



# **The Image of Israel in the UK**

**Presentation  
H.E. Ron Prosor  
Ambassador of Israel to the UK**



# The UK – Punching above its weight

- What is left of the British Empire? A Media Empire
- Permanent seat on the Security Council. Membership of the G8
- An International Academic Arena
- A hub for the International NGOs – campaigning organisations that are accepted all over the world
- Churches that are intertwined with this culture of activism and campaigning

*These attributes help make the UK the “Hot Bed of Anti-Israel sentiment, with Israel facing an intensified campaign of delegitimisation, demonisation and double standards” (Article by HE Ron Prosor in the Daily Telegraph of 10 June 2008).*

# **Britain has become the intellectual head-quarters for:**

1. Calls for “A One-State Solution”
2. The Academic Boycott of Israel
3. The Boycott of Israeli Goods

# The Media Empire: Britannia Rules the Airwaves



- **The English Language-** the international language of media and the International Community.
- **British media reaches way beyond the borders of the UK**
- **International networks (BBC; SKY) –**
  - BBC is the largest broadcaster in the world. Television and radio broadcast worldwide.
  - BBC reaches 274 million homes in 200 different countries.
  - SKY also has international reach
- **Print and online media –** Times, Guardian, Financial Times, Economist are read throughout the world
- **The Guardian is read religiously and is the key opinion forming newspaper for BBC staff and many in the media who self-describe as “liberal”**

***The British Media helps give the UK a global voice that punches above its weight in terms of size and economic power***



# The Conflict and Cartoons: Open Season

## Misrepresentation of Israel's aims and motivations

Peter Brookes in The Times, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009



## Inappropriate historical analogies: Gaza as Guernica. Olmert as the Nazi Luftwaffe

Dave Brown, The Independent 10th January 2009

Rogues' Gallery: The Three-Hour Lunch Break



# Abuse of Jewish Symbols

Magen David as barbed wire:

Steve Bell, The Guardian, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009



# Blood Libel?

Western powers portrayed as in Israel's service

Dave Brown, The Independent, 30<sup>th</sup> December 2008





# The Media's Tolerance of Extremism

- Hamas given **unchallenged** platform in the Guardian. Examples include:
  - **“End the Siege of Gaza”** 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008, by **Azzam Tamimi** (de facto Ambassador of Hamas to the Court of St James)
  - **“This brutality will never break our will to be free”** 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009 by **Khaled Mash'al**
  - **“A decisive loss for Israel”** 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009, by **Mousa Abu Marzook**

*Uncritical platforms for Hamas figureheads strengthen the anti-Israel tone of coverage and provide moral support for the Islamist position.*

# World Famous Academic Institutions



- Academic institutions are world famous.
- International elites send their children to Britain to study. That includes the next generation of leaders from autocratic regimes.
- Continued prevalence of Marxist theory in universities.
- A haven for revisionist historians: Prof. Avi Shlaim at St Anthony's Oxford and Dr, Ilan Pappé at Exeter. Israelis who adopt a rigid Palestinian narrative reap the rewards on British campuses.
- **Anti-Israeli positions become accepted as academically impartial. Universities become a hotbed of radical anti-Israel sentiments.**
- **LSE course:** Israel as a Colonial power

*A one-sided, distorted discourse has been provided with a smokescreen of academic respectability*



# A hub for the International NGOs

- **OXFAM**; War on Want; **Christian Aid**; Islamic Relief and Save the Children – are some examples of International NGOs with head-quarters in the UK.
- Coalitions of NGOs formed for campaigning purposes. Examples include The Campaign to Boycott Israeli Goods and Stop the War.
- on the other hand a coalition like Disasters Emergency Committee – the coalition body to coordinate relief and fund-raising in cases of world Disasters (like the Tsunami in 2004 or earth quakes in Turkey, Afghanistan etc);
- **An unquestioning cultural landscape that regards NGOs as the incarnation of purity, sweetness and light.**  
**A meeting point for traditional Christian “do-gooding” and the radical post-1960s**
- **Problem – NGOs misuse their reputation for morality and neutrality to push a fiercely one sided political agenda.**

