



Youth demands unity



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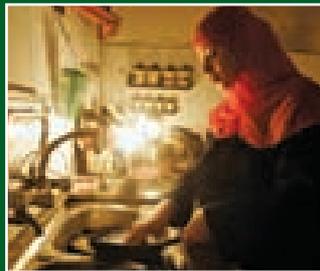
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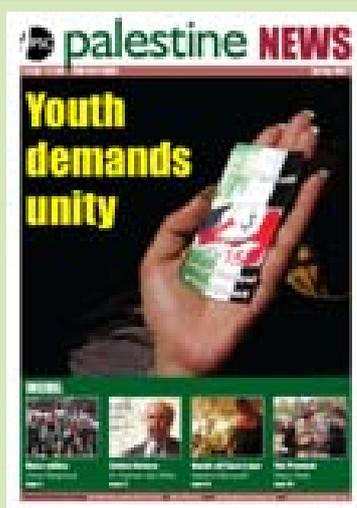
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Cover image: Demonstrator at rally in Gaza, 15 March.

Photo: Ali Jadallah,
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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 anti-semitism and racism, including the apartheid and Zionist nature of the Israeli state

Seize the day

Turmoil in the Middle East and Israel's intransigence are creating opportunities that both the solidarity movement and the Palestinians must grasp with both hands, says Betty Hunter.

People power in the Middle East is the most important international political development since the fall of the Soviet Union. The outcomes may not yet be clear but the revolutions and uprisings in so many countries will affect the way that the region sees itself and the way the people see themselves. The mass actions demonstrate a refusal to be under the thumbs of tyrants, monarchs and feudal systems and the people are finding their own voices. And those voices will undoubtedly be raised in support of the people of Palestine.

The end results may not be replicas of western democracy but they must meet the aspirations of the people for freedom of speech, freedom of choice and economic, social and political development. Palestinian statehood and full national, political rights are issues which concern all of the populations in the Middle East, as they see their neighbours' oppression as a glaring example of the double standards exercised by western democracies. Both established leaders and emerging leaders in the Middle East will be expected to challenge Israel's traditional impunity.

The immediate reaction of the Palestinian Authority to try to suppress Palestinian support for the uprisings seems incomprehensible, but the exposure through the Palestine Papers and Wikileaks (p6) of the extent of US control cannot be disguised, no matter how many excuses of "context" are raised. The recent US veto in the UN against a resolution simply reiterating President Obama's avowed policy of a settlement freeze exposed yet again the intimate, seemingly indissoluble links between the US administration and Israel. We discovered that even aid is used by the Palestinian marionettes to create security for Israel rather than economic and social development for Palestinians.

Alastair Crooke in a recent article (p5) describes the success of the Israeli

state since the Oslo Accords in creating a situation in which false and moving parameters have allowed continuous prevarication: not only have facts on the ground been established but divisions among the Palestinian leadership have been intensified.

Having been won over to parliamentary democracy, Hamas were punished for their success in the election with a five-year siege, with devastating humanitarian consequences. And the PA has been encouraged to turn a blind eye. Siege is a word associated with all-out warfare, yet our governments have allowed the barbaric treatment by Israel of the Palestinians in Gaza to go unchecked despite pious resolutions and statements.

However, while Israel once expected to enjoy unassailable support, the recent UN vote was unanimous — apart from the US. The increasing success of the international campaign to isolate Israel through boycott, divestment and sanctions has provoked Israel to pass laws outlawing Israelis and others who are active in boycott campaigns. They are delighted by the recent partial retractions of Judge Goldstone (p21), yet this only demonstrates the lengths to which they will go in hounding critics.

A recent BBC international poll showed Israel was rated among the least popular countries in the world, with only 21 per cent

seeing it in a positive light. This figure will no doubt increase as Israeli intransigence and greed for expansion continues to be exposed and as the latest killing spree in Gaza, callously named Operation Scorching Summer, is documented in horrific detail by the more independent TV channels.

Since the Israeli government refused to agree to Saeb Erekat's astonishing concessions, as outlined in the Palestine Papers, there should be no doubt of the insincerity of any calls for so-called peace talks from a government bent on more settlement building and increasingly violent attacks on the besieged people of Gaza. The growing international support for Palestine and the impetus for change in the Middle East must be used positively to help change history for the Palestinian people.

Richard II from his prison bemoaned: "I have wasted time and now doth time waste me." The Palestinian people are all imprisoned by Israel's occupation and Israel has been allowed to waste the time of the Palestinian people while it builds what it hopes to be an impregnable Jewish state.

The leaders of all Palestinian parties and representatives of the grassroots Palestinian campaigns of resistance must recognise that time is running out. They must prepare the ground — now — for the September UN resolution, which will be calling for recognition of a Palestinian state, by issuing a broad, united appeal to the international community. The world is ready to hear that call.

“The impetus for change in the Middle East must be used positively to help change history for the Palestinian people”



Carlos Latuff

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Young protesters demand end of Oslo

The revelations in the Palestine Papers have fundamentally changed the political landscape in Palestine, chiefly by destroying any remaining shreds of credibility in the leadership and by inspiring thousands of young protesters to demand unity, **Omar Barghouti**, co-founder of the Boycott National Committee, told *Palestine News*.

The immediate reaction to the news breaking on Al Jazeera TV was “massive” said Barghouti. “For once mainstream journalists and analysts attacked the PLO and the PA very strongly on the issue of accountability. Youth movements went on the streets in impromptu protests, not organised by any party.

“At first there were small groups of 20 or 30 coming out in solidarity with the protesters in Tunisia and Egypt but they grew over time to a couple of thousand and turned more to attacking the PA. They began to call for ending the Oslo accords and for stopping the security co-ordination with Israel.

“That has been a completely taboo subject up to now. It would be like the UK calling for the end of the monarchy. But security co-ordination is increasingly seen as Israeli security being delivered by Palestinian hands.”

The PA reacted to demonstrations with heavy-handed police action. “They hit little kids from school and video-taped everyone. They were very scared by events in Egypt,” said Barghouti. They tore down Tunisian and Egyptian flags and forbade the printing of new ones — an order that was openly defied by young protesters.

The protests led to the resignation in February of Saeb Erekat, leader of the negotiating team since Yasser Arafat’s death in 2004. “He was deeply hated across the board so was the perfect scapegoat for the PLO which hoped his going would end the protests, but it didn’t.”

Anger was fuelled further by the US veto of the UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories. “On the night of the veto there was a rally in Ramallah involving all parties — Fatah was there in force. People called the US and Israel ‘partners in crime’ and the US flag was burned.”

Barghouti said he believed that now a “solid majority” of Palestinians opposed negotiations with the Israelis. He added that elections, proposed by Mahmoud Abbas for September, were “off the agenda” because the fact they would not include Gaza and Hamas was unacceptable in the new climate.

“It is not just Hamas in opposition any more. The Palestine Papers gave credence to what left wingers have been saying for a long time and has led to the revival of some left groups who are trying to emphasise their differences from the PA. Even Fatah is



Saeb Erekat reacting to the revelations

pointing out that it is not the same as the PA. No-one wants to own the PA any more.”

He believed the US and Israel would keep the PA going, “by force if necessary,” because it was acting as a “sub-contractor for the occupation.” He thought it likely Mahmoud Abbas will soon be ousted and that PM Salam Fayyad was “the only factor that the US and Israel will maintain at any cost.”

Though the Palestine Papers were devastating for the Palestinian leadership, Barghouti believes the major focus should be on the role of the Israelis who were revealed to have “no interest in peace.”

And he said Egyptian-style mass protests would not happen in Palestine mostly because the occupation controlled every aspect of life but also because it felt “treacherous” to be tearing their own leadership apart when the major problem was the occupation.

“The grass roots youth groups are trying to play with this balance and to co-ordinate their actions. They start with demanding the end of the occupation and settlements and lead on to demanding the end of Oslo.”



Demos on 15 March called for unity

A temporary life... for ever

The Palestine Papers reveal how Tony Blair abandoned the lessons on how to build peace, learned with such pain in Northern Ireland, and obeyed the US demand to try to obliterate Hamas. In a recent essay in the *London Review of Books*, British diplomat, **Alastair Crooke**, argued that this policy served Israel's goals and betrayed the interests of the Palestinians.

It was at a Downing Street meeting in 2003 that Alastair Crooke realised that something had fundamentally changed. Then foreign minister, Jack Straw, burst in to announce triumphantly that he had persuaded Joschka Fischer, the German foreign minister, to add Hamas to the EU list of terrorist movements.

Crooke, who was Middle East adviser to EU foreign policy leaders from 1997 to 2003, wrote in his essay, "Permanent Temporariness," that what shocked him was "the elation with which Straw greeted the banning." He said that, once on the list, it was almost impossible for an organisation to be removed and the "consequences for diplomacy, for the politics of peace-making, would be profound, possibly irreversible."

Officially the EU remained committed to a political solution "but it now seemed that two key member states were heading in the opposite direction — towards a militarised resolution. The wind had changed."

Crooke had already realised that his efforts at building popular consent across all parties in Palestine, including Hamas, were out of favour. Instead "the Islamic resistance in Palestine was to be neutralised, and psychologically defeated, by the massive display of Western force in Iraq, rather than brought into the political process. Britain and the US expected that the chastened Palestinians would then make the necessary concessions to Israel."

The foreign affairs adviser to the PM, Nigel Sheinwald, told Crooke angrily that "security in Palestine could be achieved by eradicating the 'virus' of Hamas from Gaza and eliminating its 'disease' from the region. He had no interest in helping to create legitimate Palestinian security services, representative of a cross-section of the community.

"The language was Washington's. The Palestinian conflict was seen not as a problem in its own right, but as a subset of a war against extremism... (George) Bush... complained that he did not see peace-building as compatible with his 'war on terror.'"

Crooke says the shift in the British position undermined the EU's commitment to promoting Palestinian unity. "The result was that when Hamas — rather than being demoralised or psychologically defeated by shock and awe in Baghdad — comfortably won the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections, the EU was forced into a militarised security response. The new commitment to counter-



A young man makes his feelings known. Photo: Ken O'Keefe

insurgency meant that there was no prospect of exploring the political possibilities of Hamas's win."

The Palestine Papers reveal how leading European states were "ramping up their covert strategy to destroy Hamas militarily... there was huge investment in training and security infrastructure, prisons were built to allow for the possible internment of Hamas members, the Dayton military battalions were established with the aim of confronting Hamas and plans were laid to depose the organisation in Gaza and assassinate its leaders. Even the Quartet dived in, working with the intelligence services of other Arab states to disrupt Hamas's sources of finance."

Crooke wrote that, since 2003, the emphasis has been on "trust-building" with Israel, involving security co-operation and "institution building." But he said the project "should be understood in the context of counter-insurgency... rather than as part of any genuine effort at 'good governance.'"

He said this was based on an American counter-insurgency doctrine whose principles include "building a ruling elite to carry out the occupier's plan; establishing security services accountable only to that elite; concentrating economic control within that elite; and setting up a generous aid policy which sustains a 'trickle-down legitimacy' for that elite..."

"In return, the Palestinians have been promised a depoliticised 'state' hardly worthy of the name and subservient to Israel. Perhaps, in such a state, a new Palestinian middle class might live more comfortably; perhaps the visible tools of occupation and control over Palestinian life would be more discreetly concealed; but such 'statehood' would amount to little more than a more benign occupation."

The reason that both the West and the PA leadership put security first was that they were convinced that a two-state solution would eventually emerge "because it is in Israel's ultimate demographic interests that it should."

But Israel has come no closer to withdrawing to the 1967 borders because, Crooke wrote, "the premise is wrong." He interpreted Tzipi Livni's arguments in the Palestine Papers as saying she wanted Israel to be a Zionist state based on the Law of Return and open to any Jew.

"To secure such a state in a country with very limited territory means that land and water must be kept under Jewish control,



with differential rights for Jews and non-Jews — rights that affect everything, from housing and access to land, to jobs, subsidies, marriages and migration.”

If a Palestinian state were created, there would still be a non-Jewish minority in Israel which would “undermine it as a Jewish state. Israel’s only answer is to keep its borders undefined while holding on to scarce water and land resources, leaving Palestinians in a state of permanent uncertainty, dependent on Israeli goodwill.”

He said Ariel Sharon “pioneered the philosophy of ‘maintained uncertainty’ that repeatedly extended and then limited the space in which Palestinians could operate... (which) was intended to induce in the Palestinians a sense of permanent temporariness.

“Maintaining control of the Occupied Territories keeps open to Israel the option of displacing Palestinian citizens of Israel into the Territories by means of limited land swaps. It also ensures that Israel retains the ability to force future returning refugees to settle in their ‘homeland,’ whereas a sovereign Palestinian state might decline to accept the refugees. It suits Israel to have a ‘state’ without borders so that it can keep negotiating about borders and count on the resulting uncertainty to maintain acquiescence.”

Alastair Crooke is founder and director of the Conflicts Forum which advocates for engagement between political Islam and the West. He worked for MI6 and was a member of the Mitchell Committee into the causes of the Second Intifada.

■ The full essay, “Permanent Temporariness,” can be seen in London Review of Books, Vol 22, No 5. www.lrb.co.uk

Bad things happen...

The release of the Palestine Papers, leaked to Al Jazeera which shared them with The Guardian, is widely regarded as having finally killed off any remaining remnants of the “peace process.”

The 1600 documents were drawn up by Palestinian Authority officials and lawyers working for the British-funded PLO negotiations support unit and included protocols, maps and correspondence covering almost a decade of negotiations. They revealed that Palestinian negotiators became increasingly desperate as they offered concession after concession to the Israelis who rejected them all.

They also reveal that the US was not an honest broker in the negotiations but backed Israel all the way and often displayed a contemptuous attitude towards the Palestinians. And that British intelligence helped draw up a plan for a wide-ranging crackdown on Hamas which became a security blueprint for the Palestinian Authority.

The main revelations were:

- Palestinian negotiators agreed to accept Israel’s annexation of all of the illegal settlements in occupied East Jerusalem except Har Homa. With the backing of the US, foreign minister Tzipi Livni turned the offer down saying it did not “meet our demands.”
- PLO leaders suggested swapping part of the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah for land elsewhere.
- They also proposed a joint committee to take over the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount holy sites in Jerusalem’s Old City. Chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said it amounted to giving Israel “the biggest Yerushalayim [the Hebrew name for Jerusalem] in history.”
- Erekat abandoned the Right of Return for the refugees. He told the US Middle East envoy, George Mitchell: “On refugees, the deal is there.” To his own staff he said the deal was “1,000 refugees annually for the next 10 years.”
- The PA collaborated with Israel in extra-judicial assassinations of Palestinian opposition and resistance leaders and in cutting

Livni: “I am against law — international law in particular”

off the tunnels going into the Gaza Strip.

