

“The war on terror and the responsibility of resistance”

by George Galloway, MP

Paper presented at the Harold Wolpe Memorial lecture series

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REVIEWS AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

George Galloway is the British MP best known for fierce anti-imperialist and anti-war campaigning. He is the Respect Member of Parliament for the London constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow. Galloway founded Respect -- The Unity Coalition, an anti-war party -- in 2004, after he was expelled from Tony Blair's Labour Party for his opposition to the war in Iraq. Galloway started his active support for the Palestinian cause in the early 1970s and he is a founder member of the Cairo Conference, bringing together Islamist, Nationalist and Socialist trends from around the world to work against globalisation, occupation and war. He is also a founder of the Stop the War Coalition UK and is currently its Vice-President. The Stop The War Coalition mobilised two million people to protest against the war on Iraq (the largest demonstration of people in British history). Galloway is a charismatic politician and public speaker, and has gained worldwide support after his Sky News interview on August 15 with reporter Anna Botting was posted on the Internet redstateson.blogspot.com. Galloway also offered a scathing response to the United States Senate when accused of corruption in the Iraqi oil-for-food programme. Further details of his talks in audio and video format are available on his website, www.georgegalloway.com. He is also the author of the new book, *Fidel*, about Cuba's leader.

In addition to the Wolpe Trust, special thanks are due to Galloway's SA hosts, Muslim Views newspaper, Cape Town

Review of the Galloway Wolpe Lecture: The Iraq War and the Responsibility of Resistance"

By Shannon Walsh 21 December 2006

"The blood of some is more valuable than the blood of others," lamented staunch anti-war critic and anti-imperialist George Galloway to a packed house at last week's Harold Wolpe lecture at UKZN. Spectators overflowed into the aisles as the powerful orator inspired and provoked the audience with his analysis of the war on 'terror', the responsibility of resistance and the growing movement against Israeli apartheid.

British MP Galloway is the founder and vice-president of the Stop the War Coalition UK, a group that mobilized over two million people onto the London streets against the war in Iraq. He has been an active supporter of the Palestinian cause since the 1970s and also participated in anti-apartheid campaigns.

Galloway borrowed Sir Peter Ustinov's definition of terrorism to frame his discussion: "War is the terrorism of the rich, and terrorism is the war of the poor ". Death and violence, he entreated, is no different for one person than it is for another, whether experienced from the heights of the World Trade Center or by shrapnel fire in Fallujah. Yet for the powerful, the deaths of Americans, Canadians, Israelis, and other Westerners means more than the deaths of Iraqis, Afghans, Palestinians and others who are poor, black, or Muslim.

Galloway linked Bush and Blair's colonial aspirations in Iraq to those of previous imperialists who pillaged and destroyed that which they did not understand. He reminded the audience that over a thousand years ago Iraqis had one of the first and most extensive libraries in the world, had developed sophisticated agricultural methods, invented Algebra, conceptualized 'zero', and made many other significant contributions to human history. Is it any surprise then that Iraqis will defend their country to their deaths? Would British citizens not do the same, Galloway enquired, if the Nazis stood upon their doorstep threatening to destroy their history and kill their people? The fact that we may even ponder this question belies a racist assumption that 'these people are not like us'.

While he touched on many topics, from the illegitimate occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan to the current fixation on Sudan since the discovery of oil there, Galloway focused his talk on a call for South Africans to support the movement against Israeli apartheid.

Galloway joins an increasingly large international community, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former US president Jimmy Carter, who are naming Israel an apartheid state and calling for boycotts, divestments and sanctions. Just this week John Berger, Arundhati Roy, Brian Eno and 93 other authors, filmmakers, musicians and performers called for a cultural boycott of Israel. Thousands of people in South Africa launched the movement against the second apartheid in Israel at the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in 2001.

Recently, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was barred from entering Israel. Galloway bemoaned the lack of response by the ANC to this insult given Tutu's worldwide admiration. Why is the South African government not saying, "Tutu in or the South African ambassador out"?

Galloway was clear in maintaining that Zionism, contrary to some common perceptions, is not synonymous with being Jewish or Judaism, but rather describes the colonial and imperial project of the state of Israel.

The Zionist movement has been responsible for the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from their land, the massacres of 1948, 1967, 1982, and the invasion of Lebanon this past summer. The international boycott, divestments and sanctions campaign comes from an understanding that Zionism is founded on a colonial and racist project that has displaced, exploited, and repressed millions of Palestinians.

