The International MA Program in Political Science presents:

Hollywood and Israel: From Adoration to Ambivalence

Tony Shaw (Leeds, Oxford, FRHS) Professor of Contemporary History
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May 3, 2018
17:00 - 19:15
Naftali Building Room 201

The lecture is open to the public
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This talk forms part of the first book-length study of the “special relationship” between Hollywood and Israel. Drawing on American and Israeli archives, and written together with Israeli historian Dr. Giora Goodman, the book investigates the assorted ways in which Hollywood’s producers, directors, actors and religious leaders have supported or challenged Israel, on and off screen, for some eight decades. It reveals the influence of Israeli and Arab public diplomacy both on Hollywood’s output and its lobbying activities, and sheds light on the political involvement with Israel of the likes of Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Vanessa Redgrave, Steven Spielberg, Natalie Portman and Haim Saban.

This talk looks at how Hollywood’s attitudes towards Israel and Zionism have changed since 1948, from apathy in the early years, to adoration in the 1970s, and ambivalence more recently. It will illustrate these changes via reference to key films (some famous, some obscure) such as The Juggler (1953), Exodus (1960) and Munich (2005), and through analysis of private and public debates about Israel between prominent directors, actors, producers and rabbis in Hollywood. It argues that the Hollywood-Israel relationship has stood at the heart of one of the most intriguing geopolitical alliances of the past century. It contends that this relationship might now be at a turning point, reflecting the gradual turning away from Israel of American liberals and contributing to the growing disunity in the American Jewish community over Israel.

Tony Shaw (Leeds, Oxford, FRHS) is Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK. He is an international historian who specialises in propaganda and film. He is the author of five books including Eden, Suez and the Mass Media: Propaganda and Persuasion during the Suez Crisis (1996), Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds (with Denise J. Youngblood, 2010) and Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film (2015). a.t.shaw@herts.ac.uk