- Livni repeatedly pressed for the “transfer” of some of Israel’s Palestinian citizens into a future Palestinian state as part of a land-swap deal.
- Condoleezza Rice, then US secretary of state, suggested Palestinian refugees could be resettled in South America.
- The British intelligence plan, drawn up in conjunction with Whitehall officials in 2004, asked for the internment of leaders and activists, the closure of radio stations and the replacement of imams in mosques. It included detailed proposals for a security taskforce with “direct lines” to Israeli intelligence. The bulk of the plan has since been carried out by the PA security forces which are increasingly criticised for human rights abuses.
- All three parties in the negotiations agreed to push the United Nations Human Rights Council to delay a vote on the Goldstone report on Israel’s winter 2008–09 attack on the Gaza Strip. The PA thought they would get in exchange “favourable assurances on (peace) negotiations from the United States and, they hoped, from Israel.”
- There were suggestions, though not definitive proof, that the PA leadership was tipped off in advance about Israel’s attack

on Gaza.

- Current US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, refused to accept any Palestinian leadership except Mahmoud Abbas and the prime minister, Salam Fayyad, if it was to continue funding the PA.
- Livni said in 2007 that international law could not be included in terms of reference for the talks: “I was the minister of justice,” she said. “But I am against law – international law in particular.”
- Erekat accepted Israel as a Jewish state. He told Israeli negotiators: “If you want to call your state the Jewish state of Israel, you can call it what you want.”
- In talks over compensation for refugees, Rice told Palestinian negotiators: “Bad things happen to people all around the world all the time.”
- Clinton asked at a meeting with Erekat in 2009 why the Palestinians were “always in a chapter of a Greek tragedy.”

Campaign for Jerusalem

The PSC is to launch a new campaign to urge the world to unite to save Jerusalem as a shared city and the future capital of a Palestinian state.

All Palestinian lives are affected by Israel's occupation but in Jerusalem — Al Quds as it is known in the Arab world — Palestinian life and culture faces complete obliteration. Even the EU Heads of Mission — the consulates based in Jerusalem and Ramallah — have been moved to voice their serious concerns, saying that if "current trends are not stopped as a matter of urgency, the prospect of East Jerusalem as the future capital of a Palestinian state becomes increasingly unlikely and unworkable."

Jerusalem has always been central to Palestinian economic,



social, cultural, political and, of course, religious life so to cut out Jerusalem would cut the heart from Palestine. The city is also sacred to all Muslims, Christians and Jews and the campaign hopes to foster the support of people of all faiths and of none.

One of our first steps will be to launch a petition in late Spring. We will be asking branches to develop and extend links with faith communities, along with other activities, to deepen and broaden the backing for this initiative.

The official launch of the campaign will be on 28 June to coincide with the anniversary of Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. We will be asking people in civic and religious circles to take a stand against the persecution of Palestinians in Jerusalem and we will ask for action from political leaders to work to:

- Protect Palestinians' right to live in Jerusalem
- Prevent house demolitions
- Stop illegal settlement growth
- Safeguard freedom of worship for all faiths
- Recognise Jerusalem as a shared city and future capital of a state of Palestine

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Settlement construction condemned

Israeli plans to expand significantly the East Jerusalem settlement of Gilo have been emphatically condemned by the EU and even the United States. European Union Foreign Policy Chief, Catherine Ashton, said she was "deeply disappointed" by the move.

"The actions taken by the Israeli government contravene repeated and urgent calls by the international community, including the Quartet, and run counter to achieving a peaceful solution that will preserve Israel's security and realise the Palestinians' right to statehood," she said.

"I reiterate that the EU considers that settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, undermine trust between the parties and constitute an obstacle to peace."

A statement from the United States said, "not only are continued Israeli settlements illegitimate, Israel's actions run counter to efforts to resume direct negotiations."

But hours before he left for a visit to Washington in March, PM Binyamin Netanyahu said Israel would not restrict construction in East Jerusalem. He told his cabinet: "As far as we are concerned, building in Jerusalem is like building in Tel Aviv."

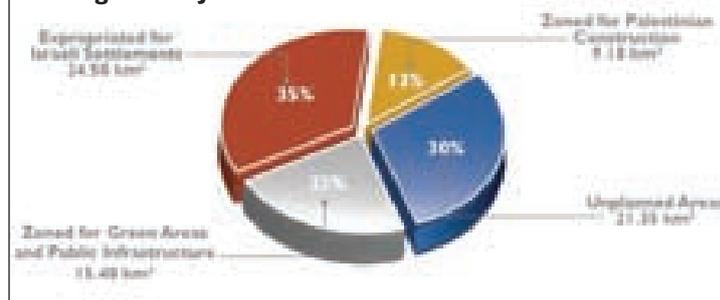
The Jerusalem Planning and Building Committee recently discussed the construction of 942 housing units in Gilo. The plan has already been approved at district level. The new development, called Gilo: Southern Slopes, will include public buildings, commercial buildings, roads and parks.

Gilo currently has a population of 40,000. The new project will extend it towards the Har Gilo settlement and begin the process of physically linking the large settlement community in East Jerusalem to Israel.

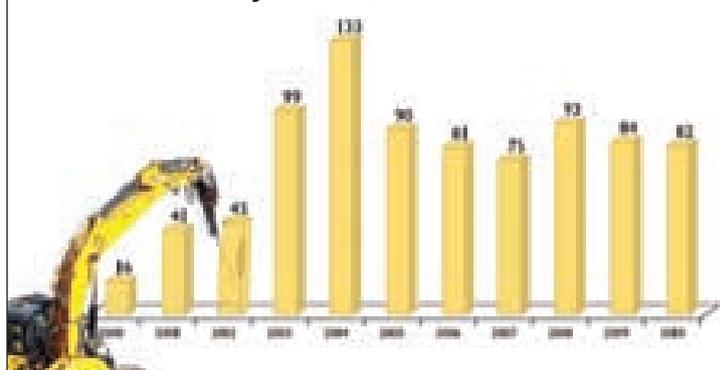
The Jerusalem Municipality has also decided to transform a police station in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud into a settlement outpost with approval for the construction of 14 housing units.

The building has been given to a religious settler group. A settlement financing group, known as the Buhkran Trust, have plans to build 104 apartments plus a synagogue, kindergartens, a swimming pool and an overpass that would link it with another outpost in Ras al-Amud that houses 200 settler families.

Zoning in East Jerusalem



Demolitions in East Jerusalem, 2000-2010



Egypt holds the key

The revolution has transformed the political map of the Middle East and brought hope to Palestine says Hilary Wise.

After its triumphant and almost bloodless revolution Egypt is once more taking its rightful place at the political and cultural heart of the region.

This role was relinquished when Sadat signed the Camp David treaty with Israel in 1979 and Egypt was expelled from the Arab League. Its isolation perfectly suited Israel and the US; the latter supported the Egyptian regime with huge sums, averaging \$2 billion a year since 1979. About two thirds of this was in the form of military aid. But it is now clear that much was also siphoned off into lucrative enterprises owned by the top generals — factories, real estate, farms, construction companies — so that about a third of Egypt's assets ended up in the hands of the military.

These rewards were not simply for refraining from any military or political opposition to Israel. Egypt guaranteed Israel full access to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea and a continued oil supply from Sinai. The regime also agreed to police Israel's southern border and later, to cooperate entirely in the siege of Gaza and in outlawing Hamas, which has close relations with Egypt's own Muslim Brotherhood. In recent years Mubarak strongly supported Mahmoud Abbas against Hamas although

(or perhaps because) the latter won the only free and fair elections in the region in decades.

A “respected” collaborator

Israel's closest colleague and ally among the Egyptian ruling elite was undoubtedly Omar Suleiman, frequently referred to in the Israeli and Western media as “distinguished” and “respected.” He was Israel's and America's preferred successor to Mubarak — even as the full extent of his collaboration and brutality was being revealed. As Head of Intelligence he reportedly went way beyond the call of duty in his assiduous attention to the detail of the torture inflicted on both Egyptian dissidents and on prisoners flown in from the US for interrogation under the extraordinary rendition programme with the CIA.

“There will be no elections... we will take care of it”

As minister responsible for Israeli-Palestinian affairs he had a hot line to Israel's head of security and could be relied upon to keep the border with Gaza hermetically sealed, to imprison or hand over Palestinian “suspects” and to act as Fatah's covert champion in talks supposedly aimed at healing the rift with Hamas. (When it had looked as if Hamas would do well in the 2006 elections, Suleiman promised Israel's security chief, Amos Gilad, that there “will be no elections

in January. We will take care of it” — although he was unable to deliver on that occasion.)

He also took on personal responsibility for “cleansing” the Sinai of all smuggling activity and supervised the building of the steel “Wall of Shame” 25 metres deep along the border with Gaza, to block any tunnelling.

Demonising the people of Gaza

To justify its policy on Gaza and to counter the Egyptian people's natural empathy with Palestinian suffering, the Egyptian regime constantly tried to present the people of Gaza as a “threat to national security.” This campaign reached fever pitch when the Gazans broke through the Wall in 2008, although it was clear they were desperate to obtain food, medicine and other essentials and had no intention of staying in Egypt.

Even internal sectarian strife, such as the bombing of the Coptic church on New Year's Eve in Alexandria, was blamed on Hamas infiltrators. Mubarak's trump card — relentlessly played to a succession of US presidents — was to present himself as an indispensable bulwark against the rising tide of violent Islamism in the region. When the revolution came the regime tried the same scare tactics, although it was patently clear that this was a popular revolution in the broadest possible sense with even the Muslim Brotherhood taking a back seat.

Thanks to Al Jazeera and other Arabic-language TV channels, the Egyptian people were able to witness directly the horrors inflicted on Gaza during Israel's onslaught in 2008–2009, of which Mubarak had prior knowledge. Demonstrations in support of the Palestinians were brutally suppressed and the foreign aid convoys attempting to take supplies into Gaza fared little better. All this conspired to add shame to the rage felt by the Egyptian people at the corruption of their rulers.

Tied by trade

Egypt was not only a willing partner policing Israel's southern border and helping to perpetuate Palestinian disunity; Israel realised it could be a convenient milch cow. Since 1979 dozens of “normalisation agreements” were signed between the two countries, increasing economic and cultural ties. The most important was the setting up of ten Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) or free-trade zones in Lower Egypt in 2005,



Omar Suleiman and then Israeli PM Ehud Barak



Young Egyptian demonstrator. Photo: www.demotix.com

following a similar accord between Israel and Jordan in the late 1990s.

The deal, largely involving the garment industry, allowed Egypt to send duty-free exports to the United States — so long as their manufacture was at least 10.5 percent Israeli. It was obviously not the case that Egyptian workers were incapable of adding buttons to shirts or patch pockets to jeans: in effect, QIZs were a carrot-cum-stick to boost Israel's trade and help tie Egypt's economic interests to those of Israel. Through this system, Egyptian exports to the US totalled more than \$1 billion in 2010 alone.

Since 2008 Egypt has also been exporting natural gas to Israel at rock-bottom prices, although it has access to more profitable markets in the Middle East and Europe. Again, one can assume US pressure.

The way forward?

Politically and economically Egypt holds trump cards in relation to Israel but it is also subject to colossal constraints. With so many overwhelming domestic issues — economic, social, political, demographic — waiting to be tackled, in foreign policy caution will be the name of the game. Moreover the army will be reluctant to relinquish either its king-making or money-spinning roles and will be keen to maintain close ties with former colleagues in Israel and the US.

the Mubarak regime and its true market value.

More crucially, al-Arabi, who was a judge in the International Court of Justice in The Hague and Egyptian ambassador to the United Nations, has said that a priority for the government is to end the five-year siege on the Gaza Strip, “which is contrary to the rules of international humanitarian law which prohibits the siege of civilians, even in times of war.”

“A priority is to end the five-year siege on the Gaza Strip”

A full opening of the borders could be considered by Israel to be a ‘casus belli,’ since arms could then enter Gaza freely. However, Mohammed Baradei, candidate for the Egyptian presidency and once backed by the US as a safe pair of hands, warned that “if Israel attacked Gaza we would declare war against the Zionist regime.”

Of Sadat's treaty with Israel, al-Arabi said: “We abide by it, but it must be properly implemented by both parties.” He mentioned specifically the clause based on UN Resolution 242, which commits Israel to withdrawing to the pre-'67 borders, saying: “Israel is building settlements on lands from which it must withdraw, according to Resolution 242.”

At a recent meeting with a top Iranian official, al-Arabi also accepted an official invitation to visit Iran and said Egypt was ready to move towards the resumption of full diplomatic ties with Iran after the 30-year hiatus.

With so many indications that Egypt is forging an independent foreign policy, we have reason to hope that it will be strongly supportive of Palestinian rights. An urgent, vital step in this direction would be to back, actively and whole-heartedly, the Palestinian people's call for unity and political reconciliation.

However, it will be impossible to ignore the views of a democratically elected government — hopefully later this summer — and of the vast bulk of the conscript army.

Economic ties with Israel may be called into question, if only because Egyptian workers, hitherto unsupported by genuine trade unions, are calling for higher wages. (Currently factory workers get \$80–\$100 a month.) Already, Egypt's interim foreign minister, Nabil al-Arabi, has said that Israel should pay the difference between the reduced price paid for natural gas under



Pro democracy demo in Cairo's Tahrir Square

BBC silent on escalation of killings

For a few months after Operation Cast Lead, when over 1,400 Gazans were killed in three weeks up to January 2009, it looked as though the international outrage this provoked might have curbed the Israeli appetite for lethal violence. But in 2010 the death toll began to rise again: 68 killed in Gaza and 14 in the West Bank (including 9 children) by the IDF and settlers. In the same period five Israeli settlers were killed in the West Bank and two soldiers in Gaza.*

From the beginning of this year there has been a steep rise in Palestinian deaths — including the shooting of a number of young children who came within 300 metres of the perimeter fence. But this appears to be of little interest to the BBC. The indifference reached a peak in late March, when eight Palestinians, including two children, were killed and 35 injured in one sustained bombing raid on Gaza: there was no mention of this at all.

PSC monitors listened to every BBC newscast the following day but there was nothing — except a report of two rockets fired into Southern Israel from Gaza (no injuries or casualties). The next day the bomb blast that killed a woman in West Jerusalem was reported in detail by the BBC: name, age, profession, family situation, even the number of the bus she was waiting for.

Even when Palestinian deaths are reported, no details are given, only the barest statistics. Victims are faceless and nameless. Is the life of 17-year-old Yousef Fakhri Ikhlayl, shot in the head on 29 January by marauding settlers near Hebron, worthless? Or that of 66 year-old Omar Salim Suliman al-Qawasmeh, shot in his bed as he slept in the early morning hours by soldiers, who later said they just mistook him for someone else?

In this the BBC is following the dehumanising approach of the Israeli media. They also parrot Israel's official explanation following every killing spree — that this is purely in retaliation for rocket attacks from Gaza, regardless of the fact that these rarely cause damage or injury and often it is Israel that initiates the violence.

