2010). NGO Monitor is also funded by Evangelical Christians (Baskin, 2010).

Upon examining the financial reports of the main right-wing NGOs, the picture emerges that most of the funding for these NGOs comes from American donors. The U.S gives tax benefits for donations to charity, and right-wing NGOs often receive this

status from the U.S government by dedicating part of their budget to social projects for Jews in the West Bank colonies, making the U.S organizations convenient channels via which the NGOs

can raise money (Hasson, 2011b; Doherty, 2012). The organization Settlements in Palestine tracked 183 U.S-registered NGOs which have transferred approximately US\$ 274 million to Israeli colonies in the OPT in the years 2002-2009, all the while enjoying American tax benefits. Although a prohibition exists for using U.S government funds on Israeli projects outside of Israel's international borders (i.e. the 1967 borders), the tax-breaks to non-profit organizations effectively encourage and even subsidize donors who wish to support the illegal colonies (Settlements in Palestine, 2009).

Despite Israeli law which stipulates that NGOs publish a full financial report every year, and give the names of each donor who gave more than NIS 20,000 (Israeli Corporations Authority, 2010), some of the NGOs fail to comply with these regulations, publish

partial reports and/or publish them infrequently and even when they do—

U.S donors are the main source of funding for right-wing NGOs, especially for expansion of Israel's colonies.

they do not give the full list of donors. It should be noted, however, that U.S regulations are less strict, and an easy way to circumvent the requirement to reveal donor names is to channel donations through U.S NGOs, or through the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which keep their own donors secret. This way, the Israeli NGOs need only mention the U.S NGO or the JNF as the source of their money.

Let us revisit the list of NGOs above and map the amount of funding which they receive, according to their submitted financial reports (see table in pp. 52-53).

In order to understand the source of funding for right-wing NGOs, we should also look at NGOs registered in the U.S. The information about these organizations was collected from Guidestar website, and their 990 Forms submitted to the U.S federal authorities (see table in pp. 54-57).

TABLE III: BUDGET OF RIGHT-WING NGOs OPERATING IN ISRAEL
In Israeli Shekels (NIS). Figures apply to 2008 / 2009 unless noted otherwise.

NGO	Budget	Donations	Biggest Expenditure	Biggest Donors	Highest Salaries in 2009
ADL—Israel	2,866,793 / 1,854,262	(from US ADL) 2,483,275 / 1,838,164	salaries: 1,888,481 / 1,251,397	ADL—U.S	388,491 CEO; 139,519 Education; 170,162 Administration; 107,529 Research; 74,913 Missions
Ateret Cohanim	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE
Eretz Ysrael is Mine	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE
Im Tirzu	504,774 / 552,046	764,531 / 460,142	marketing: 327,913 / salaries: 336,407	Central Fund for Israel, Jewish Agency, One Israel Fund	84,285 Missions Department Head; 83,744 Activists and Branches Department Head; 82,833 Planning and Hasbara Department Head; 11,846 Campus Coordinator; 3,867 Campus Coordinator
The Institute for Zionist Strategies	699,959 / 741,140	180,650 / 390,701	salaries: 189,586 / 277,637	Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF); Hudson Institute; Roger Hertog Foundation; The Tikva Fund; Friends of the Institute for Zionist Strategies	2009: 86,393; 56,850; 37,950; 29,055; 23,330
Ir David Foundation (Elad)*	59,523,000 / 39,045,000	47,087,000 (+10 million in other income) / 23,244,000 (+13 million)	tourism in Jerusalem's Old City: 23,472,000 / 15,820,000; then archaeology, then buying houses: 4,150,000 / 2,370,000	Israeli Ministry of Education: 1,017,000 (2008) / 593,000 (2009); Jewish Agency: 25,000 (2008)	NOT AVAILABLE
Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs	7,733,252 / 6,073,542	2,121,656 / 5,800,992	salaries: 2,649,522 / 2,356,254; then research: 2,119,748 / 1,578,838	Center for Jewish Community Studies (CJCS)	487,123 President; 359,211 Publication Manager; 324,734 CEO; 187,747 Project Manager; 186,589 Hasbara Manager
Keren Keshet	32,684,269 / 5,144,960	31,178,860 / 9,982,149	supporting other organizations and projects: 30,660,908 / 2,975,194	PEF—Israel Endowment Fund	681,067 Accountant; 472,072 CEO; 277,438 VP
NGO Monitor	1,362,583 / 1,640,075	2008: 1,608,512 2009: 1,319,676	NOT DISCLOSED	American Friends of NGO Monitor; The Jewish Agency for Israel; Center for Jewish Community Studies; Matan; Orion Foundation; Peter Simpson.	2009: 177,216; 140,767; 139,337
The Reut Institute	6,452,969 / 5,822,221	3,296,281 (total income; donations only a third) / 457,177 (no donations)	salaries: 2,525,345 / 2,423,615	American Friends of the Reut Institute; PEF; New Israel Fund.	255,600 Founder and CEO; 171,600 VP; 148,800 External Contact and Influence Manager; 148,800 Strategic Development Manager; 148,800 Head of Analysts Group
Shalem Center**	33,548,511 / 27,301,682	28,241,770 / 17,782,212	salaries, excavations, research / salaries	Tikva Fund; Shalem Foundation; Nadav Fund; U.S Embassy in Thailand	1,051,082 Provost; 969,660 President; 918,149 Senior VP; 720,137 CEO; 587,316 Chairman of Edelson Center
SOS Israel	3,016,716	NOT AVAILABLE	printing and publication: 1,584,593	Menachem Karseninsky	2009: 84,285 Mission Department Head

