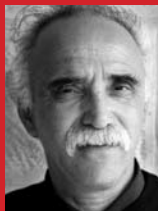


Boycott Israel, not Occupied Palestine!



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Cover picture: original cartoon by Brazilian artist Latuff. View Latuff's newest project here: www.tales-of-iraq-war.blogspot.com/
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palestine NEWS

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Palestine Solidarity Campaign

- Campaigning against the oppression and dispossession suffered by the Palestinian people
- Supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle to achieve these rights including the Right of Return in line with UN resolution 194
- Promoting Palestinian civil society in the interests of democratic rights and social justice
- Opposing Israel's occupation and its aggression against neighbouring states
- Opposing antisemitism and racism, including the apartheid and Zionist nature of the Israeli state

Justice, not aid!

Boycott Israel, not occupied Palestine!

By Max Watson

Let's get one thing clear: Palestinians do not want our 'aid' – with all its connotations of pity, charity and strings attached. What they want is independence, and freedom from the yoke of occupation – the only reason the West has given aid is to duck the issue of the occupation, helping to deny Palestinians their freedom. Now, after holding elections on which Western leaders were so insistent, they have got neither aid nor their national rights.

The suspension of funds to the Palestine National Authority (PNA) is doubly shameful of the Western powers. The US, EU, and Japan have bowed unreservedly to Israeli demands. Rather than enforce the International Court of Justice ruling on the Wall – and countless UN resolutions demanding end to occupation – the EU, led by the US, have imposed sanctions on Palestine. Several commentators have pointed out that Palestinians must be the only occupied people in history to have sanctions imposed on them – rather than on the occupying power.

This is a scandal – but we should not be surprised by the double standards of either the US or the EU. After all, when did the US or the European powers ever respect the democratic choices of oppressed countries? Ever since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the US has asserted its right to dominate its 'own backyard' of the Americas and the Caribbean. From the twentieth century that backyard has grown. From Cuba, since 1960; through to Chile in 1973; Nicaragua throughout the 1980s; and more recently in Venezuela – where in 2002 a CIA backed coup to overthrow

Hugo Chavez was defeated – and again in Haiti, 2004. And of course, there is Serbia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The US sees meddling in the political business of other nations as its right.

Nor has Britain's role in the Middle East been one of benevolence. Since the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the occupation of Palestine after the First World War, the British government has never supported the Palestinian majority. And why should Blair, who jumped at the chance to go along with the recent US-led misadventures, not agree with punishing Palestine too? When he lied three years ago that by supporting the US invasion of Iraq, the UK would be better placed to push the 'Road Map' to peace in Palestine, not many believed him. But few thought the New Labour government would collude so openly with Israel's occupation: the rush to withdraw vital aid and the scandalous breach of the agreement to protect Ahmed Sa'adat, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), in a Jericho prison. (On March 14, the US and UK monitors did a runner, allowing the Israeli army free reign to do with Sa'adat and others as they please. Since then the Israeli courts have had to abandon his trial because of lack of evidence).

The Israeli excitement over the bloody fate of Iraq in 2003 is matched only by their anticipation of an invasion or bombing of Iran. The report by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt in the London Review of Books (see page 16) indicates how US foreign policy in the Middle East is influenced by the Israeli-Zionist lobby. Some have argued, it's not 'The dog that wags the tail' – Israel looking after US interests in the region – but the other way around. Perhaps it's a bit of both. If the Israeli

tail is wagging the neo-conservative dog that is the USA, then today's European powers are the fleas, going wherever this rabid canine pleases. The only European countries willing to talk to Hamas have been Zapatero's Spain and Prodi's new Italian government but they were short-lived exercises indeed. France and Germany, following their 'independence' over Iraq, are now busy trying to mend the damage done to US relations by going along with the Israeli-US punishment of the Palestinians.

Palestinians themselves were perfectly aware that they would suffer economically and politically if they did not vote for the status quo – Fatah made this clear enough during the elections. It should be no surprise that the Palestinians, instead of blaming Hamas for these sanctions, blame Israel and the West – and Fatah should take note of this.

'Few thought the New Labour government would collude so openly with Israel's occupation'

Our tasks in the UK are clearer than ever – to fight against the UK policy of support for Israel. The withholding of aid affects the Palestinian teachers, doctors, nurses, and civil servants of the PNA, and all of their dependants (25 per cent of the population) who are sent the message that we in the West don't care about their lives. This collective punishment cannot be tolerated.

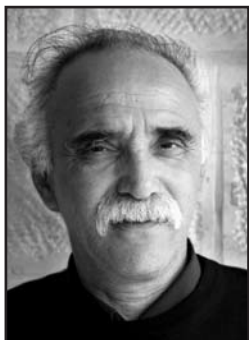
While some people crumble in the face of Zionist pressure – the 'suspension' of the play 'My Name is Rachel Corrie' in New York being a recent example (see page 17) – the lecturers' union NATFHE have reasserted the need for a boycott of Israel (see page 15). Through our demonstrations and vigils, days of action and boycotts, petitions and lobbying of MPs, we must campaign for the Palestinian struggle for liberation: Justice, not Aid; Against the sanctions on Palestine; boycott Apartheid Israel.

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■ John Austin MP ■ Tony Benn ■ Victoria Brittain ■ Julie Christie ■ Caryl Churchill ■ Jeremy Corbyn MP ■ Bob Crow ■ William Dalrymple ■ Andy Gilchrist ■ Lord Gilmour of Craigmillar ■ Revd Garth Hewitt ■ Dr Ghada Karmi ■ Bruce Kent ■ Karma Nabulsi ■ Corin Redgrave ■ Keith Sonnet ■ Ahdaf Soueif ■ Baroness Tonge of Kew ■ John Williams

A Government of Unilateral Annexation

By Michael
'Mikado'
Warschawski



On the very night of the Israeli elections, while interviewed by a Swiss journalist, I predicted that the new government may include both left-Zionist Meretz party and the semi-fascist "Israel is our Home" led by Avidgor Lieberman. The journalist was surprised and started doubting my analytical skills. "Why would Ehud Olmert include the far right in his government, while they strongly denounced his "unilateral redeployment" plan, and he has a comfortable majority without their participation?" asked the journalist. Despite three years in Jerusalem, this journalist didn't understand how the Israeli system works: unlike most democratic countries throughout the world, when elections are finished there is not a majority-opposition game, but a general norm of national unity government.

'What made, however, the formation of a government which is supported by three quarters of the Knesset so easy is the broad political consensus which exists now in Israel; a consensus on a strategy of unilateral separation behind the Wall'

The Member of Knesset (MK) appointed by the President of the State to try to form the new government is expected to offer to all the political parties represented in the parliament (except, of course, the Arab parties) to join the future government; these parties are presenting their demands – which are mostly on questions of portfolios, budgets and subventions and much less on the political platform; only on a few occasions do parties reject the offer on the spot.

After tough negotiations – conducted by experienced (and expensive) lawyers,

not by political leaders! – unbelievable deals, agreements are reached. Those parties with which an agreement was not possible, become the new opposition in parliament.

Already during the election campaign, when a huge victory of Kadima looked certain, the Labour Party, the religious parties and Meretz announced that they will be in the future Kadima-led government. The night of the elections, Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the far-right "Israel is our Home" list – who throughout the whole campaign accused Ehud Olmert of treason for "selling out the land of Israel" and being ready to dismantle settlements – announced that he intends to be part of Olmert government. Lieberman led a racist campaign against the Palestinian citizens of Israel and leads calls to remove their Israeli citizenship; he demanded however, as a condition of being part of the government and accepting its program of unilateral redeployment, to be appointed Ministry of Police and Internal Security.

A *Ha'aretz* editorialist warned against the inclusion of Avigdor Lieberman in the new government: "Avigdor Lieberman and his party, "Israel is our Home", are proposing to take away Israeli citizenship from a majority of the Israeli Arabs, in the framework of an exchange of territories with the Palestinian Authority. This position – though not included in the program of the new government – delegitimises the Arab citizens of Israel. The very fact that Lieberman is perceived as legitimate in the new government, while the Arab parties are a-priori disqualified, is a black spot on the Israeli political culture..." (*Ha'aretz*, April 27, 2006).

In the meantime, this nightmare has been removed from the agenda: the law explicitly forbade the appointment of Minister of Police a person against whom a legal procedure has been opened, and against Lieberman, two procedures are right now in process. As a result, the negotiations with "Israel is our Home" are in a deadlock, which makes the probability for Meretz to join the

coalition real. In the meantime, Olmert is using the negotiations with Meretz as a pressure to soften Lieberman's conditions and to convince him to accept another portfolio.

The core of the new coalition is a Kadima-Labour joint platform which represents a total capitulation of Amir Peretz's social program to Kadima: the minimum salary will not be raised to US\$1,000; the huge cuts in child and other social benefits will not be cancelled; and there will be no new taxation on stock-exchange benefits. Kadima's neo-liberal policy has defeated Amir Peretz's social-democrat offensive; in exchange, the Labour leader got the prestigious Ministry of Defence and his colleague, MK Yuli Tamir the Ministry of Education. Though prestigious, the ministry of defence is a poisonous gift: Peretz will be squeezed between his promise to reduce the Defence Ministry budget in order to release funds for social improvements and the pressures of the generals who already are treating him as an amateur on security issues and demanding that he proves himself by defending their scandalous budget. As Nehemia Strassler cynically predicts: "From the moment he will enter the ministry of defence, he (Amir Peretz) will be the best advocate of the system; and if he will try to cut (the budget) the whole army will stand against 'the civilian who doesn't understand anything'." (*Ha'aretz*, April 27, 2006).

Concerning the religious parties, their opposition to an eventual dismantling of settlements has been silenced by the offer of a few social ministries and substantial subventions to their educational and social institutions.

What made, however, the formation of a government which is supported by three quarters of the Knesset so easy is the broad political consensus which exists now in Israel; a consensus on a strategy of unilateral separation behind the Wall. Even the far-right agrees with the principle, though not on the definition of the areas from which the Israeli army will redeploy, and settlements will be evacuated. As *Ha'aretz* political

analyst, Akiva Eldar, explains, Olmert's disengagement plan is very general and between his interpretation and Amir Peretz's, the gap is huge: "Let's suppose that the new Minister of Defence, Amir Peretz, will succeed to calm down the violence, that President Abu Mazen will disarm the terrorist organizations, and Hamas Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh will recognise the right of Israel to exist in security next to Palestine; what will be the final borders map that the Israeli government will put on the table of negotiations? Will it include Ariel settlement bloc or will it accept minor mutual border corrections in Etsion Bloc and Maalei-Edumim? And concerning Maalei Edumim – are we speaking about the small city in the suburb of Jerusalem or the huge metropole named E1? What about the Jordan Valley and what will be the position of the Kadima-Labour government concerning territorial compensations in exchange of the annexation of settlements blocs to Israel?" (*Ha'aretz*, April 24, 2006).

It is true that Ehud Olmert and Amir Peretz do not share the same political vision: for the Prime Minister, the annexation of 20-30 per cent of the West Bank – and maybe the Jordan River too, which will make it 50 per cent – is unquestionable, and therefore unilateralism a necessity, because

no Palestinian leader will even start negotiating such a "solution". The new Labour leader, on the other hand, is closer to the "Geneva agreement" which assumes the return to the 1967 cease-fire lines, with limited and mutual exchanges of territories which could avoid the dismantling of some of the most populated settlements located near the "Green Line"; with such a perspective, it will be definitely more

'In order to mask Labour's capitulation to Sharon's annexation-map, Ehud Olmert will be ready to present his new borders of Israel as provisory'

useful to negotiate with the Palestinian leadership and to reach a real peace agreement between Israel and the PLO. Concretely speaking, however, the differences of approach do not have any implications, for the common evaluation is that, in the meantime at least, "we have no partner". Though one can reasonably suspect the Labour chairman to know, deep in his heart, that this is a fallacy, he did not and will not try to challenge it publicly and to confront the great majority of the Israeli public opinion, manipulated by various Israeli Prime Ministers since July 2000.

Being without a Palestinian partner allows, or even obliges, the Israeli

government to take unilateral steps, which will guarantee security through separation. In order to mask Labour's capitulation to Sharon's annexation-map, Ehud Olmert will be ready to present his new borders of Israel as provisory, until the Palestinians will be declared fit as partners in negotiations. In the meantime, settlement expansions will continue.

It is definitely not good news when the whole Israeli political spectrum – except the Arab parties and a small part of the far right – are united behind the policy of Olmert's government of unilateralism, continuation of settlement construction and annexation of the settlement blocs – and promising him four years of stability in order to implement its plans. The few thousands Israeli activists challenging the colonialist consensus are loudly and bravely protesting against the wall and the settlements, but it would be too optimistic to believe that they will be able to change the present course of the Israeli policy.

Michael Warschawski (Mikado) is an Israeli activist and writer, co-founder of Israeli-Palestinian NGO, the Alternative Information Centre. His latest book, *On The Border*, which recounts his life-long devotion to the struggle for justice in Israel-Palestine, is published by Pluto Press (2005).