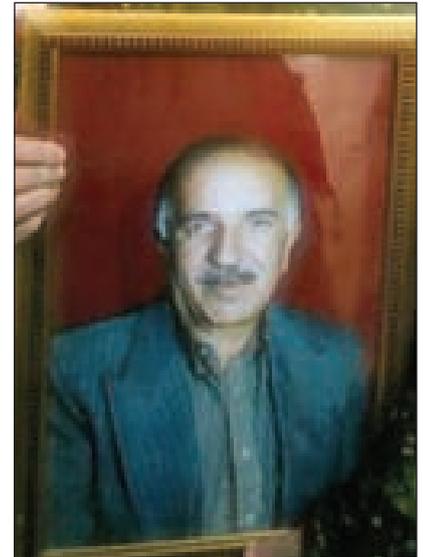
Another disturbing development is the BBC's increasing use of Israeli terminology when referring to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, calling them simply "the Territories." Are they loath to refer to the occupation? What next, one wonders. Will "the Territories" become "Judea and Samaria," will "settlements" become "neighbourhoods," as these are cosily referred to in the US media?

The BBC, the sole UK public service broadcaster, funded by the tax-payer, is committed to providing independent, accurate and objective coverage. But without sustained pressure from an

informed public it may well continue to show both indifference and bias during the coming months — which Israel has unashamedly announced as Operation Scorching Summer.

*These figures are supplied by the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem

If you would like to be involved in monitoring BBC coverage contact amena.saleem@palestinecampaign.org



Omar al-Qawasmeh, 66



17-year-old Yousef Fakhri Ikhlayl

They do have names...

The murder on 13 March of five members of a family of settlers, the Fogels, who believed in their divine right to live in the West Bank settlement of Itamar, was widely reported. To redress the balance a little, here are details of just a few of the 39 Palestinians who had been killed in the first three months of the year. There had already been a further 15 killed and 60 injured in April by the time Palestine News went to press.

On 17 February, in Gaza, the Israeli army killed Jihad Khalaf, 20, Talaat Al-Awagh, 25 and Ashraf Al-Kteifan, 29, who, according to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), were attempting to infiltrate into Israel to search for jobs. Agence France Presse (AFP) described the men as fishermen and said they had been hit by a tank shell and machine gun fire in an area close to both the shore and the northern border with Israel. No weapons were found near their bodies.

On 11 February, Hussam Rwidy, 24, was murdered by a number of young Jewish Israeli men. According to PCHR, while he was walking home from his work in West Jerusalem, an Israeli stabbed him in the face then others gathered and violently beat him. He died of his injuries a few hours later.

On 27 January, settlers shot dead 18-year-old Uday Maher Qadous, from Iraq Burin, southwest of Nablus. His cousin, who witnessed the murder, said four settlers opened fire on them from a nearby hilltop.

Nadine Marroushi

Costing the occupation

Shir Hever, economic researcher for the Palestinian-Israeli organisation, The Alternative Information Centre, spent six years examining the costs of the occupation to write his book, *The Political Economy of Israel's Occupation*. He met up with *Palestine News* during a UK speaking tour.



Despite the vast amount of aid which is poured into its coffers annually by the US, running the occupation is no longer a profitable business for Israel, according to Shir Hever.

By his estimation, the Israeli government spends \$3 billion a year on subsidies to settlers and \$6 billion a year on security. The total of \$9 billion counts for 9% of the national budget.

"This is not the entire cost of running the colonies. It is just the extra funds that are used to subsidise them, on top of what similar communities would cost to run if they were inside Israel," he says.

"And the cost is increasing very fast. My estimates were based on 480,000 settlers and there are now over half a million. The colonies are growing at a rate of 7% a year because of all the subsidies."

Hever reckons that since 1967 Israel has received \$135 billion in aid from the US while he calculates that the occupation has had a net cost of around \$100 billion. These figures reflect the fact that for the first 20 years Israel profited economically from oppressing the Palestinians. Now, he says, the situation has reversed.

The US government ploughs \$3 billion a year into Israel in order to keep a foothold in the Middle East. But Hever says the money mostly acts as a subsidy to American military manufacturers since Israel has to spend it on buying US weaponry.

The additional deluge of annual donations from Jewish organisations which qualify for tax breaks around the world are harder to track and this money benefits the Israeli economy more as it is spent within the country.

"It is your money that is being used to assist the Palestinians and you should look at what it is being used for"

When he set out to research the economics of the occupation, Hever says he soon realised that the complex reality was no respecter of borders and involved many different countries. "It is relevant to the British too. It is your money that is being used to assist the Palestinians and you should look at what it is being used for," he says.

Israel is the highest per capita recipient of aid in the world. Egypt comes second after the US pledged to hand over 60% of the same subsidy when it signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1978. Financial support to the Palestinians comes not far behind.

When the Palestinian Authority was

being formed in 1994, Hever says the European Union made a "strategic decision" to support the two state solution. "A lot of European countries have a lot to gain economically from peace in the Middle East," he says.

"But they were unwilling to put sanctions on Israel to force it to implement the Oslo accords. So they provided money to build a Palestinian state without any guarantees that it would be used for that. It was all carrot and no stick."

After the second intifada began in 2000, donors reacted by doubling aid to the Palestinians but switching the bulk of it from development to humanitarian projects. "By doing this they are taking on the burden that belongs to Israel which has the responsibility under humanitarian law of looking after the people it occupies."

Between 1994 and 2007 around \$7 billion was spent on development projects, mostly by the EU but also by Japan, the US and Arab countries, but "the overall effect was negative," says Hever, because so many of the projects have been destroyed, mostly by US-made weapons.

The occupation has many other costs including the expense to neighbouring nations of hosting Palestinian refugees, most of whom are unemployed, and the cost to the UN of education and health care — UNRWA spends \$600 million a year subsidising the occupation by providing such services.

Four "industrial zones" which are supposed to boost the Palestinian economy are being developed, two paid for by the French government, one by Germany and one by Japan. They are expected to employ a total of 20,000 people; wages will be fixed and no unions will be allowed, Hever says.

"It is a far cry from what the Palestinian economy needs — 20,000 new jobs need to be created every year just to keep pace with population growth so the zones won't make a big impact."

Up to now the Israeli public has been prepared to accept the costs of the occupation, but Hever wonders why the rest of the world should do the same. "In Europe people should be asking their MEPs whether the projects you are paying to build are being destroyed by the Israelis."

■ *The Political Economy of Israel's Occupation: Repression Beyond Exploitation*, by Shir Hever. Published by Pluto Press.



The remains of the EU-funded Gaza International Airport in Rafah. Photo by Kai Wiedenhofer (see p27)

Maps of a stolen history

Dr Salman Abu Sitta has devoted 20 years and infinite care and patience to producing his definitive *Atlas of Palestine 1917–1966*, which documents through maps how the land has been stolen from the Palestinians and much of their physical history obliterated. **Gill Swain** went to meet him at the book launch.

“What is a map? What does it do in history?” asked Dr Salman Abu Sitta. Answering his own question, he went on: “It is the birth certificate of a place and its identity card.”

In the case of Palestine, most of whose ancient villages and landmarks have been destroyed by a people intent on creating the myth that they never existed, this “birth certificate” is crucial not only to the fight for justice but to preserve the sense of identity of the Palestinian people.

That is why Dr Abu Sitta has lavished such love and care on creating his massive atlas, which is an updated and expanded version of his *Atlas of Palestine 1948*, published in 2004. The new book has 500 large scale map pages covering all of Palestine at different stages in its history and over 150 pages of analysis of the process of destruction, plus information on 1600 towns and villages, 16,000 landmarks and 30,000 place names.

The result is a book that disproves definitively the Zionists’ claim that early 20th century Palestine was “a land without a people.” It also tells the story of that people in the places that they named and of the enormous crime that was committed against them when those places were obliterated.



No maps, no monuments

Launching the new atlas in London in January, Dr Abu Sitta said that colonial powers usually made maps to chart natural resources and strategic points of defence. “The Zionists have different objectives — to take the land by military power, to expel the owners and to erase the memory of those owners. To do that there should be no maps, no monuments or shrines made by the people; all had to be destroyed.”

The process began after the Balfour Declaration of 1917 when Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann demanded from the British government a full survey of Palestine. “He wanted to know the legality of ownership of every dunum of land so that, if it was not owned, it could be declared ‘state land.’

“Most of the land was owned by ‘custom law’ and not registered in the modern sense.” The British tackled the problem by making a “pedestrian map” which involved walking around talking to people and, if there was a dispute over ownership, resolving it there and then.

At a conference in Versailles in 1919 to discuss the break-up of the Ottoman empire, the Zionists presented a map on which few of the Palestinian towns and villages were recorded. Marked on the map in their place was “grazing land for nomads.” The colonial powers knew this was a travesty but failed to challenge it.

Obliteration will never stop

After Israel was established in 1948, its first leader, David Ben Gurion, recognised that the expelled Palestinians had a fierce emotional attachment to their land and would fight to return. So he issued an order to “erase every name in Palestine and replace them with Jewish names,” said Dr Abu Sitta.

“Of the 1000 towns and villages in the part that became Israel, 900 were obliterated. It was the biggest and most comprehensive ethnic cleansing operation in modern history and it is a continuous process. It will never stop.”

His atlas features photographs taken from the air by the RAF in 1919 and aerial photographs from 1948, plus documents painstakingly gathered from more than 20 locations in the UK and other sources in the US and Germany.

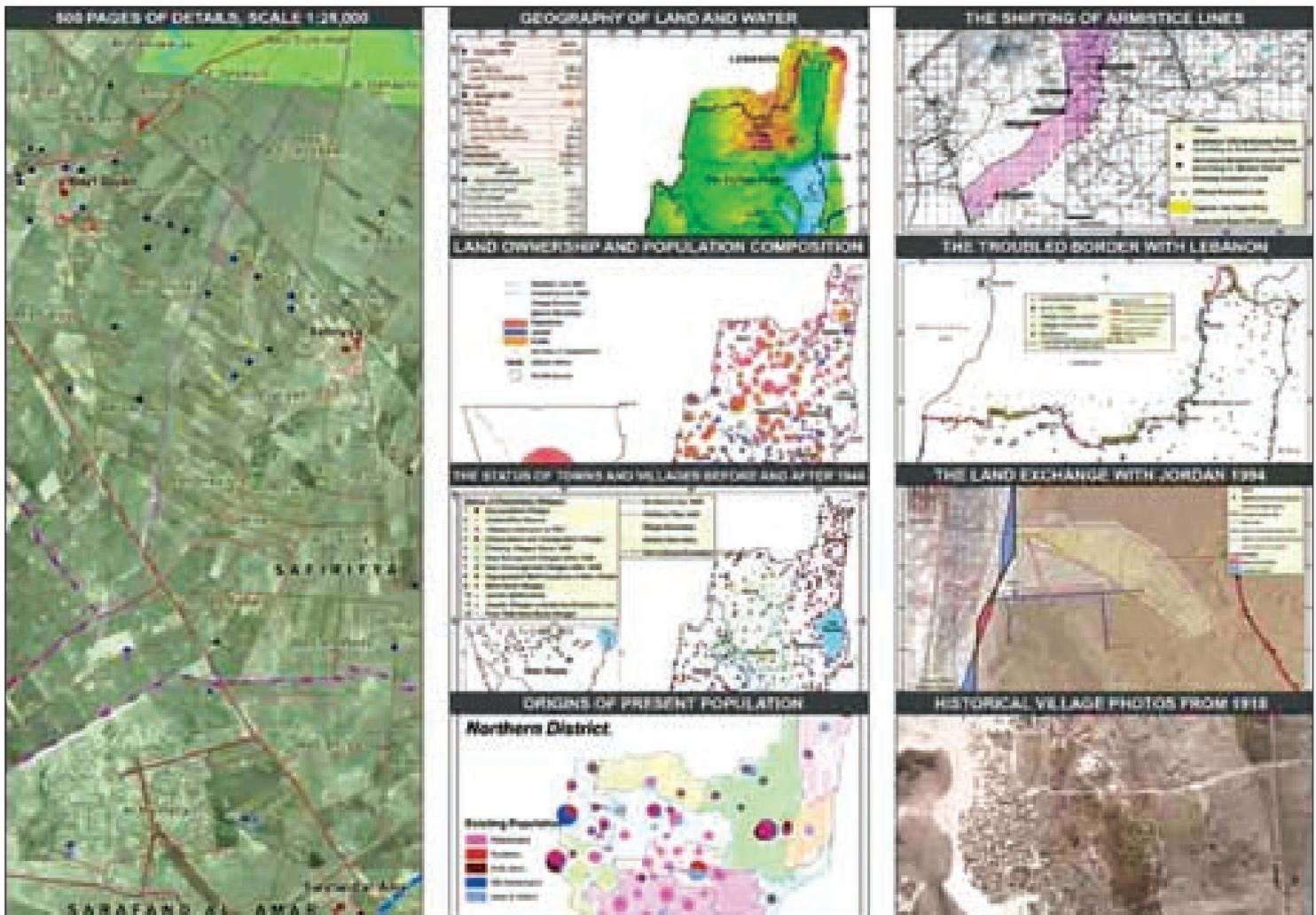
The amazing index of 46,000 landmarks and place names “describe the life the people created over thousands of years. They indicate things like what they planted, the animals they kept, the colour of the land, the relative location of villages, places where it was common to have a beard. I call it the social history of Palestine.

This is the history of humanity

“Ben Gurion said the people would die and forget about their land. It is true that people die but not before the father has told his son about the place he came from and what he had there.”

Dr Abu Sitta’s atlas contains 139 villages which were recorded on an ancient map made in 313 AD and which still existed with the same names in 1948. “This is not just the history of Palestinians, it is the history of humanity,” he said. In the process of erasing the Palestinians, the Israelis have also destroyed archaeological evidence of all ancient peoples, except where they can find evidence of Jewish inhabitants.

The atlas also reveals how relatively simple it



would be for Palestinian refugees to return to their ancestral land, according to Dr Abu Sitta. "We know where the people of each village are now and it is not true that there would not be room for them in present day Israel. Eighty four per cent of Jews live on 17% of Israel; the rest is almost empty.

This is a cry for justice

"The most important inhabitant of those areas is the Israeli army; they control 85% of the land. Israel is in effect a huge military

base where soldiers are custodians of the land that belongs to Palestinians."

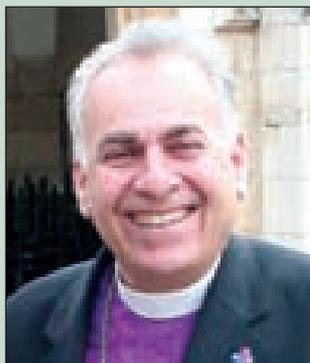
Dr Abu Sitta's aim in creating this fantastic historical record has been to "defy Ben Gurion's dream of erasing Palestine's memory and depriving the young from knowing their heritage and their home." He added: "This is a battle that is more lasting than political and military fights.