* Also owns two for-profit companies: "Hama'ayan Tourism Ltd.," and "Ma'ale Bait."

** The Shalem Center is split into two organizations: the Shalem Center and Shalem Center Inc. The data here is the combination of the financial reports from the two organizations.

TABLE IV: BUDGET OF RIGHT-WING NGOS REGISTERED IN THE US*In US-Dollars. Figures apply to 2008 / 2009 unless noted otherwise.*

NGO	Founded	Budget	Donations	Main Expense	Official Purpose (taken from the organization's official documents)	Notes
ADL—U.S	1913	127,315,000 (2008)	39,785,000; other income: 16,601,000 (2008) ^v	regional operatives: 25,739,000 (2008)	Stop the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment to all. Fight anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defend democratic ideals and civil rights for all.	
ADL Founda- tion—U.S	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	6,342,797 / 8,067,321	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	Helps fund the ADL.
American Friends of Ateret Cohanim	1987	1,677,672 / 818,826	1,815,389 / 910,298	grants	Provide funding for higher educational institutions in Israel.	Funds Ateret Cohanim.
American Friends of New Communities in Israel Inc.	2001	345,033 (2009)	538,912 (2009)	"other expenses" 324,424 (2009)	To assist in new communities in Israel including absorp- tion, social and educational needs.	
American Friends of NGO Monitor	2007	485,770 (2010)	807,763 (2010)	grants	To promote accountability, report and analyze activities and funding sources of non-governmental organizations active in human rights and humanitarian issues.	Funds NGO Monitor. Form 990 is available only for 2010.
American Friends of the Reut Institute	2006	1,524,759 / 1,146,422	1,450,987 / 1,141,338	grants: 1,395,000 / 1,060,000	To support research and programs designed to strengthen the vision of the state of Israel including, without limita- tion, those of the Reut Institute, and to carry on other educational, scientific and charitable activities associated with this purpose as allowed by law.	Funds Reut Institute.
Birthright Israel Foundation	1999	74,503,366 / 71,606,658	48,606,830 / 71,369,840	grants	A support organization for Birthright Israel.	
Birthright Israel Next Inc.	2009	4,233,301 (2009)	3,323,806 (2009)	grants	To invite Birthright trip participants to expand their con- nections to Israel and deepen their personal commitments.	
Birthright Israel USA Inc.	2002	2,348,031 (2009)	2,380,529 (2009)	NOT AVAILABLE	To increase the number of young Jews visiting Israel.	
Camera—Com- mittee for Ac- curacy in Middle East Reporting in America	1984	4,221,427 / 5,085,663	2,761,144 / 2,415,739	"other expenses" and salaries	Promoting accurate and balanced coverage of Israel and the Middle East, while taking no position with regard to American or Israeli political issues.	Website offers no information on the organization.
Center for Jew- ish Community Studies	1976	2,354,698 / 1,876,273	1,652,935 / 2,052,577	"other expenses"	Research, lecturing and education.	Funds NGO Monitor and Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