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www.jai-pal.org or <http://www.atg.ps>

Condemn the suspension of EU aid; support EDM 2041

In light of the dire crisis in Palestine, Jeremy Corbyn MP has proposed Early Day Motion (EDM), no 2041, which reads:

"That this House notes the decision of the European Union to withhold funding to the Palestinian Authority; recognises that this decision, together with both the Israeli government's regular closure of trade routes in and out of Gaza, and similar funding decisions taken by the United States, Japanese and Canadian governments gravely threatens the health and well-being of the Palestinian people, and quite possibly the jobs of approximately 150,000 Palestinian employees who have in total an estimated seven dependants per employee; expresses its opposition to this act of collective punishment against the already impoverished Palestinian people

in contravention of international human rights conventions; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to work with EU and national governments for the immediate reinstatement of funding, as well as for the return of the withheld revenues collected by the Israeli government which belong to the Palestinian people."

As we go to print, EDM 2041 has over 80 signatures: please try to get your MP to sign and promote this motion, and get your union branch to back it.

Find out if your MP has already, at: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=30539&SESSION=875>

Email your MP direct, via: www.writetothem.com

The rise of Hamas

Khaled Hroub looks at some of the regional and global factors which will help determine Hamas' future

Internally, regionally and internationally, Hamas is fortunate to have achieved its electoral victory in favourable circumstances.

Frustrated with the continuous cruelty of the Israeli occupation and fed up with their corrupt Fatah-dominated leadership, the Palestinians were ready to vote for whoever could challenge both Israel and the PA. The Israelis, for their part, find themselves in a chaotic transitional period after the illness and departure of Ariel Sharon, the man on whom many Israelis had pinned their hopes as a timely leader for dealing with the Palestinians. So far, Israelis are wary and in disagreement as to how to deal with the Hamas-led PA. Different signals come from across the political spectrum on how Israel should formulate its policy toward Hamas.

Beyond the Palestinian and Israeli context, regional circumstances were also partially advantageous to Hamas. The region as a whole is taking on a new shape, and in the opposite direction to the one most desired by the US – ironically in response to the very war that was meant to reshape the region toward a new geopolitic which favoured American interests. A major development of this reshaping has been the astonishing rise of Iran's leverage in the region, the rise of popular radical discourse there, and their repeated declaration of willingness to replace any cuts in Hamas funding.

The US is fully aware that the fate of American troops (and the whole adventure) in Iraq is at the mercy of Iran. The Iraqi Shiites, who not only constitute the majority of the population but are also the largest group upon which the US relies in the country, would support Iran in any confrontation against the US. Iran could easily play them off against the American presence there and bring the whole Iraqi quandary to a bloody new phase.



Palestinian Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh

Syria and Hizbollah have gone to extreme lengths in supporting Hamas, for domestic and regional reasons. After last year's assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister, Syrians were cornered and compelled to undertake desperate survival measures, including public support of Hamas (as well as exploiting the Danish cartoon issue), to garner pan-Arab solidarity.

'Though we are the victims, we offer our hands in peace, but only a peace that is based on justice'

Saudi Arabia, whose relationship with Hamas has always been cordial, if tacit, is deeply worried by Iran's high-profile diplomacy and rhetoric. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claims to speak in the name of Muslims and Islam – a role the Saudis have long perceived to be theirs – thus opening up an area of severe competition. Along with Egypt and other Arab countries, the Saudis are struggling to prevent Hamas from falling within Iran's sphere of influence. Thus, they are offering Hamas a diplomatic and financial hand. Turkey, too, with its moderate Islamists in power, feels that it is in an advantageous position to play a regional role, not only because its ruling elite has a shared background with Hamas but also because of its friendly relations with Israel and the West. However, the development of these relationships will largely depend on the level of pressure that the United States will exert on these states, with regard to their relationship with a Hamas

government.

Cracks soon appeared in the unified 'Western siege' that was hastily formed in response to the 'shock and awe' of Hamas's rise to power. Russia's position has of course dealt a considerable blow to American efforts to corner Hamas. France's decision to leave their door ajar to Hamas left no less of an impact. In May, Hamas's minister for refugees' affairs, Atef Adwan, visited Norway and met officials there, confirming statements by Mahmoud Zahhar, the foreign minister, that many Europeans want to talk to Hamas. Still, however, those cracks are not wide enough, as the US and the EU decided to officially stop funding the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. Things will be much easier of course for Hamas in regions such as Asia, Africa and Latin America, but the challenge that Hamas is facing in the US 'siege' is formidable.

Israel has limited options in dealing with the new Palestinian Authority. Starving the Palestinians by cutting their funds will bring more support to Hamas. Foiling a Hamas government will increase the movement's popularity, and guarantee its victory in any early elections. Invading the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and attempting to bring down the Hamas-led PA by force would broaden the military front to the maximum, bringing Israeli forces into the Palestinian streets, and thus ensuring a third even bloodier intifada – something that Hamas is expert in handling.

However, Hamas' main obstacle is Fatah – not Israel, nor the US or the EU. Fatah controls the security forces, a multi-headed apparatus that is the backbone of the PA. If Fatah continues to refuse to cooperate with Hamas and decides instead to make their life difficult, it could inflict grave damage on the movement – but even more damage on itself, in the eyes of the Palestinian public. But Hamas can survive any radical decisions taken by Fatah. This is because Fatah itself is split on how to respond to Hamas. Many Fatah leaders show reluctance at being involved in an effort to foil Hamas because they would be seen to be colluding with Israel and the US. Also, many middle- and low-ranking Fatah members have deep

sympathy with Hamas. One of the most astonishing results of the elections was that almost half of the members of the security forces, the vast majority of whom are Fatah affiliates or supposed supporters, voted for Hamas.

Any observer of its undertakings will know that Hamas – in its role as a militant movement, not as a government – is not short of money to maintain the smooth running of its own organisational functions. Even during its most difficult times, when a combination of foreign intelligences kept a close eye on the channelling of Hamas' funds, the movement managed to survive. Now, with its popularity reaching unprecedented peaks not only in Palestine (it receives considerable funds from Palestinians both inside and outside Palestine) but in many Arab and Muslim countries as well, Hamas would face no problem in soliciting funds and donations to its own private accounts. However, what Hamas requires to maintain its organisational affairs is very little compared to the massive amounts needed to supply the needs of the entire

‘We in Hamas are for peace and want to put an end to bloodshed We have been observing a unilateral truce for more than a year without reciprocity from the Israeli side.

‘The message from Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to the world powers is this: talk to us no more about recognising Israel’s “right to exist” or ending resistance until you obtain a commitment from the Israelis to withdraw from our land and recognise our rights.’

Palestinian people, particularly the huge populations of economically devastated refugees. With the Western blockage of aid, it is the ordinary Palestinians who will be deprived of aid and services, not Hamas.

Moreover, angry and frustrated Palestinians will become closer to Hamas, not alienated from it, as a result of such radical Western measures. Particularly following its legitimate, democratic election, Hamas will be

seen in their eyes as striving to do its best against all the moving of the goal posts and ‘conspiracies’ by the West and Israel. Hatred against the West will become entrenched in ways conducive to all kinds of radicalism.

Khaled Hroub is the author of *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (2000) and *Hamas: A beginner’s Guide* (Pluto Press, forthcoming, 2006).

Defend freedom of speech

Nasser Amin victimised

By Max Watson

A Masters student at SOAS has been persecuted for defending the Palestinian right to resist occupation.

Last spring, Nasser Amin wrote an article in the SOAS Spirit magazine in response to a distinguished Islamic scholar based in the US, Sheik Hamza Yusuf, who suggested Muslims should denounce violence in Palestine – which Amin refuted, arguing that we should not deny Palestinians their right to resist.

The hate campaign that followed was vicious and unrelenting. He was hounded by politicians, (Labour MP David Winnick called for Amin to be prosecuted); Zionists and Islamophobic hate-mongers, posted death-threats on websites and verbally abused him on campus.

One student said Amin would have “a short and bloody life”.

Amin has since said: “At all stages of my persecution SOAS has

shown complete contempt for me. I had naively believed that they might defend my academic freedom. They did not.”

“I naively thought that they might take measures to ensure my safety on campus after the death threats. They did not. I believed that they might issue a statement denouncing, if not the media lies, then at least the racism and promises of violence against Muslims. SOAS did nothing of the sort.”

Instead of sticking up for Amin, the SOAS head, Colin Bundy, shamefully put out a press release saying that he had been ‘reprimanded’ for breaching their code of freedom of expression.

The claim that Amin had been reprimanded, he says, was untrue: “I was never disciplined. I was never found guilty of any wrongdoing. During an extremely difficult time, following the witch-hunt and family bereavement and a day before my examinations, Bundy issued this public statement on the world-wide-

web under the title ‘Allegations of antisemitism’.”

The statement has since been removed from their website – perhaps an implicit acceptance of wrong-doing on the part of SOAS. A number of academics at SOAS expressed unease about the implications for academic freedom, and one teacher, John Game, said: “The school owes both Nasser Amin and all of us deprived of this opportunity [to freely debate the Middle East] an apology. It is possible that they owe Nasser something more than an apology.”

Amin is still waiting for that apology. “They engaged in the public humiliation and scapegoating of a Muslim student,” he said: “As a Muslim, I was an easy target.” Campaigners mustn’t let this go unnoticed. If we don’t stick up for Amin, who will speak out for us when we are being attacked?

Email, write or phone Bundy, demanding a public apology and retraction of this racist witch-hunt:

Email: cb3@soas.ac.uk Phone: 0207 898 4014 Write: School of Oriental and African Studies, Professor Colin Bundy, Director and Principal, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG

Israel's Other Weaponry

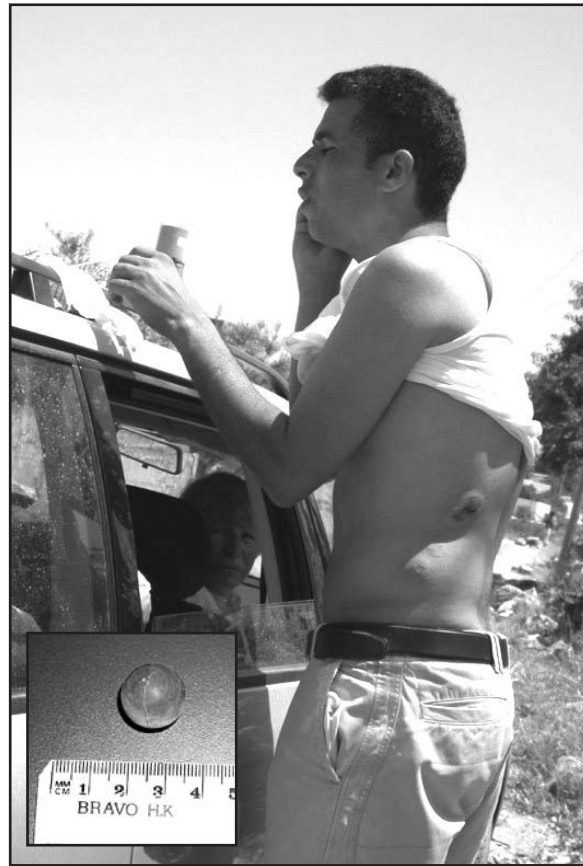
By Steven Rose

That Israel had significant stockpiles of nuclear weapons is common knowledge – not least of course thanks to Mordecai Vanunu. Even British and American government spokesmen can no longer avoid recognising their existence. Less well known, but surely to no-one's surprise, is Israel's history of research and development of chemical and biological agents, thereby completing a full house of so-called WMD. The problem for the Israelis however is that such weapons are of no help in solving the problem of controlling the civil Palestinian population of the occupied territories – or for that matter their supporters within the Israeli peace movement.

Heavily armed troops with carte blanche to shoot to kill, tanks, bulldozers, the collective punishments of curfews and house demolitions have been part of the day-to-day experience of Palestinians for decades now. Yet to control and subdue an urban population, to defeat and disperse mass demonstrations – especially when, as in the case of the actions against the Wall, Jewish Israelis as well as Palestinians may be demonstrating – other 'less lethal' measures are required. And indeed over the past few years, the Israeli state has been experimenting with a variety of novel weapons and techniques within what might properly be called 'the technology of political control.'

Such weapons and techniques draw on the social as well as the physical and biological sciences, in terms of evaluating their deterrent effects and devising the most effective strategies for their use, and have of course been closely observed for their effectiveness by Israel's interested allies, notably the US and UK.

As a weapon of crowd control, tear gas has been around since first developed by the US in 1918, but its efficacy was greatly enhanced when in the 1950s the UK's Chemical Weapons



A Palestinian demonstrator in Bil'in hit by 'Pepper-ball' (inset)

Establishment at Porton developed the less toxic irritant codenamed CS, extensively used by the US in Vietnam, by the UK in Northern Ireland and later available to police forces around the world. CS is fired as a shell or cartridge or dispersed as an aerosol or dust which irritates the eyes nose and throat and causes a gripping pain in the chest. But over the last couple of years, reports have begun to come in of a newer and more unpleasant version being used by the IDF. Thus as Gush Shalom reported, on 28th April last year at the village of Bil'in to the west of Ramallah, there was a big demonstration against the wall, with about 100-200 Israelis in addition to hundreds from the local population. Some amongst the demonstrators (eyewitnesses said they were *agents provocateur*) began to throw stones at the army, while the Palestinians were walking in a disciplined manner

holding up both hands and holding an olive branch in each hand to show that they do not have violent intentions (see New weapons in the struggle for Bil'in, *Palestine News*, Summer 2005).

