



PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BEN JAMAL

We have been witness to extraordinary events since we sent our last newsletter to you. The processes of ethnic cleansing being enacted in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan saw protests on the ground subject to brutal repression by Israeli forces, followed by an 11 day air assault on Gaza. The historic mobilisations that ensued on the ground in response to these assaults, including uprisings by Palestinian citizens of Israel and the momentous unified strike for dignity are addressed by Kamel Hawwash in this issue.

What I want to focus on is happened here in the UK, the extraordinary outpouring of solidarity that saw the largest demonstrations for Palestine in British history. 150 thousand marched to the Israel Embassy on May 15th and the following week 200 thousand marched to Hyde Park. Simultaneously on each of these days we saw more than 70 demonstrations taking place across the UK. PSC branches mobilised from cities like Manchester and Birmingham, to towns like Abergavenny and Banbury.

In tandem with these huge street mobilisations, May saw people join PSC in unprecedented numbers. We gained one thousand new members in 2 weeks alone. Since May 6, new branches in Montgomeryshire, Bournemouth, Newport, Redbridge, Worcester and Rhondda Cynon Taf have been formally constituted and 3 more are in the process of setting up. We welcome you all.

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Our task now is to take the energy from this moment and translate it into renewed vigour in our campaigning. In July we led the way with 3 days of action. Thousands of you lobbied your MPs calling for a recognition of the apartheid nature of the Israeli state and action to hold it to account including an end to the 2 way arms trade; hundreds of students marched in London calling for their universities to divest from complicit companies, and thousands of you participated in the day of action against Puma where we were joined by Black lives Matter.

In the national office, we are recruiting to boost the strength of our staff team. I'm delighted to announce that we have recruited PSC's first Deputy Director. Ryvka Barnard will be joining us from War on Want where for many years she has spearheaded their work on Palestine including on the Stop Arming Israel campaign.

We have also recruited Zeyn Mohammed who has held previous roles within Jeremy Corbyn's office when he was Labour leader, and more recently leading the election campaign for the Scottish Greens. Zeyn will be leading PSC's work defending the movement from attacks on our right to campaign. We are planning further recruitment in the autumn including a full-time student and youth officer to take forward our crucial work supporting student activism and engaging young people in our campaigns.

In September, we are also launching a website which will bring together all of the resources we have created to support the campaign opposing the IHRA definition of antisemitism which, as you all know, is being used as a key tool to suppress legitimate activism for Palestine.

The solidarity movement in the UK responded to the call for action in May with huge energy, with PSC leading the way. We need to keep marching, keep protesting, keep lobbying and keep boycotting until the people of Palestine enjoy what is their birthright; freedom, justice and equality in their historic homeland.

Onwards!

RESIST DSEI STOP ARMING ISRAEL DEMONSTRATION

12.09.2021

ASSEMBLE 1PM, FOREST LANE PARK, E15



The world's largest arms fair, Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI), is taking place in London. March with us the Sunday before it begins, to show our solidarity with the Palestinian people.

[**MORE INFO**](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON: PSC'S WEEK OF ACTION



Thousands took part in PSC's Week of Action for Palestine across the UK. Actions included a Lobby Day, Student Protest and a Boycott Puma Day of Action.

This week of events follows demonstrations in support of Palestine in May and June which drew crowds of hundreds of thousands of human rights defenders in London and across the country.

Hundreds of constituents across the country took place in the Lobby Day on Thursday 8th July, which saw over 50 MPs lobbied about the UK-Israel arms trade and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Constituents also brought to attention the landmark Human Rights Watch report detailing the ways in which Israel's repressive regime of control over Palestinians amounts to apartheid. BT'Selem, Israel's largest human rights organisation also released a report to the same effect which was similarly shared with the members of Parliament.

The student protest which gathered hundreds of students from across the country on July 9th marched through the streets of London and stopped at the many UK academic institutions in the city which are complicit in Israel's crimes. Students called on these universities to divest from companies that profit from and uphold the various human rights violations which Israel is engaged in, with speakers including representatives from CAAT Universities Network, Palestine societies across the country and Young Greens members.

The Boycott Puma Day of Action on July 10th saw hundreds of protestors across over 30 locations take to the street and call on the sports retailer to end its sponsorship of the Israeli Football Association, which includes teams based in the illegal settlements. As well as demonstrations outside stores stocking the brand, a direct action took place inside the Puma flagship store in London's Carnaby Street. Dozens of activists conducted a sit-in, revealing "boycott Puma" t-shirts and holding "Free Palestine" signs as speakers addressed those in the store. Among those whose words were shared was Black Lives Matter UK representative Joshua Virasami, whose statement of support was read out regarding the inherent intersections and solidarity between the two movements.



THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF JERUSALEM

BY KAMEL HAWWASH

It started with a hashtag, #SaveSheikhJarrah. That was the plea from a group of young residents of the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Their refugee families had tried every peaceful mean to ensure they stayed in the homes they were given by UNRWA in 1956 in exchange for their ration cards. The Jordanian Government of the time had given the land to the UNRWA to house 28 refugee families. The registration of the homes in the name of the families did not take place before Israel occupied in East Jerusalem in 1967.

Both Sheikh Jarrah to the north of the old city, and Silwan to the south have been targets for settler organisations for decades. The ethnic cleansing of the area surrounding the old city from the North, East and South with Jewish-only settlements would cut it off from any remaining Palestinian neighbourhoods in the holy city, making it impossible for Palestinians to claim it as their capital city.

One of the 28 families threatened with eviction is that of my late cousin Jamal Atiya. I last visited their home in 2016 when I enjoyed a traditional Palestinian breakfast with Jamal. I did not foresee that the house would feature repeatedly across our TV screens and on social media videos being attacked by the Israeli security forces, as it had become an open house to serve refreshments and food to the solidarity groups that came to stand with the residents.

My cousin's wife Nuha, who is a nurse, attended to the injured. She told me that they live an impossible existence under constant fear of attacks by settlers and the Israeli security forces. She told me that they sleep in their day clothes rather than night clothes because the house could be broken into at any moment. PSC hosted Nuha in our second webinar on Jerusalem and Sheikh Jarrah in June. Another member of the family, Murad was arrested in August and remains held for 'interrogation' by the Israelis. He is a teacher and faces the danger of losing his job simply for peacefully standing up to the occupiers.

Israel ratcheted up the attack on Palestinians in Jerusalem during the holy month of Ramadan this year, starting with an attempt to cleanse Damascus Gate of Palestinians and finally a vicious attack on worshippers at the Al-Aqsa mosque.

Palestinians across historic Palestine rose as one to reject the Israeli aggression, including armed groups in Gaza. A general strike was held across historic Palestine that showed the power of peaceful resistance. However, Israel met this with numerous arrests fearing the growth of discontent amongst its Palestinian citizens.

The incidents of May of this year showed the resilience of the Palestinians but also their unity, not only in historic Palestine but also in the diaspora. Their resilience inspired hundreds of thousands of people around the world to take to the streets rejecting Israeli brutality and standing with the Palestinians. They will not give up on their rights and we must continue to stand with them until liberation.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

READ ABOUT HIGHLIGHTS FROM SOME OF OUR CORE CAMPAIGNS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS!

LGPS DIVEST

The last few months have seen positive developments in the campaign to get Local Government Pension Scheme funds to end their complicity in Israeli apartheid. London Combined Investment Vehicle, the pooled investment vehicle of London local government pension funds has committed, in [a public statement](#) “to monitor all relevant lists and identify emerging issues to ensure our funds are not complicit in any violations of human rights or international law anywhere in the world.”

In addition, Lancaster City Council passed a motion of support for BDS, which called on Lancashire Pension Fund to divest from companies active in illegal Israeli settlements or supplying weapons to Israel.

In Hackney, campaigners staged a public demonstration to hand in the 50,000+ strong petition urging the pension fund to divest. Representatives from a range of local groups, including trade unions, lobbied the council to demand they take action. Despite this, the fund has not committed to take any substantive action. The campaign in Hackney continues...



STOP ARMING ISRAEL

In the aftermath of Israel's 11-day relentless bombardment of the population of besieged Gaza, demands have been growing for the UK government to implement a robust two-way arms embargo, to stop the supplying of British weapons to Israel. In Parliament, Richard Burgon MP has sponsored a Private Member's Bill to prohibit the sale of arms to Israel and the purchase of arms from Israel. The bill is scheduled to have its second reading on the 10th September.

In local communities across the UK people are taking action to protest the UK's continuing complicity. In Liverpool a coalition of community groups, including Liverpool Friends of Palestine, has come together to resist the AOC Europe 2021 arms fair, which is scheduled to take place at the council-owned ACC Exhibition Centre in October.

In an inspiring display of solidarity with the Palestinian people, thousands have supported the campaign's petition, and over 300 took to the streets in a demonstration against the fair. Despite this, the fair is still scheduled to go ahead, and the local campaign continues.