Why use the term apartheid in relation to Israel? Israeli apartheid uses similar methods to exclude Palestinians and institutionalize racist separation to those used by the apartheid state in South Africa. For example, Israel forcibly removes Palestinians from their land and has created pass laws that make it illegal for non-Jews to own state land. Palestinians must carry ID cards at all times to avoid detention or deportation by the Israeli army, they are unable to travel on Israel-only roads, and must pass through military guarded security check points to move in and

out of the refugee camps in which they must live. Israeli prisons hold more than 10,000 Palestinians who suffer routine torture, and now Israel is building a 20-foot high concrete Apartheid Wall to enclose Palestinian areas.

Ehud Barak's call for "Peace through Separation: We are here and they are there" is an example of the premise on which Israeli state policies have been formed.

"During the days of South African apartheid, we would bring South African goods to the till in Britain and drop them to the floor in front of the shopkeepers in horror, decrying that these good were spoilt, stained with the blood of South Africans. Why are you carrying the goods of another apartheid state in your shops?"

Galloway focused on practical examples of how South Africa contributes to supporting Israeli apartheid. Pick & Pay, for example, carries Israeli produce and Israeli diamonds are polished in South Africa.

Boycott, as Mandela reminds us, is not a principle but a tactic to put pressure on unjust governments. Everyday acts of resistance can make a difference, as they did in the past.

Building Solidarity?

Galloway lambasted divisive politics that present criticism necessary to keep power in check as anti-American or anti-Jewish. Many Jews and Westerners are united with others throughout the world in calling for justice.

Orlean Naidoo of the Westcliff Residents Association had some other thoughts about building solidarity and supporting international movements in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

While Naidoo thought Galloway's message was powerful and inspiring, she was disappointed that his criticisms of the ANC focused on South Africa's diplomatic relations with Israel.

"Some of the same people here tonight say we are anti-war but don't address the war on the poor in South Africa. How can we deal with international apartheid when the class divide here is so strong?"

Naidoo saw the struggles of the poor as the common ground that must be addressed in order to overcome apartheid everywhere.

"The government is at war with the poor here at home by cutting off water, electricity, and evicting people. We might be anti-war, but what about the class war? We need to speak the truth about our own government."

Hizbollah's war against Israel

By George Galloway - *Morning Star*, August 2006

There can be no doubt that the Israeli assault on Lebanon has been a huge failure for the Israeli government and a huge setback for the US neocons' desire to attack Iran. Hezbollah has not only not been defeated by the enormous technological might

of the Israeli Defence Force, but has emerged pretty much intact and strengthened in terms of its popular support in Lebanon. In Damascus and Tehran all those who would resist US imperialism are cheering. In Tel Aviv the Israeli government has been plunged into crisis. And all the pro-Western autocratic Arab leaders will now be sleeping much less easily in their beds.

I welcome these developments wholeheartedly. But what a cost has been paid in destruction of life and property. More than a thousand innocent Lebanese civilians, many of them women and children have been killed by Israeli missiles and bombs. Hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes. And billions of pounds of damage was inflicted on Lebanese infrastructure. This was all done in the name of retrieving two Israeli soldiers, seized by Hizbollah in the hope of exchanging them for hundreds of Lebanese prisoners illegally held by the Israelis. Those in Israel who launched the assault on Lebanon are guilty of war crimes, and so are those in the White House and Downing Street who gave them the green light and blocked any UN resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire.

However nothing the Israeli Defence Force did could destroy the Hizbollah resistance. Indeed as the conflict dragged on, the number of missiles discharged by Hizbollah increased rather than declined. Far fewer Israelis died than Lebanese and far less destruction was inflicted on Haifa and northern Israel than on every part of Lebanon. But the Israeli forces' reputation for invulnerability has been undermined, perhaps for ever.

We now have an uneasy ceasefire, the Lebanese army moving into the south of Lebanon and the promise of a French-led 'international' force under UN mandate, although the French, clearly worried about the peace lasting, are only promising to send 200 soldiers. But if displaced Lebanese families are slowly returning to the destruction wreaked on their villages, towns and cities, the Israeli assault on the Palestinians continues. Yesterday I was forwarded an email from a refugee camp outside Nablus which had been brutally attacked by the Israeli Defence Force, once again killing the innocent and the young.