The situation escalated after the stone throwing, and the army began shooting tear gas and bullets at the demonstrators. According to eye-witness reports, one of the bullets fired at the demonstrators was very strange, and was seen for the first time. It was a small transparent red plastic ball, the size of a marble, containing a creamy white powder. When this bullet hit the skin and exploded, it gave an extreme burning sensation penetrating into open wounds and causing blistering. The powder has a pungent odour, is irritating, causing coughing, sneezing, burning eyes and skin, nausea and vomiting.

Because the Israelis refused to identify the agent, both clinicians and injured were uncertain of the treatment necessary to prevent significant damage to the skin. This photograph shows the skin injuries one individual received.

We* have now been able to identify the active component in the munition as a capsaicin, a compound related to that which gives chillies their characteristic burning taste. It is analogous to something marketed in the US as 'pepperball tactical powder' and intended to discourage or disperse demonstrators. Pepperball Technologies Inc.'s data sheet for their product describes it as an 'active irritant' whose symptoms include burning eyes and skin, and cautions against inhalation or contact with the eyes. This is only one of an entire new generation of such chemical 'non-lethal' weapons, now sometimes generically known as calmatives. One such, a derivative of an opioid, was used with disastrous effects by Russian special troops attempting to end the Moscow theatre siege in 2002, when several hundred hostages died when the chemical was pumped into the theatre – a clear indication if one were needed that there is no such thing as a non-lethal weapon, merely that some are more lethal than others.

It is not just chemistry that can be called into play to deter demonstrators. In June last year, again at Bil'in, the chosen weapon was codenamed Tze'aka (Scream) – a minute long blast of sound emanating from a white Israeli military vehicle. Within seconds, it was reported by Mitch Potter of the Middle East Bureau, protestors begin falling to their knees, nauseous and unable to retain their balance. 'The intention is to

disperse crowds with sound pulses that create nausea and dizziness,' an IDF spokesman is reported as telling the Toronto Star. The weapon is analogous to one used in Iraq by the US called a Long-Range Acoustical Device, or 'sound curdler.' It is clearly a localised version of the terror tactic being used by the IDF in Gaza, with their regular supersonic overflights producing powerful sonic booms, that both frighten and disorient the population over a wide area, and which have been subject to international protest.

As with the pepperball, Scream is but one of a range of new weapons systems, in this case going by the generic name of 'active denial technology (ADT),' also being developed in the US. Other forms of ADT use a beam of millimetre waves to heat the skin, producing intense pain though allegedly without damage. Pain intolerance depends on skin temperature, increasing rapidly as the temperature reaches 550C. As with Tze'aka, the ADT system is vehicle mounted. One of its attractions,

according to the company's press release announcing its availability is that 'the probability of hit is 100% since ballistic effects are irrelevant. The energy beam travels at the speed of light and can be swept across the targets.

'As with the pepperball, Scream is but one of a range of new weapons systems'

Of course it is important to keep the use of such weapons systems in proportion. Far more Palestinian civilians have been killed by sniper bullets and as the 'collateral damage' to so-called 'targetted assassinations' than by pepperballs or sound curdlers or sonic booms. And they may well also be less hazardous to a demonstrator than rubber bullets or the heavy 'beanbags' that are sometimes fired. Sophisticated protestors begin to develop their own counter-measures as the weapons become more familiar, as are the more conventional tear gasses. There has

certainly been nothing to compare with the disaster of the Russian theatre hostages. But the well-established close cooperation between the IDF and the US military, the exchange of military techniques between the Occupied Territories and Iraq (see for instance the interesting article by the Israeli whistle-blowing architect Eyal Weizman: *Walking Through Walls*, *Radical Philosophy* 136, March 2006) suggests that for both states, a crucial battle within the 'war on terror' is being fought out over the bodies of the civilian protestors at Bil'in, across the West Bank and in Gaza.

*Alastair Hay, Anita Abdullah, Rita Giacaman, Ramzi Sansur and myself, with funding from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust for the analysis.

Steven Rose is a neuroscientist, Professor of Biology at the Open University, with a long-standing interest in the development and uses of chemical and biological weapons and secretary of BRICUP, the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine.

Two demonstrators shot in head in Bil'in

Despite the new weapons Israel uses in occupied Palestine, their favourite crowd control method remains the good, old-fashioned rubber-coated bullet, with clubs and tear-gas for special effect.

On 12 May, at the weekly Friday demonstration against the wall in Bil'in, Israeli soldiers opened fire at close range, shooting two internationals and seven Palestinians.

An Australian and a Dane were hospitalised, after both were shot in the head. AFP cameraman Jamal Al Aruri was shot in the hand whilst filming, breaking two fingers.

Phil Resse, the Australian, with ISM, had also been filming the non-violent demonstration. He was later diagnosed with a sub-ural hematoma, swelling caused by bleeding in the brain, and given eight stitches for the gash near his temple.

BJ, from Denmark, suffered a fractured jaw. He said: "There was an explosion next to me – I put my hand

on my ear and it was wet. I looked and there was blood all over it. I was stunned until someone grabbed me and just started running. I feel really lucky: if I hadn't turned my head I could have lost all my teeth."

Adeba Yasin, 65 years old, was shot whilst watching the demonstration from her balcony. Five other Palestinians received wounds from the rubber bullets, and several more were beaten with clubs and suffered tear-gas inhalation.

The attack on the peaceful demonstration began after protesters attempted to open the wire fence that prevents the villagers from accessing their land. Eyewitnesses reported vicious beatings, tear-gas and then, when people began to back off, shots were fired as close as ten metres away.

Israeli army regulations say that the minimum range for firing rubber bullets is 40 metres, and they are supposed to fire warnings into the air

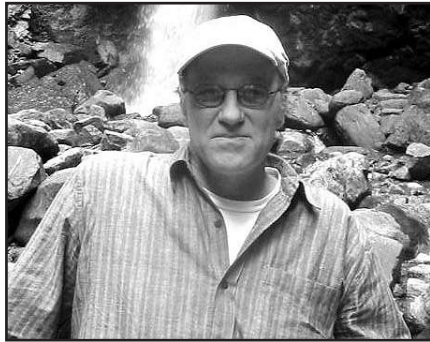


An ISM volunteer after the shooting

first, then at the legs. Every one of these regulations were broken.

The internationals are considering suing the 'Most Moral Army in the World' for their actions. No soldiers were reported to have been seen crying after shooting.

Israel, India, US



By Mike Marqusee

Presumably because I'm Jewish and write about India, I received an invitation to a 'Jewish-Indian Reception' held earlier this year at Columbia University in New York.

"Did you know that Jews have lived in India for over 2000 years without any signs of antisemitism?" the invitation began. "Did you know that annual bilateral trade between India and Israel reached \$2.7 billion this past year? Interested in learning more about the historical, cultural, and political connections and similarities between Jewish and Indian Americans? Join us for a night of great speakers ..."

These speakers included the Indian Consul-General, the Israeli Deputy-Consul General and Congressman Gary Ackerman. The event was organised by a pro-Israel student group called LionPAC, with support from the South Asian Law Students Association, among others. It offers a microcosm of the burgeoning India-Israel-US axis, a phenomenon supporters of the Palestinian cause need to be more aware of.

Let's start with Gary Ackerman, the ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia. A loud voice for Israel on Capitol Hill, Ackerman's career "highlights", according to his website, include "authoring legislation that required President Bush to impose sanctions against the Palestinian Authority". He championed the Israeli military offensive of spring 2002, and denounced the ICJ finding on the wall as "shameful".

Ackerman is also a Congressional point-man for the "India lobby". A former chairman of the Congressional Caucus

on India and Indian Americans, he unequivocally backs India on Kashmir, lays all the blame for the conflict there on Pakistan and pushes for increased US-India arms trade and military collaboration.

In 2003, Ackerman helped organise the first-ever joint Capitol Hill forum between AIPAC and AJC, on the one side, and the newly formed US Indian Political Action Committee, on the other. Ackerman stressed the two countries' common concerns: Israel, he said, was "surrounded by 120 million Muslims" while "India has 120 million Muslims [within]". Last year, he was the leading Democratic sponsor of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's address to a joint session of Congress.

Then there's LionPAC, the main pro-Israel group at Columbia. A couple of years ago LionPAC members played a key role in the documentary film 'Conduct Unbecoming', in which it was alleged that Jews and supporters of Israel at Columbia faced systematic intimidation and bias, and which slandered a number of Columbia professors as anti-semites. The ensuing uproar led the university to appoint a committee of investigation, which, in due course, dismissed the film's allegations and reprimanded the methods used by the film-makers. LionPAC is clearly in need of campus allies and the reception was an attempt to seek friends among just about the only people of colour at Columbia for whom Israel is not anathema – career-minded students of Indian origin.

According to the Columbia Spectator, "Around 200 people, mostly



Sharon and Vajpayee - in Delhi, 2003

undergraduate and graduate students," attended the reception. The speakers "highlighted... the similarities between Jewish and Indian values and culture, and the shared efforts by the US, India, and Israel to combat terrorism."

Note how "values", "cultures", states and geo-politics are interwoven here. The existence of coherent "Indian" or "Jewish" value systems or cultures is casually assumed, and in each case casually attached to a state. These two entities are then somehow said to have "similarities" and the whole package is tied up with the help of the USA and the "war on terror".

'Although there's no history of antisemitism in India, it's striking that one of the country's best-selling books is Mein Kampf, openly available at bookshops, stationers and street stalls'

Back in the days of the freedom struggle, Gandhi and the Indian National Congress opposed the creation of a 'Jewish National Home' in Palestine. Nehru insightfully analysed the relationship between Zionism, Arab Nationalism and British imperialism. Newly-independent India voted against the UN Palestine partition plan in 1947 and the admission of Israel to the UN in 1949. As a leading force in the Non-Aligned Movement, India backed anti-colonial movements in the middle-east and enjoyed close links with Nasser's Egypt.

Nonetheless, a clandestine relationship with Israel developed, thanks in part to Mossad, which acted as an unofficial – and deniable – diplomatic courier. During the 1971 war with Pakistan, Israel supplied India with mortars and ammunition. In the following years, intelligence collaboration was established, with an exchange of information about Pakistan, which at that time was building alliances with Arab regimes in the Middle East.

In the 1980s, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, keen on improving relations with the US, began the process of upgrading ties with Israel. As the Indian press put it at the time, "The road to Washington passes through Tel Aviv." Full diplomatic relations with Israel were

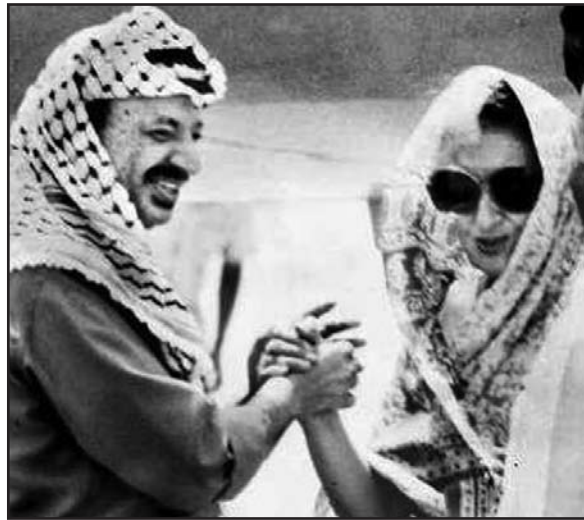
finally established a year after Gandhi's murder in 1991.

Since then, military and commercial links have grown exponentially. The process escalated under the right-wing BJP-led government of 1998-2004. The BJP is the political wing of the Sangh Parivar, the family of organisations dedicated to the ideology of Hindutva (roughly, 'Hinduness'): an authoritarian, Hindu supremacist, virulently anti-Muslim movement. Its founders were admirers of Hitler and Mussolini, but it also has a long history of support for Israel and Zionism.

In many respects, Hindutva and Zionism are natural bedfellows. Both depict the entities they claim to represent as simultaneously national and religious. Both claim to be the sole authentic spokespersons for these entities (Hindu and Jewish). Both share an ambivalent (to say the least) historic relationship with British colonialism. Both appeal to an affluent diaspora. And, most importantly at the moment, both share a designated enemy ('Muslim terrorism').

During the Kargil War of 1999 (in which India and Pakistani troops clashed in Kashmir), Israel supplied India, at 24 hours notice, with high altitude surveillance vehicles and laser-guided systems. In the wake of 9/11, the alliance was deepened, with Hindutva and Zionist world-views dovetailing snugly with the US war on terror. In May 2003, India's then National Security Adviser Brajesh Misra spelled out the strategy in an address to the American Jewish Congress, in which he pleaded for a "Tel Aviv-New Delhi-Washington" axis. A few months later, Ariel Sharon arrived in India as an honoured guest.

When a Congress-led coalition replaced the BJP after the 2004 elections, its left supporters urged it to abandon the previous government's foreign policy, notably the embrace of Israel and the USA. They have been



Indira Gandhi and Yasser Arafat in India, for the Non-Alignment Movement's summit

ignored. The government has signed deals with the US for military purchases, joint military exercises and most recently, in the course of Bush's state visit, nuclear collaboration. In February, India abandoned Iran at the IAEA, voting with the US to refer the country – usually considered one of India's major strategic allies – to the Security Council.

At the same time, the link with Israel has been consolidated. In the course of 2005, India's Ministers of Science and Technology, Commerce and Industry, and Agriculture and Food all visited Israel, holding high-level meetings with political and business leaders. In February 2006, Israel's National Security Council Chairman Giora Eiland was welcomed in Delhi.

