



WAKE UP! ITS YER HAD A SCHNOG YESTERDAY

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WAILING WALLS

“British headlines are full of suicide bombs, raids on Jewish settlements, inter-Palestinian violence. My experience of the past few weeks has included listening to Israeli F16 bombers flying low over Gaza City for two consecutive nights. That is the real drama being played out in the grim day to day existence of Palestinians.” - Rev. Lucy Winkett (Human Rights Observer).

One day in 1998 Salim Shawamreh and his family were eating dinner at their home in Anata, a Palestinian suburb of Jerusalem, when the house was surrounded by two hundred Israeli soldiers. They were given just 15 minutes to pack their bags before their house was destroyed.

Salim tried to stop the soldiers and was attacked then arrested; his wife locked the doors, trying to keep their six children safe. The army responded by breaking windows and throwing in tear gas. Salim's 'crime' was that he didn't have a permit for his house. He owned the land that he had bought to house his family, who were living in cramped conditions in a refugee camp. But every time he applied for a building permit to build his house legally, according to rigged Israeli law, he was refused.

What happened to Salim and his family is what Jeff Halper from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions describes as the “Kafka-esque administration system designed to wear the Palestinians down...laws, zoning, planning, permits, settlements, roadblocks – all designed to control and confine the Palestinians.” In the past few years 250 by-pass roads costing \$3 billion dollars and all funded by the US have been built to bypass Palestinian settlements - cutting the Palestinian state up into small isolated islands. In the Jewish settlements there are bungalows and swimming pools, and well-watered land, whereas in Palestinian Khan Younis a population of 200,000 people doesn't even have a sewage system. For the Israeli government this war of attrition is much more preferable than using the army, because images of soldiers shooting at stone throwing youths does not go down well internationally. Much better, and much less newsworthy to drown the Palestinians in bureaucratic despair.

Currently over 180 Palestinian children are being held as political prisoners in Israeli jails where they are subject to violence and denied basic rights such as family and lawyer visits and the right to continue their education.

Peace House

During the demolition of Salim's house local villagers and people from the Committee Against House Demolitions tried to stop it being destroyed - seven were injured including a 16 year old who lost a kidney. The Red Cross gave the family a tent where they lived by the ruins of their house, until a new one was built with the help of hundreds of people. Just 24 hours later however and the army were back with the bulldozers - this time even taking the tent because it didn't have a permit! Yet again hundreds of people helped to rebuild it, and again it was demolished, the army even digging up the foundations.

The destruction is just one of the many hundreds in a fresh wave of house demolitions that are taking place in Palestine. But Salim's house, dubbed the Peace House, is also a symbol of the resistance that has taken place, with Arabs and Jews working together to take direct action to stop the demolitions and to rebuild those houses that have been destroyed. Support from the Israeli people is important – they can get in front of bulldozers and will only be arrested. If a Palestinians did the same they may be shot.

In other countries not quite so powerful as Israel, you would be hearing words like ethnic cleansing and Apartheid (there are now Jewish-only beaches) but then this is the fourth biggest military power in the world receiving goodwill and good cash (£3 billion a year) from the most powerful nation in the world – USA. As the Palestinian Authour, Edward Said commented, “Israel's cruel confinement of 1.3 million people in the Gaza Strip, jammed like so many sardines into a tiny place surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, and of nearly two million in the West Bank - all of whose entrances and exits are controlled by the Israeli Defence Force - has few parallels in the annals of colonialism. Even under Apartheid, F16 jets were never used to bomb African homelands, as they are now sent against Palestinian towns and villages.”

Last Orders

In the past few weeks nearly 230 Israeli army reservists, many of them officers, have signed a petition saying they will refuse to serve in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip because Israel is “dominating, expelling, starving and humiliating” the Palestinian population. The army revolt is the

biggest since the start of the 16-month Palestinian uprising. One of them, Lieutenant Ishai Sagi, has described how, during one two-week stint in the West Bank, he was ordered to open fire at Palestinians who picked up stones for throwing at the troops. “Everything that we do in there - all the horrors, all the tearing down of houses and trees, all the roadblocks, everything - is just for one purpose, the settlers, who I believe are illegally there. So I believe that the [orders] that I got were illegal and I won't follow them again.”

Last Saturday 10,000 people in Tel-Aviv, demonstrated their support for those sentiments under the banner “The Occupation Is Killing Us All”, demanding an immediate end to the occupation of Palestinian land and solidarity with the growing number of young Israelis who are refusing to serve in the occupied territories. See: www.seruv.org/

* The Palestine Solidarity Campaign are calling for a boycott of Israeli goods and tourism. Box BM, PSA, London, WC1N 3XX. Tel. 020-7700-6192. www.palestinecampaign.org
* 26th Feb The Case Against Sharon - Michael Verhaeghe, part of the legal team in Belgium who are trying to prosecute the Israeli Prime Minister for war crimes, is speaking at Goodenough College, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1 8pm. www.indictsharon.net

* See New Palestinian Indymedia site: <http://virtualpalestine.org/update>
* Also see www.btselem.org

Recommended reading:

- Pity the Nation by Robert Fisk (Simon & Schuster 1991).
- Drinking the Sea at Gaza by Amira Hass (Owl Books 2000).
- Fateful Triangle: the US, Israeli and the Palestinians by Noam Chomsky and Edward Said (Southend Press 1999).

