

RTE, bias, and the state of mainstream journalism

by Robert Harris



RTE – Ireland’s public service broadcaster has long been noted for uncritically (if not enthusiastically) adopting progressive-left narratives in news reportage, where nations like the United States and Israel come in for [particularly rough and a-factual treatment](#).

On May 17th, Colm Ó Mongáin, one of RTE’s senior journalists presently standing as “deputy foreign editor,” recycled old anti-Israel talking points on RTE’s news that have been [constitute an occupation](#) and are illegal under international law but that Israel disputes it. There are in fact [Australia, and the US most notably](#), while a small number have a voting record at the UN that also suggests some disagreement.

The article notes that he then visits Efrat, where it is suggested that it was established by replacing part of an Arab-Palestinian settlement called al-Khader, after Israel

claimed some of it was state land in the 1970s:

“Efrat is a different scale of settlement. Founded in 1983, it looks like a well-landscaped suburb of Jerusalem, serving commuters. Playgrounds are regularly interspersed on hillside housing estates. A mall is full of shops and restaurants. Palestinians work here on the building sites. But Efrat was built on land that once belonged to the town of al-Khader near Bethlehem, which was made state land by Israel in the 1970s.”

However, Efrat is an important part of the historic Gush Etzion bloc, an area which was founded on several occasions, from the 1920s, and [near the border of al-Khader](#), a town [Christians and Jews](#). Ownership is very far from clear, despite the contrary protestations of the journalist, given the findings of the Israeli High Court’s ruling.

Besides Efrat, [notorious Khirbit Susiya](#) – both of which are focal points for anti-Israel protest tourism. Combined with the involvement of Shaul, whose NGO prolifically runs anti-Israel tours of the West Bank, it looks as if RTE just rehashed the expected findings of a propaganda tour.

Ó Mongáin’s reports surely represent one of many examples of the nadir of modern Western journalism, where notions of “balance” – the long-cherished gold-standard of ethics and fairness – are in reality little more than playing a game of pretend, for balance becomes a mere endeavour to reinforce the validity of supposedly enlightened ‘Black and White’/‘Cowboys and Indians’ narratives by those that believe that they somehow know better.