

Wikipedia's Unsettling Embrace by the Far-Left Tides Foundation

Executive Summary

- The relationship between Wikipedia's owner Wikimedia Foundation and Tides Foundation, an organization with a history of supporting far-left causes, has been the subject of controversy and scrutiny in recent years due to their close financial ties.
- This controversy is magnified considering Tides' support of far-left causes and organizations with a radical anti-Israel agenda because **it calls into question Wikipedia's stated policy of neutrality.**
- The following report will outline the **(1)** numerous personnel overlaps between Wikimedia and Tides; **(2)** the unique financial ties between the foundations, and; **(3)** Tides' wide financial support of far-left and anti-Israel groups.

About the Tides Foundation

Tides Foundation is a donor-advised fund dedicated to “advancing social justice and equity.”¹ Founded in 1976, the foundation acts as a pipeline for donations from anonymous donors to various organizations, which are usually progressive and left-leaning. In 2023, the fund distributed over \$761 million to more than 4000 grantees.² Tides Foundation is part of a network of related organizations that also includes Tides Network and Tides Advocacy.

Overlapping Personnel – Tides and Wikimedia

At least 3 senior management members of Tides later assumed similar roles at Wikimedia, which may indicate that the financial relationship between both entities may be coordinated:

- **Dhaval Patel** worked at Tides Foundation from 2016-2023, first as an Investment Manager and then as Director of Investments. In March 2023, he was appointed to Principal of Investments at Wikimedia, as well as Treasurer of the Wikimedia Endowment.³ In September 2023, only 6 months after his departure from Tides, the Wikimedia Endowment formally separated from Tides and began acting as a separate 501(c)(3) organization.⁴ Patel still works at Wikimedia.
- **Amanda Keton** served as General Counsel of Tides Network, the Head of Tides Foundation, and CEO of Tides Advocacy from 2010-2019.⁵

She was appointed to the role of General Counsel of the Wikimedia Foundation in 2019,⁶ and served in that role until February 2023.⁷ Notably, Keton's move from Tides to Wikimedia coincided with the creation of the Tides Advocacy's "Knowledge Equity Fund", which received \$8.7 million grant from Wikimedia.⁸

- **Lynette Logan** served as an Executive Partner at Tides Foundation from 1995-1998 and as Director of Administration from 2001-2011.

She was subsequently appointed to the role of Director of Administration at the Wikimedia Foundation from 2012-2021.⁹

Tides Foundation's Fiscal Relationship with Wikimedia Foundation

The Wikimedia Endowment

Tides Foundation and the Wikimedia Foundation share a close financial relationship. From 2016 to 2023, the Wikimedia Endowment was hosted and managed by Tides.

The stated goal of the Wikimedia Endowment is to ensure the continued operation of Wikimedia projects "in perpetuity," among them, Wikipedia.¹⁰ To this end, starting in

2017, Wikimedia transferred \$5 million annually to Tides, intended for the Endowment.¹¹ Additionally, between 2016-2023, Wikimedia paid \$1.54 million in fees to the Tides Foundation for managing the fund.¹²

The Endowment's original goal at the time of its establishment in 2016 was to raise \$100 million within ten years – by 2026. However, Wikimedia far exceeded that goal, passing the \$100 million mark five years early in mid-2021 due to generous contributions from key donors.¹³ It was estimated that by 2023, the Endowment had enough funds to keep Wikipedia running for the next 100 years.¹⁴

Despite its abundance of funds, the Wikimedia Foundation continued aggressively soliciting donations from users through banners displayed on Wikipedia.

Although there is no public accounting available to see how Wikimedia has distributed and used the massive amount of funds it has received, donors and Wikipedia users have expressed their frustration about continued solicitations in Wikimedia forums. They argue that donors believe they are supporting the upkeep of the encyclopedia, when really their money is being diverted to unrelated organizations which allow for Wikimedia's participation in "US culture wars".¹⁵

In September 2023, the Wikimedia Endowment formally separated from Tides and began acting as an independent 501(c)(3) organization.¹⁶

Knowledge Equity Fund

In 2020, the Wikimedia Foundation provided an unconditional grant of \$8.7 million to Tides Advocacy, a separate but related entity to Tides Foundation.¹⁷ A portion of that grant (\$4.5 million) was used to establish the Knowledge Equity Fund.¹⁸

According to Wikimedia, Knowledge Equity Fund was created "to provide grants to external organizations that support knowledge equity by addressing the racial inequities preventing access and participation in free knowledge."¹⁹ Wikimedia's rationale behind the need for such a fund was that access to knowledge is often inhibited by "systems of racial oppression." The fund was created as part of Wikimedia's commitments to "advance racial justice" in the wake of the 2020 murder of George Floyd and the mass protests that ensued.²⁰