"Ben Gurion wanted to prove that we didn't exist. That we were a speck of dust in the train of history. We want to prove how criminal that is and how untrue. This is a cry for justice."

Bishop of Jerusalem threatened with expulsion

The Right Reverend Suhail Dawani, the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, has had his Jerusalem residence permit revoked by the Israeli Ministry of Interior, who have accused him of "acting with the Palestinian Authority in transferring lands owned by the Jewish people to the Palestinians and also [helping] to register lands of the Jewish people in the name of the church."

Bishop Dawani has vehemently denied the accusations. As yet the Israeli authorities have not produced any evidence against him. Since last August he tried to resolve the situation without publicity but then he was offered a temporary work permit — which he refused.



Interviewed on Radio 4's "Sunday" programme on 6 March, he said: "They offered a three month foreigner visa. It's very insulting to treat me as if I am a foreigner. I am an indigenous Christian. But I now have no legal status here — at any time they can come and ask me to leave."

Previously, all Anglican bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem who have not held Israeli citizenship have been granted residency permits to allow them to live in Jerusalem where the bishop's residence, diocesan offices and cathedral are located.

Israel's chief rabbi, Shlomo Amar, and Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, together with other members of the Anglican church, have complained to Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister.

Asked by Edward Stourton about the implications for the Christian community in the region, Bishop Dawani said: "It's a very bad indication that Christians are not welcome here." He is now taking legal action against the Israeli government.

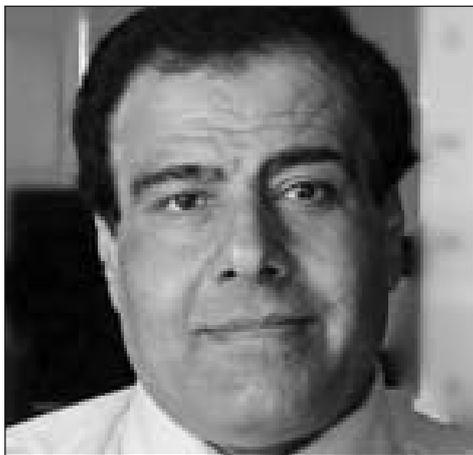
“I shall not hate...”

It was an unforgettable cry of anguish amidst the desperate horror of Israel's onslaught on Gaza — Dr Izzeldin Abuelaish weeping on the phone live on Israeli TV and repeating over and over: “My God, my God, what have we done?”

Two Israeli shells fired into his home killed three of his six daughters: Bessan, 20, Mayar, 15, and Aya, 14, and his niece, Noor, 17, and seriously injured his daughter, Shatha, 17. The doctor, an infertility specialist who worked in Israeli hospitals, phoned one of his many Israeli friends, Channel 10 reporter, Shlomi Eldar.

The doctor's voice was raw and desperate, Eldar's face stricken. “I wanted to try to save them,” cried Abuelaish. “But they died, Shlomi.”

Two years on Dr Abuelaish, who had lost his wife, Nadia, to leukaemia just three months before his daughters were killed, was in London to promote his book, *I Shall Not Hate*. It is his response to the tragedy that has engulfed his family like that of so many Palestinians. **Garry Ettle** reports.



To introduce himself, Dr Abuelaish began with a poem written by an Israeli acquaintance and dedicated to his lost, eldest daughter, Bessan. It gently expressed awe at the family's determination after their unbelievable loss and how women were central to this tragedy and to so many others world-wide.

The conversation that followed was threaded through with medical allusions and metaphors, reflecting the long and almost unique career of a doctor who has worked across the deep divisions of the Middle East in Egypt, Gaza and Israel. He has also worked in Europe and is now a professor in Canada.

Medicine, he told us, demands absolute equality in the relationship between doctor

and patient and Dr Abuelaish found this amongst his colleagues in Israel. As for “hate,” this was a “symptom of a sick body, not healing well.”

He led us through the moments between when he stepped out of his daughters' bedroom, filled with young life and hope, on the afternoon of 16 January 2009 at their home in Jebalya refugee camp in Gaza, and the screaming, dust-choked scabble back to a laughter-slaughtered space of blood and body parts and his instinctive first-aiding of the intact and breathing.

We were asked to pause on the thought of how easily such individual, real nightmares become lost in a repeated “number of dead,” as another news item. We also tried to reflect on how we as individuals would survive and react to such an event destroying our own lives.

Moving into “questions and answers,” Dr Abuelaish was asked the obvious, first question: “How have you resisted hate?”

He replied that the list of his persecutors was endless and he refused to be their victim or partner in hate. He also felt that one day he would have to account to his daughters as to how he had brought them true justice, rather than revenge.

He spoke of the example set him by his injured daughter, Shatha, who persistently pleaded as she recovered to return to her studies in Gaza and who succeeded in passing her grades, with merit. Her challenge had been to herself as well as to

those who attacked her family: to defy, not to hate.

Again, “How did Dr Abuelaish feel the Israeli de-humanisation of Palestinians could be curtailed?” His reply was, by challenging the selected “facts.” Constantly to drive home that Israel's freedom is inextricably linked to that of Palestine.

He talked of his faith and how it explained that his wife's dying before her children saved her that ultimate horror of mothers. Hope should also sustain people because, while there was life in the body, there was hope, but that we had to work tirelessly to discover and remove the true cause of the sickness.

Finally, being asked “what could we do?” Dr Abuelaish related the tale of a child running up and down a beach where hundreds of starfish were being washed ashore, gasping for their lives. The child stopped again and again to toss one starfish after another back into the sea. Then a man approached shouting: “You are making no difference!” The child looked up into the man's eyes and answered firmly: “I am making a difference to each one I save.”

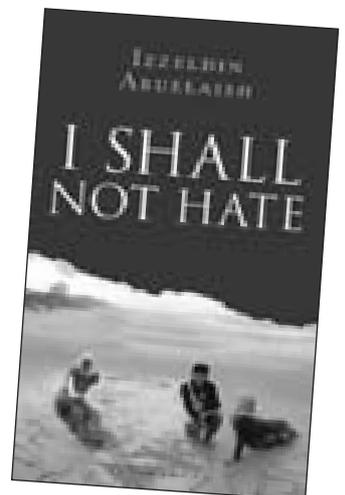
With his book, Dr Abuelaish brings a way forward for Israelis and Palestinians to reflect on how hate imprisons them alongside fear. As Dr Abuelaish might say, without treatment this patient's future is full of more pain and horror, but challenged with trust and real human sensitivity, there is another future.

■ In memory of his beloved girls, Dr Abuelaish has established the Daughters for Life Foundation to provide educational scholarships for young women throughout the Middle East, including Israel. See www.daughtersforlife.com

■ *I Shall Not Hate* by Dr Izzeldin Abuelaish is published by Bloomsbury.

The book cover shows Dr Abuelaish's daughters

who wrote their names in the sand at the beach two weeks before they died.



Turkey still angry

By Barçin Yinanç



PHOTO: WWW.DEMOTIX.COM

Thousands protested outside the Israeli embassy in Istanbul after the Mavi Marmara murders, May 2010.

As the first anniversary approaches of Israel's raid on the Gaza-bound aid flotilla that left nine Turkish activists dead, relations between the former allies remain tense as Israel refuses to deliver on the Turkish request for an apology and compensation for the victims' families.

The murder of Turkish citizens on the *Mavi Marmara* sparked a deep crisis in what were already strained relations between Israel and what used to be its most important friend in the Muslim world. Now, though both embassies in the respective capitals continue their activities, relations stay at the minimum with all contacts at the political level suspended.

Even if Israel fulfils Turkey's two conditions, it will not be enough to put relations back on track. For, in contrast to the period that started with the Middle East peace process in the early 1990s and lasted until the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, bilateral ties will no longer enjoy immunity from Middle Eastern conflicts. And as long as the AKP remains in power, relations will largely depend on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially if Israel insists in continuing its current intransigent policies.

Turkey was the first country with a majority Muslim population to recognise Israel, but successive Turkish governments were unwilling to improve relations further in the absence of a solution to the Palestinian problem. The Middle East peace process that started following the first Gulf War lifted that reserve and Turkish-Israeli ties began to improve.

The fact that the two nations enjoyed historically good relations helped the process along. One of only a few places in the world with a relatively clean record on anti-Semitism, Turkey, among other Middle Eastern countries, provided a safe haven for Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century as well as for those fleeing the Nazis in Europe.

Meanwhile Turkey's difficult relations with its neighbours, Iran and Syria, the arch-enemies of Israel, also played a role in the fast developing accord during the 1990s.

As Turkey started to sort out its problems with its neighbours in the last decade, the strategic value of Israeli cooperation began to diminish. But it was Israel's preference for military action rather than negotiations with its Arab neighbours that dealt the heaviest blow to ties with Turkey.

Israel's deadly strike on the Gaza Strip in the last days of 2008, just as Turkey was in the midst of mediating for a historic breakthrough between the Israelis and the Syrians, proved to be a turning point. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's bitter spat with Israeli President Shimon Perez at Davos a few days later made things worse between the two countries but it gained Erdogan tremendous popularity not only inside Turkey but in the Arab street as well.

Although the AKP's voter base is both socially and politically heterogeneous, it has its roots in Turkey's Islamist movement which harbours some anti-Semitic elements. So while thousands of AKP followers took to the streets in a show of support, the deteriorating relations with Israel attracted criticism from some in secular circles.

As the AKP is widely expected to win a third term in the Turkish elections in June, the move to mend fences will be expected to come from Israel. With regime changes on the way in the Arab countries that could bring to power governments less accommodating to Israeli policies, Israel cannot afford to have strained relations with one of the strongest countries in the region which accepts the existence of the Jewish state.

Turkey, for its part, would not let go an opportunity to mend fences with Israel since it knows its influence in the region is more effective when there is a working relationship between the two countries. In addition, while anti-Israeli feeling is strong among the supporters of Erdogan, the AKP is a pragmatic party, aware of the fact that strained relations with Israel poses a contradiction to the government's policy of "zero problems with neighbours."

Even if, in contrast to wide expectations, AKP does not form the government after the elections, it will be highly unlikely for any new government to back down from the request for an apology and compensation for the *Mavi Marmara* murders.

The current state of affairs between the two countries is not sustainable. But the timing and pace of normalisation depends on decision-makers in Israel.

Barçin Yinanç is Associate Editor of the Hürriyet Daily News and Economic Review in Istanbul



PHOTO: TOMASZ GRZYB, WWW.DEMOTIX.COM

The Mavi Marmara was opened to the public in January.

Hands off Gaza's gas

By Nadine Marroushi

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has officially asked Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to resume talks on the sale of natural gas from Gaza's offshore marine field to Israel, it was revealed in early March. The UK's BG Group holds a 60% stake in the field with the remaining 40% held by Athens-based Consolidated Contractors Company, whose chairman is the Palestinian Said Houry, and the Palestine Investment Fund.

Netanyahu told Tony Blair in February that the marine field should be tapped together with the nearby Noa field which lies in Israeli waters and is jointly owned by US company, Noble Energy, and Israeli companies, Delek Group and Avner Oil Exploration.

Israel is not short of gas, at least in the short-term. It imports 40% of its natural gas needs from Egypt and has its own offshore fields that can supply it with gas for the next 25 years. These fields are operated by Noble, BG and a Canadian company. Israel is even looking at options to export its gas via Cyprus.

BG acquired the concession for the Gaza field in 1999 as a 25-year exploration and development license from the PA and drilled two successful wells in 2000. The field has reserves estimated by BG at around 1 trillion cubic feet. In 2002 the PA approved a four-year development plan to bring the field on stream.

A pipeline from the offshore field to Gaza was in the making when Israel put down the condition that production would only be allowed if the gas is first piped to the Israeli port of Ashkelon and then to Gaza. In other words, Israel would have been in



PHOTO: KHALIL IBRAHIM, WWW.DEMOTIX.COM

With access denied to their own gas resources, the people suffer frequent power cuts

control and able to turn Gaza's gas taps on and off at will. And it could control the money from gas sales too. BG then broke off negotiations with the Israeli government.

There is no need to repeat here the dire circumstances under which Gaza's 1.5 million inhabitants live in what is effectively the world's largest open air prison. Let us, therefore, encourage and remind BG and the PA of the continued importance of keeping Israel off Gaza's gas fields.

Nadine Marroushi is the editor of Gulf States Newsletter

Life in Gaza – School Art Competition

An exciting new art competition for secondary school students in the UK is being launched this spring but hurry — the deadline is coming soon!

The competition, called *Life in Gaza*, has some great prizes on offer including an HD video camera, vouchers for art supplies and book tokens. The best works will also be displayed at a premier venue in London to show that Gaza has not been forgotten.

The idea is for students to produce art works reflecting on the difficulties and hardships young people of the same age endure every day under the continuing occupation and siege of Gaza. Entrants can produce paintings, collages, sculptures — whatever medium they feel best captures their thoughts and feelings about the situation.

The competition is open to two separate categories — Key Stage 3 and 4 and A level years 12 and 13. It is being run by the Council

for Arab British Understanding (Caabu) which is working on behalf of Al-Fakhoora, an international campaign that aims to secure the freedom to learn for Palestinian students in the Occupied Territories.

Students can enter individually or through their schools by posting a photo of their work on the Fakhoora website. For full details, including rules and application forms, visit www.fakhoora.org/art. The deadline for submissions is May 2, 2011.

What can you do?

This competition is the first of its kind. If you know anybody who might like to enter but who doesn't feel they know enough about the topic, Caabu has developed a new online quiz all about Gaza on Al Fakhoora's website (www.fakhoora.org/resources/quiz-on-gaza). There's also a versatile "Palestinian Pathways" programme you can download free of charge, tracing Palestinian history through the extraordinary testimonies of ordinary families, alongside a rich collection of historical photos and images (<http://fakhoora.org/resources/palestinian-pathways>).

In addition Caabu is offering special introductory talks to interested schools through its education programme, free of charge. To book one of these, learn more about the competition, or for any other enquiries, please get in contact with **Caabu's Education Officer, Edward Parsons, at parsonse@caabu.org or call 020 7832 1320.**



Women unite

Some 250 Palestinian and Israeli women human rights defenders marked the centenary of International Women's Day on 12 March with a historic conference to discuss using civil disobedience to challenge the occupation.

The meeting was held in the West Bank village of Beit Umar and the presence of Israeli women there was in itself an act of defiance as the Israeli Army had pasted large signs forbidding entry to Israeli citizens.

The signs claimed wrongly that Beit Umar was in Area A and thus under the control of the Palestinian Authority. In fact, the Oslo accords state that it is in Area B and it is treated as such by the Israeli security forces who carry out frequent incursions and prevent Palestinian security forces from acting in the village.

Fida Arar and Ghadeer Abu Ayyash, from Beit Umar, and Yusra Hammam, from Hussan, described the suffering Palestinian women endure at checkpoints on the way to work. In addition to the burden of providing for their families with fathers and husbands often imprisoned or unable to get work, they are forced to spend long hours in line and to undergo often humiliating searches.