The Palestinian question has been eclipsed in the media over the last few weeks but the situation in the Palestinian Authority remains extremely grave as a result of Israeli attacks. We should remember that some 10,000 Palestinian prisoners are currently languishing in Israeli prisons, many of them routinely tortured. And a dozen democratically elected members of the government of the Palestinian Authority have been seized and imprisoned. We hear cant and hypocrisy from Bush and Blair about their commitment to spreading democracy and yet Israel has with international impunity launched wars against the democratically elected governments of Lebanon and Palestine. The only democracy Bush and Blair are interested in is 'democracy' which guarantees delivering a pro-Western government. But what everyone has to understand is that until there is justice for the Palestinians and until there is an end to the occupation of Iraq there will be no lasting [...]

Speech in Boston, September 2005, part of George's US speaking tour

Brothers and sisters, comrades and friends, ladies and gentleman. Thank you very much for that wonderful introduction and that wonderful welcome.

We in the occupying countries have only one choice to make. Whether we are with the occupier, or whether we are with the rights of the occupied to struggle to be free of that occupation. That's the only question that should concern us. This is a subject

to which I shall return when I talk about the struggle of the Iraqi people to free themselves from the foreign occupation which has been illegally and violently imposed upon them.

I want to deal with this broader question. You see, these airplanes on 9/11 may have appeared to come out of a clear blue sky. But in fact, these monstrous mosquitoes flew out of a swamp of bitterness, and hatred and enmity, which exists against us, throughout the world, but most markedly in the Muslim world. It is a swamp that we have flooded with new grievances on a regular basis. And in that swamp mutates the kind of monsters who can believe that killing thousands of innocent people in the United States of America, or killing innocent people on buses and underground trains in London, is a way to punish the guilty people in America and England.

This mutation is a powerful mutation. It is pregnant with dangers not only for us, but also with real dangers for the people of the Muslim world themselves, for as professor Keach just said to you, the main recruiter of support for this mutation is not bin Laden. It is not any of the Islamist obscurantists who wish to feed upon it. The greatest recruiter, the greatest creator of this hatred, bitterness, and enmity are the leaders of Great Britain and the United States themselves. And you see, the British Parliament was recalled just days after 9/11. I was lucky enough to speak in that debate, and if you'll forgive me quoting myself, this is what I said. "If we handle this crisis the wrong way, we will create 10,000 new bin Ladens." Is there a sentient being left in this land who believes other than that we did handle it the wrong way, and that we created not 10,000 new bin Ladens, but hundreds of thousands of new bin Ladens throughout the Muslim world? This is the problem we must confront.

Instead of draining the swamp of the bitterness and hatred by reversing the policies and the prejudices that watered that swamp, we embarked upon a course of action that deepened, ever-deepened, that swamp. And so we made a bad situation worse. So we made even more people hate us even more intently. What kind of policy is that? How can it be a policy toward terrorism if that policy creates more terrorism? How can it be a policy toward making us safer if it actually puts us in greater danger? How can it be a policy to move forward, when it is a policy that takes us back?

You see, I listened to Mrs. Bush and Mrs. Blair—Mrs. Bush II—I'm coming to Mrs. Bush I later. I listened to them in a synchronized radio broadcast in which they invited us on the first anniversary of 9/11 to remember those heartbreaking messages of love and farewell left from their mobile phones by those American women on those airplanes, on the answering machines of their loved ones. They asked us never to forget those heartbreaking messages—as if we could. But as I said at the time, just because Afghan women don't have mobile telephones, and their families don't have answering machines, it doesn't make their deaths delivered from the sky any less obscene than those American women killed on 9/11.

But when I said it, as I looked around the Parliament at the powerful people to whom I was saying it, I knew that for them that apparently self-evident truth was not a truth at all. We have to face up to this, for the rich and powerful people who rule our countries and our world, the blood of some people is more valuable than the blood of other people. The blood of American and British and Israeli and Western people for them is worth more than the blood of poor, Black, Muslim people from other parts of the world. Nobody counted the dead in Afghanistan.

Nobody is holding a minute silence for the dead people in Fallujah. Nobody's raising money at charity concerts for the massacred in Jenin in Palestine. They don't count the same. This is an undeniable truth, which may yet be ungrasped by most of our

own people, but was long ago grasped by the people of the poor world, and most precisely by the people of the Muslim world. The people of the Muslim world know that we care more about Israelis than we care about Palestinians; that we care more about Americans than we do about Afghans; and that we care more about British people than we do about Iraqis. And they are mad as hell about that. They are mad as hell about that.