Notably, Wikimedia acknowledges on Knowledge Equity Fund’s information page that the fund is “**designed to provide grants to organizations outside of our movement.**”²¹ These organizations are specifically those that promote an agenda of “**racial equity,**” which Wikimedia defines as “**repair for non-White, non-US and non-Eurocentric communities and communities that continue to experience harm due to racism and other systems of oppressions across the world.**”^{22 23} Some of the external organizations that received funding from the Knowledge Equity Fund include the Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), Borealis Racial Equity in Journalism Fund, and The SeRCH Foundation, Inc.²⁴

In June 2023, the Knowledge Equity Fund was moved back to Wikimedia Foundation from Tides Advocacy “to allow for increased clarity around structure, finances, and decision-making”.²⁵

The remainder of the \$8.7 million grant to Tides Advocacy (\$4.2 million) was earmarked “to fund the annual operating expenses of other Wikimedia chapter organizations,”²⁶ meaning that Tides Advocacy serves as a financial vehicle supporting Wikimedia chapters around the world. Wikimedia has 37 chapters worldwide.²⁷

The structure of this arrangement means that neither Wikimedia’s financial statements nor its Form 990 show how or where this money was spent by Tides Advocacy.²⁸

Tides’ Funding of Far-Left Causes and Anti-Israel Organizations

Tides Foundation’s Support of Far-Left Groups

Tides Foundation has a history of funding progressive, far-left organizations. These include (total funding from 2020-2023):²⁹

- **#BlackLivesMatter Foundation** - \$157,690
- **Planned Parenthood Action Fund and Federation** - \$913,707
- **Sierra Club Foundation** - \$3,483,500
- **ACLU Foundation** - \$231,205
- **Center for American Progress Action Fund** - \$80,000

- **J Street** - \$400,000
- **Media Matters for America** - \$50,000
- **Economic Opportunity Institute** - \$41,625
- **Center for Constitutional Rights** - \$82,018
- **CODEPINK** - \$159,000
- **National Lawyers Guild** - \$220,000
- **Grassroots International** - \$1,225,000

Total (2020-2023): \$7,043,745

Tides Foundation's Support of Anti-Israel Organizations

The Tides Network has an extensive history of funding far-left organizations, many of which have an explicit anti-Israel agenda, including the following (total funding from 2020-2023):³⁰

- **Jewish Voice for Peace** - \$137,000
- **IfNotNow** - \$313,000
- **WESPAC Foundation** - \$97,000
WESPAC serves as a fiscal sponsor for Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN), Adalah-New York, and Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM).³¹
- **Palestine Legal** - \$515,000
- **Adalah Justice Project** - \$550,000
- **Foundation for Middle East Peace** - \$683,000
- **Amnesty International USA** - \$172,470
- **American Friends Service Committee** - \$290,000
- **Middle East Children's Alliance** - \$10,000
- **New Israel Fund** - \$1,008,776

Total (2020-2023): \$ 3,329,246

Additionally, in 2021, Tides Foundation published a blog post on its website featuring 3 of its Palestinian partners (Palestine Legal, Adalah Justice, and AROC) in which Tides accused Israel of “ethnic cleansing,” “apartheid,” and “settler colonialism.”³²

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References

- ¹ <https://www.tides.org/>
- ² <https://www.tides.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Tides-2023-Impact-Report.pdf>
- ³ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dpatelprofile/>
- ⁴ https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Endowment_reports/Financial/Audits/2023-2024_-_frequently_asked_questions
- ⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/amandaketon/>
- ⁶ <https://wikimediafoundation.org/news/2019/10/03/wikimedia-foundation-welcomes-amanda-keeton-as-general-counsel/>
- ⁷ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/amandaketon/>
- ⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/2022-10-31/News_and_notes
- ⁹ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lynnettlogan/details/experience/>
- ¹⁰ <https://wikimediaendowment.org/>
- ¹¹ <https://thecommunemag.com/opindia-report-reveals-the-shady-money-trail-of-wikipedia-foundation/>
- ¹² https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/56/Wikimedia_Endowment_Financial_Statement_%28June_30%2C_2016_-_June_30%2C_2023%29.pdf
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- ¹⁸ https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_Equity_Fund
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ A list of the Knowledge Equity Fund's grantees can be found [here](#).
- ²⁴ https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_Equity_Fund/Grantee
- ²⁵ https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_Equity_Fund
- ²⁶ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/foundation/1/1e/Wikimedia_Foundation_FY2020-2021_Audit_Report.pdf#page=16
- ²⁷ https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_chapters

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/2022-10-31/News_and_notes

²⁹ Data from Tides Foundation 990 Forms 2020-2023, which can be found here:
<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/510198509>.

³⁰ Data from Tides Foundation 990 Forms 2020-2023. Data pertaining to Adalah Justice Project and Palestine Legal is from the Rockefeller Brothers fund website: <https://www.rbf.org/grantees/tides-center>.

³¹ https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/wespac_foundation/

³² <https://www.tides.org/blog/extraordinary-palestinian-leaders-and-their-work/>