PHOTO: ESTI TZAL

They also spoke of the impoverished status of women within Palestinian society and called upon women to insist on their rights to education and more freedom of choice.

Israeli writer and translator, Ilana Hammerman, said the law regulating entry into Israel "is illegal and should not be obeyed. As a group of women practicing civil disobedience, we will continue to work to destabilise the system of military decrees and regulations that make the life of our Palestinian friends and their families unbearable."

Sara Beninga, an activist in the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement, focused on the political investigation initiated by the

Israeli police against the activists. Uttering slogans against the occupation was now labelled as "incitement" and criminalised, she said, and thus "joint non-violent activity by Palestinians and Israelis is presently conceived as the most intimidating threat to the Israeli regime."

The conference opened a few hours after the murders of five members of a family in the Itamar settlement. Veteran Israeli activist, Rivka Sum, said: "These violent events, which will not end as long as the occupation continues, stress the commitment we must have to act together daily to end the present situation which is impossible."

One of the Palestinian women said: "We too condemn the use of violence. It has not contributed to our progress but on the contrary, backfires on our own public."

Participants described the groundbreaking conference as a powerful emotional experience. "It is a rare occasion for us to be hosted so generously by women who live under occupation, in spite of all the wrongs done to Palestinian society by our side," said the Israeli feminist activist, Yvonne Deutsch.

Help us challenge Israel's "pinkwashing"

Israel's attempt to "pinkwash" its image by presenting itself as a tolerant, "gay friendly" tourist destination was raised at the PSC AGM. Israel's supporters have also increased their criticism of the support within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community for Palestinian rights.

Since the strong policy motion was passed at the AGM in January, PSC aims to increase awareness of this issue, produce material and increase its links with supportive LGBT groups and with Palestinian LGBT organisations.



■ If you are interested in getting involved with this work, please contact sarah.colborne@palestinecampaign.org

Eye on the web

● How to solve spatial problems

A new website is an excellent contribution to architectural activism and discourse on the Israel/Palestine conflict, writes **Abe Hajeem**. The "arena of speculation.org" presents new thinking on how to solve the spatial problems posed by the occupation and colonisation of Palestine and what could be done to achieve solutions compatible with equality and restoration of human rights in the event of a just peace.

Much of the material coincides with the work and aims of Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine. Highly recommended!

<http://arenaofspeculation.org>

● Comment is free, but watched...

The Zionist "hasbara" network stretches its tentacles everywhere, trying to stifle any criticism of Israel. A new website is monitoring anything negative said about Israel on the Guardian's "Comment is Free" site.

See what they are up to on <http://cifwatch.com>

● Roger Waters says – tear down the wall!

There is an excellent 25 minute interview on al-Jazeera with Pink Floyd's Roger Waters on his support for the Palestinians and the BDS campaign as he plays his current world tour of The Wall.

<http://tinyurl.com/6jxuk8v>



BDS – Ten years on

On 4 July, 2001, the PSC, supported by dozens of other organisations, launched the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign at the House of Commons. People listened to the speakers with excitement: this was history in the making, an event akin to 1959's Conway Hall gathering triggering the boycott of South African apartheid.

Frankie Green, who was there, reviews the achievements of the last ten years.

We knew we were in for the long haul, while hopeful that this struggle for justice would not take as long as the South African one. Boycotting Israel had always been a PSC issue but urging a full-fledged boycott was yet to make a mark on British public consciousness. It was an idea whose time had come. Outraged by Israel's violent provocation and brutal repression of the second intifada, shocked by murders such as that of Mohammed al-Dura, the 12 year old who was filmed being shot while trying to shelter with his father in Gaza, our burgeoning membership was keen to act.

Immediately, members began to build a mass boycott campaign, undertaking a variety of projects about consumer goods, arms trading, tourism, sporting and cultural links. The PSC got down to the grassroots work of tirelessly, week after week, increasing the campaign's visibility.

Supermarket actions were a crucial way of raising awareness and distributing information, discussing with shoppers the importance of ethical consumerism and collecting petition signatures. They also involved postcard campaigns, lobbying shareholders at AGMs, picketing, leafleting, sticking produce and filling trolleys with oranges, grapes, potatoes, peppers, humus or avocados to cause havoc at check-outs.

National days of action

Pickets of Selfridges and M&S were held in Oxford St and London branch began regular pickets of Israel Airlines and tourist office. National days of action saw synchronised email/phone/fax-ins of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Also targeted were the BBC, complaining of bias, and complicit companies such as those supplying cement for settlements. On 9/11 we were at the huge arms fair at East London's Excel Centre, demanding an end to the arms trade between Israel and Britain.

By February, 2002, boycotts were developing in France, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The campaign posted large newspaper advertisements and imaginative actions were staged on particular days, for instance "I Love Palestine" events to persuade people not to buy Israeli flowers for Valentine's Day.

Any successes afforded great opportunities for publicity, such as when Selfridges temporarily



withdrew settlement goods and when *Ethical Consumer* removed BIG info under Zionist pressure only to reinstate it after protests from readers. Additionally, PSC encouraged the purchase of fairtrade Palestinian crafts, olive oil and other products to support the devastated Palestinian economy.

In Scotland the boycott campaign was launched by the Scottish Palestinian Forum at the Scottish Parliament in March, 2002, with MSPs, academics, activists and trade unionists attending. Letters to newspapers called for sanctions and *Palestine News* called for intensified public pressure for sanctions and an end to the binational trade-promoting Britech Agreement.

Boycott bus attracts attention

Cultural and sporting boycott became another strand to the campaign. Israeli singer, Noa's, Barbican concert was disrupted by International Solidarity Movement activists and three people were arrested for invading the pitch with banners at a football match between Leyton Orient and Maccabi Tel Aviv.

As Israeli invasions wreaked destruction across the West Bank and global public protest went unheeded by governments, boycott actions accelerated. The Freedom Summer boycott bus travelled around London festooned with balloons, flags, banners and placards. Activists exhorted shoppers to consider the plight of people under lockdown unable to shop, on one occasion causing apoplexy among Israeli tourists visiting Camden Lock. The bus parked in Whitehall on 15 July to deliver a petition expressing outrage over Israel's invasions and calling on the government to impose complete trade sanctions on Israel.

The Network of Palestinian Arts Centres sent out a call for an international cultural boycott and by June, 2002, this was really taking off, as evidenced by a speech by the late actor and PSC patron, Corin Redgrave, an article by Nicholas Rowe in *Dance Europe* and more protests at concerts. The call for academic boycott was taken up across America, Europe and Australia, and calls for divestment were also underway in the US.



Badgers settle in Starbucks

Proving that the best protest actions are often the wittiest, 30 members of ISM dressed as badgers and armed with water pistols garnered valuable publicity when they occupied Oxford Street's Starbucks (a focus of activism for its Zionist CEO's support of Israel) in October, 2002, claiming the land as their ancestral home. Using the logic of Israeli settlers the badgers evicted some of the customers, handed out copies of the "badger bible" that "proved" their ownership of Starbucks and erected the first badger settlement in London.



With placards proclaiming "If it works in Palestine, why not here?" and "It's ours because we say so," the self-styled Badger Defence Force set up checkpoints to inspect shoppers for concealed weapons. "If they're not a badger, they could be a terrorist," a spokesbadger reasoned.

Charges were dropped against the football pitch activists and "Kick Israel out of UEFA" became a rallying cry with more protests at sporting events. The autumn conference season saw a wave of resolutions backing boycott and Plaid Cymru described Israeli occupation as "terrorism."

The PSC's international conference on 30 November, 2002, issued "a fresh call for comprehensive, international boycott" specifically including a boycott of artistic, scientific and sporting contact, cessation of official contacts with the state of Israel, divestment of funds from institutions supporting Israel, an arms trade embargo and the imposition of economic sanctions upon Israel. Signatories included Naseer Aruri, Tony Benn, Edward Said, Hilary Rose, Steven Rose, MPs and trades union leaders and academics.

Retailers refuse to stock Israeli goods

Through 2003 the pressure carried on building. That summer the BIG campaign newsletter reported retailers refusing to stock goods and expressions of concern from Zionist groups. TU resolutions accumulated and creative, theatrical actions vividly dramatised

protests. For instance, cardboard bulldozers in Brighton drew attention to the destruction of the Palestinian homeland and commemorated the murder of Rachel Corrie. Carmel-Agrexco actions included dozens of blockades of the depot while Caterpillar was a focus of action in 2004 to press councils to refuse tenders from companies using their equipment.

And so momentum has built from those initial steps, action by countless action, with great leaps forward with the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) call being issued in 2004 and Palestine civil society, through the Boycott National Campaign (BNC) launching their call in 2005.

Sustained action regarding the labelling of settlement goods resulted in DEFRA issuing guidelines to retailers in December, 2009. Church groups then became more prominent in the movement. Last June the Methodist Conference backed the boycott of settlement produce in response to requests from Palestinian Christians and the World Council of Churches and most recently, in April, British Quakers followed suit.

Tireless work with local branches of trade unions culminated in the historic vote by the TUC last year which pledged it to work closely with the PSC to encourage the boycott of the goods of companies profiting from the occupation, the settlements and the wall and divestment from those companies.

In ten years the BDS campaign has gone global and high profile and is beginning seriously to give Israel the jitters, as evidenced by the launch of their concerted counter attack which they call "delegitimising the delegitimisers." But the situation for Palestinians remains dire.

A surge in BDS activity to take it further is now essential. We cannot wait for as long as it took to end South African apartheid; another ten years must not be allowed to go by without an end to Israel's genocidal behaviour.



A recent supermarket action

Spies out for BDS supporters

Israeli Military Intelligence is collecting information about organisations round the world that the army views as aiming to "delegitimise" Israel, *Ha'aretz* reported in March.

Senior officials and IDF officers told the paper the unit was created several months ago in the wake of investigations into last year's assault on the Gaza convoy. It will monitor groups involved in the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign and will also collect information on groups who try to bring war crime charges against Israeli officials.

Military Intelligence officials said the initiative reflected an upsurge in BDS activity worldwide. "The enemy changes, as does the nature of the struggle, and we have to boost activity

in this sphere," an MI official said. "Work on this topic proceeds on the basis of a clear distinction between legitimate criticism of the State of Israel on the one hand and efforts to harm it and undermine its right to exist on the other."

But *Ha'aretz* said the undefined and potentially broad scope of such a venture "has some Foreign Ministry officials concerned that the army is overreaching."

One ministry official told the paper: "We ourselves don't know exactly how to define delegitimation. This is a very abstract definition. Are flotillas to Gaza delegitimation? Is criticism of settlements delegitimation? It's not clear how Military Intelligence's involvement in this will provide added value."

Buy olive oil, save lives

By Sharen Green

Two Palestinian olive farmers whose oil is imported by Zaytoun toured the UK during Fairtrade Fortnight. I listened to their moving talk at St Michael and All Angels' Church in Colehill, Dorset, in March.

Bassema Basalat told the congregation that she is an architect and shares the care of her four children with her engineer husband in addition to farming olives. A pioneer in her village of Haja, she has founded an association to help women become financially independent.

She said many women had been forced into the role of breadwinners because of the high numbers of men who had been killed or were in prison. Her own family's land is under threat of being stolen and she can no longer reach five acres due to the building nearby of two Israeli settlements.

Her colleague, father of four Riziq Abu Nasser from Deir Istya, said his village had lost nearly 60 per cent of its land to a ring of settlements and its water sources had been polluted by untreated settlement sewage.

Last September settlers ploughed up 40 dunums of Deir Istya land and installed 20 caravans there while in November the Israeli army destroyed newly planted Palestinian trees, blocked water courses and seized 50 metres of irrigation pipes.

In spite of everything Riziq remained steadfast, believing that the support of ordinary people around the world will bring about an end to occupation.

"By buying our olive oil, you are saving our lives, the future of our children and you are helping to save our land," he said.

Vicar John Goodall said: "We are delighted to host the Palestinian farmers — both to hear of their experiences and to offer our solidarity for their struggle against the illegal and oppressive occupation of their land."



From the left: Riziq Abu Nasser, Canon John Goodall, Bassema Basalat, Cathi Pawson, co-founder of Zaytoun and her baby Jessica

PSC delegation to Brussels

A delegation of PSC members, including nine from County Durham, joined with a group from the European Coordinating Committee on Palestine (ECCP) in March to lobby MEPs and EU officials about policies towards Israel and the peace process.

Durham Labour MEP Stephen Hughes helped them meet the High Representative for External Affairs, Baroness Cathy Ashton's advisor, Mr Paleyo Castro Zuzuarregui. They also met Fiona Hall, Durham Lib-Dem, and senior officials Silvio Gonzala, from the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Michael Docherty who serves on the European Commission with responsibility for the Occupied Territories.

The delegates argued that EU-Quartet policies were not working and that a better way forward was to show determination to require Israel to live by international standards and meet the human rights criteria that are at the centre of EU external relations policies.

The EU officials were open about the EU approach, stressing that Baroness Ashton had to work within the limits of what the 27 member states would support. Durham delegates concluded that the EU can go no faster than the slowest partner and there were states like Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovakia and Romania that were not willing to enforce stronger measures against Israel.

The EU will evaluate its Israel-Palestine policies in September. Among officials there appears to be a clear view that radical changes in the EU approach are needed and that the EU can and should take a lead.

The visit was a great success and delegates returned clear that PSC pressure is especially vital in the coming months as Europe re-evaluates its policies. The PSC needs to build on the evidence that public opinion in Europe is ahead of the EU in regarding Israeli intransigence as the main obstacle to peace.

Bill Williamson, Durham PSC



Goldstone's shameful U-turn

By Ilan Pappé

“If I had known then what I know now, the Goldstone report would have been a different document.” Thus opens Judge Richard Goldstone's much-discussed op-ed in *The Washington Post* on 1 April.

I have a strong feeling that the editor might have tampered with the text and that the original sentence ought to have read something like: “If I had known then that the report would turn me into a self-hating Jew in the eyes of my beloved Israel and my own Jewish community in South Africa, the Goldstone report would never have been written at all.” And if that wasn't the original sentence, it is certainly the subtext of Goldstone's article.

This shameful U-turn comes after more than a year and a half of a sustained campaign of intimidation and character assassination against the judge. Readers might ask “why could Goldstone not withstand the heat?” Alas the Zionisation of Jewish communities and the false identification of Jewishness with Zionism is still a powerful disincentive that prevents liberal Jews from boldly facing Israel and its crimes.

Every now and again many liberal Jews seem to liberate themselves and allow their conscience, rather than their fear, to lead them. However, many seem unable to stick to their more universalist inclinations for too long where Israel is concerned. The risk of being defined as a “self-hating Jew,” with all the ramifications of such an accusation, is a real and frightening prospect for them. You have to be in this position to understand the power of this terror.

Just weeks ago, Israeli military intelligence announced it had created a special unit to monitor, confront, and possibly hunt down, individuals and bodies suspected of “delegitimising” Israel abroad. In light of this, perhaps quite a few of the faint-hearted felt standing up to Israel was not worth it.

“Israel's international legitimacy has suffered an unprecedented blow”

We should have recognised that Goldstone was one of them when he stated that, despite his report, he remains a Zionist. This adjective, “Zionist,” is far more meaningful and charged than is usually assumed. You cannot claim to be one if you oppose the ideology of the apartheid state of Israel. You can remain one if you just rebuke the state for a certain criminal policy and fail to see the connection between the ideology and that policy. “I am a Zionist” is a declaration of loyalty to a frame of mind that cannot accept the 2009 Goldstone Report. You can either be a Zionist or blame Israel for war crimes and crimes against humanity — if you do both, you will crack sooner rather than later.

That this *mea culpa* has nothing to do with new facts is clear when one examines the “evidence” brought by Goldstone to explain his retraction... There is only one new piece of evidence and this is an internal Israeli army investigation that explains that one of the cases suspected as a war crime was due to a mistake by the Israeli army that is still being investigated.



Judge Richard Goldstone in the Gaza Strip, June 2009.

Ever since the creation of the state of Israel, the tens of thousands of Palestinians killed by Israel were either terrorists or killed by “mistake.” So 29 out of 1,400 people were killed by an unfortunate mistake? Only ideological commitment could base a revision of the report on an internal inquiry of the Israeli army focusing only on one of dozens of instances of unlawful killing and massacring. So it cannot be new evidence that caused Goldstone to write this article. Rather, it is his wish to return to the Zionist comfort zone that propelled this bizarre and faulty article.

This is also clear from the way he escalates his language against Hamas in the article and de-escalates his words toward Israel. And he hopes that this would absolve him of Israel's righteous fury. But he is wrong, very wrong.

Goldstone and his colleagues wrote a very detailed report, but they were quite reserved in their conclusions. It was first Western public opinion that understood better than Goldstone the implications of his report. Israel's international legitimacy has suffered an unprecedented blow. He was genuinely shocked to learn that this was the result.

We have been there before. In the late 1980s, Israeli historian Benny Morris wrote a similar, sterile, account of the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Morris too cowered under pressure and asked to be re-admitted to the tribe.

Professionally, both Morris and Goldstone tried to retreat to a position that claimed, as Goldstone does in *The Washington Post* article, that Israel can only be judged by its intentions not the consequences of its deeds. Therefore only the Israeli army can be a reliable source for knowing what these intentions were. Very few decent and intelligent people in the world would accept such a bizarre analysis and explanation.

Ilán Pappé is Professor of History and Director of the European Centre for Palestine Studies at the University of Exeter. His most recent book is *Out of the Frame: The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Israel* (Pluto Press, 2010).

■ This article first appeared in the Electronic Intifada, 4 April 2011. <http://tinyurl.com/3kc5h36>

Ahava driven out

Victory! The fortnightly protests outside the Ahava cosmetics shop in **London's** Covent Garden by PSC members and other pro-Palestinian supporters have driven the company out.

The *Jewish Chronicle* reported in March that Shaftesbury PLC, which owns the property, told them that when Ahava's lease expires in September, "we will not offer them a new one."

The protests began two years ago in response to a call for action from the Popular

Committee of Bil'in. Ahava products are manufactured in the Israeli West Bank settlement of Mitzpe Shalom though labelled as produced in Israel. A counter group of pro-Israeli supporters, backed by the



ultra-right English Defence League, staged alternative protests.

It appears that nearby shop owners put pressure on the landlords to oust Ahava. The *Jewish Chronicle* quoted Colin George, manager of a clothes shop next door, saying: "I'm pleased Ahava is leaving. It's brought the street down. I've complained to the landlords, as has everyone here. Everyone would like them to leave. I wish they had left two years ago."

The JC said Ahava UK's accounts up until the end of 2009 show a loss of more than £250,000, despite receiving more than £300,000 from its Israeli parent company, with no repayment plan. The company told the paper it was looking for

"I'm pleased Ahava is leaving. It's brought the street down... Everyone would like them to leave"

another location, including sites in north-west London.

Another store to be targeted was Adidas's busy flagship store on London's Oxford Street in a protest at the company's sponsorship of the Jerusalem Marathon. Members of **West London, Lambeth** and **Richmond** branches and other BDS activists imposed a no-shopping zone at the store for 30 minutes on the day of the race, 25 March.

The runners distributed flyers explaining that the Jerusalem Marathon is an attempt by Israel to whitewash their atrocious human rights record and to urge Adidas not to sponsor the 2012 race. They gave the management a document explaining the purpose of the action with a request it be forwarded to head office. The store was evacuated and forced to close for a time.

Several branches have supported Mark Thomas's performances of his "Extreme Rambling" show about walking the apartheid wall. **Cambridge** hosted a Q&A after the show and **Oxford** held a stall at the Pegasus Theatre during the week of his tour and provided a speaker for a Q&A on one evening.

There were events round the world in February to mark the death of Jawaher Abu Rahmah, 34, who became the first Palestinian to die at the hands of the Israelis when she was killed by tear gas during a peaceful demonstration in Bil'in. **Lambeth and Wandsworth** held a stall and banner signing in her memory at the Dashed Hopes Symposium at St John's, Waterloo.

The idea was to get the banner covered with messages of support for the people of Bil'in and then to send it to the village organisers so they could carry the support with them on future demonstrations. They report: "People were open to the idea of non-violent protest in pursuit of human rights following the wide coverage of the uprising in Egypt." **Portsmouth and South Downs** held two vigils for Abu Rahmah in central Portsmouth with big placards explaining the circumstances of her death.

Joint activities with other organisations were held to mutual benefit. **Lambeth and Wandsworth** branch are holding fortnightly stalls with Lambeth Unison in support of BDS while **Oxford** members worked with the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association who are bringing young people to the town this summer. They also joined in Women in Black demonstrations which have recently concentrated on East Jerusalem.

Orkney Friends of Palestine has forged a link with the unrecognised Bedouin village of Al Sira in the northern Naqab [Negev] which the secretary, Bryan Milner, visited when on an ICAHD study tour. Members held a table-top sale and a music and poetry evening which raised over £500. Donations were added and the total sum was matched by a local charity with the result that £2,000 was sent to Al Sira to help a community leader on a legal course relating to land rights.

Films continue to be an effective way of drumming up interest from the wider public. The award winning documentary, *Budrus*, about the fight by Palestinian community organiser, Ayed Morrar, to save his village, was shown in **Cambridge** where the branch arranged for Ben White, author of *Israeli Apartheid: a Beginner's Guide*, to host a Q&A afterwards. They report the event "got a full house, people were turned away."

York branch showed the film in a local cinema and led a public discussion afterwards which was very well attended with many new people coming. One member also organised a film showing of Lawrence of Arabia in aid of Medical Aid for Palestinians. **Orkney** Friends of Palestine also participated in a lively discussion after a local showing of the film while **Oxford** provided publicity and food for a showing of the Gaza Monologues film and raised over £2000 towards bringing a group of young performers from Gaza this summer.



Martial Kurtz at the PSC stall at the March for the Alternative demo in London

Public meetings were held by **Southampton** branch with a talk by David Cromwell of Media Lens, and **York** had one with the Israeli economist Shir Hever and another with Ramzy Baroud, editor of the *Palestine Chronicle* and author of *My Father Was A Freedom Fighter – Gaza's Untold Story*.

Portsmouth and South Downs held a Day for Palestine in January with speakers including Jenny Tonge, Tony Greenstein, Angus Geddes, Suleiman Sharkh and Malcolm Levitt on the One State Solution, MP Mike Hancock, Del Singh of Labour Friends of Palestine and Zuber Hatia, a driver on the first convoy to Gaza.

Miranda Pinch of the Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme did a superb presentation of her experiences in Hebron and the branch attended a presentation by another EAPPI speaker, Rachel Nassif, at the Friends Meeting House in Chichester in February which "made a deep impression on the audience." They also hosted a talk by Gazan journalist Yousef Al-Helou in March.

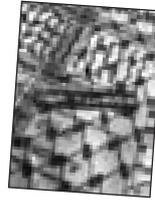
Branches continue to press councils not to renew contracts with Veolia. Members from **Richmond and Kingston** and **West London** held a "silent protest" at Merton Civic Centre in February during a meeting of the South London Waste Partnership Joint Committee which was discussing contracts.

They also held street events and collected signatures — and their hard work paid off when the SLWP announced that Veolia was being dropped from the bidding.

Portsmouth and South Downs has done a huge amount of work on the Veolia issue, organised by Angus Geddes. On 7 March they were rewarded when Portsmouth City Council Cabinet voted to select Biffa as the preferred bidder for the city's rubbish collection contract even though Veolia holds the current contract. The council,

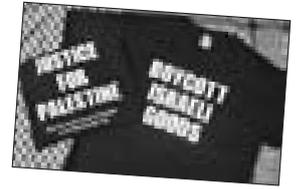
naturally, said Biffa won on price and quality. Portsmouth reports: "We will never know for sure how much influence we had... From Angus's contacts with councillors he feels that there was a lot of sympathy for our campaign."

PSC merchandise



Keffiyahs made in Hebron **£10**

Boycott Israeli Goods t-shirt: **£10**
(available in S, M, L & XL)



Gaza Flotilla Attack: The Truth
DVD: **£5**

Case for Justice booklet: Limited offer **£1.50**
PSC's updated 55-page booklet: A great introduction to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from the origins of Zionism to the Apartheid Wall. Facts, figures, quotes, colour maps and photos.

For merchandise information visit

www.palestinecampaign.org/shop or phone 020 7700 6192

Making a roller banner

The best impact we had ever had with a stall was when we displayed a roller banner we had bought via PSC head office showing the three maps of "Disappearing Palestine."

We needed something of similar impact for our Veolia campaign so we thought — why not make a banner of our own? It proved to be relatively simple to do; the time-consuming part turned out to be deciding what to put on it.

The first thing you need to ask is: what do I want to say and who am I trying to say it to? We wanted to grab the attention of passing shoppers at street events and get the message across that their council was complicit in the oppression of Palestine by placing contracts with Veolia. Thus the banner had to be visually striking with text large enough to be read at a distance and set out in a logical layout.

This is harder to do than it sounds. In fact, banner design is an art in itself. You can get help from websites such as <http://tinyurl.com/yzbsmlj>.

We started off trying to tell a story over four panels with quite a lot of text, maps and pictures. We soon learned the lesson — simplify, then simplify again. Attention-grabbing pictures and a few lines of simple text work best. Images must be high resolution but be careful of copyright — or be prepared to pay for them.

I bought two roller banners from Ebay for £9.99, plus delivery. Make sure the width you buy is suitable for your design. Also buy the type that have swivel feet, which are more stable for displaying outdoors.

I brought them to a meeting so we could discuss the layout. Having desktop publishing software such as Microsoft Publisher can be very useful if you want to produce the final design yourself, or some printers will do it for a fee. Some have blank templates on their websites that you can use.

We settled on two banners, 85cm wide by two metres high. I found printers on Ebay and emailed them for quotes making it clear that it must be suitable for use outdoors — printing onto PVC/vinyl is fine but laminated paper is not.

When ready you can just send your design to the printer and ask them to supply the complete roller banner or just ask them to print the graphic and assemble the banner yourself. If going the DIY route, make sure the graphic is long enough to stretch several times around the roller drum when the banner is fully extended. For a 2m high banner the extra is likely to be 20cm.

I assembled ours and the cost worked out at £37.35 each banner. A printer is likely to charge a total of £60 to £100 for including assembly. When you see eyes swivel towards your display and people heading over to find out more — I think you will agree with us that the cost and effort is all worthwhile!

Joe Cairns, Richmond and Kingston PSC



In Brief

BULLDOZERS LEAVE AL ARAQIB

After demolishing the poor Bedouin village of Al Araqib in the Naqab (Negev) 21 times and uprooting hundreds of the residents' fruit trees in order to plant its own forest, the Jewish National Fund removed its bulldozers, dismantled its work camp and departed in April without finishing the planting.



Rabbis for Human Rights — North America claimed that the move came as a result of mounting pressure and media coverage combined with behind the scenes meetings they held with supporters of JNF-US and board members of JNF-Israel (KKL-JNF). Meetings were arranged with Bedouin leaders and the JNF were urged to freeze home demolitions in Al-Araqib and other Bedouin villages.

The Rabbis are now asking supporters to help them “turn this initial tactical gain into a strategic victory” by writing to the KKL-JNF World Chairman Efi Stenzler in Jerusalem at efis@kkl.org.il and tell him to “announce a JNF freeze on all home demolitions and forestation in the unrecognised Bedouin villages until Israeli courts issue final rulings on the land’s ownership and a just and mutually agreed solution for these villages is reached between the Israeli government and the Negev Bedouin community.”

Meanwhile the Recognition Forum, a coalition of groups working for Israeli recognition of the Bedouin villages, is seeking donations to buy olive tree saplings to replace the ones uprooted by the JNF. Contributions may be sent to Recognition Forum, POB 1335, Kfar Saba, 44113.



PALESTINIAN INFRASTRUCTURE DESTROYED

The “Freedom Road” in the northern West Bank district of Shalfit was bulldozed by the Israeli authorities for the second time in March. The road is part of Palestinian attempts to build institutions and infrastructure for a future Palestinian state.

It goes through Area C which covers nearly 60% of the West Bank and, under the Oslo accords, should have been handed back to Palestinian control by the end of the 90s. But Israel demolishes anything that the Palestinians build in it.

The Freedom Road was built by the Palestinian Authority and funded by the US at a cost of \$400,000. Prime Minister Salam Fayyad opened it in September 2010 but the IDF destroyed it in November while Fayyad was abroad.

The municipality rebuilt the road only to see it destroyed again. The village mayor, Abdul Kareem Rayan, said Israeli forces attacked locals who tried to defend the road which provided a lifeline to villagers. Meanwhile, Israel continues to build apartheid roads for settlers in Area C.

ARAB LEAGUE AWAKES

On 10 April the Council of the Arab League called on the United Nations to convene an emergency special session of the Security Council, to consider the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and to impose a no-fly zone over Gaza, in order to protect civilians against Israeli airstrikes.

The call marked a new departure in the stance of the Arab League, as it openly rejected the West’s double-standards policy towards the Palestinian cause. In addition the Council demanded the international community prosecute all Israeli war criminals and bring them to justice.

The Council also called for the siege on Gaza to be lifted and welcomed President Mahmoud Abbas’s recent initiative to achieve Palestinian national reconciliation.

WATER APARTHEID

World Water Day on 22 March was marked by the announcement from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) that Palestinians use only 15% of the water from underground aquifers in the West Bank while Israelis use 85%. The Gaza Strip uses about 18% of the coastal aquifer while Israel takes the rest — 82%.

It also said that Israeli settlers consume seven times more of the West Bank water than Palestinians. And it quoted a World Bank



report of 2009 which said that Palestinians pay five times more than the settlers for obtaining water which encourages settlers to use an excessive amount.

● LATEST TRIUMPHS OF THE "ONLY DEMOCRACY..."

Several new laws have further consolidated Israel's relentless drift towards apartheid and oppression of dissent.

The so-called "Boycott Law" which would impose punitive fines on Israelis who call for academic or economic boycotts passed its first reading in the Knesset in March with 32 MKs voting in favour and 12 against. Several MKs known to be opposed were absent for the vote. The draft law explicitly includes boycotts of goods from settlements.

Opposing the law, MK Hanna Swaid of the Hadash party said it "violates freedom of expression and every citizen's right to choose to boycott products from the occupied territories. There is racism here which must be condemned."

This was soon followed by the passing of the first reading of the "Citizenship Law" which would allow the State to revoke the citizenship of anyone convicted of terror or espionage offences against Israel or of undermining Israel's sovereignty, instigating war or aiding the enemy.

The bill's initiators, MKs David Rotem and Robert Ilatov of Yisrael Beiteinu, said the legislation is aimed at stressing the connection between the right to Israeli citizenship and loyalty to the state.

Another law passed in March allows towns built on state land inside Israel not to sell land to Palestinian citizens of the state and to ban them as residents.

This blatantly apartheid law follows other recent ones such as the "loyalty oath" law that turns Palestinian Israelis into second class citizens and one which does not allow them to live with their Palestinian spouses from the Occupied Territories.

● KIDNAP IN UKRAINE

In another outrageous flouting of international law, Israel admitted that its secret service, Mossad, kidnapped Gaza's chief power plant engineer while he was in Ukraine and illegally rendered him to an Israeli torture centre and then prison.

Dirar Abu Sisi, 42, was snatched from a passenger train on 18 February. His Ukrainian wife, Veronika Abu Sisi, told a German press agency that he later telephoned her and said he was being held in a secret Israeli prison.

"Dirar said Israeli secret agents had grabbed him and snuck him out of Ukraine," she said. "He has done nothing, and I am absolutely shocked."

Maksim Butkevych, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine, said: "What happened looks like a violent abduction and not a legal extradition or any other legal action on the part of authorities."



● CALL TO VISIT PALESTINE IN JULY

Major Palestinian civil society organisations and human rights defenders have issued a joint appeal to activists around the world to visit Palestine on July 8 to 16 to take part in non-violent actions.

The date has been picked because it was on 9 July, 2004, that the International Court of Justice ruled that the wall and settlements built in occupied territories are illegal and that Palestinians should be compensated for the damage they have caused. A year later Palestinian civil society organisations called for help in demanding the implementation of the resolution through non-violent actions including BDS.

There is a rich programme planned including peace building in Jerusalem, the Bethlehem area, Hebron old city, the Jordan Valley, refugee camps, the Ramallah area (including villages like Bilin) and the Negev.

The organisers say they "believe in the power of collective nonviolent action" which has "shown its efficacy to bring hope and to transform reality." They add: "We believe that every single one of us is a change maker, and nobody has the right to deny us the access to suffering populations."

For more information visit www.bienvenuepalestine.com and palestinejn.org

● STARS FIGHT TO SAVE BOOKSELLER

World class UK writers, Ian McEwan, Roddy Doyle, John Banville and Simon Sebag Montefiore and Israelis, Amos Oz and David Grossman, are among the host of voices petitioning for bookseller, Munther Fahmi, be allowed to stay in Jerusalem, the city of his birth.

Fahmi, 56, runs an English-language bookstore in the forecourt of the world famous American Colony hotel, stocking it with works of history and literature written by Arabs, Jews and scholars from around the world.



Michael Palin and Munther Fahmi at the Palestine Festival of Literature 2009. Photo: Raouf Hajj Yehia

While Israel gives anyone from anywhere in the world who has one Jewish grandparent the right to live in Israel or its illegal settlements, Jerusalem-born Palestinians are issued with residency permits which they must keep up. Fahmi let his lapse when he spent several years in the US and since his return in the 1990s has been living in his home city on a succession of temporary tourist visas which 18 months ago the authorities warned that they would not renew.

David Grossman told *The Observer* newspaper that Fahmi was one of many Palestinians whose residence in Jerusalem was threatened by Israeli laws. "What is being done to him is an outrage. It's part of an attempt to embitter the lives of Palestinians so that they leave."

● ILL-TREATMENT OF CHILDREN MUST END

A report by a group of MPs who watched children being tried in Israeli military courts and were shocked and appalled by what they saw calls for Israel to put an end to the mass arrest and ill-treatment of minors.

The report was released in March by the Britain-Palestine All Party Parliamentary Group (BPAPPG) and based on a visit last November to the West Bank by some of its members along with the Council for Arab British Understanding (Caabu).

It shows that approximately 700 Palestinian children are prosecuted every year in military courts and that at the end of January 2011, 222 Palestinian children were being held in Israeli jails.

Richard Burden MP, Chair of the BPAPPG, said: "Having been to Palestine many times, I thought the area had lost its capacity to shock me. But when I saw the military court and what went on

there, I knew that the area still had the capacity to shock me, with a vengeance.

“When I saw children come into the room, shuffling because their legs are shackled together, and with their hands in handcuffs, it hit me.

“It hit me when I saw the look on the face of a child who only wanted to see his mother, who had come to the court to see her child, probably for the first time since he was arrested in the middle of the night.

“When one sees such things for oneself, one cannot ignore it and say, ‘Well, this is just something to do with the political situation there.’ It is totally unacceptable.”

PEACE ACTIVIST RELEASED

Abdullah Abu Rahma, the coordinator of the Popular Committee against the Wall and Settlements in Bil'in, was released in March after 15 months in an Israeli prison and was met by scores of family members, friends and supporters.

Dragged from his home in the middle of the night in December 2009, Abu Rahma, 39, was initially charged with stone throwing and arms possession, the latter based on the collection he had made



of Israeli bullet casings and tear gas canisters to prove how Israel violently suppresses peaceful demonstrations.

He was cleared of those charges but convicted last October of organising protest rallies. The case caused outrage round the world; EU diplomats attended all the hearings and EU foreign policy chief, Baroness Cathy Ashton, expressed her deep concern “that the possible imprisonment of Mr Abu Rahma is intended to prevent him and other Palestinians from exercising their legitimate right to protest.”

Thousands of Palestinians are currently held in Israeli prisons, subjected to ill-treatment and torture and often deprived of visits from their families. The Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners states that almost half of the 315 prisoners arrested before the Oslo Agreement have been in Israeli jails for over 20 years.

There are more than 1,500 cases of serious illness among prisoners but the Israeli authorities deny the prisoners adequate medical care and often medication is limited to painkillers. About 14 prisoners have been subjected to solitary confinement for more than five years.

SETTLERS SEIZE JERUSALEM HOUSES

At 2.30 am on 2 April around 15 to 20 settlers seized a house in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem Old City belonging to Mr Nasser Jaber. They had forced their way in but when Mr Jaber called the police the officers told him they would not remove the settlers. He had to bring the legal documents relating to the property to court.

In the afternoon, police and military escorted another settler into the house while a crowd gathered to protest at the police and military partiality. In court Mr Jaber was told a decision would be taken in a few days but until then he would not be able to access his house.

Mr Jaber claims the settlers knew the house was temporarily empty because renovation work was going on. Two more properties nearby were successfully occupied in the 90s and now the settlers are looking to strengthen their hold in this part of the Old City.

A few days before this the American millionaire and settler patron, Irving Moskowitz, finally scored a sickening victory in his



Confrontation outside the Jaber house. Photo Silvia Boarini, www.demotix.com

long legal battle against the Hamdallah family when a court ruling meant their probable expulsion from a bedroom and the front yard of their home to make way for fanatical settlers.

The Hamdallahs, comprising three families, live in Ras al-Amud, on the edge of Ma'ale Zeitim, the biggest settlement in a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. Their house is preventing the expansion of the settlement on its western border. This fact has fuelled Moskowitz for the past 16 years in pursuing four claims simultaneously in separate courts in an attempt to evict the family.

In 1990, Moskowitz bought the land on which the Hamdallah house is built from religious seminaries that had been able to register it in their name after the annexation of East Jerusalem. Israeli law

permits Jews to claim ownership of land owned before 1948 — a privilege not extended to non-Jews.

In 2005 a judge decided that the Hamdallahs could keep everything built before 1989 but were to be evicted from anything



Members of the Hamdallah family at home

built after that date. Two years later, Moskowitz filed a new suit which claimed the front yard and one bedroom should be included in the sections to be evacuated. Though the bedroom extension was built in the mid-'80s, the judge ruled in his favour in March. Moskowitz then stated his intention to install a Jewish family in the bedroom, along with armed guards.

The Hamdallahs' lawyer, Shlomo Lecker, got an order to delay the move for a month. He believes that, should the settlers be allowed to move into the appointed bedroom, “they will harass the family until they want to leave completely, part of the drive to expand Ma'ale Zeitim.” The Hamdallahs have been in Ras al-Amud since 1952, after being displaced from their home in Ramle in 1948.

The room to be evacuated is home to Ahmad and Amani Hamdallah and their one year old baby. Amani says: “If they come in to one bedroom, they will keep trying to take more and more. In my mind and my heart, I feel hopeless. If your house is taken, what do you do?”

Images of suffering

Injud al-Ashkar was hit by a phosphorus shell while sheltering from Israel's onslaught on Gaza in a place she thought would be safe — an UNRWA school. Two of her children were killed and she lost her right hand.

She looks straight at the camera in acclaimed photographer Kai Wiedenhofer's picture with a serenity that belies her continuing distress in the aftermath of this tragedy. For Injud's husband is a deaf mute and she used her hands to talk to him. Now her marriage is in crisis.

At the exhibition in London's Mosaic Rooms of Wiedenhofer's pictures from Gaza, *The Book of Destruction*, Injud, 33, was flanked by others with equally affecting stories. There was 16-year-old Jamila al-Habash whose legs were sliced off by a missile fired on to the roof of her house and Sabah abu Halima, 45, whose husband and four children were burned to death by phosphorus shells. Sabah, who was also severely burned, has now developed cancer as a result of the phosphorus, the use of which is illegal under international law.

"We have electronic warfare now so missiles can be aimed extremely accurately and the Israeli army has a good reputation. But I wanted to show the reality of what it actually did to people," Wiedenhofer told *Palestine News*.

"The Israelis like to preserve the myth that they just shoot at 'guilty people.' My pictures reveal that is completely wrong."

Wiedenhofer first went to the Occupied Territories as a young man in the late 80s but had been focusing on other projects since the mid 90s because he was disillusioned by the lack of political progress. But in 2009 he won the inaugural Carmignac Gestion Photojournalism Prize and was awarded a grant to undertake a new body of work in the Gaza Strip.

He found his subjects through the local health authority, charities and a female community worker who convinced many of the women to pose. He photographed people in their own homes, using natural light.

"It was difficult to strike the balance between voyeurism and revealing something. I tried to reduce the injury part of the picture as much as possible." Interspersed with the people were beautifully composed pictures of devastating destruction, often shot in the rosy light of dawn. Together they formed a harrowing collection which was also full of humanity and dignity.

When the exhibition premiered in the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris late last year, two men wearing ski masks and motorcycle helmets tried to storm the building to

damage the exhibits and an umbrella group of Jewish organisations in France accused Wiedenhofer of "virulently anti-Israel views."

"They had to close the museum for a day. Everyone got to hear about it and after that the exhibition was full," he said happily.

Wiedenhofer doesn't think his pictures will change things. "If I believed that I would

go mad," he said. "But perhaps we can help some of the people in the pictures. Probably not all of them, but maybe a couple."

■ *The Book of Destruction: Gaza — One Year After the 2009 War*, by Kai Wiedenhofer will be published by Steidl/Fondation Carmignac Gestion on 6 June, £30.



Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine: population, territory and power

Edited by Elia Zurick, David Lyon and Yasmeeen Abu-Laban
Published by Routledge

Way, way back I was joint author of a Penguin book, *The Technology of Political Control*. Its theme was how technologies were being developed in the UK to protect the state from attacks from within. The context was the “troubles” in Northern Ireland.

So I jumped at the chance to review a book covering at least part of the same territory but now with Israel’s attempt to control Palestine and Palestinians as the focus and with technology advanced by 35 years. Back then plastic bullets were cutting edge. Now we have the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) or drone.

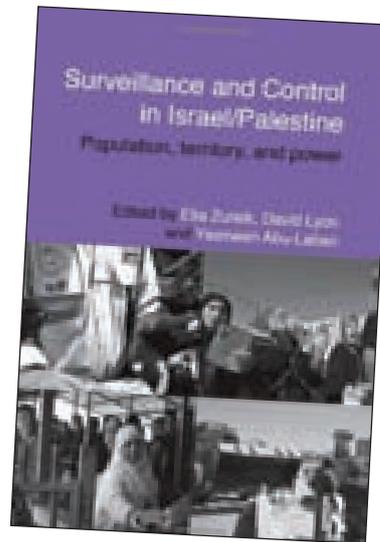
The drone is indeed the iconic new development in warfare and not just in Israel. But it is Israel that makes 68% of the world-wide market. Israeli UAVs monitor the India/Pakistan border and are in use in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, the US border with Mexico... and the UK is buying them too. This is just one instance of a larger phenomenon: Israel was ranked by SIPRI in 2008 as the sixth largest military exporter in the world. Other sources put it

fifth or even third.

It is not just hardware but also military doctrine that is exported from Israel. Those US targeted assassinations by drone in Afghanistan. Who practiced it first? And here we see another success for Israel. In deliberately and repeatedly breaking what were understood to be the rules of warfare, they are having some success in changing those rules which are only conventions.

Israel has other high-tech exports — homeland security technologies are already in the \$billions including passenger profiling systems, biometrics, checkpoint systems, intruder detection systems. They all come with the useful customer reassurance that they have been forged and tested in the laboratory of Israel’s ongoing conflicts.

A more mundane aspect of Israel’s surveillance of its Arab population is focused on the ID card and the checkpoint. The colour-coded ID card is central to a regime of selective but also essentially arbitrary exclusion. One provocative chapter suggests that the whole apparatus is



designed not to regulate movement but simply to discourage it. The less they move around the easier it is to forget about them.

There is much fascinating historical material, for example on the origins of the Israeli census. And, this being an academic rather than an agitational book, there are extensive summaries and critiques of the available theories of surveillance.

Several words of warning are, however, appropriate. Too few of the chapters attempt to

describe just what the technologies they feature actually do and how they work. And there is a good deal of overlap and hence repetition. It is possible, for instance, to learn the size of the Israeli weapons industry, or the colours of ID card jackets, once too often. The price (£85) suggests that the publishers expect their sales to come almost exclusively from libraries. Probably they are right.