(continued)

TABLE IV: BUDGET OF RIGHT-WING NGOs REGISTERED IN THE US*In US-Dollars. Figures apply to 2008 / 2009 unless noted otherwise.*

NGO	Founded	Budget	Donations	Main Expense	Official Purpose (from NGO's documents)	Notes
Central Fund of Israel	1979	11,279,962 / 12,766,263	12,141,410 / 12,967,765	Grants	Promoting charitable activities in Israel.	Claims to be a humanitarian organization, but gives money for "security".
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities	1995	1,363,901 / 816,343	1,353,830 / 796,897	Grants: 1,101,154 / 555,905	To stand with Jews at risk in Israel whose homes are threatened and who face terrorism on a daily basis.	Funding focuses on colonies in the West Bank.
Israel Independence Fund	2008	73,327 / 215,000	121,513 / 240,792	Grants (individuals in the US)	To receive and manage a fund or funds of real or personal property, or both, without limitation as to amount or value, and subject to the restrictions or limitations hereinafter set forth, to use and apply the whole or any part of the income therefrom and the principal thereof exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, literary, cultural and scientific purposes.	
One Israel Fund	1994	1,982,792 / 1,805,942	1,785,446 / 1,748,650	Grants	Supporting welfare of people in Judea and Samaria and rebuilding the lives of the Jews impacted by the Gaza evacuation.	Donor to Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Many projects are actually "security" and not humanitarian.
PEF—Israel Endowment Foundation	1938	60,386,876 / 60,250,775	47,995,288 / 45,113,843	Grants	PEF—Israel Endowment Funds was established in 1922 for direct distribution of funds to selected & approved charitable organizations in Israel.	Funds Keren Keshet, the Institute for Zionist Strategies, Reut Institute.
The Shalem Foundation	1997	10,442,290 / 6,487,775	8,557,087 / 7,311,878	Grants	To create and maintain a Zionist infrastructure for the nation of Israel.	Fund the Shalem Center.
Stand with Us	2001	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	To ensure that Israel is accurately portrayed and justly represented on college campuses, in the media, and in communities around the world.	Registered in the U.S, but main office in Jerusalem.

It should be stressed that the list above is merely a sample out of a much larger number of organizations. Settlements in Palestine identified 183 U.S.-registered NGOs operating between 2002-2009 (Settlements in Palestine, 2009).

American Friends of New Communities in Israel claim in their tax report that they are “assisting communities in Israel in absorption, social and educational needs,” but are actually funding projects in the oPt (Ma’an and Jordan Valley Popular Committees, 2010).

Center for Jewish Community Studies is an NGO closely tied to the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, and also a major donor to NGO Monitor, having donated NIS 3.2 million (Blau, 2012b).

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities is an organization which claims to assist Jews who are persecuted and at risk, including Jewish “refugees” from Gaza. The organization spends its funding on developing

cultural projects for Israeli colonies in the occupied Jordan Valley (Ibid.).

American NGOs funding the Israeli right-wing have much larger budgets than the organizations which they support.

Stand With Us is a pro-Zionist organization in the U.S that publishes pro-Israeli propaganda and which prepared a lawsuit against the Olympia Food Co-op in the U.S which organized boycott action against Israel. Close coordination with the Israeli government in Stand With Us activities has been revealed (Abunimah, 2011a).

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is a well-known and powerful organization which claims to defend human rights. Yet the organization does not criticize human rights violations in Israel, and conflates criticism of Israel with defamation of Jews (El-dar, 2011).

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), is a large pro-Israeli lobby in the U.S which

does not only lobby U.S. politicians to support Israel, but also lobbies them to promote policies which are associated with the Israeli right-wing (such as the expanded colonization of the West Bank) (Eldar, 2011).

The Central Fund for Israel is especially noteworthy as it focuses on funding the colonization efforts in the West Bank (and previously the Gaza Strip). It funds organizations such as Women in Green (a right-wing colonialist spoof on the left-wing Women in Black), Im Tirzu (Gurvitz, 2011b) and others (Gaon, 2011). It also funded an emergency unit to defend Israeli colonies in the occupied Jordan Valley (Ma'an & Jordan Valley Popular Committees, 2010).