Israel is now the second largest supplier of arms to India (after Russia). It provides India with missile radar, border monitoring equipment, night vision devices, the new Phalcon reconnaissance aircraft, among other items. India, in turn, is the biggest purchaser of high-tech Israeli weapons and accounts for almost half of Israel's arms exports. In addition, several thousand Indian soldiers have received "anti-insurgency training" in Israel.

In a speech at Tel Aviv University in March, the Indian Ambassador described India and Israel as "heirs to great and ancient civilizations" which "emerged from foreign domination as independent nations around the middle of the last century" and whose "historical interaction... is vividly embodied in the presence of Judaism in India for over 1600 years."

While the ambassador was speaking in Tel Aviv, the Jewish-Indian reception was being held in New York, knitting together the same alliance and using the same themes. The Indian presence

in the USA is highly diverse (many are Muslims), but an affluent, suburban constituency within it identifies with the Indian right and more broadly with Indian elite aspirations for economic and military status. Many see American Jews as the "model minority" and seek to emulate their political clout. A number have openly declared their intention of constructing a lobby similar to the Israel lobby. The attraction has been reciprocal. The American Jewish Committee is soon to open an office in New Delhi.

It's ironic that Indian Jews should find themselves used as a lynch-pin in this marriage of convenience. Of course, India's population is so diverse, its diaspora so far flung, that it can claim some kind of relationship with almost anyone anywhere. India's small Jewish communities were themselves highly diverse – in language, ritual, origin – but today they number merely 6000 (out of a population of one billion). During the 50s and 60s, most Indian Jews went to Israel, many to the US. The motives were mainly economic. The niche they had occupied collapsed after independence.

Although there's no history of anti-semitism in India, it's striking that one of the country's best-selling books is *Mein Kampf*, openly available at bookshops, stationers and street stalls. One young man pursuing a degree in business administration told me that the book was popular because it was "an excellent management text". Ironically, the aspirant bourgeoisie buying *Mein Kampf* is precisely that section of Indian society most keen on the alliance with Israel. The mentality is summed up by a catchphrase currently favoured by India's foreign policy-makers: "Non-alignment is for losers."

Manmohan Singh described India's deal with the US and its vote against Iran as acts of "enlightened self-interest". The same excuse is applied to the link with Israel. The reality is that India's betrayal of the Palestinians, however profitable for a few, is not remotely in the interest of the vast Indian majority. It certainly diminishes India's status and influence in the developing world. What price favour in Washington?

Mike Marqusee writes a fortnightly column in *The Hindu*, south India's largest circulation English-language newspaper. He's the author of books on Bob Dylan, Muhammad Ali, and cricket in south Asia and England. www.mikemarqusee.com



Protest against Sharon visit, 2003

Apartheid Jerusalem

For over a thousand years Jerusalem has been a paradigm of religious, social and cultural diversity. Since its creation in 1948 Israel has sought to make this ancient city the Jewish capital of the Jewish state, to the exclusion of the Christian and Muslim Palestinians.

Despite UN policy that Jerusalem should remain a shared city for the three major religions, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Jerusalem has been taking place for decades and is now about to be achieved by the completion of the Apartheid Wall and the consolidation and annexation of the ring of colonial settlements around East Jerusalem.

In December 2005, EU diplomats in the Occupied Territories, the Jerusalem and Ramallah Heads of Mission, wrote a report which EU governments attempted to suppress (*see extract in box*).

Historically, Jerusalem was defined as the Old City and immediate surrounding villages; since 1967, West Jerusalem was on the Israeli side of the Green Line and East Jerusalem is on the Palestinian side. In 1948, 80,000 Palestinians were driven from West Jerusalem to secure its 'Judaization'. The current policies of Israel are to 'Judaize' the whole of Jerusalem and its surrounding area.

After 1967, settlement building on stolen land, including on destroyed Palestinian villages throughout the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza has been the policy of successive Israeli governments. But nowhere is this colonisation policy clearer than in East Jerusalem. By creating the Jerusalem Municipality, Israel, in contravention of international law, defined and enlarged Jerusalem to include the illegal settlement colonies.

There are currently around 190,000 Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem, with over 20,000 more in surrounding areas. Plans are agreed for the colony of Ma'ale Adumim to be expanded and new colonies to be built on Palestinian land around East Jerusalem. Settler only roads and railways are planned. The Israeli government is also supporting settlements being implanted in the heart of existing Palestinian neighbourhoods. Extremist Jewish settler groups, often with foreign funding, use force or the

financial difficulties of Palestinians to take over their properties and land. There are even plans to build a large new Jewish settlement within the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, a clear provocation.

At the same time the privately acknowledged aim of Israeli government policies is for Palestinian 'transfer', the public policy of some members of the Knesset, and favoured in a recent opinion poll by 62 per cent of Israelis (Israel Democracy Institute). With the completion of the Apartheid Wall, indigenous Palestinian Jerusalemites are being forced to decide whether to continue to live in their villages and be denied their Jerusalemite status or to move into the increasingly densely populated ghettos remaining to Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

The identity and residency laws are being tightened in order to reduce the number of Palestinians living in Jerusalem. Some Palestinians have annually renewed blue Israeli ID cards, which give them the "right" to live in

East Jerusalem, but not to vote in Israeli national elections or take an Israeli passport. Anyone holding such an identity card found not to be living in East Jerusalem will have it revoked. Those studying or working abroad temporarily have already lost their ID and those working or living in the West Bank because of the economic problems in East Jerusalem, are being forced to make impossible choices. Couples where only one has a blue ID card must be separated, or both live in the Occupied Territories and lose all Jerusalemite status.

The EU diplomats are absolutely clear: "Israel's main motivation is almost certainly demographic – to reduce the Palestinian population of Jerusalem, while exerting efforts to boost the number of Jewish Israelis living in the city – East and West." We must continue to demand that the EU and European governments initiate sanctions now to prevent this ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

Jerusalem and Ramallah Heads of Mission report

1. East Jerusalem is of central importance to the Palestinians in political, economic, social and religious terms. Several inter-linked Israeli policies are reducing the possibility of reaching a final status agreement on Jerusalem, and demonstrate a clear Israeli intention to turn the annexation of East Jerusalem into a concrete fact:

- the near-completion of the barrier around east Jerusalem, far from the Green Line;
- the construction and expansion of illegal settlements, by private entities and the Israeli government, in and around East Jerusalem;
- the demolition of Palestinian homes built without permits (which are all but unobtainable);
- stricter enforcement of rules separating Palestinians resident in East Jerusalem from those resident in the West Bank, including a reduction of working permits; and
- discriminatory taxation, expenditure and building permit policy by the Jerusalem municipality.

2. The plan to expand the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim into the so-called "E1" area, east of Jerusalem, threatens to complete the encircling of the city by Jewish settlements, dividing the West Bank into two separate geographical areas. The proposed extension of the barrier from East Jerusalem to form a bubble around the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim would have the same effect.

3. When the barrier has been completed, Israel will control access to and from East Jerusalem, cutting off its Palestinian satellite cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah, and the rest of the West Bank beyond. This will have serious economic, social and humanitarian consequences for the Palestinians. By vigorously applying policies on residency and ID status, Israel will be able finally to complete the isolation of East Jerusalem – the political, social, commercial and infrastructural centre of Palestinian life.

4. Israel's activities in Jerusalem are in violation of both its Roadmap obligations and international law.

Support Arsenal to Ditch Israel and Kick Racism out of Football

By Dave Lawrence

Arsenal may have done as much as any club, in the campaign to “Kick Racism out of Football”, but its recent deal with the Israeli Tourist Ministry to promote “fun in the sun” holidays supports an apartheid state, built on racism. The deal should be scrapped.

From the outset it was clear Arsenal's commercial and marketing manager, Keith Edelman had steered the Board into a controversial deal promoting not just Israeli holidays but a positive spin for a country struggling with its image abroad and anxious to deflect attention away from the brutality meted out to Palestinians

Despite Arsenal's defence that it was an ordinary commercial deal, the Emirates Airline – having invested in excess of £100 million into Arsenal's new stadium – had no difficulty in understanding the message and was clearly embarrassed. The Israelis had previously failed to clinch similar deals with Juventus and AC Milan.

The Israeli Ministry of Tourism does well out of this deal: For only £350,000 (less than three weeks wages for Thierry Henri) they get:

- Two years advertising for Israeli holidays on the digital perimeter boards shown to the 198 countries where the Premier League is broadcast, and via 450 LCD screens throughout the ground;
- Permanent signage at one of the entrances to the stadium;
- Use of the Arsenal logo and photographs of players for public relations purposes;
- Use of the club's website, including editorial articles on Israel and a Ministry of Tourism banner;
- Feature adverts and profile articles on Israel in the club magazine; and
- Use of the Emirates Stadium, twice a year, for the staging of friendly matches at the close of the season.

This promotion of friendly matches fosters the idea that Israel is a country we should have closer ties with but the opposite is true if we want freedom and justice for Palestine. The racist nature of the Israeli state and its occupation of Palestine has to be exposed to Arsenal fans. Perhaps the recent experiences of the Palestinian National side best illustrate why we should boycott Israeli teams and holidays.

Since gaining recognition by FIFA in 1998 the Palestinian national side has improved its world ranking from 184th to 115th despite being hampered at every turn by the Israeli occupation.

‘Within Israel itself, the treatment of Palestinian (‘Israeli Arab’) players by the crowds is unbearably racist: fans of Beitar Jerusalem, in particular, chant “Death to Arabs” throughout matches’

To begin with, team selection is so difficult when there are hardly any football pitches – let alone a Palestinian league. The hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks that blight travel for all Palestinians make the concept of a league impractical for players and spectators alike. For the same reasons training is impossible. During the 2006 World Cup qualifying rounds, the only place the team could meet to train was in another country: at Ismailia, in Egypt.

For their qualifying match against Uzbekistan, five members of the squad were refused permission to travel by Israel and FIFA refused to postpone the match. When the striker Ziad Al Kourd returned from Uzbekistan he found that his house in the Gaza Strip town of Deir al-Balah had been demolished. Israel has since deemed Al Kourd a ‘security threat’ and banned him from travelling.

The captain, Sueb Jendeya recalled: “After the Uzbekistan match, it took us 40 hours to cross the Egyptian border into Rafah.” This gives a glimpse of how the Occupation interferes with the operation of everyday life.

On 30 March this year, the IDF bombed the Palestinian Football Stadium in Gaza, leaving a huge crater in the middle of the pitch. It seems the withdrawal of settlers from Gaza was not disengagement, but an opportunity for the Israelis to increase the level of collective punishment on its inhabitants. In addition to the regular bombings and “targeted assassinations” in which many bystanders have been killed, the IDF now use the sonic boom of jets flying beyond the speed of sound to wreck sleep patterns.

Within Israel itself, the treatment of Palestinian (‘Israeli Arab’) players by the crowds is unbearably racist: fans of Beitar Jerusalem, in particular, chant “Death to Arabs” throughout matches played against teams like Bnei Sakhnin, with predominantly Palestinian players.

Israelis want it both ways; they want to boast that they have two Arab players in their national side, but at the same time they deride and abuse them. In advance of the recent Israeli elections, surveys revealed deep hostility to Palestinians inside Israel; 62 per cent wanting them expelled from the country.

The recent series of articles by Chris McGreal in the Guardian comparing the Israeli Government to the South African apartheid regime demonstrate how unacceptable the Occupation is; but this comparison also reminds us of the part that international boycotting played in the demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa. The sporting boycott of the South African apartheid regime made a huge impact because of its international dimension and because sport appeals to some kind of notion of fair play.

Currently Israel plays its football in Europe. It should play its football in its own zone of Asia, but first it must end the Occupation and address the issues of freedom and justice for Palestinians. Until that time it must not expect to use Europe as an alternative to not getting on with its neighbours.

If you are interested in building a “Support Arsenal to Ditch Israel” Group, please send ideas and contact details to info@palestinecampaign.org

BBC flunks impartiality test

By Diane Langford

A report commissioned by its governors has told the BBC it must do better. An independent review panel chaired by Sir Quentin Thomas, highlighted 'failure to convey adequately the disparity in the Israeli and Palestinian experience, reflecting the fact that one side is in control and the other lives under occupation.' The panel's conclusions are backed by new research from Loughborough University that shows six times as many Israeli fatalities as Palestinian deaths were reported in news and current affairs programmes over the period under review, despite many more actual Palestinian deaths. It also confirms the noticeable disparity in favour of Israelis in BBC "talk-time" taken as a whole.

In a letter to *The Guardian* [May 4, 2006] Greg Philo, co-author of 'Bad News from Israel,' pointed out that these figures represent a more extreme ratio than found by Glasgow Media Group three years ago, indicating that BBC bias has become even more pronounced. He asks: why has this situation been allowed to continue and what will the BBC now do to offer a better informed coverage?

'It is curious that one of the most newsworthy and iconic symbols of occupation, the Apartheid Wall, is so shyly peeked at by BBC cameras'

The Thomas Report recommends the BBC should make purposive, and not merely reactive, efforts to explain the complexities of the conflict in the round, including the marked disparity between the positions of the two sides, and to overcome the high level of incomprehension among the audience. The broadcaster is urged to consider the case for basing a correspondent



in the West Bank to facilitate access 'particularly once the barrier is complete.'