In London, we're gearing up to resist the return of the world's largest arms fair, DSEI. We've called a mass demonstration in Newham on the eve of the fair, Sunday 12th September. See you there!

**RESIST DSEI
STOP ARMING ISRAEL
DEMONSTRATION**

12.09.2021

ASSEMBLE 1PM, FOREST LANE PARK, E15



STUDENT WORK

On the day of the 16th anniversary of the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), hundreds of students took to the streets of London to demand that UK Universities end their complicity in Israeli apartheid. The noisy demonstration swept through the campuses of SOAS, Birkbeck, LSE and KCL, where student activists spoke of their inspiring campaigning work.



They reminded us that Israeli apartheid can only be maintained because of the complicity of our government and our institutions. This includes UK universities. UK Universities collectively invest over £400m in companies complicit in Israeli violations of international law.

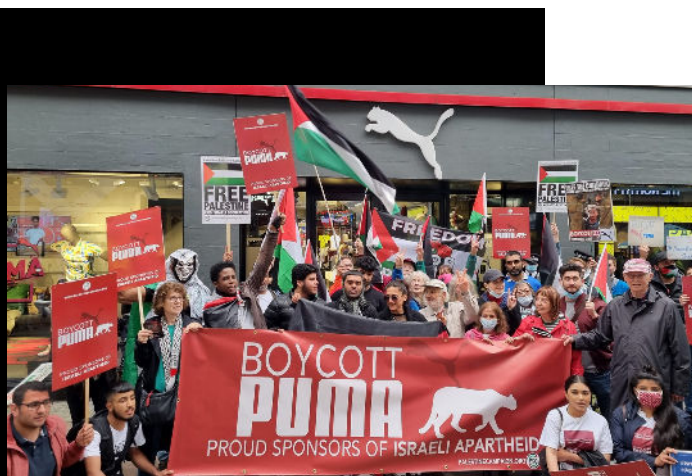
Along with investments, UK universities maintain partnerships, programmes, and ties with complicit Israeli institutions. For example, a plethora of UK universities have ties to the Technion in Haifa, which functions as the R&D wing of the IDF, developing military technology to be deployed to oppress Palestinians.

At the demonstration, representatives from a range of campaigning organisations, working on ending UK Universities role in oppression, also spoke to support student's demands. This included Stop the War Youth and Student, CAAT Universities Network, and the Young Greens.

While the demonstration was a unifying display of solidarity – there's so much more we need to do. PSCs Youth and Student Committee is working hard to prepare students to campaign for divestment during the next academic year. Watch this space...

BOYCOTT PUMA

The pressure on Puma is rising, with the Boycott Puma Day of Action on July 10th seeing hundreds of protestors across over 30 locations mobilising to demand that the sports retailer end its complicity in Israeli apartheid.



As well as partaking in the day of action, Black Lives Matter UK showed its further solidarity with the campaign by publicly stating that “you cannot be selectively anti-racist. Either you are against racism or you are for it. You cannot be neutral on a moving train. And Israeli settler-colonialism is a moving train. It is racial violence in its purest form. We're proud to join the BDS movement calling for Puma to divest!”

Watch this space for the next Boycott Puma Day of Action, details to be announced!

THE BIG RIDE FOR PALESTINE

Hundreds of human rights campaigners participated in a bicycle ride from Bristol to London in show of solidarity with the Palestinian people.



Hundreds of human rights campaigners from across the UK took part in The Big Ride for Palestine 2021, an annual event combining a love of cycling with passion and solidarity with the Palestinian people. They rode from Bristol to London over the course of 4 days, starting on July 29th and ending today, on August 1st.

The ride ended in Mile End Park following events in 2019 where Tower Hamlets Council rejected that year's application from The Big Ride for Palestine to hold their event in the council-run park. A freedom of information request undertaken by PSC revealed that this decision followed in the aftermath of council officials raising concerns that references on The Big Ride's website to Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and to the existence of laws and policies that meet the definition of apartheid might violate the IHRA definition of antisemitism. Following a petition to the council and significant local protest, the council made clear that it did not regard the event as problematic in any way and would allow it to finish in a council run park in subsequent years. The Big Ride have put the issue of apartheid at the centre of its campaign this year.

The money raised in the initiative this year will go towards assisting the Middle East Children's Alliance's creation of a recreational park in Rafah. The aim of this is to foster a safe space for children traumatised by Israel's bombing of the Gaza Strip and the illegal blockade of the densely overpopulated strip of land.