REBEL ALLIANCE

The irregular collection of Brightons groups and individuals involved in direct action. Come and hear whats been going on and what you can make happen - with a focus on the Sainsburys development. Thursday 21st 7pm. Upstairs at the Albert, Trafalgar Street Brighton.

BLUNKETT CHECK

Last week saw the publication of "Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with diversity in modern Britain" the government white paper on asylum seekers. David Blunkett described the paper as 'tough but tender'. But the Refugee Council don't see anything tender in it, describing it as a kick in the teeth for refugees, increasing the numbers of detained asylum seekers, and doing nothing to improve the application process.

With the paper came the announcement that Campsfield Detention centre near Oxford will soon be closed. Although this is great news for those campaigning for Campsfield's closure, the next few years will see the places in secure centres increasing by 40%. The white paper includes plans for 'asylum villages' to house refugees' families while their applications are processed. Although refugees won't be locked into 'villages', proposed locations are so remote that refugees will unlikely be able to leave because of travel costs, and those refugees who turn down the governments kind hospitality won't be entitled to any financial support whatsoever.

On top of detention, refugees will also enjoy a 'streamlined' application process with no improvements in fairness or access to legal advice. And should their applications be refused they're on the first plane home before they've even packed their bags. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

*Demonstrations are taking place at Campsfield on the last Saturday of every month while it remains open. www.closecampsfield.org.uk

DEATH ROW

In March 2000 Zahid Mubarek was murdered by his racist cellmate. His family, despite demanding a public inquiry into Zahid's death, have been ignored by the Home secretary David Blunkett. In September 2001 in a judicial review Judge Justice Hooper asked the Home Secretary to reconsider and order an independent investigation into Zahid's murder. Despite the ruling, Mr Blunkett still refuses to meet the Mubarek family, preferring instead to appeal against the judge's decision. Blunkett's appeal starts next Monday (18th). The verdict will have a profound impact on how suspicious deaths are dealt with by public bodies. Suresh Grover, of the National Civil Rights Movement stated that "The Home Secretary is petrified of losing because he believes that other victim families with similar deserving cases will also successfully demand public investigations and inquiries."

* Picket the High Court, Strand, London 18th February 9.30 am.

* 'Justice for Zahid meeting, Committee Room 8, House Of Commons London 7.00 pm, 25th February. Info: call Suresh Grover 020 8843 2333 sgrover@monitoring-group.co.uk

For information on miscarriages of Justice in the UK www.mojuk.org.uk/

FISHY CHIPS

The future of 'Great British cuisine' could take a battering if ActionAid are successful in patenting salted chips. Under bizarre new patent rules ActionAid have found that by re-inventing the ready salted chip, they can demand chip shops pay a licence fee to add salt to their chips. Luckily ActionAid won't be robbing us of beloved fried product - just showing us how things are for farmers in developing countries, who have to live with this sort of theft, which is becoming common practice, thanks to greedy corporations patenting traditional crop varieties and local skills. Tel 020 7561 7636 www.actionaid.org.uk

