

# Gilad Atzmon: Winners and Losers

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by Gilad Atzmon

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Despite relentless underhand efforts by Israeli operators in the UK and their close allies within the Jewish 'anti Zionist' network to block a panel event discussing 'Jewishness, Zionism and Israel', the debate went ahead as scheduled yesterday.

It was a tremendous success. Speaking to a full hall, Alan Hart, Karl Sabbagh, Sameh Habeeb and myself elaborated on the meaning of 'Jewishness' and the essence of Zionism.

But we also tried to understand once and for all; why is it that some of the Jews who claim to be the most sincere 'supporters of Palestine' -- are always amongst the first to stifle debate on such crucial issues?

Six years ago, I was shocked to learn about the destructive impact of elements within the UK Jewish 'anti Zionist' network: at the time they were intent on burying 'Deir Yassin Remembered' (DYR), probably the most significant Nakba memorial group in the history of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement. Unfortunately, they succeeded-by putting into action the most repulsive Zionist tactics, the Jewish 'anti Zionists' did eventually manage to bring down DYR.

But in doing so, they also inflicted some serious damage on themselves. They were exposed for what they are -- a bunch of crypto Zionists. They smeared and defamed other activists; they lied, and they mounted pressure on Palestinian officials. They exposed the ugliest possible form of Zionist politics. I did not like what I saw and published a satirical expose of their tactics which I titled "The Protocols of the Elders of London".

Needless to say that my criticism was not welcome amongst UK Jewish 'progressive' leaders.

Recently I went back and read my expose and what is immediately evident is that not one single person who is mentioned in the piece has managed to maintain any influence whatsoever within the solidarity movement. After the publication of "The Elders of London," the majority of the (so called )activists mentioned simply faded away into total obscurity and anonymity, and others joined 'Zionist-left' cells.



They all evaporated. Except for one Tony Greenstein. The 'anti Zionist' Greenstein has become my dedicated cyber-stalker, and – amusingly enough -- seems to want to assume the role of my 'nemesis'. Day and night he continues to harass academics and many others who disseminate my work. It is worth mentioning that he carries out his harassment, often in the name of Palestinian BDS movement,[1] no less no more.

But Greenstein has at least achieved one thing -- he has managed to alienate himself even from everyone in this movement including his Jewish allies, who are also reluctant to publish any of his repetitive slander

### **Kosher-leaks**

One of yesterday's panelists told me that was hounded for three days by twelve different Jewish 'anti Zionists'. He also told me that all my detractors repeated the same line : "Gilad is not good for Palestine".

Yet consider that not one single Palestinian and not one single Gentile joined the Jewish campaign against me, once again we witness a crude manifestation of Jewish exceptionalism: some Jews in the 'anti Zionist' movement clearly feel they 'know better' what is good for the Palestinians.

But how is it that they 'know better'?

Is it that they are slightly more clever than the rest of us? Or is that they are just *chosen* -- which sounds pretty Zionist to me.

However, some Jews within the UK Jewish anti Zionist network are becoming increasingly embarrassed by their comrade's dirty tactics: they went as far as leaking to me and others some internal correspondence within the 'Jewish activists' lists. For instance, I came across an email sent by Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi, a Jewish ethnic leader who was obviously foolish enough to brag openly about using BRICUP (British Committee for the Universities of Palestine) to mount pressure on other Panelists and Palestinians who were scheduled to speak with me.

**I believe that from a solidarity perspective Wimborne-Idrissi's and Greenstein's actions border on betrayal: BRICUP and BDS are solidarity political instruments that were created to support Palestinians. And the last thing Palestinians need is Jewish activists exploiting these unique instruments -- solely in order to fight their own internal Jewish wars. If Wimborne-Idrissi and Greenstein insist that I am an anti Semite then they would be better off joining the ADL because clearly that is where they belong.**

But Wimborne-Idrissi's and Greenstein's conduct should not take us by surprise. Max Blumenthal reported recently that Jeremy Ben Ami ('J Street's' leader) stated that the "discussion on BDS" should stay "within the Jewish community."

Keeping 'J Street's' model in mind then, Wimborne-Idrissi and Greenstein probably do not see themselves as traitors: they are simply 'loyal to the Jews'.

The tactics that were used this week by Wimborne-Idrissi, Greenstein and others are Rabbinical to the bone: exclusion and excommunication are inherent to Jewish Rabbinical thinking. Spinoza and Uriel Da Costa famously brought on themselves these measures, simply for being dissident voices.

However, with me, these tactics have failed completely: frustratingly enough for my detractors, I am neither an activist, nor a campaigner, and I am certainly not a politician. In fact, I am not a member of any club at all. I am an independent truth seeker. I am not afraid of being alone. In fact I prefer to be on my own and say what has to be said without inflicting damage on anyone.

Clearly this is a unique state of mind that our 'kosher Trotskyites' cannot handle. The more pressure they mount on me -- the more they prove my argument. The more they attempt to harass me -- the more they prove my clear theories regarding their own duplicity and affiliation.

They are in a limbo. They are in a no-win situation.

Years ago, I might have been slightly concerned by people like Wimborne-Idrissi and Greenstein. But nowadays, I realise that these people have no power or influence whatsoever within the solidarity movement, because it is patently clear to everyone that they are solely concerned with internal tribal matters. And the reality is, by acting as a constant noise on the periphery of our discourse, they provide the rest of us with an invaluable glimpse into the Zionist mind.

I am obviously not the first person to be subject to Jewish 'anti Zionist's' slander. By now all truth seekers in our movement are more than familiar with their strategies and are tired of, and wary of their tactics. Sameh Habeeb, the founder of *Palestine Telegraph* told us yesterday that he is used to being approached by 'kosher anti Zionists' who preach to him who about who he should print and who is to be shunned and excluded.

Despite these endless, relentless Jewish campaigns against me, I have not 'just survived it all', but instead, I have managed to win, time after time,

I believe the reason for that is simple: there may be nothing particularly 'clever' or 'sophisticated' about me. I guess that I am not that original either. Yet, I am saying loudly what so many of us feel so strongly in our bellies: The reality is that Israel defines itself as 'the Jewish State'. The reality is that Israel drops bombs from planes emblazoned with Jewish symbols. Therefore, surely the first question to be asked, is what 'Jewishness' means. And clearly, amongst the first people to oppose such a discussion, are the Jewish 'anti Zionists' themselves. Hence we should also investigate what their 'Jewishness' stand for. And we are certainly entitled to locate them within the Zionist spectrum.

It is evident that the tide has changed : these issues are now being explored by more and more people, and also, by more and more liberal Jews. I am in the USA at the moment, touring fundraising for different Palestinian causes. I am meeting many people, and I am delighted to say that I am scheduled to meet with some prominent Jewish progressive leaders and a Rabbi. Some of these people are now interested to rethink the meaning of Jewish identity in the light of the criticism I have been offering for a decade.

Needless to say that in our talk yesterday in London, there were also Jews and Israelis present. They came to listen, learn, and think out of the box rather than to preach, harass, intimidate or protest.

Peace may prevail after all.

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[1] In 2005, Palestinian civil society issued a call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights.