

Israel invaded Gaza last winter, raining bombs on schools, hospitals, UN compounds and killing some 1400 Palestinians, mainly civilians, including over 300 children... The world was outraged. Gaza was already under military siege, a collective punishment in defiance of international law. The siege is still in place. In the West Bank, Israel continues to build the Apartheid Wall, carving up Palestinian territory in defiance of the 4th Geneva Convention, which Britain is required to enforce. Checkpoints control Palestinian movement, while Israeli Jewish settlers drive on roads from which West Bank Palestinians are barred. This is racism, like apartheid era South Africa. People who care about human rights, including many Jewish people, are shocked and upset at Israel's crimes.

Where do your candidates stand?

At the General Election, out of the five Liverpool constituencies, the Labour Party has chosen three candidates who have significant involvement with the Labour Friends of Israel (LFI).

Riverside: Sitting MP Louise Ellman is a Vice Chair of LFI

West Derby: Stephen Twigg is a former Chair of LFI

Wavertree: Luciana Berger was, until her selection, Director of LFI (a previous Director was David Mencer, former volunteer for the Israeli Defence Force). **Sitting MP Jane Kennedy is on the Policy Council of LFI.**

Who are Labour Friends of Israel?

In 2003 LFI described themselves as "a Westminster based lobby group working within the British Labour Party to promote the State of Israel".

They draw wide support from MPs and government Ministers and have a large membership .

How influential are they?

Their influence extends right to the top. Tony Blair joined LFI on entering Parliament in 1983 and Gordon Brown stated at the LFI Annual Reception 2007 "I have been proud to be a

member of Labour Friends of Israel over three decades".

As part of their campaign to extend their influence, between 2001 and 2009 they paid for more than 60 MPs (including Louise Ellman and Stephen Twigg) to visit Israel and the Palestinian Territories. More Labour MPs have visited Israel than from any other party.

What do they do?

Prominent members of LFI

- Justify Israeli atrocities as 'self defence', even when they break international law or are condemned by the international community.
- Oppose attempts to introduce steps that may bring pressure on Israel to end its abuse of Palestinian human rights. This includes sanctions, which they demand for Iran.

Justifying Israeli violence

Prominent members of LFI

- Justified the attack on Gaza last winter which resulted in the death of 1400 Gazans, including over 300 children. The UN described it as collective punishment, illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention. However, Jane Kennedy claimed in Parliament that "...the responsibility for those

deaths lies at the door of Hamas" (12 Jan 2010). Luciana Berger declined to comment on the invasion during the Liverpool hustings on 10 April 2010.

- Berger told the hustings life in the West Bank is improving. But the Apartheid Wall and house demolitions continue. Amnesty International says (Dec 2009) the human rights situation in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – "has deteriorated to an unprecedented level". The UN highlights a new military order placing tens of thousands at risk of deportation from the West Bank.

- Have supported targeted assassinations even when this caused Palestinian civilian deaths.

"Does he [the Foreign Secretary] understand that Israel's action in killing Sheikh Yassin [Hamas spiritual leader] was a legitimate response ..." Louise Ellman 30 Mar 2004 House of Commons

- Supported the attack on Iraq. Blair reassured LFI members 'a stable Iraq will be good news for Israel.'
- Push for sanctions against Iran claiming it is a threat to Israel, but do not mention Israeli plutonium, enough for some 100-200 nuclear bombs, or its refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"...everything, including sanctions, should be used to stop Iran acquiring nuclear weapons" . Luciana Berger – hustings Liverpool 21 March 2010.

[This echoes the demand of Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu, for 'crippling sanctions' against Iran]

Barrier to Peace

Prominent members of LFI

- Have opposed the rights of citizens to use Universal Jurisdiction to bring alleged Israeli war criminals to justice. Andrew Dismore, Vice Chair LFI, tabled a Private Members Bill to end the practice.
- Opposed the Goldstone report produced by the UN which condemned Israel for numerous war crimes during the attack on Gaza, and lied about its contents.

"Goldstone did not look at the context of the invasion, specifically the 6,500 rocket attacks over 8 years". Luciana Berger – hustings Liverpool 21 March 2010. In fact, Goldstone mentioned 8,000 rocket attacks on Israel since 2001 and concluded that the rocket attacks are a war crime.

We do not believe that the voters in Liverpool wish to have three such blatantly pro-Israeli MPs as their representatives. **We would ask you not to vote for them.**

There is also a Conservative Friends of Israel and adverts for jobs for this organisation require candidates to have a 'a pro-Israel ideology' .

"The pro-Israel lobby ... is the most powerful political lobby," says Michael Mates, a Conservative MP and privy councillor.

There are also Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel. We ask you not to vote for them either. But to our knowledge only Labour is fielding Friends of Israel candidates in Liverpool at this election.