While it deals effectively with glaring deficiencies in BBC coverage which are hard to ignore, at times the report comes across as callously indifferent, as in the observation: 'In recent years (When has it been otherwise? DL) many more Palestinians have been killed but usually in circumstances which are less dramatic and give rise to less striking images. Moreover, leaving aside death and injury, much of the Palestinian suffering arises from the situation of displacement and occupation, which does not generally lend itself to the newsworthy event.'

It is suggested that news stories are chosen on the basis of the pictures available to accompany them. In light of this, it is curious that one of the most newsworthy and iconic symbols of occupation, the Apartheid Wall, is so shyly peeked at by BBC cameras. The report does not say what it would take for the BBC to get excited about economic strangulation, starvation and state terror. However there is recognition that news and current affairs programmes are as much a construct as is a soap opera: there must be a choice of subject, presentation decisions, narrative

framework, context setting and the selection of angles of vision. Journalists, producers, editors and the BBC as an institution should be fully conscious that a 'human construct' is being created, declares the report, and must take responsibility for their crucial interpretive role in that process.

All this could be applied to the report: itself a construct on every level, sugaring the pill for the BBC by conferring a gold standard upon 'the majority' of its output, and appeasing the Israeli notion of a 'dual narrative' in which ethnic cleansing, land theft and human rights violations are reduced to a mere 'mindset'. Zionist myths are accorded the status of legitimate narrative. The choice of an Israeli lawyer, Noam Lubell, to produce a paper on international law, is puzzling given the nature of an exercise aimed at establishing impartiality. Lubell gets it badly wrong in his appraisal of the ICJ ruling, ignoring the role of the Wall in illegal annexation of Palestinian land. The choice of experts on the Middle East invited for a seminar with the Panel also displayed a narrow 'angle of vision' and the organisations and individuals invited to give written and oral evidence mirrored the asymmetry referred to in the report. Heavy hitters, including Gideon Meir and Daniel Shek, put Israel's case, while the Palestinians and their supporters were unable to match the resources of the Israeli Government and Embassy.

Lubell's contribution has been used by the panel to help determine terminology: should the BBC use 'occupied' or 'disputed' lands? When giving oral evidence for PSC, we were told the BBC style book calls for the use of 'occupied territory' but this is not followed consistently. 'Targeted killings' is the term preferred by the panel for Israel's illegal assassinations. Discussing the use of words deriving from the root 'terror' (ism/ist etc) the report acknowledges that state terrorism should be named as such, and puts the issue into the context of attacks on civilians,

recalling terrorist acts by Zionists. If those described as terrorists don't like it, suggests the report, they can always cease the activities that give rise to the label. However, when describing the concerns of pro-Israeli witnesses regarding 'tendentious' reporting of Israeli actions as possibly triggering antisemitism, the panel refrained from issuing similar advice.

The BBC is commended for appointing Malcolm Balen as senior adviser in late 2003 when relations between Israel and the BBC were at an all-time low. In a Ha'aretz interview Balen expressed his view of accusations of antisemitism aimed at the BBC.

"I know there is a widespread belief, and it quite shocked me on taking this job, that if the BBC gets something wrong, or the nuances are misplaced, there is now a virtually automatic assumption that the BBC had done that because it is biased against Israel, or worse, anti-Semitic," he says. "It is very difficult for sections of the audience to accept that the BBC got something wrong – it is maybe because it got it wrong, and not because it is biased. This situation polarized the debate and it is very difficult to get the editorial debate back on pragmatic level."

Balen complains of Israel's "megaphone diplomacy," which he says thwarts possible dialogue. He offers as an example the leak of a letter from Natan Sharansky to the BBC. Sharansky claimed that a report on Hussam Abdu, a Palestinian youth who was caught at the Hawara roadblock wearing an explosive belt, was marked by an anti-Semitic bias.

"The letter," says Balen, "was leaked to the media and became a public debate, [concerning] whether the BBC is anti-Semitic, based on this single report. Rather, it should have been a private debate about the editorial content of that report. Now, any viewer and any listener is perfectly entitled to ask questions about our coverage, but once it comes associated with allegations of antisemitism based on an individual report, the BBC could have done nothing else but to rebut that claim and defend itself robustly. We are so far removed from what should be the case, which is a pragmatic, sensible debate, where the two sides can understand each other better. I now get calls from government officials in Israel and they are legitimate, sensible editorial conversations, which is the way we should have a debate."

While Malcom Balen's appointment

is praised, the panel goes on to recommend the creation of another, more senior post, to improve grip and provide firmer guidance. Perhaps they were too polite to mention the worsening bias towards Israel, and audience incomprehension, unearthed by the Loughborough study, happened under Balen's watch.

Complaints from viewers and listeners sometimes seem to be treated as a necessary nuisance and dealt with defensively. It is not enough for the BBC to say that as there are complaints from both sides their coverage is about right. This kind of complacency would not be acceptable, says the report.

'At times the report comes across as callously indifferent, as in the observation: "In recent years many more Palestinians have been killed but usually in circumstances which are less dramatic and give rise to less striking images".'

Over 700 emails and around 80 letters from the public arrived for the panel between 3rd to 25th October 2005. Pressure group activity could be seen in the number of identical letters or parts of letters. A large number of pro-Israeli supporters emailed from the United States, often with the same complaint, on the same date and/or from the same state: a reminder of the effectiveness of using your own words when complaining.

Despite its shortcomings, the Report is a useful tool for challenging bias and distortion, not only in BBC coverage but that of the entire mainstream media. PSC's submission to the panel is on our website under PSC News.

Thanks to all supporters who wrote in to the BBC.

The Thomas Report and appendices:

http://www.bbcgovernors.co.uk/docs/rev_israelipalestinian.html

Press Statement issued by the Board of

Governors: http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/05_may/02/conflict.shtml

PSC thanks everyone who made individual representations to the BBC Governors Impartiality Review. If you would like to be more involved in media work, please contact the office to join our media group.



Jeremy Bowen

NOT the BBC News

Bolder Boycott Campaign:

As we go to press, news came in that the UK teaching union, NATFHE, narrowly voted in favour of a boycott of Israeli academics that fail to disassociate themselves from Israel's apartheid policies.

Steven Rose, secretary of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP), applauded the "courageous and principled vote" in a statement: "We recognise that this has not been an easy decision faced with the extreme pressure put upon the Union by outside forces, including the Israeli government and the organised Israel lobby."

Rose added it was a historic step forward "in helping persuade our Israeli academic colleagues that it is time to cease silent complicity with the illegal acts of the Israeli state," and that this was the beginning – not the end – of a national debate on the boycott issue.

Meanwhile, action on the ground is already taking place: In May, Professor Richard Seaford, from the University of Exeter, refused to write an article for an Israeli academic journal.

"Alas, I am unable to accept your kind invitation, for reasons that you may not like," Prof Seaford wrote to Dr Daniella Dueck, of Bar Ilan University:

"I have, along with many other British academics, signed the academic boycott of Israel, in the face of the brutal and illegal expansionism and the slow-motion ethnic cleansing being practised by your government."

In March, Dance Europe refused to publish an article by Sally Ann Freeland, an Israeli choreographer. The magazine requested that she sign a declaration against the occupation before publishing her work, but she refused.

Bar Ilan University complained that there is a "silent boycott" of Israel already in place. Let's take a lead from the activists in NATFHE and the AUT, and turn up the volume a little...

See back page for Boycott Day of Action details.

Laying bare the Lobby

The London Review of Books, was probably surprised to find itself propelled into the global media limelight after publishing a scholarly account of the pro-Israel lobby in the US, on 23 March.

The authors, respected academics John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt of Harvard, clearly stated that there is no 'Jewish conspiracy' in the States, but rather a loose coalition of Christian Zionists,



neoconservatives, top journalists and, most powerful of all, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), combining to exert a 'stranglehold' on Middle East policy and public debate.

The evidence they put forward is all in the public domain, and is clearly sourced in their article. Although none of the facts can be seriously disputed, the authors were subjected to a predicatable barrage of accusations of antisemitism and 'Neo-Nazism' and calls for their dismissal – proving their point that the lobby is a taboo.

The US Atlantic Monthly originally commissioned them to write an article on the lobby in late 2002, but asked for a re-write and then finally rejected it in 2005. "I believe they got cold feet," said Mearsheimer.

Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz, given to the most vitriolic attacks on any critics of Israeli policies, launched a 45-page diatribe, in which he claimed his fellow academics

had "destroyed their professional reputations" by writing as they had.

Mearsheimer and Walt replied in measured terms to this and other attacks in the LRB on 11 May. They end by stating: "Although we are not surprised by the hostility directed at us, we are still disappointed that more attention has not been paid to the substance of the piece. The fact remains that the United States is in deep trouble in the Middle East, and it will not be able to develop effective policies if it is impossible to have a civilised discussion about the role of Israel in American foreign policy."

See www.lrb.co.uk for the original article and subsequent correspondence.

A US petition supporting the two beleaguered academics has already attracted 1300 signatures. Shortcut to the website: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/875967959?l=1147683052>

The Richard Rogers Affair – from the Riverbank to the Occupied West Bank

In the last issue of *Palestine News* we reported on the inaugural meeting of Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine, held at Richard Rogers' Thameside offices.

Lord Rogers of Riverside is perhaps the most distinguished architect in Britain, responsible for the Pompidou Centre in Paris, the Lloyds insurance building in London, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, Madrid's new Barajas airport and, most recently, the Welsh Assembly.

Rogers graciously welcomed the 50-odd professionals (British, Israeli and Palestinian) who attended the meeting and expressed his deep disquiet at Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories, especially with regard to the illegal settlements and the separation Wall being built on Palestinian land. In such situations, he said, planners and architects carry a heavy moral and

social responsibility.

A few weeks later Rogers was summoned to New York, where he has a \$1.7 billion contract for the Jacob Javits Convention Center and a commission to redevelop the Lower East Side riverfront. He faced a barrage of threats and criticism and clearly risked losing these lucrative contracts.

However, with the help of top PR consultant Howard Rubinstein, Rogers made a full recantation. He actually pronounced himself "in favor of [the wall] to thwart terror attacks on Israel", called on Hamas to "renounce terrorism and recognise Israel's right to exist", and said that the Middle East conflict is between "a country that is a terrorist state and a country that's a democratic state. I'm all for the democratic state".

He denounced boycott as a political weapon and claimed that he is

opposed to economic boycott in any form (although he had participated in the boycott of the apartheid regime in South Africa).

This show of repentance did the trick. Not only was Rogers welcomed back into the fold; he was even invited to head the judges' panel for the David Azrieli Prize for architecture in Israel. Interestingly, one of the contenders for the prize is from a school of architecture in the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

The late Edward Said, patron of PSC and friend of Richard Rogers, spent his life campaigning for justice for Palestine and calling for urgent action on 'isolating the settlements instead of allowing them to isolate and surround Palestinians, which is what occurs today'. These words are unfortunately as relevant now as when he wrote them.

Synod's decision and interfaith relations

Sue Plater (with thanks to other members of the Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible Investment for their comments).

The decision by Synod to back the call by the Palestinian church for morally responsible investment (and therefore divestment from Caterpillar) has continued to cause debate within Christian and Jewish circles. It was quickly presented as an antisemitic act, with talk of it setting back Christian-Jewish relations by decades. Anxious to be seen to listen to this viewpoint, the Anglican fundholding bodies (the Church Commissioners and CBF) have quickly announced that they will ignore Synod's motion (and the Palestinian church's plea for action).

Among those who expressed concern was the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), an organisation that treads a difficult path in their support of Israel. CCJ do not take the theological line of Christian Zionists, who support Israeli Government policy (right or wrong) for convoluted reasons involving a belief in an interpretation of biblical prophecy.

The understanding of Christian Zionists is that when the Jews return to the land which is now Israel and Palestine, then good things will happen for Christians — Jesus will return and gather them up — although the same good things will not actually happen to the Jews unless they convert to Christianity. So they want the Jews to be in control of 'the land' at any price it takes (including Palestinian lives).

This suits expansionist Israelis, who want the support (financial and political) of Christian Zionists, whilst understanding perfectly well that such people think they have to convert or be condemned to something awful.

CCJ's nervousness about a direct action such as divestment is based instead on their foundation in the post war period, and the concern felt by many Christians that the official churches did not do all they could to prevent the holocaust. Indeed antisemitism in its original guise owed a great deal

to religious teachings and so many Christians wanted to make reparations, recognising the European crucible within which antisemitism was forged. These are Christians who do not want to convert Jews, but who recognise the mutual foundations of their faiths — shared also with Islam — the stories of the Old Testament/Hebrew scriptures.

In the UK, the CCJ has taken forward these conversations, and provided platforms for shared expression of concerns. The Council has high profile Presidents, including UK leaders of Judaism and Christianity — Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Rabbi Tony Bayfield, Archbishop Rowan Williams and Archbishop Cormac Murphy O'Connor. For over 60 years careful dialogue has continued, and from the reaction to the Synod debate it would seem that its roots are not deep enough to withstand facing up to some major issues affecting both communities in Israel and Palestine. Instead they have taken the idea promulgated by many Israelis that Israel speaks for all Jews, and in so doing disregard all those Jews who dissent.

There is some positive news about good relations between different groups. At a grassroots level, Christians and Jews are working together on the campaign for Palestine — alongside those from other backgrounds. These are people who are not concerned so much about focusing on faith issues (some are not religious at all) as about bringing about justice, and campaigning alongside people in Israel and Palestine from the same faith backgrounds. Following the Synod decision, Jewish groups based both in the UK and Israel have written to thank the Archbishop for his vote for divestment, and to urge him to stay firm on this issue.