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SchNEWS in brief

Want to see a model of the shiny, new Brighton Sainsbury's supermarket development? Check out the plans at Brighton Library next week (18-23), or view at www.buddbrighton.org. Next BUDD meeting: 7.45pm, 20th Feb, Church of the Annunciation. **Protest against the Sainsbury's development at London Road Sainsbury's**, Brighton at Noon, this Sunday (17th). Info: occupy_resist@hotmail.com 01273-298192 ** A new website www.worthinga27.freemove.co.uk highlights the campaign against the proposed **development at Titnore Lane** in Worthing which will trash ancient woodland. ** On Monday Julio Galeano became the first person killed as a reprisal for a successful strike against **privatisation in Cali**, Colombia (see SchNEWS 339). Julio, a community leader and strike committee member was assassinated by paramilitaries as he left his home. Striking workers and members of the Colombian food workers union - who are taking Coca Cola to court for complicity in the assassination of trade union leaders - shall be at the **'Plan Colombia: Clearing the way for the Multinationals'** Conference on Saturday 23 February Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube). Colombia Solidarity Campaign, contact us at PO Box 8446, London N17 6NZ. Tel 07950 923448, email colombia_sc@hotmail.com ** **National Demo to End Student Poverty**, Reinstate the Grant, Weds 20th Feb, Coaches from University of Brighton, tickets £1 from UBSU offices, 07812 148919 ** **London Underground** is back on the 1st Sunday of each month from 2pm at London Activist Resource Centre (LARC), corner of Fieldgate & Parfett Street, London E1. ** The next meeting of the **London social Centres network** is on Feb. 20th 7.30pm Sebbon Street Community Centre, Sebbon Street, Islington London N1 Email: Londonscn@yahoo.co.uk ** **Justice Not Vengeance** - Relatives of 11th September attacks speak out against war and for an end to sanctions on Iraq. 7pm, 21st Feb, Friends House, Euston, London. www.justicenotvengeance.org ** **National Anti-War Anti-Sanction Conference**, 23rd-24th Feb, Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, London E2. £10/£5. Details from glenn@viwuk.freemove.co.uk or 0845-458-9571. ** **The Block 'n' Roll** protest the beginning of this week saw three days demonstrations against the trident nuclear submarines in Faslane, Scotland. About 600 protestors turned up and 188 people were arrested including a mother and her 8 month old baby! A vanload of senior Navy officials was stopped and locked on to and protestors succeeded in keeping the gates of the military base closed for the three-day period. Tel: 0141 4231222 www.faslanepeacecamp.com ** The cheeky all new **Faslane Focus** is out - to read all about the exploits of the crap arrest specialists from the peace camp send a couple of quid to Faslane Peace Camp, A814, Shandon, nr.Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire, G84 8NT, Scotland ** **Earlier this week** York university managers attempted to flush 400 protesting students out of University buildings by deliberately setting off fire alarms. The attempt backfired when students chose to stay put, unlike the local fire services, who where not amused. ** **Sam Karoba**, spokesman for the Alliance of Papuan students and the Highland Tribal Council, has had a bounty put on his head by the Indonesian army. Sam is investigating the murder of the one of the leaders of the Papuan independent movement. Fax letters of protest 006296731642 and 006221356404 www.eco-action.org/opm

Chomsky at the bit

Fatih Tas was acquitted yesterday in Istanbul of charges of producing propaganda against the unity of the Turkish state. Fatih might well have spent over a year rotting in a Turkish jail, however, if it were not for the intervention of star witness Professor Noam Chomsky.

A relieved Mr Tas stated after the acquittal that "If Chomsky hadn't been here we wouldn't have expected such a verdict". Tas faced imprisonment under anti-terrorism laws simply for translating and publishing Chomsky's work, which was highly critical of the US for supplying the Turkish Government with weapons that would ultimately be used for "intensive ethnic cleansing" against the Kurds. Chomsky supporters said he would petition the court to add his name to the charge sheet. "He will say 'I am here, I wrote this book and if there is a crime I should be tried too'."

The Turkish authorities have a history of 'information management' that extends beyond labelling free thinking publishers as terrorists. Little over a year ago the Turkish Government threatening 'action' against Microsoft for content relating to the Armenian genocide included within Encarta on-line encyclopaedia.

Quite how the Turkish authorities expected Encarta to 'gloss over' the genocide of approximately 1,500,000 Armenians between 1892 and 1921 is another matter.

POSITIVE SchNEWS

The Glaneirw Housing project in North Wales is combining the skills of the New Futures Association, Endless Knot and Travellers' School Charity. The group is creating a community housing co-operative for 20 families to live as a sustainable community when they're not travelling. The project hopes to create an environmentally sustainable resource centre where produce and crafts can be produced to sell locally. Over the summer fortnightly camps for travellers children aged between 9-15 are being organised with loads of classes on offer including bender building, food foraging, self-defence, cookery and computing skills. Tel 01239811929/ 0845 2818571 www.tsct.co.uk

...and finally...

Reebok, that well known champion of human right's has attempted to award Dita Sari, an Indonesian labour activist with a 'Reebok Human Rights Award'. The multinational reckons it honours, "champions and torchbearers in the fight for a better world" with its annual £35,400 Award. Shameless Jill Tucker, from Reeboks Hong Kong office said, "We feel like we are fighting for the same thing" and somehow managing to keep a straight face. Reebok are but one of many shoe and clothing companies to have their 'sports goods' manufactured on the cheap in Indonesia by sub-contractor companies. In their plants, the workers are lucky to get paid \$1.50 a day. "They then have to live in a slum area, surrounded by poor and unhealthy conditions, especially for their children," said Dita Sari. "At the same time, Reebok collects millions of dollars of profit every year, directly contributed by these workers. The low pay and exploitation of the workers of Indonesia, Mexico and Vietnam are the main reasons why we will not accept this award."

For info contact: No Sweat 07904-431-95 www.nosweat.org.uk

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all Zionists not to have a GodAlmighty chip on their shoulder as it's already been patented Honest.