



Executive Summary¹
Antisemitic Activity and Anti-Israel Bias
At the Center for Near East Studies, University of California at Los Angeles
2010 - 2013

Introduction

AMCHA Initiative systematically investigated antisemitic activity and anti-Israel bias in the public events of the Gustav E. von Grunebaum Center for Near East Studies (CNES) at UCLA during the academic years, 2010-2013. Significant antisemitic activity and anti-Israel bias were found in these events, as well as a singling out of Israel for opprobrium from among all other Middle Eastern countries. A majority of the events about Israel demonized and delegitimized it, with a significant minority condoning terrorism against Israeli civilians, as well as promoting boycott and divestment efforts. A large majority of the invited speakers at the events have demonized Israel and promoted boycott and divestment. One-third have compared Jews to Nazis, and one-third have condoned terrorism. The results indicate that CNES has a troubling anti-Israel bias, which distorts its scholarly and educational mission and is a violation of the funding requirements of Title VI of the Higher Education Act.

During this period, the faculty Directors of CNES were: Susan Slyomoviks, 2010-2012 and Sondra Hale and Gabriel Piterberg (Co-Interim Directors), 2012 – 2013. FOIA requests revealed that during this time period CNES received approximately \$1,500,000 from the Department of Education under Title VI. It is also noteworthy that CNES also received a donation of \$10,000 - \$20,000 from the Saudi government-owned Arabian American Oil Company.

Title VI of the 1965 Higher Education Act

As a result of the concern of federal legislators over the misuse of Title VI funding by award recipients who had engaged in unbalanced and politically biased programming and actively discouraged students from contributing their expertise to U.S. intelligence and defense agencies, the U.S. Congress amended Title VI in 2008 to include the following stipulations for all applicants for NRC and FLAS funding:

¹ The full report can be found here:
<http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CNES-Report.pdf>

- Applicants must demonstrate that the activities funded by the grant are not biased, and “will reflect diverse perspectives and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs.”
- Applicants must demonstrate that they “will encourage government service in areas of national need, as identified by the U.S. Department of Education, as well as in areas of need in the education, business, and non-profit sectors.”

Research Methods

All events listed by CNES as public events pertaining to Israel, which CNES sponsored or co-sponsored and which were audio or videotaped or were films to which we had access, were analyzed for antisemitic discourse and anti-Israel bias. Twenty-eight events were investigated. AMCHA Initiative utilized a systematic definition of antisemitic activity that includes 10 categories of antisemitic behavior or discourse, with 8 of the categories culled from the U.S. State Department’s definition of antisemitism established through the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004. The events were also examined for anti-Israel bias, defined as pervasive criticism of Israeli government policies, society, and/or people.

In addition, AMCHA noted the total number of public events sponsored or co-sponsored by CNES that pertained to all countries of the Middle East during the time under consideration, and analyzed the number of events pertaining to significant political conflicts in the Middle East, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab Spring, Egyptian uprising, Syrian civil war, Tunisia uprising, Libya uprising, Iranian revolution and Iranian nuclear threat.

Biographical information was prepared about every speaker at the events, including examples of antisemitic activity or affiliations in which the speaker has engaged. Thirty one speakers were investigated.

Similar biographical information was gathered about the three CNES Directors.

