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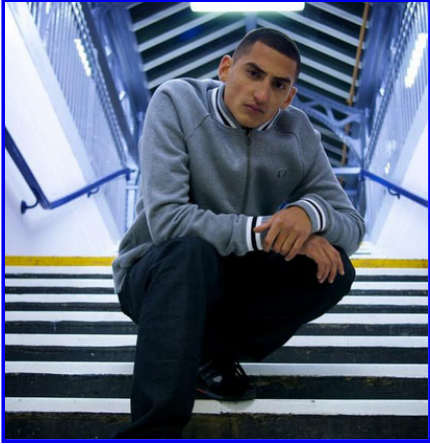
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# Mic Righteous; the latest case of BBC impartiality-syndrome



- By [Jody McIntyre](#)
- [Notebook](#)
- Monday, 23 May 2011 at 11:14 am

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“I can still scream free Pale\*\*\*\*\*”, raps Mic Righteous on Fire In The Booth, Charlie Sloth’s hugely popular hip-hop showcase on BBC Radio 1Xtra. As the smashing glass effect proved, Mic Righteous was wrong; on the BBC, the words ‘Free Palestine’ are not allowed.

Of course, it is fair to assume that DJ Charlie Sloth was not at fault. When hip-hop artist Lowkey appeared on the same show, and dedicated his words to all those that had died on the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza, no such action was taken, and Charlie Sloth has built a reputation for giving expose to strong, political voices in hip-hop, that other BBC puppets might shy away from. Rather, this is the most recent case in a long line of targeted BBC decisions, in the name of so-called ‘impartiality’, to prevent an impartial view of the question of Palestine from ever being aired.

Take the decision of the BBC, during the Israeli assault on Gaza from December 2008 until January 2009, to refuse to broadcast the DEC Charity Gaza Appeal. In that instance, the BBC apparently became humanitarian aid delivery expert, when they questioned Oxfam, the British Red Cross and Save The Children’s ability to deliver aid in a volatile situation. Again, the excuse of ‘impartiality’ was thrown into the mix. In fact, the Appeal was eventually broadcast on the BBC, but only when Tony Benn insisted on reading out the entire address to make donations to not once, but twice, during a televised interview.

At least they gave Tony Benn the time of day to express his sentiments. I remember my own interview with the BBC, being questioned by the now-infamous Ben Brown as to whether I had been “throwing anything” at the police officer who pulled me out of my wheelchair and dragged me across the street. After an eight minute interview, when I suggested that Ben Brown’s line of questioning “reminds me a lot of the way the BBC report the Palestinian conflict”, the interview was ended immediately.

But I stand by the point I was trying to make, which is that this is about completely ignoring a reality that is staring you in the face, in the name of impartiality, like Ben Brown claiming that footage ‘appeared’ to show something that, in fact, it clearly did show without a shadow of a doubt. So, when the BBC suffix every single article on the Palestine with, “the settlements are illegal under international law, although Israel disputes this”, the claim is absurd. In fact, these are not “settlements”, or “neighbourhoods”, but illegal colonies built on occupied land. As Hesham Zakai observes in a recent article:

“Let us imagine that an old lady is walking down Kensington High Street on a sunny afternoon when a gang of thugs run towards her, snatch her handbag and throw her to the ground. Not realising that Kensington High Street is more intrusive than the Big Brother Diary Room, they are eventually identified on CCTV, arrested and sent to court. At the hearing, one of the defendants tells the judge: “Yes it was us, no we don’t regret it and yes we will continue to do it; we disagree that theft is against the law.” Would the BBC, upon reporting the story, put a ridiculous sentence near the end of the article which reads: ‘Theft is illegal under English law, although the thieves dispute this?’ Of course they would not.”

I can think of several more lines the BBC could use to preserve their precious impartiality:

1. “Besieging a civilian population is illegal under international law, although occupying invaders dispute this...”
  2. “Arming terrorist states is a bad thing to do, although weapons companies dispute this...”
- or even...
3. “Taking over ships in international waters is illegal, although pirates dispute this...”

Since the furore surrounding the censorship of the Mic Righteous rap, the general public have again taken the matter into their own hands. On Saturday, thousands of people phoned, emailed, tweeted and facebooked various BBC programmes and stations, demanding they played the full, uncensored lyrics. Will the BBC finally get the message, or is further action necessary?

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WASHINGTON—State Department diplomat Nelson Milstrand, who appeared on CNN last week and offered an informed, thoughtful analysis implying that Israel could perhaps exercise more restraint toward Palestinian moderates in disputed territories, was asked to resign Tuesday. “The United States deeply regrets any harm Mr. Milstrand’s careful, even-tempered, and factually accurate remarks may have caused our democratic partner in the Middle East,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in an unequivocal condemnation of the veteran foreign-service officer’s perfectly reasonable statements. “U.S. policy toward Israel continues to be one of unconditional support and fawning