



## **AEN Conference - Abbreviated Comments**

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I have been around in the Israel Advocacy battle for 35 years, since my days as a Ph.D. student in the London School of Economics. I have spent time in universities all over the world, and I say it for the sake of historic context. I can say I have seen and experienced it all, including being protected by bodyguards and policemen and subjected to verbal abuse. I think that there is nothing new nowadays, when things seem to have become worse. Yet, if there is nothing new, then the sad conclusion is, that we are in a struggle with no end in sight. Resilience, endurance and strong belief in our just cause are necessary to help us prevail.

BDS is yet another stage in a long campaign to undermine and destroy Israel, which is mainly waged by Arabs and Muslims, but not only. Anti-Semites of all ideological stripes, from Right and Left are now and have always been full partners in this campaign. Remember the Arab Boycott of the first 40 years of Israel's existence. IT FAILED! And this is what will happen with the current campaign. In fact, the economic BDS is a complete failure, the art BDS is becoming one as well. The academic BDS is more successful, but the counter campaign which started too late, is having a reasonable chance of first, stem the flow of boycotts, and then reverse it.

We are at a war, and in a war the goal is to win, and in order to achieve that goal, we need to do things which many of us may not be so happy to do, but we will HAVE to do! No need to lie, no need to use racist propaganda against ALL Arabs and Muslims, no need to use violence, verbal and physical. We have justice on our side. So, what should we do!

Make coalitions with groups which may disagree with us ideologically on certain issues, but which share pro-Israel and anti-BDS positions with us. EXAMPLES: Evangelical Christians, Conservative Republicans, Ethnic associations like Turks [mostly pro-Ataturk legacy], Lebanese Christians, Armenians, Indians, African countries and Asians. We may find many allies! Decentralize the message – talk to certain groups in a terminology which is specifically adapted to their discourse. EXAMPLES: The South East and West; not the Liberal East Coast corridor... Therefore we need to organize regional subgroups within the overall umbrella of the AEN, to work specifically within these regions with regional-specific appeals. I personally am starting to organize such a Southern group.

Specific messages to specific academic associations - what we say to the sciences, law schools, medical schools is different in emphasis than what we say to humanities. Use the legal option – the latest example of the CUOMO anti-BDS executive order is a good example. Use politicians from BOTH parties. More cooperation with out of campus Jewish local organizations, more cooperation with Hillel and others, and no reservation about ad hoc Jewish grassroots groups in

fighting specific local situations. SELF DEFENSE in our meetings: speakers to be accompanied by supporters always seated in the front rows. DIVERSITY OF SPEAKERS. And to use activists who may not be academics, but add authenticity to our cause: Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, African Americans, Native Americans, gay activists and others. There is a big pool of such talented and proven speakers.

THE NARRATIVE – in the end of the day, ALL the above is not enough, if we run away from the Battle over the narrative! USE WORDS AND TERMS LIKE JUSTICE, RIGHTS, ETHNIC CLEANSING IN THE PROPER PROISRAEL CONTEXT! DO NOT LEAVE THIS ARENA TO THE OTHER SIDE – THEY DO A GREAT USE WITH SUCH TERMS WHEN DEALING WITH YOUNG, MOSTLY UNKNOWLEDGEABLE AND IMPRESSIONABLE STUDENTS. AND YES!!! WE ARE THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND WE ARE ZIONISTS. AND ANTI ZIONISM IS ANTI SEMITISM!

WE SHALL WIN!