Now, at the time of 9/11, people asked me. OK, well if not this, what? If not the unleashing of overwhelming deadly force by the richest and most powerful countries in the world against the poorest and most ragged people on the earth, then what? What would drain this swamp? And I said, there are three things in particular that we need to do. First is to stop the unending, bottomless, and unconditional support for General Sharon's Israel and its occupation of the Palestinian people, and its dispersal of the Palestinian people around the world. This is a key question, and in the United States you have to grasp this—and even some people in the antiwar movement have not grasped this. This Palestine question is the flaw at the heart of the West's attitude to the East, of the non-Muslims' attitude to the Muslim world. You see, the double standards that are so brazenly obvious to the Arabs, to the Muslims, and to many others—but not alas to our legislators—are at the core, a cancerous core, of this crisis in relations between East and West.

Iraq was broken on the wheel of economic sanctions because of the need to demonstrate the unacceptability of the acquiring of other people's territory by force. It was broken on the wheel of sanctions, and a million Iraqis died—most of them children. Most of them died before they even knew they were Iraqis—but dying for no other reasons but that they were Iraqis—on the grounds that no regime must be allowed to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Iraq was broken because of the need to impose the authority of the resolutions of the UN Security Council.

But Israel has occupied other people's territory by force for decade after decade after decade. Israel we know—thanks to the whistle blowing of the brave Israeli hero Mordechai Vannunu, who spent nearly two decades in solitary confinement for telling us—Israel is in possession of hundreds of nuclear weapons and the missiles with which to land them on any and all Arab capitals. Israel sits on top of a mountain of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Israel has broken more UN Security Council resolutions than all of the other countries in the world put together. Yet Israel is not subject to economic sanction or invasion.

Thanks to the United States of America, Israel is endlessly rewarded with money and weapons and political and diplomatic support, precisely for its breaking of these resolutions. We may not see it that way—indeed, in the United States it seems to me precious few people see it that way. But I can tell you in the Arab world, in the Muslim world—around the world—that double standard is as plain as can be.

The second thing that had to be done to drain this swamp was to end the agony of the Iraqi people. I went to Iraq in 1993 and 1994. I had never been to Iraq before. It was the only Arab country I had not visited. I would not have been welcome there if I had, indeed I would have been arrested as a known and vociferous opponent of the Iraqi dictatorship. I used to be demonstrating outside the Iraq embassy in London when British ministers and businessmen were going in and out selling them guns and gas. I never take any lectures from anybody about the dictatorship in Baghdad. But you see, when I went there in 1993 and 1994—before there was any oil-for-food program, when there was mass starvation in the land, when the suffering was literally unbearable to watch, which is why so few Western politicians went there to see it—I saw mass funerals of little children, who were dying at the rate of one every six

minutes of every day and night. I listened at the door of the labor ward in a hospital in Baghdad as a woman gave birth by caesarian section without anesthetic, for there was no anesthetic to be had.

When I went there in 1993 and 1994, I was very clear, as was a brave American politician called David Bonnier, a Democratic Party congressman, once the chief whip on the hill. I haven't heard of him in a long time, I assume he's out of politics now. He described this policy as infanticide masquerading as politics. And that is exactly what it was. I argued after 9/11, that as well as changing course on the issue of Palestine, we had to end this crucifixion of the people of Iraq because we have fallen out with the dictator that we helped into power, we armed, we made strong, we encouraged to attack Iran, and invaded to halt the Islamic revolution of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

And the third thing we would have had to have done, is to stop propping up the puppet presidents and the corrupt kings who rule the Muslim world almost without exception from one end to the other—not one of whom would be in power for five minutes if it were not for the military, political, diplomatic, and financial support of your country and mine. Which is why Muslim people don't know whether to laugh or cry when they hear George Bush and Tony Blair talking about liberty. The masses in Pakistan, for example, who one day had a general who had seized power in their country, who wore a uniform, who was subjected to an arms embargo, who was suspended from the British Commonwealth, who was routinely described, indeed memorably described, by President Bush just before his first election, when he was asked in that wonderful question and answer session about the names of world leaders with whom he'd have to be dealing in a few weeks.

Bush was asked who was the ruler of Pakistan. And he said, "The general." And the interviewer asked, "Do we have a name here? General who?" And Bush answered, "We just call him the general." Well, of course, very soon they stopped calling him the general. He stopped being a military dictator who had seized power illegally, exiling and imprisoning his opponents. He became not General Musharraf, but President Musharraf, a great and wise statesman who must be given all the weapons and all the help he needed to follow Washington's orders all the more precisely. Indeed, he was even allowed to acquire—what?—nuclear weapons, the very pursuit of which (fruitless as it turned out) had led to Iraq being crucified and a million Iraqis slaughtered.