For those of us who think that a just solution would assist both Israel and Palestine (not to mention the rest of the world), CCJ's approach is frustrating — the more so if it is said to be an

official line of Christianity or of Judaism in dialogue with Christianity. It might be understandable, but it buys into the line that criticising Israel's policies amounts to antisemitism. Christianity and Judaism may be very different faiths, but surely both of them have a morality that includes speaking out against gross injustice and standing up for the oppressed. If the oppressors are those who share our faith (and this has been true of all faiths at different times), then we should still speak out, the more so if we want our faith to be respected and heard.

Sue Plater is Associate Director of the Amos Trust

'My Name Is Rachel Corrie'

The play about 23-year-old American Rachel Corrie, based on her own diaries and emails, was banned this March from a theatre in New York, when it was about

to open. It tells the story of her life, up to the time she was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer when acting as a human shield in front of a Palestinian home in Gaza. Since then, her parents have sought redress both from the Israeli army and from Caterpillar, the company selling militarised bulldozers to the IDF.

After pressure from the pro-Israel lobby, the artistic director of the New York Theatre Workshop, James Nicola, said he didn't want to be seen to be taking sides at an "edgy" time. The director, Alan Rickman, condemned the decision as an act of "censorship". The play has since had a second successful run in London.

Rachel's mother Cindy, who attended the opening of the Occupied Space Palestinian art exhibition (see page 23) in London on 15 May said: "What happened to the play is symptomatic of the situation in the US... open discussion about this topic is often thwarted." She went on to say that the family had since been approached by a number of theatres in New York: "Ironically, the publicity has made the play a 'hot ticket' production."

The Seattle Repertory Theatre has already decided to stage it next year.

Peace Quilt Grows

By Alison Wilkinson

The Peace & Justice For Palestine Quilt is growing — we now have four sections completed (each one the size of a single-bed). All four were shown at the recent National PSC AGM.

Please will PSC branches and individual members across the country consider taking up this worthwhile and beautiful project. You can either send squares to the address on the back of the Quilt leaflets (full instructions inside), or you might consider creating whole quilt sections representative of each branch.

Remember, if necessary, we intend to make this quilt as long as the Apartheid Wall! We are making a beautiful Wall of Cloth instead of the monstrosity enclosing and dividing Palestinians in the West Bank. The more sections of the Quilt that get completed, the greater the publicity for the solidarity campaign. Please spare a few minutes to create a square — we're perfectly happy to sew them together if you send them in.



Branch News

Liverpool Friends of Palestine continues to be very active, holding monthly vigils and twice monthly leaflet distributions in Liverpool City Centre, hosting informative events with visiting speakers, and organising fundraising cultural events. They joined in the Stop the War demo against Condoleezza Rice's visit in April, displaying banners, flags and posters, and distributed leaflets emphasising Jack Straw's collusion with Israel over: the Jericho jail-storm; blocking a UN enquiry into the invasion of Jenin; and his apology to Israel for the near arrest of ex-General Almog.

A very successful one-day conference at Liverpool University was organised on 4 March. Speakers included Husam Zomlot, Charge D'Affaires, Palestinian General Delegation, and Betty Hunter, National Secretary, PSC.

Betty Hunter is famous for her tireless campaign work for Palestine; **Herefordshire** group enjoyed a visit from her in March — in February they organised a public meeting when Judith Keshet, co-founder of Machsom Watch, also came to speak to around 50 people. And in the lead up to the demo on 20 May, two meetings were held to rally our forces in London: one on 9 May in Central London's Friends' Meeting House, and one on 16 May in Brent. Speakers in Central London included Tony Benn, Karma Nabulsi, and Tariq Ali, whilst in Brent, Daniel Machover, Fathy Khdirat, of the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, and ... (who else?) Betty Hunter, all spoke on the crisis in Palestine.

In April, **Sheffield** Palestine Solidarity Campaign organised two fund-raising events: a Falafel and Quiz evening, with delicious Palestinian food, and a Quiz pitting 'Sheffield's finest brains' to help support a social and educational children's projects in Gaza. A second event was a sponsored Four-Hours-Non-Stop-Fun-Basketball! All proceeds went towards buying books and toys for a Children's Library in Palestine.

Hackney PSC showed 'Our Story' by Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi, of the Palestine National Initiative. It is a very effective

presentation using maps to explain the background to the current situation, as well as photographs (copies of this CD Rom are available from the PSC office). Hackney has an excellent relationship with their local independent cinema, The Rio; they did a great deal of leafleting there during screening of 'Paradise Now,' and also showed 'Visit Palestine' to help build for the Nakba Day demo.

'Friends of Palestine' hosted an evening of Palestinian crafts on 9 May, at **Exeter** University, upon the completion of a ten-week course on Palestinian geography, history and culture (see photo). Members of Exeter PSC were in attendance to support the students. A week-long celebration of Palestine film and culture at Exeter University will be held in February 2007.



Students in Exeter collect their awards for completion of a ten-week course on Palestine

Bucks/Berks branch have been showing a series of films at its public meetings, including: 'Bury my Heart in Palestine', introduced by Jaya Sacca; and Katy Barlow's 'Visit Palestine'. Their regular Reading stall happily signed up Martin Salter, MP for Reading West, to PSC national membership, whilst the branch's twinning group Friends of Wadi Fuqeen have been able to send much needed funds to their twin village. The branch will be running its stall in May at the CWU Trade Union Conference in Bournemouth and is already booked up to cover the TUC Tolpuddle Rally and WOMAD music festival in July.

Stevenage PSC members are part of the Stevenage Coalition for Peace, which includes members of Amnesty, CND, and Christian Aid. They are planning a peace fair in November, where there will be a PSC stall with info and olive oil, and potentially a film about

Palestine. Malcolm Chapman advised: "Getting involved with other peaceniks is the way forward where you do not have an active branch."

Tyneside PSC held a joint event with **Durham** PSC and Stop the War at the Monument in central Newcastle on the national day of action. Durham brought down their imposing half scale model of a Caterpillar armoured bulldozer, which attracted lots of attention. Good

speeches by Yunis Bakhsh of Respect; Roger Nettleship of South Tyneside Stop the War; Thea Khamis of Durham PSC, Iyad Al Agha, a Palestinian student studying locally, and our own Peter Burrett. Organisers made the mistake of informing the police in advance, however, who then prevented them from using a sound system on penalty of arrest (under which law exactly, they could not say).

**"Getting involved with other peaceniks is the way forward where you do not have an active branch."
Malcolm Chapman**

Palestinian Women Speak

Women in Sheffield presented a series of inspiring events marking International Women's Day, 2006.

On March 4, dozens of women gathered for a day-long conference to hear Dr Mona El Farra and Randa Alami speak and to take part in workshops to discuss solidarity work. Dr El Farra, representing the Union of Health Work Committees, and member of the board of directors of the Red Crescent Society of Gaza, spoke movingly of her experiences of living under Israeli occupation in Gaza. She read from diaries she kept during the early months of the Intifada outlining the ever-present fear of Israeli attack, and daily humiliations suffered by the Palestinian people under occupation.

Speaking about the recent electoral success of Hamas, Dr El Farra's analysis was that women had voted for Hamas more because of their frustration with the lack of progress towards a just peace, and the corruption within the Palestine Authority, than for their support for an Islamic state. She acknowledged some concern about the impact of Hamas's victory on the social status of women and families. Although Hamas has stated that it is not their present intention to tackle the social agenda, Dr El Farra urged supporters to be aware of the potential implications of Hamas's power, particularly for women:

"My message to all women on International Women's Day is that we are strong and should stay strong together, and with continual organised work in different fields we can make the

real changes that we aim to achieve for a better future."

Randa Alami spoke of the 11-year ordeal endured by her twin sister Samar, who was wrongly convicted of conspiracy to bomb the Israeli embassy.

Her appeals have been turned down despite David Shayler's revelations which exonerated Samar and her co-defendant Jawad Botmeh. Their appeals against conviction were hampered by the extraordinary secrecy surrounding the case in which they themselves have not even been informed of the full extent of the alleged "evidence" against them, for reasons of "national security".

Samar and Jawad still languish in British prisons in spite of a long campaign for their release. They are both coming up for parole shortly, although concern was expressed that the political climate following the July 7 bombings in London will deny them a fair outcome. At the conference, a letter to the then Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, was written pleading for a fair parole hearing for Samar. The conference participants overwhelmingly ratified the letter, with over 90 signatures collected on the day.

There were a number of workshops throughout the day which focussed on solidarity and practical campaigning for women in Palestine. There are many examples of how people can show practical support. For example:



International Women's Day in Sheffield

Judith Green of the Quaker ecumenical accompaniment programme reported back on her experience of living in a West Bank village under occupation; a group of women from Sheffield and from the International Women's Peace Service reported on their recent participation in an International Women's Peace Conference in Palestine, in which they took part in local protests against occupation.

Campaigning work in the UK was highlighted in a workshop led by Diane Langford of PSC, in which there was information and discussion around the growing movement to boycott Israeli goods, and about the Stop the Wall campaign.

In the evening, singing, dancing and wonderful food were enjoyed by over 100 women supporters of Palestinian human rights from around the city. The women's singing group "Body of Sound" delivered a rousing performance, and women were treated to a lesson in traditional Palestinian "dabka" dancing.

This event was a first for Sheffield – during the course of the day over 200 women (from many different walks of life and interests) participated in events in support of Palestinian women in the true spirit of International Women's Day. Many women were inspired by the event and what they learned from the day, and resolved to continue the initiative into the future. An immediate expression of this was the letter of protest to the Home Secretary, and on March 8, a huge banner declaring 'Free Palestine – International Women's Day' was held up outside City Hall, receiving approving smiles from passers-by.

The event was funded and supported by: Lipman Miliband Trust; Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust; Sheffield Women's Forum; Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Individual donations and fundraising activities of local women. As a result of the conference, we have raised approximately £1,500 to go towards women's projects for Palestine. Organisers and supporters of the conference are meeting to discuss how to allocate the funds, and to organise ongoing activities in support of women in Palestine.

Trade Union conference pledges solidarity with the Palestinian people

Over 250 trade unionists attended the Palestine Solidarity Campaign Trade Union Conference held at Congress House, the headquarters of the trade union movement in Britain, on Saturday 11 March 2006.

The conference was an historic event, which was sponsored by 15 national trade unions, together with the Southern and Eastern Region of the TUC. The gathering brought together trade unionists from across the country to discuss how to build solidarity with Palestinian workers challenging the Israeli Government occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

'Apartheid was characterised by killings, hangings, disappearances, arrests, exile, confiscations, inferior education, rapes and the creation of Bantustans. All this was like a Sunday picnic compared to what is happening to the Palestinian people.'

**Willy Madisha,
President of COSATU**

Amongst the speakers were Shaher Sae'd, General Secretary of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, Willy Madisha, President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the TUC.

Shaher Sae'd, General Secretary of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), welcomed the Conference. He outlined the problems facing Palestinian workers as a result of the inhuman policies of the Government of Israel. He said that whilst official figures state that over 35 per cent of workers are unemployed, by the time the Apartheid Wall is completed in 2007 it could be as high as 50 per cent. He explained that over 60 per cent of Palestinians are now living below the poverty line and that this was caused in part by the Apartheid Wall and the many checkpoints set up by the Israeli Government which prevent Palestinian workers getting to work.



Shaher called for an international campaign of solidarity with the Palestinian people to demand that the Israeli Government immediately withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, which they illegally occupy in contradiction with international laws and UN resolutions.

Shaher received a standing ovation from the delegates present expressing the solidarity of British trade unionists and showing the determination of those present to respond to his call.

Willy Madisha, President of COSATU, and also President of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), drew comparisons between the situation for the Palestinian people and the situation in South Africa under Apartheid. He said: "Apartheid was characterised by killings, hangings, disappearances, arrests, exile, confiscations, inferior education, rapes and the creation of Bantustans. All this was like a Sunday picnic compared to what is happening to the Palestinian people." He went on to say that Apartheid was a brutal and repressive regime but those fighting Apartheid had not faced attacks by F16 fighter planes and helicopter gunships nor had there been a repressive Wall like the one that now stole more and more land from the Palestinian people.

"Why are all the things done to Apartheid South Africa not being done to Israel?" Willy Madisha asked: "I say with confidence that Israel is an Apartheid state. The trade union movement must move beyond resolutions, otherwise history will look back on us and spit on our graves."

He called for an international campaign of economic sanctions and boycotts against the Government of Israel

like the ones that had been used against the racist South African Apartheid regime.

Frances O'Grady said that she wanted to "reaffirm the TUC's commitment to and friendship with the PGFTU. We are eager to deepen and strengthen our mutual relationship. I would like to invite Shaher and the PGFTU to meet with the TUC formally, in the next few months, to discuss what form that deeper solidarity should take." She said that the TUC supported the right of the Palestinian people to a viable independent Palestinian state and for a negotiated settlement.

Closing the Conference, Bernard Regan, Trade Union Officer of the PSC, said that the attempt to intimidate those who defended the Palestinian people by accusing them of being anti-Jewish was like the McCarthyism of the 1940s and 1950s and should be resisted. He said that PSC had always and would always make a clear distinction between the Government of Israel, its army and state institutions on the one hand and the people of Israel on the other. PSC stands shoulder to shoulder for example with those like the Refuseniks and all the other campaigners in Israel who stand against the continuing repression of the Palestinian people.

