

“Facts for Peace”: The Billionaire-backed Propaganda Campaign Attacking the Palestinian Cause

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A week after Hamas launched its surprise attack on Israel, the social media page Facts For Peace was created with the message, “Get the facts on Hamas, Israel, and peace in the region.”

A few days later, the [page began advertising](#) its content. “Here is [Hamas’ Founding Charter in Their Own Words](#),” one sponsored post reads alongside video clips of Hamas leaders speaking and snapshots of the document. The page has spent more than [\\$945,000](#) on Facebook ads since the war began nearly four months ago, and according to [POLITICO](#), was the single largest pro-Israel advertiser between November 2 and December 1, spending over \$450,000 on Meta ads. The ads have mainly reached male-identifying Facebook users under the age of 35 in California, Texas, New York, and Florida.

Labeled as a media/news company on Facebook, now Meta, the page’s posts and its supporters appear less concerned with accurate reporting and more involved in shaping public opinion.

In November, news website [Semafor](#) reported real-estate billionaire Barry Sternlicht launched Facts For Peace and sought \$1 million in donations each from some of the world’s wealthiest individuals. “This is just one of several behind-the-scenes efforts by business tycoons — many, though not all of them Jewish — to support Israel since the attack by Hamas,” Semafor reported.

“Public opinion will surely shift as scenes, real or fabricated by Hamas, of civilian Palestinian suffering will surely erode [Israel’s] current empathy in the world

community,” Sternlicht wrote in an email, seen by Semafor, soliciting contributions from Wall Street, Hollywood, and tech moguls. “We must get ahead of the narrative.”

The main objective of the "Facts for Peace" media campaign is to blame Palestinian deaths & suffering on Hamas instead of on their occupier, Apartheid Israel. pic.twitter.com/TaEy7ZNcGJ

— MintPress News (@MintPressNews) [November 13, 2023](#)

Sternlicht wrote that he’s aiming to raise \$50 million from the recipients and secure a matching donation from an unnamed Jewish charity. With the funds, Facts For Peace seeks to “define Hamas to the American people as a terrorist organization” and “not just the enemy of Israel but of the United States.”

According to Bloomberg and Forbes data, the recipients have a combined net worth of almost \$500 billion and include media tycoon David Geffen, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, Apollo CEO Marc Rowan, investors Michael Milke, Nelson Peltz, and Bill Ackman, and tech tycoons Eric Schmidt and Michael Dell. Facts For Peace did not respond to MintPress News inquiries about its campaign objectives.

Paying for Propaganda

Following its debut ad on the Hamas charter, Facts For Peace has gone on to publish hundreds of sponsored posts, with some conflating support for Palestine with support for Hamas or calling for the destruction of Israel. Only one ad was taken down since Facts For Peace’s launch for violating the platform’s advertising standards by not adding a paid for by disclaimer.

One ad, which hasn’t been active since Jan. 22, 2024, depicts a pro-Palestine march with participants chanting, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.”

“Does this sound like peace and freedom? No,” the ad reads, followed by stating the protest ballad is a call for “genocide.” The ad then tells the viewer this slogan is sung at nearly every pro-Palestine rally and immediately jumps into saying, “Hamas wants to destroy and take over the entire area where Israelis and Palestinians live.”

The ad then ends with, “Anyone who says these words...is calling for a world without Israel.”

In another advertised video, a man approaches pedestrians in New York City, asking them to sign “a quick petition to help Hamas free Palestine.” He then reads off the petition’s “terms and conditions,” which include, “You agree that every Jew, Christian, and non-Muslim in the world must be slaughtered,” “You believe Iran should use Palestinians as puppets to spread radical jihad and destroy the west,” and “You want a terrorist group that beheads babies and rapes girls to replace the only democracy in the Middle East.”

A similar video shows a man approaching pedestrians in Washington, D.C., asking them to sign the same petition. In this video, the “terms and conditions” outlined include agreeing “Hamas should keep enforcing anti-West values like murdering gay Palestinians,” and “You want Hamas to win the war so they can spread their death cult to the U.S. and massacre all non-Muslims.”