Findings about Events

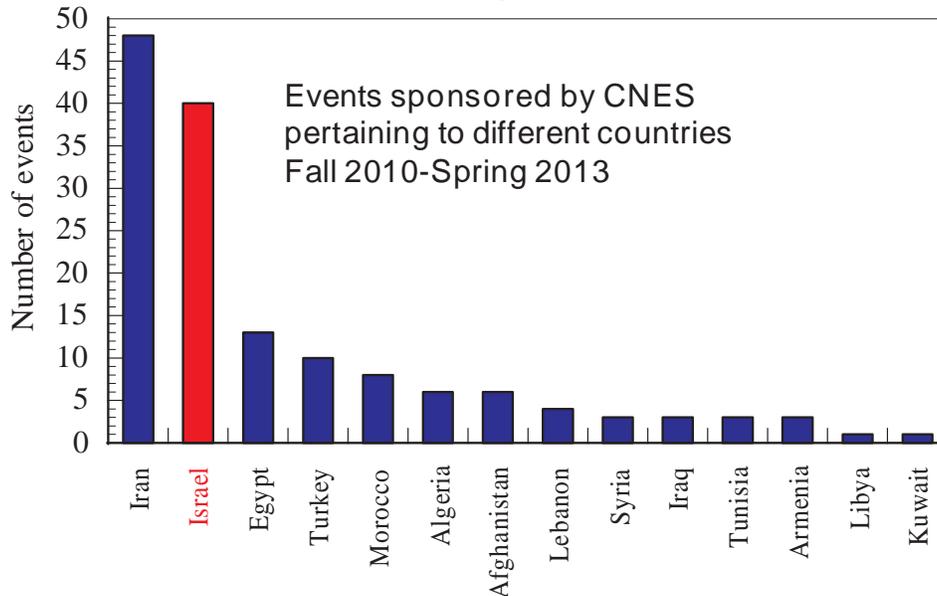
- Anti-Israel bias was exhibited in 26 out of the 28 Israel-related events (93%).
- Of the 28 Israel-related events analyzed, 21 (75%) contained antisemitic content.
- 7 kinds of antisemitic behavior were displayed in the Israel-related public events, including demonization and delegitimization of Israel, promoting the boycott of Israel, holding Israel to a double standard, denying Jews the right to self-determination, historical antisemitism, and comparing Jews to Nazis. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1
Antisemitic Content in CNES Israel-Related Public Events

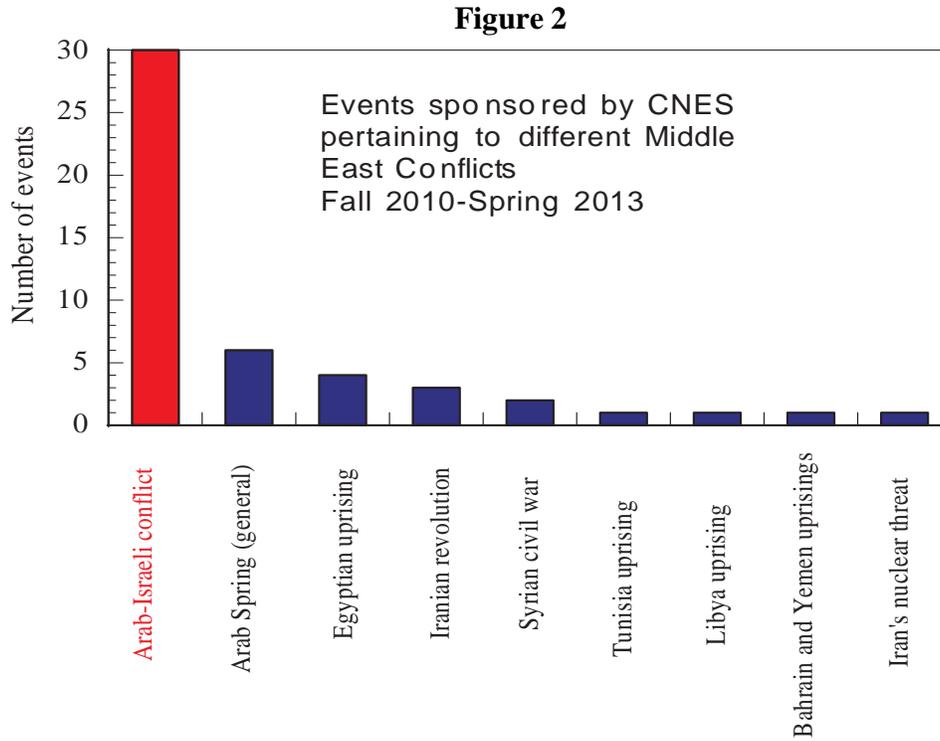
Type of Antisemitism	Number of Events (Total = 28)	Percentage of Events
Demonization of Israel	16	57%
Delegitimization of Israel	11	39%
Promoting BDS against Israel	5	18%
Holding Israel to Double Standard	3	11%
Denying Jews Right to Self-Determination	5	18%
Comparing Israelis to Nazis	3	11%
Condoning Terrorism	3	11%

