

## Understanding Delegitimization of Israel: A Librarian's Guide

*Avi Weinryb*

**Description:** What is delegitimization of Israel? How has it manifested itself in the field of librarianship and information science? How can librarians protect the integrity of their profession against those seeking to advance boycotts and divestment and undermine peace? In this innovative session, answers will be provided and participants will explore the most effective strategies for effectively advocating for Israel and the cause of two states for two peoples.

**Avi Weinryb**, as the Israel Action Network's Assistant Director of Community Strategy and Communications, manages national organizing campaigns focused on developing, supporting and growing a collective of advocates across multiple disciplines to counter attacks on Israel's legitimacy. In this role, he identifies and coordinates teams of faculty and other professionals, fostering relationships and creating resources to further their engagement and support. Avi regularly leads campaign teams comprised of national agencies and local community organizations in his efforts. Avi previously worked at the Canadian branch of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, conducted research at a public affairs think tank, and more recently coordinated communications for a political campaign in an Ontario provincial election. His writings on diverse topics have appeared online and in print. Avi holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Toronto and a graduate degree from the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy, and Strategy at IDC Herzliya in Israel.

The Israel Action Network (IAN), a strategic initiative of the Jewish Federations of North America in partnership with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, presented to AJL members as part of a special session about the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

IAN's Avi Weinryb walked the audience through the question of "What is delegitimization of Israel?", exploring how an erosion of public support is a precursor to a breakdown in political support for the Jewish state – and is driven by a distortion of highly valued terms such as social justice and equality. An oversimplification of a complex conflict, devoid of nuance, creates obstacles to finding a resolution. The same can be said for targeting one party in a two party conflict, cutting off dialogue and pinning all blame on one side. The presentation explored the history of anti-Israel resolutions within the American Library Association and how they have been driven by a small body of activists and typically rejected by the ALA's members.

In discussing how BDS has manifested itself in the field of librarianship and information science, the presenter explored how librarians can protect the integrity of their profession against those seeking to advance boycotts and divestment and undermine peace. It quickly became clear that the most effective strategies for effectively advocating for Israel and the cause of two states for two peoples involves dialogue, listening, and refraining from using ineffective messaging that may resonate with the pro-Israel community, but not necessarily with those on the fence or disinterested in the conflict.