As a reminder, those demonstrating in support of Palestine are generally not siding with Hamas, and using the slogan, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” isn’t genocidal but rather expressing freedom from oppression across the historical land of Palestine.

While pro-Palestine activists have been condemned for this phrase, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not receive similar backlash when he called to take over the “area from the river to the sea.”

“Every area that we evacuate, we receive terrible terror against us. It happened in South Lebanon, in Gaza, and also in Judea and Samaria [the occupied West Bank], which we did it,” Netanyahu [said earlier this month](#). “And therefore, I clarify that in any other arrangement, in the future, the state of Israel has to control the entire area from the river to the sea.”

Another now-inactive ad encourages viewers to take a quiz to determine “Who do you really support in the Middle East Conflict?” The ad then directs to a Facts For Peace [online quiz](#) asking questions related to democracy, human rights, and equality. If you answer positively, your results say, “your views are more in line with Israel’s.”



Your views are more in line with Israel's

How so? Well, based on your answers you support Democracy, freedom of religion, women's equality and LGBTQ civil rights. And, while Israel's government is not perfect, they do too.

On Democracy

Unlike Hamas, which has not held elections since 2006, Israel's Knesset holds elections every four years.

“It seems that Facts for Peace is another transparent effort to wrap up genocide propaganda in lies and push the public conversation in counterproductive directions,” rapper and activist Lowkey said.

Currently, the page is running two ads on Instagram. On January 28, Facts For Peace launched an ad with the caption, “The International Court of Justice [ICJ] just confirmed Israel’s right to self-defense.” In this video, Facts For Peace said because the ICJ didn’t call for an immediate ceasefire “establishes Israel’s military actions are a defensive response to the Oct 7 attacks.”

The page is also running an ad featuring a video interview with Abbey Onn, an American-Israeli who had five members of her family kidnapped by Hamas on October 7. The video was produced by Middle East Intel, yet the only record of this organization is a black-and-white [webpage](#) containing only its name in large font. Another website, [Israel Palestine Chronicles](#), features the same design as Middle East Intel but links to accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as well as noting that it is paid for by Facts For Peace LLC. These websites mirror Facts For Peace’s own [website](#), which also dons a black-and-white theme and links to its social media pages.

Facts For Peace’s mission falls in line with the United States’ vast Israel lobby. American journalist and executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, Norman Solomon, explained the lobby’s current tactics since Israel’s war began.

“The Israel lobby extends far beyond literal lobbyists on Capitol Hill,” Solomon told MintPress.

Israel-can-do-no-wrong defenders have been in ongoing damage-control mode since October, and part of that effort is focused on smearing principled supporters of human rights like Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Cori Bush.”

Facts For Peace appears part of these damage-control efforts with its own media blitz. “The lobby’s influence is inclusive of, and perhaps mainly composed of, ferocious media offensives – now denying that Israel is engaged in the mass murder of civilians in Gaza and slandering the movement that demands an immediate and permanent ceasefire,” Solomon said.

Despite Facts For Peace’s continuous ad expenditure, Solomon doubts, however, that the campaign can make a real impact on public opinion, telling MintPress:

Its website is rudimentary and appears to be going through the motions. Not major players in the manipulative game of smearing people who advocate for human rights of Palestinian people.”

Who Is Behind Facts for Peace?

Facts For Peace’s website offers little transparency beyond giving a contact email address and social media links and stating it’s paid for by Facts For Peace LLC. Yet who manages the campaign isn’t listed. Facts For Peace was incorporated in New York on September 15, 2022, and was [originally called](#) Fulfill the Promise LLC. It changed its name to Change the Narrative Coalition LLC on October 13 before finally landing on Facts For Peace on October 16.

According to Semafor, Facts For Peace hired Josh Vlasto, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer and ex-New York governor Andrew Cuomo, to advise it. The number listed on Facts For Peace's Meta Ad Library account is the same one for Vlasto's public relations firm, Bamberger & Vlasto. The firm is run by Vlasto and Richard Bamberger, both former Cuomo aides who [reportedly assisted](#) Cuomo in his smear attempts against former aide Lindsey Boylan, who accused Cuomo of sexual harassment.