PEF—Israel Endowment Foundation was established long before the state of Israel was founded, and its acronym stands for Palestine Exploration Fund. Its stated goal is to fund charitable organizations in Israel, but in reality it funds ideological organizations such as the Institute for Zionist Strategies and the Reut Institute. It also funds the New Israel Fund and the Hebrew University.

*

The total budget of the ten right-wing NGOs mentioned above for which financial reports are available (and one must remember, they are merely a sample of the total number of right-wing NGOs) for 2008 was NIS 148.39 million, or US\$ 39.03 million.

By comparison, a study of 13 of Israel's most prominent human rights NGO found that their combined funding in 2002 was US\$ 7.4 million (Berkovitch & Gordon, 2008). In 2008 the seven biggest left-wing and human rights NGOs received a combined total of NIS 37 million, or US\$ 9.68 million (Hasson, 2011b).

In 2010, European funding to organizations in Israel was Euros 158 million. Of that amount, left-wing or human rights Israeli NGOs received only Euros 1.76 million (Sheizaf, 2011).

This report focuses only on NGO funding, but right-wing activities can also be funded directly or through private companies. The U.S. millionaire Iving Moskowitz, for example,

funds settlements activities by direct donations, and is developing a hotel (a private company) in occupied East Jerusalem (Yahni, 2012).

In addition to the donations to NGOs, individual politicians in Israel who managed to raise NIS 50,000 or more in donations, received more

than 50% of their campaign financing from foreign donors. The politicians who received the largest proportion from foreign donations were Moshe Ya'alon (100%), Binyamin Netanyahu (96.8%) and Limor Livnat (94%), all of them from the right-wing Likud party (Levinson, 2012).



Shari Arison

What are the Foreign Interests Involved?



Neoliberal and neocon interests are funding right-wing NGOs and promoting a right-wing agenda designed to generate public support and to influence government decisions. This state of events seems to reflect the situation

Harvey, 2004), but also many NGOs and think-tanks (History Commons, 2012) to promote their ideology and interests.

However, the situation in Israel is not merely a copy of the U.S state of affairs (Gaon, 2011), but an additional and important battlefield for the same clash of interests.

U.S money flowing to the Israeli political system brings with it neocon ideologies, and serves political interests in the U.S.

While capital interests funding for right-wing NGOs certainly exist,

in the U.S., where neoliberal and neocon groups use well-funded institutions (such as Fox News (Legum &

such as the Azrieli group²⁷ funding for Im Tirzu (Gurvitz, 2011b), Shari Arison²⁸ funding of NGO Monitor

²⁷ The Azrieli Group is the Israeli branch of a global real-estate company, with shopping malls in Israel.

²⁸ Shari Arison owns the Arison Group, which controls Bank Hapoalim, Israel's second-largest bank. She is the richest woman in the Middle East.

(Blau, 2012c) and Ron Lauder²⁹ covering the salary costs of Dore Gold from the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in 2004, the right-wing NGOs in Israel rely mostly on foreign funding.

Yisrael Hayom is a widely-distributed Israeli newspaper given out for free. Although the newspaper is not profitable—its losses are estimated at NIS 3 million every month—it is funded by Sheldon Adelson, a U.S. billionaire who made his fortune in the gambling industry. *Yisrael Hayom* reporting strongly favors Binyamin Netanyahu, and its political correspondent Shlomo Tsezna is close to Netanyahu's office (Frisco, 2011). A senior pundit in the newspaper, Dror Eydar, is also employed by the Prime Minister's office as a speechwriter (Ravid, 2012b).

Netanyahu's political opponents called the newspaper a loophole in the campaign funding laws of Israel—allowing Adelson to contribute money to Netanyahu's political campaign indirectly.

