



September 19, 2011

The Meir Amit Intelligence and  
Terrorism Information Center

**Premeditated heckling attempts to disrupt a performance of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in London. It was organized by the PSC, a radical leftist British network, which is a prominent factor in the campaign to boycott Israel in Britain (BDS).**



The Royal Albert Hall in London, where several dozen PSC activists attempted to disrupt a performance of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Picture from YouTube)

## **The Event**

1. On September 1, 2011, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra performed the first in a series of BBC concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in London. **Several dozen activists sitting in the audience unfurled a banner reading "Free Palestine" and interrupted the performance by shouting at the conductor, Zubin Mehta** (and were hissed and booed

by the audience). BBC's Radio 3, which broadcast the concert live, was forced to stop the broadcast twice because of the interruptions. Security personnel removed the demonstrators without the use of force. There were no detentions (BBC spokesperson, BBC.co.uk). Outside the theater a group of about 20 anti-Israeli activists demonstrated, as did pro-Israeli protesters.

2. **The disruptions were well-organized by a radical leftist anti-Israeli British network called the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)**, which plays a major role in the campaign waged to boycott Israel (the BDS campaign<sup>1</sup>). Employing email and social networks before the performance, the PSC appealed to the British public to boycott the concert. They were joined by various Palestinian groups, including the PACBI.<sup>2</sup> The PSC strongly urged the BBC to cancel the concert because of what it called "Israel's violations of the law and human rights," and because, it claimed, the Philharmonic Orchestra "services the Israeli army." When the BBC refused, the PSC tried to disrupt the performance.

3. Four members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra joined the effort to cancel the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's performance. The four added their names to the letter sent to the organizers of the concert series printed in the Independent on August 30. Headed by the Irish composer Raymond Deane, One of the founders of the PSC in Ireland (IPSC) it called for the concert to be canceled. The concert's directors rejected the appeal and suspended the four musicians for nine months to make it unequivocally clear that "for the LPO, music and politics do not mix" (Haaretz, September 18, 19, 2011).

**The BBC is out of tune with human rights:  
BOYCOTT THE ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA AT THE PROMS!**

From the [bricup.org.uk](http://bricup.org.uk) website

## Portrait of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)

4. The PSC is a pro-Palestinian network operating in Britain, established in 1982 by radical leftist activists, some of whom were **Marxists**, to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. It is supported by British trade unions, and a list of 17 affiliated unions appears on its website. It is active within the unions, the British public, the British Parliament, the European Parliament and collaborating leftist organizations in Europe and around the globe.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions

2 The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, an organization based in Ramallah and led by Omar Barghouti, an anti-Israeli activist.

3 For further information see the paper "Mapping the Organizational Sources of the Global Delegitimization Campaign against Israel in the UK" (JCPA.org, 2010, pp. 30-32).



The PSC logo: No reference to Israel on the map

5. **The PSC has become the largest-ever and most active pro-Palestinian campaign in Britain.** It leads the campaign to boycott Israel (BDS) as part of the campaign to delegitimize Israel. **It collaborates with radical Islamic organizations**, some of which are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. They represent the boycott of Israel as supporting international law and promoting peace and justice. **The network is active in other anti-Israeli projects in Britain:** it joined Viva Palestina in sending aid convoys to the Gaza Strip in 2009, some of its activists participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla and its members demonstrate against Israel alongside radical Islamists (its activists demonstrated to protest the visit in Britain of former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzippi Livni in December 2009).

6. **Within the BDS, the PSC leads BIG (Boycott Israeli Goods), the campaign to boycott Israeli products. PSC activists routinely demonstrate against companies importing goods from Israel and against stores selling them.** They make no distinction between merchandise imported from Israel and merchandise from the so-called "occupied territories." For example, they held a demonstration in Russell Square in London to protest the giant food chain Tesco ("The Source," a program on Israel Channel 10 TV, August 25, 2011).



A demonstration in front of a Tesco store with the participation of PSC activists



The PSC's anti-Tesco demonstration in Russell Square (Israel Channel 10 TV, August 25, 2011)

7. According to the article in the **British newspaper The Telegraph** about PSC involvement in boycotting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the "**Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) long ago moved from legitimate protest for a legitimate cause – the rights of Palestinians to self-determination – to attacks on Jews for being Jews.**" It is not a surprise, continued the paper, that the Board of Deputies<sup>4</sup> said the PSC's anti-Israeli rhetoric was "infused with anti-Semitism" and that its members engaged in "racist conspiracy theories."<sup>5</sup> That is completely at odds with the way the PSC represents itself as being "opposed to all forms of racism, including anti-Jewish prejudice" (From the PSC website).