MintPress could not reach Vlasto's firm for comment. However, Vlasto has already shared Facts For Peace's content on his [X profile](#). According to [The Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#), Facts for Peace, Israel Palestine Chronicles, and Bamberger & Vlasto, websites all share the same IP addresses, suggesting they are hosted on the same server.

Semafor also reported that Sternlicht discussed Facts For Peace with CNN owner David Zaslav and that Endeavor CEO Ari Emanuel agreed to coordinate the endeavor. However, neither Zaslav nor Emanuel responded to MintPress inquiries on their involvement.

Facts For Peace's known head, Sternlicht, has previously funded [Birthright](#), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and the American Jewish Committee (AJC) through his foundation and according to the foundation's 2022 tax filing, available on [ProPublic's Nonprofit Explorer database](#), it gave \$20,000 to the American Jewish Committee's "to support [its] pro-Israel media campaign."

Barry Sternlicht, the individual heading Israel's \$50 million propaganda campaign, Facts for Peace, has previously funded Birthright, the ADL, and one of Israel's national institutions, the UJIA.

— Lowkey (@LowkeyOnline) [November 13, 2023](#)

Lowkey stressed Sternlicht's funding ventures should be cause for concern, telling MintPress that:

Sternlicht has a history of funding projects aimed at radicalizing young people and converting them to settler-colonists. Birthright offers free trips to occupied Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to young Jews around the world."

The [ADL notoriously spied](#) on thousands of Arab students and pro-Palestine and anti-apartheid activists, including [Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#), and even sold that information to South African intelligence agents in the [1980s](#).

Another notable person linked to Facts For Peace is ex-Google CEO Schmidt, who co-founded the Israeli tech company Team8 [in 2015](#) with Nadav Zafrir, former head of Israeli military intelligence Unit 8200, which is infamous for surveilling Palestinians. Schmidt has met with Netanyahu over the years, and during their last meeting in [Sept. 2023](#), Schmidt agreed to join Netanyahu's advisory forum on artificial intelligence.

Project Nimbus is the final phase of Google's integration into the Israeli military.

Ten years ago, Google head Eric Schmidt held an intimate press conference with Israeli PM Netanyahu; not long after, Schmidt founded a tech hub with the

former head of Israeli intelligence. pic.twitter.com/byLghBcBt0

— MintPress News (@MintPressNews) [November 8, 2022](#)

According to a [MintPress investigation](#), at least 99 former agents of Unit 8200 are currently employed in significant roles at Google, including as Head of Strategy.

Other Facts For Peace's email recipients have also expressed support for Israel as of late. Wall Street executives Ackman and Rowan [criticized](#) universities' handling of pro-Palestinian demonstrations — calling to withhold their donations.

Facts For Peace's ads are often stuffed with prominent voices like comedian Mikey Greenblatt, actors Nathaniel Buzolic and Zach Sage Fox, and Mosab Hassan Yousef, a Palestinian who worked undercover for the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service and has strongly opposed calls for a ceasefire.

Despite this Rolodex of high-profile support, netizens have questioned the campaign and its agenda in a [Reddit forum](#).

One user responded:

answer: It's a Zionist propaganda group manufactured to try and counter, belittle, and discredit the organic anti Zionist sentiments on social media.

Edit: their increased presence is fueled by monetary investments by pro Zionist individuals and groups that dislike the fact that younger individuals are anti Zionist.

Jewish ≠ Zionist

Jewish ≠ Israeli

Anti Zionist ≠ Anti Semitic

Public opinion polls indicate that support for Israel is waning, with a November 2023 [Reuters/Ipsos survey](#) noting that around 68% of respondents in the U.S. agreed with the statement that "Israel should call a ceasefire and try to negotiate." And with Israel charging forward with its unrelenting war on Gaza — killing more than 26,000 Palestinians so far in the assault — amid growing international pressure, sponsored social media ads may not be enough to return Israeli favor in the world's eyes.

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