*Again, we see a reinforcement of negative attitudes to Israel given credibility by those perceived as having the moral high ground.*

# NGOs and Israel: A total lack of context

Christian Aid defends its impartiality (from their web site 29.1.09):

“We assert that Israel’s blockade of the strip over the past year and a half had already created a humanitarian crisis”

One word is consistently noticeable by its absence:

HAMAS

Image from Christian Aid website



# Churches

- Although Britain is in general a secular society, culture, morality and beliefs are heavily influenced by Christianity.
- Identification with the meek (as was said in the sermon on the mount) – those who need salvation by Christ
  - The Palestinians as Jesus Christ
  - The Jews as their killers: the resurrection of Jews as Christ-killer**Implementing the “replacement Theology” to the extreme**

- **Churches in Britain are aligned according to nationalism/tribe:** Anglicans see themselves as the “true Israel/Jerusalem” versus Catholicism and Judaism alike; Scottish Presbyterianism points direct connection to Scottish tribalism and stands unique versus Anglican influences and concurs; similar trends evident in Welsh Church.
- **Traditional presence of the Church in British campaigning**

*Therefore, the Christian Critic voice is added to the NGOs voice and multiplies the criticism – i.e. specifically Christian Aid.*

*Again, we see the phenomenon of respected institutions providing a cloak for anti-Israel fanatics.*



# Examples:

## Christmas Manipulated to Demonise Israel

### Channel 4 and Ahmadinejad

- On Christmas Day (25.12.08), Channel 4 gave its prestigious “Alternative Christmas Message” to President Ahmadinejad;
- He was given an unchallenged 7 minutes to indulge in a totally unopposed propaganda exercise

Ahmadinejad's debut as a British TV presenter:



# Examples: The Anti-Israel Carol Service

## Recent anti-Israel Christmas Carol Service at the Anglican Church of St James's Piccadilly

- Jews for the Boycotting of Israel Goods organised the concert at the Church
- Their Jewish identity provided a cloak of respectability for the Church
- The Church provided a cloak of respectability for a radical anti-Zionist organization
- Traditional Carols changed to convey a bitterly anti-Israel message

Eg:

### ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

Once in royal David's city  
Stood a big apartheid wall;  
People entering and leaving  
Had to pass a checkpoint hall.  
Bethlehem was strangled,  
And her children segregated.

*Image: A Christmas Card from the  
Amos Trust's  
"Christmas in Bethlehem" Series*



# Left-Liberal forces in search of a meaning (not like Viktor Frenkel)

- Philosophical confusion: Fall of the Berlin Wall; the failures and exposures of Marxism; new realities of globalisation; rise of a loose coalition of “anti-American” sentiment.
- The liberal search for new meaning and new causes: supporting the Palestinians and delegitimizing the State of Israel is **a convenient peg on which to hang a number of resentments.**
- **Trade Unions hijacked by the extreme left:** most unions are now affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.
- Excessive influence of the aggressively anti-Zionist Socialist Workers Party (Trotskyites.) The SWP is, and has always been, ideologically committed to the destruction of the State of Israel.
- Hence the **calls for Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions.**
- **The strategic alliance between the Marxist Far-left and the Islamist Far-Right – The Respect Party of George Galloway won a seat in Parliament using this tactic.**
- **Academic Boycott.** An Oxymoron on the idea of Academic Freedom. **The real problem – Tacit boycott** where institutions and individuals choose to refrain from cooperation. **Very hard to prove the negative.**



# Left-Liberal forces in search of a meaning (not like Viktor Frenkel) - continued

- **Boycott of goods:** those are being promoted by the extremist political agenda of the NGOs. “Innocent” liberals who “want to make a difference” are manipulated into pushing a far more radicalised agenda.
- **Thus we see a highly extreme agenda gaining respectability and influence** dangerously close to the “mainstream” and even **wielding influence over decision makers.**
- Furthermore, there has been a tendency for groups with an ideological commitment to the destruction of the Jewish State, to **penetrate the institutions of the liberal-left.**

*We see Trade Unions, NGOs and Charities hijacked by the anti-Zionist far-left and Islamist narratives. These extreme but influential groupings include:*

