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PRAISE FOR THE FIRST EDITION

'It could hardly be more timely or more useful.' Noam Chomsky

'Every journalist should read this book; every student of journalism should read it.' John Pilger, New Statesman

'A fascinating scrupulously researched book.' Will Mutton, Observer

'A new and necessary book by the Glasgow University Media Group.' Molly Watson, the Mail on Sunday

The study shows the crucial importance of TV news in informing public opinion and the powerful influence it can have on how we see and understand our world. It also shows how news can fail to inform, and the researchers do suggest different and innovative approaches to improve the quality of news. The study also raises serious questions for broadcasters - indeed, all journalists - about their responsibility in trying to tell the truth to the public while maintaining impartiality.' Roy Greenslade, the Guardian

This superb study is extensive in scope and scrupulously fair. It will be a landmark.' Professor Edward S. Herman, University of Pennsylvania

'[The book] covers a lot of ground in a clear and readable manner and is particularly good at airing different views about the Arab-Israeli conflict.' Professor Avi Shlaim, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

'Covers the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often dangerously superficial.... a strong contribution to scholarship and public debate.' John D.H. Downing, Director, Global Media Research Centre, Southern Illinois University

More Bad News From Israel examines media coverage of the current conflict in the Middle East and the impact it has on public opinion. A new edition of the seminal Bad News From Israel, this book brings together senior journalists and ordinary viewers to examine how audiences understand the news and how their views are shaped by media reporting. In the largest study ever undertaken in this area, the authors illustrate major differences in the way Israelis and Palestinians are represented, including how casualties are shown and the presentation of the motives and rationales of both sides.

Building on research undertaken by the Glasgow University Media Group, this new edition includes new studies of how television covered the Israeli attack on Gaza of December 2008 and January 2009, and on the Gaza flotilla in 2010. It shows the very sophisticated level of public relations now offered by Israel and how news has often reproduced this without offering an alternative perspective from the Palestinians. The impact on public opinion is explored through new audience research which greatly extends that of the first edition. It includes new findings on how the impact of even the most terrible images of war can be reduced by controlling audience beliefs about the origins of violence. With a new and updated history of the conflict, this authoritative study is an invaluable tool for journalists, students and media researchers.

GREG PHILO is a Professor at Glasgow University, and Research Director of the Glasgow University Media Group. He is the author with David Miller of Market Killing (2000).

MIKE BERRY is Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham and, with Greg Philo, is the author of Israel and Palestine: Competing Histories (Pluto, 2006) and Bad News From Israel (Pluto, 2004).
Reviews
This meticulously researched book by Greg Philo & Mike Berry begins with an extensive and enlightening account of the contested histories of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Later, there is a brilliant analysis of the BBC/ITV news coverage of the Israeli attack on Gaza during 2008/2009 which reveals a clear pro-Israeli bias. The Israeli explanation for the war on Gaza was largely accepted by BBC news programmes with Israeli spokespersons immediately on hand to put their case. One BBC insider has said: "The Israeli ambassador was practically camped at TV centre". Interviews with highly educated members of focus groups showed that many believed that Palestinians are the occupiers and few were aware that Hamas had been democratically elected.

Such widespread ignorance will continue until news programmes present a more balanced picture of the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

Philo and Berry’s study of how the media reports on Israel and the Palestinians is essential reading for anyone interested in journalism or international justice. It bears comparison to "Flat Earth News" by Nick "first investigated on NOTW phone hacking" Davies which also shone a spotlight on the day to day realities of the newsroom and the structural pressures that lead to media bias and misinformation.

Grounding the study in its historical context - as so little reporting on the situation does - provides a firm foundation on which to carry out an informed examination of what audiences are being fed, how they understand and interpret it and ultimately, albeit at a few degrees of remove, why the resulting skewed narratives are prolonging the suffering of millions.

Much has been said and written about Israel's sophisticated and relentless public relations machine - and rightly so - but, uniquely, this book actually sets out statistically the effect of these efforts on audiences' viewpoints using qualitative and quantitative research. Small sins of omission by journalists who just want to avoid hassle (rather than being biased either way) and so neglect to mention one side's perspective on a certain point are, in the last analysis, not telling the whole truth to the public they should serve.

The hopefulness implicit in the title of US website 'If Americans Knew' which set itself a similar task of highlighting the flaws in reporting around Israel and Palestine, is also inherent in Philo's project. Underlying both is the belief that most people are not apathetic, irrational or callous, but misguided and poorly informed. Ironic in an era of mass-media and information overload. Besides the corporate media though, any illusions we still harboured about the BBC's self-declared "impartiality" are swept away by this fascinating book - and the authors have been chastised by a senior BBC news editor for, if anything, under-estimating the extent to which the BBC is under the cosh and is failing to convey an accurate picture of the region to British people.

This is a tremendous book and ought to be read by anyone who is interested in learning about the true situation in Palestine and Israel, and it ought to be a must read for those who want to take up journalism.

This excellent book is an expanded and updated edition of Bad news from Israel, published in 2004. The authors ask that the media give an accurate account of the perspectives of both sides to the conflict.

Presently, both BBC and ITV tend to present the Israeli version of events as fact, while the Palestinians have only 'claims' or 'beliefs'. The Israelis are swift to supply the media with clear consistent accounts. They blame the Palestinians for starting the conflict and assert that Israel merely 'responds' to Palestinian violence, so any casualties are really the Palestinians' own fault. By contrast, the media never give a clear account of the Palestinian case.

The authors analyse how the TV news bulletins described the conflict's causes, the casualties and the motives of the contending parties. They found that the bulletins gave little background to the conflict's causes. So even in 2009, two-thirds of the sample of British social science students still did not know who was occupying the occupied territories. The authors also study how people received the news.

The new sections of the book take the history of the conflict on from the first edition: Hamas wins the Palestinian elections, the 2006 Lebanon war, Hamas takes control of Gaza, the Israel-Hamas ceasefire, the 2008-09 Gaza war, the Goldstone report, the second Netanyahu administration and Israel's 2010 attack on the Gaza aid flotilla. There are also new chapters on the news content and competing explanations of the Gaza war, the audience understanding of the conflict and the Gaza attack, and the attack on the Gaza flotilla.

The UN report on the Gaza war, the Goldstone report, accused Hamas of war crimes: "where there is no intended target and the rockets and mortars are launched into civilian areas, they constitute a deliberate attack against the civilian population'. But the UN found that Israel had committed by far the most breaches of international law. The report concluded that Israel had carried out "a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability."

The United States Congress passed a resolution condemning the UN report. The resolution, wrongly, stated that the "report makes no mention of the relentless rocket and mortar attacks" by Palestinian groups. The Israeli attack on the Gaza aid flotilla killed nine passengers and wounded 54. The UN report into the attack stated that the Israeli blockade of Gaza was `unlawful' and that the Israeli action of intercepting the aid ship Mavi Marmara was `clearly unlawful'.

After securing the top deck, Israeli soldiers fired at the passengers below on the bridge deck. The report found that "none of the four passengers who were killed, including a photographer, who at the time of being shot was engaged in taking photographs and was shot by an Israeli soldier positioned on the top deck above, posed any threat to the Israeli forces."
The UN report found that the Israeli forces had used torture and that at least six of the passengers had been subjected to `extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions'. The report concluded that Israeli forces had used a level of force that was `disproportionate to the occasion' using `totally unnecessary and incredible violence' which `betrayed an unacceptable level of brutality'. The BBC lunchtime, early evening and main news never mentioned the report.

Like all the Glasgow University Media Group's work, this is fine, useful scholarship which makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the conflict.