Adelson, however, is not merely interested in Israeli politics. Ranked by Bloomberg as the 13th richest man in the world (Tanzi, 2012), he was also one of the biggest contributors to Newt Gingrich,³⁰ one of the contenders for the Republican candidacy to the U.S. presidential elections (Ha'aretz, 2011). After donating about US\$ 15 million to Gingrich by March 2012, Adelson admitted that Gingrich's chances of winning are low (Mozgovaya, 2012) and shifted his efforts to support the candidacy of Mitt Romney for president (News Agencies, 2012a). Adelson's interest

²⁹ Ronald (Ron) Steven Lauder, a billionaire who owns communication companies around the world, and is a part-owner of Israeli Channel 10. He held political roles in the U.S.: Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Ambassador to Vienna (appointed by President Reagan) and ran to become mayor of New York. During the mayoral campaign he expressed right-wing opinions. He is also the president of the World Jewish Congress. Lauder was considered a personal friend of Israeli PM Netanyahu (until recently, Ravid, 2011b).

³⁰ Gingrich's comment that the Palestinians were an "invented people" sheds light on the ideological proximity between him and Israel's right-wing.

in supporting the Republican party is clear, Romney's proposed tax-breaks are estimated to save Adelson taxes worth US\$ 2.3 billion in four years, making his donations to the campaign an economic investment (News Agencies, 2012b). His intervention in Israeli politics, however, is motivated by more complex interests. Thomas Friedman commented in a New York Times op-ed that Romney's visit to Israel was organized with the intention to convince Adelson (and other donors) to give more money to the Republican Party. Leveraging the donations to make the U.S-Israel relations a key element in the U.S elections and preventing the U.S government from considering its alliance with Israel on a rational basis (Friedman, 2012).

The three candidates for leadership of the Republican Party focused their foreign policy positions on support of Israel (Gimble, 2012b). Only 14% of U.S citizens thought that U.S aid to Israel should increase, yet it has increased over the past four years. The "Jewish swing vote" is courted by U.S presidential candidates who believe that Jewish citizens in the U.S might vote for the most pro-Israeli candi-

date, but their numbers are not very high (about 4% of American Jews, according to a recent poll). James Zogby, President of the Arab American Institute, estimates that over 40% of the voters to the Republican Party are from the Christian right, who are also swayed by pro-Israel arguments (Gimble, 2012a). While many Jewish voters in the U.S actually have progressive opinions, some do make their decision in the elections solely (or even mainly) based on the candidates' stances towards Israel (Gimble, 2012b).

Journalist Max Blumenthal argues that Israel became the main issue for the Christian Right even more than gay marriage or abortion. Israel has a special liaison with the Christian Right, which was formerly conducted through the ADL Christian Outreach program. Funding from Christian pro-Zionist organizations has become a more significant factor for U.S politicians than the actual Jewish voters.

The funding structure which supports the Israel lobby is connected to the Christian Right movement. AIPAC cooperates with Christians United for Israel—the main Christian

Zionist organization. John Hagee is the founder and senior pastor of this organization (CUFI, 2012), and

David Brog is the Executive Director of Christians United for Israel. He was also Chief of Staff for Arlen Specter, former Senator from Pennsylvania and one of the biggest recipients of AIPAC funds (Gimble, 2012a; Gimble, 2012b).

Newt Gingrich was the Republican Party's candidate with the clearest funding ties to the Israeli right-wing, but after he retired from the campaign, Romney was selected as the representative of the right-wing pro-Israeli interest.

When the American Zionist Organization (Hallowell, 2011) granted a special prize to Glenn Beck, a conservative, right-wing and pro-Israeli pundit who formerly worked for Fox News, Netanyahu himself sent his congratulation to Glenn Beck. The American Zionist Organization's event was sponsored by Sheldon and Miriam Adelson (Ravid, 2011c).

A handful of wealthy Jewish donors and Christian organizations supporting the U.S.-Israeli military alliance do not represent the opinions of all American Jews.

*

Civil society, grassroots organizations and social movements, however, are limited in the types of tools available to them. They must rely on their (much smaller) sources of funding, on public support, and on a message which stresses content over form. A report written by an NGO will not be covered by the media as much as a government document, unless the NGO can somehow convince the journalists that its report is of special interest. On the other hand, civil society organizations enjoy a reputation of reliability. Their members are often personally committed to the ideals of the organization, and their narrowed focus on non-violent advocacy gives them the appeal of the underdog.

Yet in the case of Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, whether as part of the occupation of the Palestinian

territory or as part of discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel in the name of the “Jewish state,” the Israeli government sought to utilize its own NGOs. Organizations which promote Zionist ideology, Jewish supremacy and an anti-Muslim or anti-Arab agenda, have been embraced by Israeli decision-makers who sympathize with these notions, and have

been granted government funds and authority to advance their goals.