- *The Socialist Workers’ Party*
- *The Respect Coalition*
- *The Stop the War Campaign*
- *The Muslim Association of Britain*
- *The British Muslim Initiative*

# Trotsky, Nasrallah and the parish priest: A curious threesome

- **The union between Islamist extremists, the far-left and misguided liberals is illustrated at every pro-Palestinian protest march**
- This was extremely manifested in the **pro-Palestinian rallies** that have taken place in the UK in the last January. **The Trade Unions infra-structure was used to mobilise the activists**; figure-heads from cultural quarters were happy to participate time and again; slogans of “we are all Hamas” were portrayed in these events.

Photo from Left to Right (3.1.09):

**George Galloway MP** (Respect),  
old friend of Sadaam.

Now a presenter on Iranian Press TV

**Annie Lennox** : Eurythmics singer

**Bianca Jagger** : “Human rights activist”  
Mick’s ex



# Terrorist Pageantry on the Streets of London (January 2009)

We are all Hamas!



Flags and banners: Iran, Hezbollah, British Muslim Initiative, Stop the War and Socialist Worker





# Terrorist Pageantry (Continued)

More love for Hamas: Banners of Hamas, Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Muslim Association of Britain



Swastikas everywhere:



# Pro-peace or pro-Hamas?

Excerpts of Speech from **Azzam Tamimi**, Hyde Park, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2009:

“Today we are all Hamas!” x3

“The Military Resistance in Gaza is intact! Has not even been DENTED!”

“ Hamas is our leader to liberation”

“Israel has dug its grave”

**“You can count down the years: that Embassy over there will be a  
Palestinian Embassy!”** [*Talking about the Israeli Embassy*]

# On a lighter note...

I wonder how long  
he would last under  
Shariah Law?





# Jewish Community



- **The UK Jewish Community** has been in institutional existence for 350 years. It enjoys good relations with the British Establishment.
- The community has **far less of a public lobbying tradition than American Jewry.**
- At the same the **community has strong ties with Israel.** On average more than 50% of non-haredi Jewish kids at the age of 16 go on a month tour to Israel; most Jews have family connections over there; and they feel strongly attached to the state – even in the progressive circles
- **Gap Year** – around 500 18/19 year olds spend a Gap year in Israel. This consist of elements of study, volunteering and general engagement with the Israeli society
- **78% of moderately engaged Jews care deeply about Israel** (UJIA's statistics)

# Jewish Community - continues

- **The Embassy enjoys the support of the Jewish community.** Many campaigns (especially campaigns to oppose boycotts) involve close co-operation between the Embassy and various organisations across the community.
- **In the last year, there have been two mass public rallies for Israel:** The Salute to Israel for its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (29.6.08); and the “End Hamas Terror” rally in the last conflict (11.1.09) – both in Trafalgar Square
- **The challenge was and remains – the enlisting of the youth:** those who are not always in the forefront of activism; those who aren’t necessarily affiliated with a Jewish youth movement; those who feel intimidated by the atmosphere on campus.
- We also face a **challenge of continuing to engage and motivate Jews who self-identify as “left-liberal” to carry on with pro-active support for Israel.**

# New (?) Means to answer the challenges

- The challenges of presenting Israel's case have drawn into ever sharper focus in the last month;
- **Strategic Thinking is needed on the use of political PR tools** in the short, medium and long Terms;
- In the contemporary Western World – that means:
  - **tackling the pre-conceptions of old media “gate keepers”**;
  - Creating **consistent messages** for “peaceful times” as well as for emergencies;
  - **Doing “housekeeping”** – providing positive Israeli content on Israel to different media venues in a consistent manner;
  - **Using new tools on the internet to gain maximum direct exposure to messages** (like facebook and other social networks) – engage the youth; allow direct contact; influencing the “old” media directly; As the Embassy did all through the last operation;
  - **Assisting the Jewish community (and other communities) in building new networks for advocacy** – supporting efforts by the different youth movements in advocacy skills seminars; supporting the activities of the ZF with young professional; cooperating with “StandWithUs” on several initiatives