Jonathan Rosenhead

BDS – The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights

By Omar Barghouti
Haymarket Books

“Our South Africa moment has finally arrived!” concludes Omar Barghouti, transforming a negative concept into a harbinger of victory against Israeli apartheid. This is a must-have handbook, especially for new activists, based on his collected essays, lectures and articles highlighting the 2004 call by PACBI (Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel) and the 2005 call for BDS by the Palestinian Civil Society Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign which he co-founded.

Of course, concerned individuals were shunning Israel well before 2001 when PSC formally launched its boycott campaign. It took years of regular, local branch organising to make the boycott visible as a *movement* in the UK and even longer before it could be described as global.

Incidentally, author Iain Banks was among the first to help PSC promote the boycott. He did not only “recently endorse” it as stated in the book. And in 2002, as acknowledged, Hilary and Steven Rose initiated a petition calling for an academic and cultural boycott.

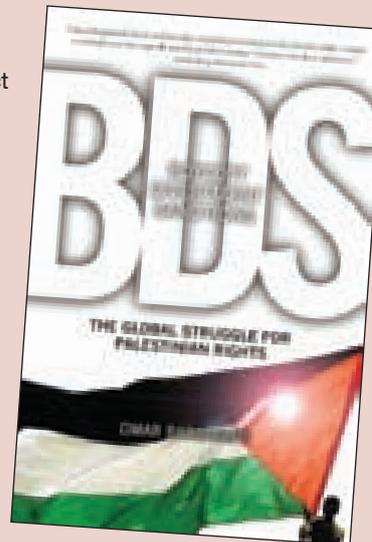
“Think global, act local,” was our adopted mantra. The global aspect received a boost when 170 Palestinian civil society organisations signed up to the BDS campaign.

Barghouti writes: “The heart of the BDS call is not the diverse boycotting acts it urges but this rights-based approach that addresses the three basic rights corresponding to the main segments of the Palestinian people. Ending Israel’s occupation, ending its apartheid and ending its denial of the right of refugees to return together constitute the minimal requirements for justice and the realisation of the inalienable right to self-determination.”

These principles are applicable to all forms of popular resistance to Israeli apartheid yet there is a focus here that sometimes makes it appear that BDS is the struggle, rather than a tactic.

By taking ownership of BDS, Palestinian civil society has exercised self-determination while acknowledging that those who will implement their calls for boycott are international grassroots solidarity activists.

It is the responsibility of civil society,



human rights defenders and solidarity organisations globally to operate BDS wherever we are to the maximum of our ability and resources. Use this book to spread it, explain it, advocate it, educate about it! We have a particular responsibility to respond to the BDS call due to the historic betrayal of the Palestinians by successive British governments.

Diane Langford

“It is the responsibility of civil society, human rights defenders and solidarity organisations globally to operate BDS”

Journeys of the mind

Powerfully affecting,” “a one-sided rant,” “brilliant, edge-of-the-sofa drama,” “anti-semitic,” “should be compulsory viewing”: the comments about *The Promise* are still flooding onto the internet. When Peter Kosminsky’s gripping drama was screened in February by Channel 4 it aroused more controversy — and inspired more dazzling reviews — than any TV drama in recent years.

Essentially it moves between the events leading up to the Palestinian Nakba in 1948 and current events in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The story is told through the eyes of Len, a young British sergeant posted to Palestine after assisting in the liberation of Belsen at the end of World War II, and through his granddaughter, Erin, who has discovered his diaries. Her trip to Israel with her best friend, who is Israeli and has been called up to serve in the IDF, turns into an increasingly obsessive mission to contact a Palestinian family Len befriended.

Every key angle is covered. In Len’s story we see desperate Jewish refugees fleeing the nightmare of the holocaust; ruthless Irgun guerrillas; Len’s Jewish girlfriend who acts as an informer for them; the kidnapping, torture, hanging and blowing up of British soldiers; the massacre of Deir Yassin; the Palestinian family who believe that they will soon return to their home.

“Erin’s physical and mental journey parallels that of many outsiders who start from a position of ignorance and who are shocked and tested by the reality they encounter”

In Erin’s story we see her friend Eliza’s well-meaning “soft Zionist” parents; their peace activist son, disillusioned and politicised after serving in Hebron; his Palestinian friend who acts as Erin’s guide in the Occupied Territories; violent settlers, complicit Israeli soldiers, suicide bombings, the siege of Gaza...

Somehow Kosminsky has managed to weld all these elements into a hugely powerful and involving drama. Both Len and Erin



Erin (Clare Foy) discovers the Wall



Peter Kosminsky (right) on location with Mohammed (Ali Suliman) and Len (Christian Cooke)

go on a physical and mental journey of discovery and deepening understanding — hers parallels that of many outsiders who start from a position of ignorance and who are shocked and tested by the reality they encounter.

At a packed meeting at the Royal Television Society on 16 March, Kosminsky explained how the original idea was triggered by a letter from a British veteran telling of his experiences in Palestine after the war and how he and his comrades felt forgotten and betrayed.

Kosminsky’s researcher, Helen Barton, delved into the archives of the period and interviewed as many surviving veterans as possible — Len’s experiences and reactions are a distillation of this research. The idea of running Erin’s story alongside her grandfather’s emerged as Kosminsky came across parallels between events in British-mandated Palestine and the present day, such as the British dynamiting the homes of Zionist terrorists and the IDF bulldozing the homes of suicide bombers.

Kosminsky said he approached the whole issue with absolutely no agenda beyond turning his research into watchable drama. For instance, Len’s feelings shift from sympathy with the Jewish refugees to antipathy as Zionist guerrillas target British soldiers, then to sympathy with the indigenous Palestinians whose likely fate was becoming increasingly clear. In this he simply mirrors the changing emotions reported by the veterans.

No doubt aware of the likely impact of his work, Kosminsky carried out an immense amount of research himself, spending months reading respected modern Israeli historians, and a team of lawyers vetted the accuracy of all the facts referred to in the film. He said he was taken aback by the “highly intemperate” language used by some viewers who simply would not accept that Israel could behave in the way described.

He talked about the challenges of filming on location — virtually the whole film was made in Israel with Jewish and Palestinian Israeli actors — and he paid tribute to the professionalism of his Israeli film crew and cast. He said: “There was a scene where a Jewish actress plays a Jewish settler, who has a screaming match with a Palestinian woman played by an Israeli Arab. It was a very hostile scene, it felt tense. At the end they wanted to be photographed together as actors.”

Hilary Wise

■ *The Promise* is available on DVD from Play.com or Amazon

Our Way to Fight: Peace work under siege in Israel-Palestine

By Michael Riordon

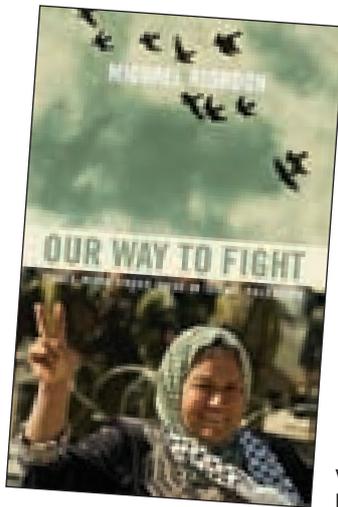
Published by Pluto Press

Two Israeli women burst into tears at a checkpoint. An Arab doctor has just jumped out of an ambulance to yell his thanks to them. His patient, a labouring mother, had been held up for hours and the women had refused to leave until the vehicle was allowed through.

It is beautifully written little vignettes like this which overcome your "Palestine fatigue" and make you want to read this informative book about activists on the ground.

Michael Riordon has a sharp eye for detail and an easy journalistic style. He interviews nervous activist Daphne Banai about her first shift with the Israeli women's peace group, Checkpoint (Machsom) Watch, and quotes her saying: "We were surrounded by Palestinians and every one of them I saw as a terrorist who was going to blow himself up or stab me. Most people in Israel are driven by this kind of fear, we're brainwashed with it."

Another scene has two young Palestinian women strolling bare-headed through Nablus, defending the choice of their peers who — unlike them — wear the hijab.



And I love the Palestinian farmer who corrects the writer when he calls an olive tree old because, at three or four centuries of age, it is only a young tree.

There is no shying away from the occupation and some of the nonsense put forward to justify it, however. Welcome to the census, Israeli-style.

"...hundreds of soldiers invaded the village [of Hares] again and arrested more than 150 people. Most were blindfolded and bound, some beaten. When witnesses from the International Women's Peace Service asked why, an army officer replied that they wanted to update their database on the village."

There's also damning material about Palestinian citizens of Israel. For every \$1,000 invested in the education of a Jewish child, his Arab counterpart will get \$200. And the Arab student must travel to a hostile Jewish town to sit university entrance — since 1981 the Israeli government has refused permission

for an Arab university.

But to end on a more optimistic note, New Profile, the NGO which helps young refusers, is now getting 60 enquiries a month as compared to only four when they set up seven years ago. It's a long haul but this book will help many a campaigner to keep going and is likely to recruit some more.

Sharen Green

What it Means to be Palestinian: Stories of Palestinian Peoplehood

By Dina Matar

Published by I.B. Tauris

This book is based on in-depth interviews and conversations with Palestinians, male and female, old and young, rich and poor, religious and secular, in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, the Occupied Territories and England. They provide a deep and intimate account of what it means to be Palestinian in the 21st century.

The stories are told chronologically through wearing phases of the Palestinian national struggle, beginning with "On the road to Nakba: Palestine as a Landscape and a People, 1936–1948," which describes the revolt against British rule in Palestine.

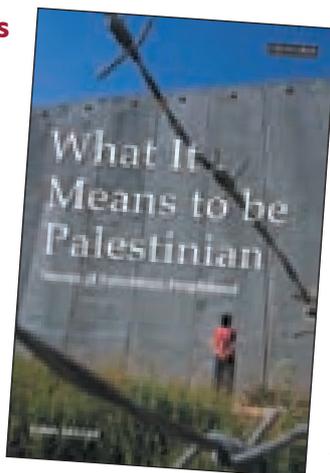
This is followed by "Living the Nakba: 'In the Perilous Territory of not-Belonging,' 1948–1964" when Israel was established and the Palestinians were fleeing their homes and becoming refugees in their own country.

The author quotes her own father, Henry Matar, who wanted to co-author the book but died before it came to fruition: "I could not cope with the occupation. I bade farewell to my friends and family and made my way to Damascus," exemplifying the despair of the catastrophe of 1948.

Ellen Kettaneh Khouri, who was born in Beirut after her parents were exiled from Jerusalem after the establishment of Israel, expresses the feeling of void and anguish because of the loss of Palestine by saying: "I was cut off from a tree, as we say in Arabic: ma'tou'a min shajarah."

The third chapter, "Raising the Fedayeen: Between Romance and Tragedy, 1964–1970," describes the years which gave rise to armed civilian rebellion. Salah Mohammed, one of the RPG kids — an RPG was the anti-tank shoulder-mounted rockets that young Palestinians carried to slow down the Israeli advance in southern Lebanon in 1982 — recalls: "And then the interrogations and the psychological torture began. My interrogators would not believe I was 13, insisting I could not be older than nine. I was small for my age in those days."

Samira Salah, who was active in the Palestinian Women's Union and member of the Palestine National Council, reveals: "It is a myth to say women were left behind and were not part of the revolution... We were active at home and on the battlefield, tending to people



who had lost martyrs, relatives or who were displaced."

"Living the Revolution: Living the Occupation, 1970–1987, the era of 'War of the [Lebanese] Camps'" continues the story then the book concludes in 1993 with the Oslo peace agreement and its aftermath with a chapter called "Children of the Stones: Living the first intifada." Khaled Ziadeh, the only Gazan interviewed outside of Gaza, says: "Everyone who lived and witnessed the intifada has a story to tell." In this book Dina gives them a welcome long-awaited voice!

Dina Matar is a lecturer in Arab Media and International Political Communication at the Centre for Film and Media Studies, SOAS, and co-editor of "The Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication."

Maha Rahwanji

A Case for Protest

A *Case for Protest* is a 45 minute documentary by Jon Pullman that explores the case of the SPSC5. It follows five members of the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign from their accounts of initially forming or joining the group to protesting at an appearance of the Jerusalem Quartet, their subsequent arrest and trial last year on charges of breach of the peace and racism.

The film does a fine job of tracing the trajectory of the group from first learning about Palestine to their reasons for protesting, their deep commitment and their willingness to go to trial and to put their future on the line. It is emotionally engaging to the point where, when they win their court case, this viewer felt like standing up and cheering.

The film also explains with clarity why the Jerusalem Quartet is an important target. There is a glimpse into how the Zionist public relations machine sells an image — evidence of the Quartet's ties to the military is pushed aside in the service of "pure art."

High production values and professional narration work to make *A Case for Protest* an excellent piece of documentary grassroots filmmaking. I highly recommend it as perfect for discussion and fundraising. Watch it on-line or order the disk for a modest fee by contacting jonpullman@yahoo.co.uk.

Naomi Woodspring, Bristol PSC

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine & Israel (EAPPI) provides protection by presence, supports Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and advocates for an end to the occupation.

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(Please note that we will not be sending hard copies of the application pack)



International Summer Camp and Workshops in Palestine

May 28th–June 12th, 2011

Join "Rays of Justice," a **Zajel International Youth Exchange Programme**, for a two week summer camp at the **An-Najah National University** in Nablus.

The programme includes lectures, working with Palestinian university students and community activities related to social youth development. Living and working together in Nablus, the volunteers will gain a better understanding of themselves, Palestinian social/political questions and the continuing Palestinian struggle for freedom.

For more information see:

http://youth.zajel.org/summer_camps/camp2011-rays-of-justice.htm

For the information packet and application form please contact: placement@najah.edu or zajel.camp@gmail.com



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END THE SIEGE ON GAZA — FREE PALESTINE

Saturday 14 May 2011
Assemble 12noon opposite
Downing Street,
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(nearest tube Westminster)

Join us for a protest vigil to
commemorate the Nakba and to
demand the government act to end
the siege on Gaza.

*Many more events listed on the PSC
website!*



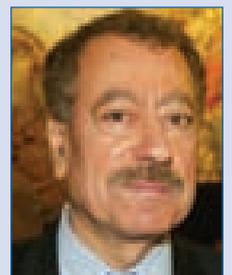
Fair news meeting

Come to listen to a panel of experts talking about whether reporting on Palestine and Israel is fair and balanced.

Tim Llewellyn, the BBC's former Middle East correspondent, **Greg Philo**, Research Director of the Glasgow Media Group, and **Abdel Bari Al-Atwan**, editor of Al Quds will discuss:

- Does newspaper and TV reporting favour one narrative over the other?
- How does this influence public perception?
- Is real damage done to the Palestinians' hopes for justice?
- What pressure do journalists come under from their news organisations when trying to report the facts?

Greg Philo will be signing copies of his new book, *More Bad News from Israel*.



Date: **Monday 23 May, 2011**

Time: **7pm–9.30pm**

Venue: **Amnesty International,
Human Rights Action Centre,
New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA**

Entrance is free but advance registration is essential. Please email events@memonitor.org.uk to reserve a place.