He criticised the British Government's concept of so-called 'even-handedness' and said that there was no equality between the occupiers and the occupied. He pointed out the long history of collusion between the British Government and the state of Israel going back into the 1950s when the British Government had assisted the Israeli Government in setting up the Dimona nuclear station and had sold plutonium to the Israeli Government in 1966 behind the backs of elected Labour Government ministers. The real truth was that successive Governments had in fact never been 'even-handed'. Supporting the notion of 'even-handedness' in fact meant supporting the status quo and that meant endorsing the occupation: that is not an option for anyone committed to achieving justice for the Palestinian people.

His call for a campaign of mass solidarity inside the trade union movement in Britain with the Palestinian people was warmly supported.

Demonstration for Palestinian Rights huge success

Thousands braved the rain in London on 20 May to demonstrate in support of Palestinian rights. People came from all across the country together to condemn the continuing Israeli occupation and apartheid, and the West's denial of basic aid to Palestinians since their democratic vote for Hamas.

Young and old; Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Buddhists; secular trade unionists and progressives – all showed their outrage at the UK government's hypocritical stance – chanting loudest when passing Downing Street: “One, two, three, four, occupation no more...”

When Lauren Booth proclaimed her embarrassment at being related (by accident of birth!) to the Prime Minister, she then led the chants of: “Tony Blair – Shame on you!”

Speaker after speaker in Trafalgar Square loudly criticised the pressure being put on the Palestinians and the criminal withdrawal of EU aid. Caroline Lucas, Green MEP, spoke for us all when she said: “We condemn this despicable form of blackmail.”

Israel, while killing over 90 Palestinians since the Hamas government was elected, has not once faced demands to denounce violence, noted Betty Hunter of the PSC. “Hamas have more or less kept to their cease-fire for over a year,” said Irene Bruegel, of Jews for Justice for Palestinians: “But where is the Israeli cease-fire?”

Leila Sansour, of the Open Bethlehem Project, urged us not to give up or be disheartened by developments – to keep up the struggle for justice in Palestine – and pointed out that the aid is only necessary because of the illegal Israeli occupation in the first place. Fathy Khdirat, the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign Co-ordinator for the Jordan Valley, among others, brought greetings from those struggling against the wall in the West Bank.

The irony was not lost on those who asked why the west is not at all keen on a boycott of Israeli goods, but is happily imposing sanctions on the Palestinians. Palestine must be the only occupied



country in history that had sanctions imposed on it, not the occupier.

One demonstrator was arrested, for apparently chanting into a loudhailer, reminding us that as the British state supports the Israeli government suppressing Palestinian rights, our rights at home are also under attack.

Otherwise, the day was a big success. Congratulations and thanks to all the volunteers for the day who ensured it was so – and to the Palestinian Dabka dance group, who performed heartily, despite the cold London drizzle.

A petition: “Stop starving the Palestinians” was launched at the rally — it can be signed online or in hard copy. Call the PSC office for copies.

PSC protesters to face trial

On 14 March the Israeli army invaded Jericho on the West Bank and shelled and bulldozed the jail where Palestinian prisoners were being held. Three Palestinians were killed, many others wounded, and some prisoners were abducted and taken to an Israeli jail. The Israelis claimed they were wanted for questioning in relation to the assassination of racist Israeli minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

Just half an hour before the invasion the official British monitors, who were responsible for the safety of some of the prisoners in the jail, withdrew. Jack Straw later claimed they had no prior knowledge of, nor collusion with, the Israeli incursion.

There was an outcry in Britain and elsewhere at this wholly illegal and brutal operation, and Betty Hunter, General Secretary of the PSC, immediately set about organising a protest outside Downing Street. The police told her that this needed 24 hours notice. Betty said: “I felt that a peaceful demonstration on the day was the best way of diffusing the widespread anger felt at the Israeli action and our government's obvious involvement.”

About 60 people came to the protest, and stood peacefully with placards until the police started to take names and addresses. A week later Betty Hunter was called for an interview, and charged with an offence under section 132 of the 2005 Serious Organised Crime and Police Act.

Betty and four other protesters have now received summonses under this act. They will appear at the Horseferry Magistrates Court, Horseferry Road, SW1, on 15 June at 10.00am. Geoffrey Bindman's firm of solicitors, specialising in human rights cases, will be defending Betty Hunter.

Betty said: “This is an unacceptable attack on our freedom to protest. Our government should be more concerned with trying to curb Israel's war crimes than with prosecuting people aiming at upholding international law.”

There will be a protest outside the court from 9.30am on 15 June. If you want to support the defendants in this case please contact the PSC office: 0207 700 6192

Music Reviews

Paul Hughes-Smith introduces us to some of the best Palestinian music available in the UK.

The following CDs are now available either commercially (distributors websites given in brackets) or by special order through PSC 020 7700 6192 or Friends of Birzeit University for Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM) CDs — fobzu@fobzu.org; 020 7832 1340.

• **Khaled Jubran – Psalms**
(available only through PSC) reviewed in Palestine News Autumn 2005.

Debut CD of instrumental music by this fine oud and buzuq virtuoso.

• **Trio Jubran – Randana**
(Fairplay FP500
-www.uk.hmboutique.com)



Samir and Wissam Jubran made the album Tamaas for French label Daqui in 2003. Now with younger brother Adnan they form a trio of 'uds playing distinctive intricate instrumental pieces that display a high level of musical understanding between the players. Lacks the focus and excitement, however, of their live performances.

• **Rim Banna – The Mirrors of My Soul**
(Kirkelig Kultur FXCD 288- www.hotrecords.uk.com)



Palestinian singer now based in Norway and married to a Ukranian guitarist. This recent CD sounds like an uneasy mix between Palestinian passion and Western pop-style production using anything from punk to jazz.

• **The Chehade Brothers – A Bridge over the Mediterranean**
(Elef 5046769372 available from Sterns www.sternsmusic.com)



Christians from Jerusalem, this duo left for Beirut in the 90s and their latest CD produced by Michel Eleftheriades is certainly Mediterranean in feel with Greeks, Turks and Latin musicians in the accompanying orchestra – but the lyrics are all Palestinian. Was one of the nominations for last year's BBC Radio 3 World Music Awards.

• **Adel Salameh – Hafla**
(Enja Records 9153-2 – www.adelsalameh.com or distributor Alternative www.altmusic-dist.com)

'ud player originally from Nablus and now living in France. Adel has produced a number of solo and collaborative CDs, this latest is more relaxed and less serious than previous albums perhaps. He performed at last year's WOMAD Festival.

• **Ahmad al-Khatib – Sada**
(ESNCM 2005)

Teacher and later head of the oriental music department at ESNCM he was forced to leave for Jordan in 2002 and is at present based in Sweden. Also founder of group Karloma. A highly accomplished and fluid player he performs classic pieces by past virtuosos of the 'ud as well some original compositions on this new CD.

• **Karloma – Karloma**
(ESNCM 2001)

More experimental group formed by Ahmad al-Khatib at Birzeit University. Now has resident Scottish flute player and Norwegian bassist, highly musical performances that might appeal more to those who were unfamiliar with Arab music in general but might seem a little lacking in 'soul' for those who like their music more passionate.

• **Palestinian Sounds – compilation CD**
(a joint production between ESNCM & Yabous 2001).



A good introduction to many of the groups and artists associated with these two organisations including Sabreen, Mustafa Al Kurd, Rim Banna, El Fanoun Group and Washem plus tracks from other CDs listed here. Some of these artists may no longer be playing with the groups featured however as this CD was made in 2001.

• **Oriental Music Ensemble – Emm el Khilkhil**
(ESNCM 2000)

The first CD produced at the Edward Said Conservatory in 2000 in their new recording studio. The ensemble is composed of teachers from the Oriental Music department that included at that time, Khaled Jubran. Totally instrumental, this CD is, unsurprisingly, quite academic in style and approach though always wonderfully musical and easy on the ear for any non-Arab listener. The ensemble has recently toured the US.

• **El-Funoun – Zaghareed – Music from the Palestinian Holy Land**
(Sounds True STAM109D Distributor www.discord.co.uk)



U.S recording of pioneering folk dance troupe based in Ramallah, not to be confused with another group from Gaza who visited UK. The group has survived for over 20 years despite being considered subversive by the Israelis. Zaghareed are the ululations made by women and this CD is a portrait of a wedding celebration based on traditional material, albeit with songs and music that have been collected and re-arranged by the group. Most of the tracks are very short but some of the singing is electrifying.

Palestinian art comes to Mayfair

ork Street had seen nothing like it. At the opening of Occupied Space, the art exhibition and sale organised by PSC, artists, celebs, buyers and activists spilled out onto the street and TV crews squeezed into Gallery 27 to cover the show.

A wide range of artists were represented: works by established Palestinian artists like Nabil Anani, Vera Tamari and Suleiman Mansour hung alongside paintings and photographs by the younger generation, such as Hani Zu'rob, Tayseer Barakat and Jawad AlMalhi – all producing work of astonishing quality under the challenging conditions of the Occupied Territories.

UK-based Palestinian artists Laila Shawa and Mona Hatoum generously donated their work, as did the internationally renowned Chapman

brothers, Antony Gormley, John Keane, the cartoonist Steven Bell and a number of distinguished members of the Royal Academy.

But the items that really stole the show were the series of large signed photos of graffiti artist Banksy's famous artworks actually painted onto the Separation Wall. These would have sold several times over.

The exhibition was designed to illustrate and support the vibrant cultural life of the Palestinian people, and to raise funds for the campaigning work of PSC in the UK. It was generously supported by the A M Qattan Foundation.

The works can still be viewed at www.occupiedspace.org.uk. If you are interested in buying please contact the office.



Visitors admire Steve Sabella's haunting piece from Gaza.



Gwithian Birchall, Occupied Space web designer, with one of Banksy's artwork



Rosa Issa, of the organising committee, with Mona Hatoum's piece, 'You are still here'



Visitors with 'Security/Impunity/Geometry & Terror (2)' by John Keane

Settler psyche on the couch

The Suppression of Guilt: The Israeli Media and the Reoccupation of the West Bank, by Daniel Dor, (Pluto Press, 2005) ISBN 0-7453-2294-8.

Occupied Minds: A Journey through the Israeli Psyche, by Arthur Neslen, (Pluto Press, 2006) ISBN 0-7453-2365-0.

Israel and Settler Society by Veracini Lorenzo (Pluto Press, 2006) ISBN 0-7453-2500-9

By John Yandell

In this country, we are bombarded with cliché-ridden, sentimental, guilt-inducing accounts of the state of Israel (Linda Grant's execrable *The People on the Street: a writer's view of Israel* is a recent case in point). Three newly-published books from Pluto Press offer much more complicated, thought-provoking perspectives.

In *Israel and Settler Society*, Lorenzo Veracini takes on the argument that the state of Israel is unique. This claim, underpinned by notions of a chosen people, is an important buttress in the edifice of Zionism because it denies the very possibility of analogy. Without such comparative perspectives, judgement, analysis and critique become well-nigh impossible. But, as Veracini points out, exactly the same claim of uniqueness, and of a God-given historic destiny, informed the settler ideology of Afrikaaner

nationalism: in South Africa, as in Israel, the settler society was grounded in a myth of indigenous absence, of a 'land without a people.'

Veracini explores, most persuasively, the parallels between the operation of the Pass Laws in South Africa and the "racialized system of mobility represented by settler-only roads – associated with a corresponding and generalised pattern of mobility limitations continuously in place for Palestinians: curfews, closures, roadblocks, etc."

The characterisation of Israel as an apartheid state might not

be news, but Veracini demonstrates the strength of the analogy at the level of policy and practice. More original, perhaps, are the parallels that he draws between Israeli settler society and the histories of Algeria and Australia. In considering the French colonial attitude to Algeria, Veracini foregrounds

the bankruptcy of attempts to substitute military for political goals – policies that are echoed in the actions of successive Israeli governments.

When he turns to Australia, Veracini considers the parallel with Israel in terms of a contested history – the chasm that separates the settlers' myth of an empty land and the indigenous people's collective memory of the founding violence of the

settler state – the Naqba: "In both cases the state has ultimately failed to become the state of all its citizens but has remained in many ways the state of a colonial project."

Where Veracini is more tendentious is in his claim that US support for Israel stems ultimately from the "settler-determined consciousness of a specific republican tradition." At this point, perhaps, there's a danger that Veracini is over-egging the pudding – and underestimating America's strategic interests in the Middle East.

Daniel Dor's *The Suppression of Guilt* shares an interest in the ideological (de)formation of the Israeli state, but focuses on the operation of the media, in particular its representation of the military occupation of the West Bank in 2002 – the systematic state violence that went under the Orwellian name of Operation Defensive Shield. Israeli press and television coverage of the occupation included a variety of political perspectives, some of which were bitterly critical of Sharon and of the IDF – Amira Hass' searing reports from Jenin, published in Ha'aretz, are an obvious example of this. What Dor's careful analysis reveals, however, is how such coverage was shaped, how news was framed so as to marginalise and suppress unpalatable truths. It matters that Hass'

reportage was buried in section B of the newspaper, just as, more generally, the meanings of any news item are as much the product of where the item appears, how it is headlined, how its message is shaped by a wider editorial context as it is of the journalist's words.