Meanwhile, the same government has begun a campaign to persecute, limit and undermine those civil society organizations critical of its policies. This policy, strongly encouraged by some right-wing NGOs, has reached a peak with the current government in Israel.



Sheldon Adelson

Conclusions



An oft-repeated accusation against left-wing and human rights NGOs in Israel is that these organizations are funded by “foreign agents,” as an attempt to intervene in Israel’s internal political process.

Surveying the facts, however, exposes a different picture. Right-wing NGO funding is substantially greater,

and most of it comes from donors abroad. In fact, Zionist NGOs have become almost a branch of the Israeli government, operating and funding projects intended to promote government policy.

The Birthright project, inviting Jews for a free trip to Israel during which they are taught a Zionist narrative, meet Israeli soldiers and encouraged to support Israel, is an

NGO with a budget bigger than all of the left-wing and human-rights Israeli NGOs combined, and is treated by the Israeli government as a state-sponsored project.

Critical NGOs in Israel employ many dedicated activists, but right-wing NGOs are a well-funded industry.

Wages in the right-wing NGOs are also much higher than wages in left-wing and human rights NGOs. This could be simply a result of the fact that more funds are available to distribute to the workers, but could also indicate the difference in power structure. Workers in left-wing and human rights NGOs know that within the context of Israel’s politics their work is controversial, even dangerous,

and their willingness to participate in such activities indicates a certain moral conviction. Workers who work for right-wing NGOs, however, know they are serving the dominant cause, and therefore have no reason to make personal sacrifices and make do with a smaller salary.

The debate about civil society actors, political organizations and NGOs is a double-edged sword. As right-wing organizations publish reports about the “risks” posed by left-wing NGOs, it is just as easy to investigate and warn about the dangers posed by right-wing NGOs.

Yet one should be cautious about the kind of conclusions that are drawn from the information gathered on such organizations. Several right-wing organizations have presented the left-

wing NGOs as enemies of the state, and lobbied the Israeli government to operate against them in various ways (anything from increased regulation to arresting members).

This report, however, does not make such a recommendation. Right-wing NGOs should have as much right to publish their findings and opinions as left-wing NGOs.

However, exposing interests, sources of funding and government ties of NGOs can help the victims of slander by right-wing NGOs to defend themselves.

Overall, transparency and an informed debate work in the interest of those organizations that promote freedom over repression, equality over discrimination and justice over injustice.

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About the AIC

The Alternative Information Center (AIC) is an internationally oriented, progressive, joint Palestinian-Israeli activist organization. It is engaged in dissemination of information, political advocacy, grassroots activism, and critical analysis of Palestinian and Israeli societies as well as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The AIC strives to promote full individual and collective social, economic, political and gender equality, freedom, and democracy and a rejection of the philosophy (ideology and praxis) of separation.

The most urgent regional task is to find a just solution to the century-old colonial conflict in Palestine and confront the ongoing Israeli occupation-regime within its international framework. The AIC method of action develops from the awareness that local struggle must be practically and analytically situated within the framework of the global justice struggle.

The internal AIC structure and working relationship aims to reflect the above mentioned values.

Shir Hever

Economy of the Occupation

The Economy of the Occupation series, published by the Alternative Information Center, offers a new approach to the economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and Israel. The series provides accessible and unique analyses of the socio-economic interests behind the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Most Palestinians and Israelis possess a limited understanding of their own socioeconomic situation and its deep connection to the conflict. On the rare occasion that the local media addresses the issue, it usually does so in a cursory manner, failing to make the necessary links between society, politics, and the economy in the OPT and Israel—leaving Palestinians and Israelis uninformed and disempowered. For this reason, it is crucial to offer alternative readings of the economic reality created by the occupation.

Flammable Politics: Political-Economic Implications of Israel's Natural Gas Find shows how the seemingly innocuous discovery of a natural gas reserve revealed deep divides in Israeli society and contradictions within the Israeli government. The heated debate that surrounded the natural gas also mirrored Israel's existential anxiety and the fear that the state will be held accountable for its actions.

Publications of the AIC are also available at:

www.alternativenews.org