8. The Telegraph article gave two examples of how **the PSC combines anti-Semitism with anti-Israelism**: In August 2011 Paul Donnachie, a student at St. Andrews University in Scotland was convicted of racially abusing a Jewish student. "The sheriff who tried Donnachie," wrote the paper, "refused to allow the Scottish PSC to turn the trial into another vehicle for its venom..."<sup>6</sup> **Sarah Colborne** the director of the PSC [See below for more additional information], attacked the conviction, and the Scottish branch of the PSC demonstrated in support of Donnachie. Another example noted in the paper was a statement made by **Ellie Merton**, a PSC activist, who wrote in July that **the massacre in Norway was "an Israeli government-sponsored operation"**<sup>7</sup> [See below for additional information].

## Portraits of Some PSC Activists

9. **Hugh Lenning is the PSC chair**. He is an extreme leftist who took it upon himself to promote BDS for the sake of "Free Palestine" (an ambiguous slogan used by the delegitimization campaigners to describe "Palestine" free of the State of Israel). In 2004 he was **deputy director general of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), the fifth largest trade union in Britain** with 300,000 members.<sup>8</sup> He has often participated in anti-Israeli demonstrations: in January 2009 he gave a speech in Hyde Park which was attended by George Galloway and many Muslims (who accompanied the speech with cries of "Allahu Akbar."<sup>9</sup> At a rally in 2010 he represented the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as wars

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4A group representing the Jewish community of Britain.

5Stephen Pollard, editor of the Jewish Chronicle, for The Telegraph, September 2, 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/proms/8737692/A-Proms-protest-with-a-whiff-of-Weimar-about-it.html>.

6Ibid.

7Ibid.

8Pcs.org.uk

9Youtube.com

against Islam and called on the British to support the Palestinians, claiming that was the way for them to show they were not Islamophobes.<sup>10</sup>



Hugh Lanning at an anti-Israeli rally for Gaza (YouTube, January 24, 2011)

10. **Hugh Lanning advocates a general boycott of Israel, not just a selective boycott of goods from the territories.** On one occasion he said that the PSC was committed not only to constructing an active campaign with the Trade Union Congress (TUC, the umbrella organization of Britain's trade unions) for boycotting goods from the settlements, **but rather to taking TUC policy one step further** with the individual organizations, **many of which had already supported a full boycott.**<sup>11</sup> The concept involved is that **through BDS Israel can be weakened and isolated to the point at which it will collapse, as the apartheid regime in South Africa collapsed.**



Salim A'lem, a Palestinian living in Britain and active in the PSC: "We want to isolate Israel with regard to diplomacy, the public, culture, sports and commerce, and our objective is to assist bringing about the end of Israeli occupation" (From "The Source," Israel Channel 10 TV, August 25, 2011).

<sup>10</sup>Youtube.com

<sup>11</sup>From the PSC website

11. **Sarah Colborne:** PSC director, born 1968, previously ran the organization's campaigns. Participated in the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. Once back in London and interviewed by the British media, claimed that the passengers aboard the ship came only for humanitarian reasons. On June 5, 2010 she participated in an anti-Israel demonstration in London held to protest the stopping of flotillas to the Gaza Strip and strongly criticized Israel (Gazaflotillasurvivors.posterous.com website). She was recently active for the release of sheikh Raed Salah, head of the northern faction of the Islamic Movement in Israel, who had been detained in Britain.

12. **Sarah Colborne was involved in disrupting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's performance in London because, she said,** "the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's services to the Israeli army continue up to the present day, performing for Israeli soldiers at their army outposts" (Palestinecampaign.org website).



**Sarah Colborne: The Philharmonic Orchestra in the service of IDF soldiers...** (YouTube, June 3, 2011).

13. **Ellie Merton: PSC activist, participates in anti-Israeli projects such as BDS and the flotillas.** Raised in Cambridge. Has played the piano, French horn and viola since she was a child. Worked as a secretary in Cambridge and London, and three years as the secretary of the Royal Opera in London. Became active in politics in 2009 after Operation Cast Lead, and did volunteer work for "Palestinian rights." PSC activist, chairs the Waltham Forrest branch.

14. Ellie Merton participated in one of anti-Israeli George Galloway's Viva Palestina convoys. Is active in the BDS effort to ban Israeli products from supermarkets in Britain. Was spokesperson for Road of Hope, a project organized by Ken O'Keefe, an anti-Israeli British activist involved in the flotilla campaign. **In July 2011, according to her Facebook page, she claimed that the massacre in Norway was "an Israeli government-sponsored operation."** The PSC expressed reservations about her remark, claiming her opinions did not

represent those of the organization, but they did not remove her and she remains in her PSC position to this day.



**Ellie Merton: The massacre in Norway as operation sponsored by the Israeli government...  
(Elephantjournal.com website)**