**RESIST DSEI
STOP ARMING ISRAEL**

**RALLY AT THE
ARMS FAIR**



**THURSDAY
16TH SEPTEMBER
6.30PM,
ROYAL VICTORIA SQUARE, E16**

Don't miss this rally led by Palestinian voices, commemorating those who've fallen victim to Israel's violence through speeches, spoken word & creative performances. Let's unite our voices and say **#StopArmingIsrael!**

MORE INFO



BERNARD'S BOOK CLUB!



Many people have asked for the names of books on Palestine that they should look at. The intention here is to give a brief introduction to books on and about Palestine that may interest you. I will take a look at history, poetry and literature more generally that might be of interest. Please also send in your suggestions of books you think we should take a look at - Bernard Regan

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Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2012)

Nur Masalha is a Palestinian historian anyone interested in Palestine should be familiar with. For those who aren't, *The Palestine Nakba*, is a good place to start. It provides a rich account of the events of 1948 and the ongoing attempts by the Israeli state to erase the history of the Palestinian people and expands our knowledge about its significance for Palestinians today.

The expulsion by Zionist paramilitary forces of more than 750,000 Palestinians from their homes in 1948 is at the centre of the book but the impact of the Nakba manifests itself in many ways. As Masalha says, 'The Palestinians share common experiences with other indigenous peoples who have their narrative denied, their material culture destroyed and their histories erased or reinvented by European white settlers and colonisers.' What might shock the reader is the systematic nature of the process adopted by the Israeli state.

The book details some of the massacres carried out in 1948 by Zionist paramilitaries, many after fighting had finished in towns like Lydda where between 250-400 men and women were gunned down inside the city. The list of atrocities has never been catalogued but the numbers in brackets indicate some of them: Al Husayniyya (15); Safad (70); Acre (100); Al-Tantura (70); Safsaf (50); al-Dawayma (80).

Towns and villages were flattened and built over. Those destroyed had their names changed by the Government Names Committee which was still operating from the Prime Minister's office in 2010. Some Mosques were turned into bars and restaurants, theme parks and nature reserves developed on Palestinian lands. The object quite literally was to wipe out all evidence of the Palestinians from the map.

In an act of what Masalha, calls 'memoricide' the aim is to remove all evidence of the Palestinians presence in the land. The expression 'History is written by the victor' has almost become a cliché but Masalha explains how oral histories can go some way to recapturing the past. He sees this as a vital way for Palestinians to regain the authorship of their own history.

There is much to commend in this book. *The Palestine Nakba* is a major contribution to redressing the gaps in our understanding of the Nakba and its reality for Palestinians today. Nur Masalha's work and that of the large number of Palestinian historians that there are, deserve to be much more widely read and appreciated. Begin by buying this book!

Recent Books by Nur Masalha:

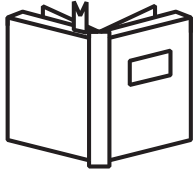
Palestine Across Millennia: A History of Literacy, Learning and Educational Revolutions (December 2021)

A Four Thousand Year History (2018, Zed Books)

An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba (2018, Edited with Nahla Abdo)

RESOURCES

Every newsletter, we will be bringing you recommendations for a book, a film and a podcast on Palestine!



Colonial Jerusalem illuminates everyday life under Israel's system of apartheid, occupation and settler-colonialism as it is defined by creating structures and conditions of "apartness" which define the parameters of the "spaces" available to Palestinians. It contains a section where a member of PSC Director Ben Jamal's family takes the author through the neighbourhood of Talbieh in West Jerusalem, standing outside the family homes from which family members were expelled in 1948. [Purchase here.](#)



From +972, this podcast episode is titled **A Little Ice Cream Goes A Long Way**. Listen to editors Edo Konrad and Amjad Iraqi discuss the significance of Ben & Jerry's decision to stop selling their products in Israeli settlements located in the occupied West Bank as well as the backlash the company continues to face, the shifting opinions among American Jews, and what this moment could mean for the movement for Palestinian rights. [Listen here.](#)



Wardi, an eleven-year-old Palestinian girl, lives with her whole family in the refugee camp where she was born. Her beloved great-grandfather Sidi was one of the first people to settle in the camp after being chased from his home back in 1948. The day Sidi gives her the key to his old house back in Galilea, she fears he may have lost hope of someday going home. As she searches for Sidi's lost hope around the camp, she will collect her family's testimonies, from one generation to the next. [Watch **The Tower** here.](#)



PSC ONLINE SHOP

Buy Keffiyahs, t-shirts, accessories and more Palestine-related products (including our brand new tote bags) on our online shop! All money raised goes towards funding our crucial campaigns for Palestinian rights.

Shop now: shop.palestinecampaign.org