- Of the 149 total CNES-sponsored or co-sponsored public events related to specific countries of the Middle East, 40 (27%) pertained to Israel. Only events pertaining to Iran -- most of them in Persian and most pertaining to cultural aspects of Iranian society and history -- exceeded the number of Israel-related events. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



- Of the 49 total CNES sponsored or co-sponsored public events pertaining to significant Middle East political conflicts, 30 (61%) focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict, by a large margin more than any other conflict. See Figure 2 below.



Findings about Speakers

- Of the 31 speakers at the CNES Israel-related events analyzed, 26 (84%) have engaged in antisemitic activity, including the demonization and delegitimization of Israel, promoting BDS, denying Jews the right to self-determination, comparing Israelis to Nazis and condoning terrorism. (See Table 2 below).

Table 2
Antisemitic Activities of Speakers at CNES Israel-Related Public Events

Type of Antisemitism	Number of Speakers (Total = 31)	Percentage of Speakers
Demonization of Israel	25	81%
Promoting BDS against Israel	21	68%
Delegitimization of Israel	20	64%
Denying Jews Right to Self-Determination	15	48%
Comparing Israelis to Nazis	10	32%
Condoning Terrorism	10	32%

Findings about Directors

- Despite their mandate as a Title-VI funded National Resource Center to maintain linkages with institutions of higher education in the Middle East, all three CNES Directors have signed petitions supporting boycott, divestment or sanctions against Israel, including petitions calling for the boycott of Israeli academic institutions and scholars. In addition, all three - despite directing a program that is intended to encourage study abroad to countries in the Middle East, and touting the public abroad program as part of the center's fulfillment of Title VI funding for meeting "areas of national needs" which includes the study of the Hebrew language and study abroad in Israel - have publicly opposed the University of California Israel Abroad Program on the grounds that Israel discriminates against Palestinians, and deprives Palestinians of the "right to education." Hale wrote and circulated the petition to rescind the UC Israel Abroad Program.

Findings about Funding

- A Freedom of Information Act request revealed that the Saudi government was a donor to CNES. On an official Saudi government website, devoted to the promotion of Islam, UCLA International Institute and CNES are highlighted for their Islamic programming, UCLA being one of only two American universities promoted on the website. The Saudi website also includes openly anti-Israel and antisemitic discourse.

Conclusions

An examination of the CNES public events pertaining to Israel over a three-year period reveals an extremely disproportionate focus on Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, the 28 events examined were not only overwhelmingly biased against Israel and lacking “diverse perspectives and a wide range of views,” but antisemitic in many of their aspects, according to categories of antisemitic activity derived primarily from the U.S. Department of State’s definition of antisemitism. An analysis of the 31 speakers chosen to speak at these events also demonstrated that the vast majority were biased against Israel and had engaged in antisemitic activity.

The CNES’s anti-Israel bias and antisemitic activities reflect the political agenda of all three Directors, who have each supported boycotts of Israel, and all of whom have publicly opposed opportunities for students who wish to study abroad in Israel – despite touting the public abroad program as part of the center’s fulfillment of Title VI funding.

The fact that CNES is praised by the government of Saudi Arabi on an official website, and that CNES’s anti-Israel bias and antisemitic discourse is consistent with the policies of the government of Saudi Arabia is worrisome and worthy of further examination.

In conclusion, a systematic investigation of CNES’s public outreach events about Israel revealed serious problems with the events, the selected speakers, and the directors, which appear to violate the stipulations of the Center’s Title VI funding and distort its scholarly and educational mission. These problems should be forthrightly addressed by the UCLA administration and the U.S. Department of Education.