Or we could look elsewhere. We could look next door to Palestine, to the great state of Egypt. Mr. Hitchens and Co. tell us that one of the fruits of the attack on Iraq is that there's now democracy in countries like Egypt. Where last week, the president, who has ruled for twenty-four years, was re-elected with 88.6 percent of the vote, in a rigged election where he chose who was allowed to oppose him, where he controlled all of the media, and where he even imprisoned his main opponent just a few months before the election. As a matter of fact, President Hosni Mubarak got more votes in this democratic election than he got in what he admitted was a rigged election six years ago. He got 84.6 percent of the vote in the rigged election, and 88.6 percent of the vote in the free and fair election, just to encourage the other rulers to go down that route.

But of course, we didn't do any of these things. We didn't stop rewarding Sharon, we stepped up the rewards to Sharon. We didn't stop killing Iraqis. We killed even more of them. We didn't stop propping up the dictators in the Muslim world, we enhanced and increased our support for those dictators. Indeed, let me give you the surprising news: The security forces of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi are now being trained at

Sandhurst, Great Britain's West Point. His army officers are being trained at Sandhurst, and his intelligence officers are being trained—god help them—by the British intelligence services, MI5 and MI6—so Qadhafi's done for. Now, did Qadhafi become less of a dictator after the attack on Iraq? Who are these security forces being employed against? Is Qadhafi's army to defend him against an external aggressor, or is it for use against his own people to keep Qadhafi in power, and likewise his intelligence services. We know the answer very clearly to these questions. So what do you think the Libyan people think when they hear Tony Blair talking about liberty and freedom, when they know that Qadhafi's forces are being trained by Tony Blair's military and intelligence apparatus?

So we did all the wrong things, and we made the world an even more dangerous place than it already was.

And that brings us to Iraq. You know, if democracy means anything, it must mean the holding to account of political leaders for mistakes—let's be charitable and call them mistakes—as big as this one. Everything that George Bush, Norm Coleman, and the American and British political class told us turned out to be a lie. And everything the antiwar movement told us turned out to be right. They told us that Iraq had links with al-Qaeda. It turned out to be a lie. But it's certainly true today.

Every al-Qaeda supporter in the world is descending like spores on the open wounds we've created in Iraq. And just like in Afghanistan, later to travel around the world and practice what they've learned in Iraq. They told us that hundreds of thousands of foreign soldiers invading and occupying an Arab Muslim country would reduce Islamist fundamentalism. I said at the time, you know, if you believe that, you really need medical help. Is there anybody outside the Oval Office or 10 Downing Street who believes now that Islamist extremism is less as a result of what we've done?

They told us that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. I'm not even going to waste your time by developing that point. Because the worst lie that they told is the one I want to focus on. They told us that the Iraqi people would welcome these foreign invaders with flowers and with rice. But instead the Iraqi people have welcomed the foreign invaders with something much hotter and much more sharp. That's where Cindy Sheehan and the other military families in the U.S. and in Britain come in. Because you see it's their sons who are paying the blood price for that lie. And it wasn't that they weren't warned. The antiwar movement warned them repeatedly that if you invade Iraq you will be opening the gates of hell. The Iraqi people will fight you with their teeth if necessary, to repel your invasion.

And to think otherwise is to be guilty of a racist fantasy. That alone of all the people on the earth, the Iraqis would welcome foreign armies to invade their country, occupy it, and begin to loot and steal their things. What kind of people would welcome such a thing? Is there a people on the earth who would welcome such a thing? If, god forbid, somebody landed in my country, some foreign army invaded my country, occupied it, installed a puppet government there, and proceeded to steal its things, every self-respecting person in Britain would fight that occupation to the best of their ability, and that's what's happening in Iraq, exactly what's happening in Iraq.

And that's why we have to be clear about this question. I'm coming to an end now, making an appeal to you for clarity on this question. It's what I said right at the beginning of this speech. It's not our duty to design the Iraqi resistance, or to design whatever political settlement will emerge when the foreign occupiers leave—as they will have to leave. We have only one choice to make as citizens of the U.S. and of Great Britain. It's one that George Bush coined for us when he said, "You're either

with us or against us.” Well, you’re either with your country going around the world, invading other people’s countries, occupying them and stealing their things, or you’re against it. And if you’re against it, you must be there on the 24th of September in Washington, D.C., to tell the world that you are all against it. Thank you very much indeed.