Emerging out of Dor's survey is a consistent picture, a homogeneity of treatment across apparently very different newspapers and television channels. Even when the Israeli media are, in effect, forced to acknowledge the terrible deeds being perpetrated in the Occupied Territories, these actions are presented as exceptions, as accidents, as acts without agency. By these means, Dor argues, Israeli society is able to suppress its guilt.

Dor's presentation of the Israeli media is persuasive; less so is his argument that the media constructs and maintains a national consensus. Arthur Neslen's *Occupied Minds* makes it seem highly unlikely that any such project could succeed. Neslen's book consists of a series of biographical snapshots of Israeli men and women, largely in their own words. Subtitled *A Journey through the Israeli Psyche*, it presents a collective consciousness so fractured, so tormented as to invite the

diagnosis of multiple personality disorder.

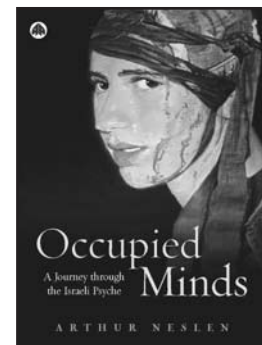
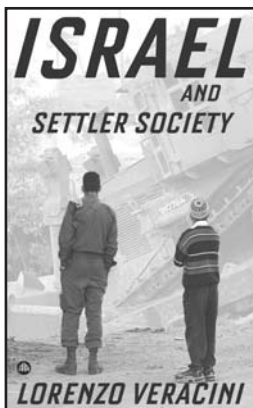
There is "Sammy", the young man who talks with absolutely chilling frankness of his time in the IDF:

"I didn't

humiliate Palestinians most of the time, but I stood by and did nothing while it happened. A very few soldiers in my unit were critical but I wasn't one of them. I was just a good soldier in the most banal sense of the phrase.

"I didn't think I was someone evil. I had become the essence of evil without even thinking about it."

There's Matan Cohen, a member of Anarchists against



the Wall, who comments, "It's ridiculous that Israelis feel like victims when you see tanks – shooting at children throwing stones." And there's the remarkable honesty of Dov Yirmiya, who as a battalion commander in the Naqba had tried to court martial one of his commanders for mass murder. Referring to a recent opinion poll in which 65 per cent of Israelis wanted Arabs to be transferred, he says: "We were transferred once. How can we utter that word? As long as there is no justice, how can I be proud?"

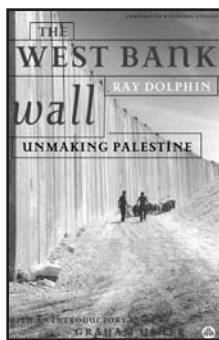
But these views, as Neslen acknowledges, are wildly unrepresentative. The picture that he paints is one of a society riven by divisions and prejudices – Mizrahim against Ashkenazim, secular against ultra-orthodox Jews, new arrivals from Russia against those who were born in Israel. What permeates almost every page is the most deep-seated racism. It is there in the director of the Israeli Law Centre's response to Neslen's question, What goes through your mind when I say the word 'Palestinians?': "There is no such thing (laughs)." It's there in the casual cynicism with which a security guard describes his day-job, supervising the demolition of Arab houses in Jaffa. And it's there in the calm matter-of-factness with which Yonatan, a fundamentalist settler in the West Bank, outlines his views:

"Occupation has become a filthy word. It has such negative connotations, but when Joshua led the people of Israel through Jordan, he was supposed to conquer, occupy and even destroy the people if he needed to. That was the commandment, you know? A Palestinian people whose capital is Jerusalem is the most made-up thing I ever heard. These aren't ancient tribes. They're just people who fought us."

There may be, as Lorenzo Veracini observes, no easy way out of a colonial situation. *Occupied Minds* shows us the impossible inhumanity of life in a colonial society – and the futility of looking to that society to produce, unilaterally, any lasting solution.

The impact of the Wall

The West Bank Wall, Unmaking Palestine by Ray Dolphin, Introduction by Graham Usher. Published by Pluto



By Victoria Brittain

The Israeli Security Wall annexes ten per cent of the West Bank. It will be 670 kilometres long when it is finished, though it would have been only 315 km if all of it had been built along the armistice line of 1949, the Green Line, instead of only 20 per cent. The actual length of the Wall tells the story of this immensely destructive new factor in Palestinian lives, which winds through the West Bank, separating people from their land and livelihoods, cutting towns off from their neighbours, making many work places, schools, and hospitals, only accessible through gates opened irregularly by Israeli soldiers.

Forty nine thousand Palestinians will be left in limbo on the Israeli side of the Wall when it is completed. Sixty five thousand Palestinians will face a daily commute through 11 transit points where biometric screening will be used. Sixty to seventy thousand Jerusalem ID card holders live outside the Wall, and thousands of them are moving inside it for fear of arbitrarily losing their right to the ID. This is creating serious over-crowding among the 130,000 Palestinians who live within the wall being built around East Jerusalem. The direct impact on hundreds of thousands of people is the crushing of lives.

Tunnels are being built to link Palestinian areas, and the Orwellian phrase "transportational contiguity" is used by Israeli policy makers to replace the idea that Palestinians need territorial contiguity for a state.

Of all the facts on the ground Israeli governments have created over the years of

illegal settlements, house demolitions, settler-only roads, checkpoints, closures, and the tangle of permits which constrain Palestinian lives, none have been as devastating, as brutal, and as ambitious as the Wall. One of its aims is that tens of thousands of Palestinians simply move away from the unviable homes with no work, which the Wall has created.

The Wall was begun in 2002 and was described as a temporary Security Fence. Today it is sometimes literally a huge wall, in other places an electronic fence topped with razor wire, and with ditches and patrol roads on either side, which sends signals to the military if anyone touches it.

To build it the Israelis have destroyed tens of thousands of Palestinian olive trees and annexed uncounted hectares of Palestinian land, and important water supplies. This land is often around the major illegal settlements, and allows for their continued expansion in defiance of the effectively defunct Roadmap which Western leaders constantly urge the Palestinians to respect.

John Dugard, the UN's Special Rapporteur, has put it like this: "What we are presently witnessing in the West Bank is a visible and clear act of territorial annexation to Israel of the major settlement blocs, which had been implanted throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem in contravention of international law."

In July 2004 the International Court of Justice ruled that the Wall was illegal. The ruling was ignored by the Israeli government, and effectively ignored by all the Western governments who have the power to end Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, but instead choose to focus on other aspects of the conflict. In international law all states are under an obligation not to

recognise the illegal situation.

The lack of international outrage about the Wall and its effect on Palestinian lives today and its political implications for the Palestinian future, is deeply shaming to the West. More important, the Wall itself, and the passivity of the rest of the world before the outrage, is causing a continuous radicalisation among the Palestinians themselves, and among the hundreds of thousands of young Muslims across the world who identify with their suffering.

Ray Dolphin has been a close observer of the unravelling of Palestinian hopes along with their economy, as an aid worker in the Occupied Territories for 15 years. His travels to the towns and villages most seriously affected by this new catastrophe gives this book impeccable detail. The clear UN maps also tell the story graphically.

This book is essential reading for anyone concerned to understand what is going on in the Occupied Territories today. Graham Usher, one of the best journalists working in Israel and Palestine, lays out the grim present and possible future in his excellent introduction: "Israel's entire purpose behind the policies of demographic separation, autonomy and the Wall has been to prevent the 'nightmare' of a binational unitary state."

Usher underlines how the future envisaged by Sharon's strategy is a provisional state, whether imposed or negotiated, in which the PA's role would be that of a vast municipality, payer of salaries and provider of services. "It would never be economically viable, politically independent, internally democratic or territorially sovereign. It would be a state doomed to politicide, not least for the lack of a leadership that would agree to it." In fact a future which means the "liquidation of the Palestinian cause", with the West Bank and Gaza as leftovers from the new shape of Israel, to become annexes of Jordan and Egypt.

Rosemarie Said-Zahlan

'A woman who had no enemies'

Rosemarie Said Zahlan, who died on May 10 in London, was one of the foremost academic historians of the Gulf states. She was the author of the first account of the 1938 Reform Movement in Dubai, and in addition to her books on Qatar and the origins of the United Arab Emirates, she researched and wrote prolifically on the linkage between the Gulf states and Palestine. She also published studies on such widely different subjects as the 19th century Red Sea route to India, Saudi relations with the other Gulf states, Anglo/American rivalry in the Gulf, the socio-economic impact of the early oil concessions, and was a sharp critic of imperial pressures in the region.

She also wrote for a number of academic and journalistic outlets, such as the Financial Times, the Middle East Journal, the International Journal of Middle East Studies, and the Encyclopedia of Islam.

Like her elder brother, the late Edward Said, Rosemarie's Palestinian identity was central to her life. She was stamped from an early age by the experience of cousins, aunts and friends who were refugees from Palestine in 1948, and she married a Palestinian academic from Haifa, Tony Zahlan. She was an Anglican and a US citizen, but Palestine was in her heart, and she brought her intellect to a close analysis of every detail of negotiations, political infighting, and the Western policy she so wanted to see change.

Although her style was more behind-the-scenes than Edward's, she was equally involved in the struggle for justice for Palestinians on many fronts. Like him she was a patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the UK. She took an active part in shaping the content of meetings, and was an excellent listener, and a builder of consensus among different constituencies and interests. Despite her fragile health she participated as much

as possible in working for the Palestinian cause. She was particularly active, with her husband, in founding and working for the Gaza Library Project, which campaigned to send books to Palestine.

Rosemarie, the oldest of four sisters, was born in Egypt. Her father, Wadie Said, a Palestinian Anglican, had emigrated to the US before the First World War, and returned to the Middle East with American nationality, to establish his business.

'Although her style was more behind-the-scenes than Edward's, she was equally involved in the struggle for justice for Palestinians on many fronts. Like him she was a patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the UK'

In her brother's memoir, *Out of Place* (1999), Edward described the privileged childhood of their wealthy, westernised, family in Egypt, from which he was wrenched and sent to the US for education.

Wadie Said always encouraged his children's pursuit of higher education, and Rosemarie had an especially warm and close relationship with him.

Like Edward, she was deeply musical, and her first degree was in musicology, at the US college of Bryn Mawr. A serious car accident broke several vertebrae and stopped her playing piano as a serious hobby, but she took intense pleasure from others' playing. Music was just one strand of her cultural interests, which included going to almost every new play in London, and, with Tony, collecting modern Arab painting.



After Bryn Mawr she taught for a while in Cairo, then went to live in Beirut, giving courses on cultural history at the American University of Beirut and the Beirut College for Women. She then moved to London to do her PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Her subject was the 18th century history of the Red Sea route to India, and its pioneer, George Baldwin, whose biography she was working on when she died suddenly from an infection which she fought in intensive care for three weeks.

She had lived in London for over 36 years, and was completely at home here, though she travelled frequently to Washington to work in the US archives, and to be with her sister Grace, Edward, and other members of the family who were living there, and to Beirut, where she had two sisters, Jean and Joyce. The family was extremely close, each closely in touch with each other's work.

Rosemarie was blessed with a serenity and confidence about her work and herself. She warmly appreciated everyone's contribution, and was loved by all who knew her. She empathised with people and accepted her many friends around the world and enjoyed their talents and company in a completely non-judgmental way. She maintained close ties to childhood, college, and professional acquaintances, as well as members of her extended family scattered around the globe. She was a woman who had no enemies, no critics, only people trying to please her.

Victoria Brittain

Rosemarie Said Zahlan, born August 20 1937, died 10 May 2006. She is survived by her husband Tony, her stepdaughter Amal and her sisters, Jean, Joyce and Grace.

'Jerusalem'
by
Leila Shawa



Laila Shawa
Jerusalem



Platform for Art

Signed and limited edition print produced for the
'Occupied Space — Art for Palestine' exhibition.
A few copies still available from the PSC office
— £75/ Tel: 020 7700 6192.

Trees for Life



Planting Peace in Palestine

Olive Co-operative's Trees For Life – Planting Peace in Palestine programme, in partnership with the Palestine Fair Trade Association and Zaytoun, offers the opportunity to sponsor the planting of olive trees in Palestine.

The new trees will offset the destruction wrought in Palestinian olive groves by the Israeli army and settlers. According to the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem, over 500,000 olive trees have been destroyed since 2000. Each new tree sponsored represents a long-term source of income for Palestinian families, who have been harvesting olive oil, fruit and wood for generations.

The trees will be distributed in Palestine by the PFTA to farmers who follow fair trade guidelines and who will benefit from future purchases of Palestinian olive oil.

£20 will sponsor five trees.

Sponsorship online and by phone is available from
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Affiliation fees for Trade Unions and other organizations are: £25 local; £50 regional; £100 national.

To cover the additional costs of overseas membership please pay the equivalent of US\$35 in your local currency

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Boycott Day Of Action*

- **Nationally co-ordinated events including supermarket pickets, stalls, meetings, leafleting and the boycott bus.**

- **Please ring the office 0207 700 6192 for leaflets and stickers.**

- **If there is no PSC branch near you, please order leaflets and go with friends to your local supermarket to hand them out.**

- **BOYCOTT — the non-violent response to Israeli apartheid and occupation.**

“Sanctions, divestment and boycotts are absolutely legitimate means at everyone’s disposal for effectively opposing injustice,”

— Jeff Halper, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAH).

***Be inspired by Kathy as an orange alongside Hackney’s boycott bus at the last national event in December.**

June 24th

**National Boycott Day —
have you made plans
for local actions?**

