



**“Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians”  
Nelson Mandela**

## INSIDE:



**Apartheid shall fail**  
Mary Clay  
page 4



**Faith groups attacked**  
Hilary Wise  
page 6



**Journey towards hope**  
Jas Irban  
page 11



**Aid – time to stop?**  
Gill Swain  
page 14



Cover image: Nelson Mandela meets Yasser Arafat, May, 1990. Photo: news.naij.co

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### Also in this issue... page 8



Bethlehem Unwrapped

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# Contents

- 3 Forward in phase four!**  
Hugh Lanning examines the role of the solidarity movement
- 4 Apartheid shall not prevail**  
Mary Clay looks at Nelson Mandela's legacy for Palestinians
- 5 PSC's fight against racism**  
Sarah Colborne reports on the ongoing struggle against Israeli apartheid
- 6 Faith groups under attack**  
Hilary Wise examines Israel's attacks on faith groups supporting justice for Palestinians
- 8 Bethlehem Unwrapped**  
The Wall is recreated in Piccadilly
- 9 Bethlehem – an isolated ghetto**  
A new PLO factsheet reveals the sorrows of the city of Christ's birth
- 10 Christians respond to Kairós**  
Pat Gaffney reports on UK faith groups' response to Palestinian Christians
- 11 Journey towards hope**  
Jas Irban describes volunteering in An Najah summer camp
- 12 Teachers go to learn**  
Beth Davies reports on NUT delegation to Palestine
- 13 Speaking up for children**  
Kiri Tunks reports on Action for Palestinian Children tour
- 14 Aid – time to stop?**  
Gill Swain examines the arguments over aid to Palestine
- 16 Palestine – a European problem**  
Hugh Lanning reports on the changing debate in Europe
- 18 "It's like the canals of Venice... only with rivers of sewage"**  
Reports on floods, power cuts and sewage overflows in Gaza
- 19 Little ships of hope**  
Children of Gaza launch paper boats begging for the world's help
- 20 Israel to drill for oil in West Bank**  
Jonathan Cook looks into Israel's ongoing theft of Palestinian natural resources
- 22 BBC tells Israel's story**  
Amena Saleem updates the PSC's campaign to challenge BBC bias
- 23 Academics join the call**  
Latest news on BDS round the world
- 24 Something serious, something fun**  
Activism news from round the country
- 26 In Brief**  
Jordan Valley under threat, Diplomatic row, Europe shows some muscle, Doctors oppose torture, Emmy for *5 Broken Cameras*, and more...
- 29 Arts and Reviews**  
*Abrahams Children*, by Heather Stroud; *Gaza: when the sky rained white fire*, by Musheir El Farra; *Beyond Occupation*, edited by Virginia Tilley; *Space & Gaze* exhibition

### 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

# Forward in phase four!

By Hugh Lanning

Israel's appetite for Palestinian land has no boundaries, it recognises no borders. The Knesset discusses "sharing" the al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem and considers the annexation of the Jordan Valley. More colonial settlements are authorised, the wall encircles more and more Palestinians within segregated enclaves. The siege of Gaza is allowed to continue despite canals of sewage in the aftermath of the floods.

This is the backdrop to the US-led talks. Mustafa Barghouti of the Palestinian National Initiative, in criticising the framework proposed by Secretary of State John Kerry, said it "converts a Palestinian sovereign state to isolated bantustans similar to the ones that were prevalent in South Africa during the apartheid regime." In a one-sided process, with the US and Israel trying to bully Palestinian negotiators into going on with it, the *Guardian*, in a New Year Editorial, comments that "two points that must always be borne in mind with the Palestinians: they are the aggrieved party; and they are by far the weakest party."

Yet Israel is allowed to continue with its aggressive ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and, until recently, the plan to remove tens of thousands of Bedouin from their villages in the Naqab desert. The welcome withdrawal of the Praver Plan legislation was a success for the combination of resistance coupled with international pressure, although it has not stopped Israel's ambitions.

The end of the year and the PSC's AGM is inevitably a time for reflection and looking forward. In the aftermath of Nelson Mandela's death and the storm created when Mahmoud Abbas said at the memorial service that he supported the boycott of settlement goods but not of Israel, there has been plenty of debate around the role of the solidarity movement and the BDS campaign.

In opening a recent international conference on the Future of the Palestinian National Movement, Azmi Bishara – exiled member of the Balad Party – said the challenge was to "not replicate... but learn from the South African experience and the international discourse of the ANC."

The challenge is to help build a strong global solidarity movement. My recollection of being a student in the Anti-Apartheid movement was that the solidarity movement was nurtured and supported by the ANC. It was challenged and chided, discussed and communicated with and sometimes listened to. Life was made easy because there was a simple path for the solidarity movement to follow. It is obvious that the more diverse and disparate the message, the harder it is to discern what the solidarity movement is being asked to do.

But more important is a shared understanding of the role of the solidarity movement in supporting the Palestinian

National Movement to advance. At the same event UN Special rapporteur Richard Falk talked of the critical role of "soft power." He argued that, historically, "the decisive battles are not generally won by the side with the superior weaponry and technology but rather by the side that prevails in the realm... of just cause, especially those bearing on nationalist claims of rights based on international law and universal standards of morality."

This global war has two interlinked aims – primarily to support Palestinian demands for freedom and independence, but also to stop the daily breaches by Israel of international law and Palestinian human rights. These objectives are inextricably linked – it is difficult to conceive of making no progress on one whilst "winning" on the other.

**"The PSC's AGM  
is a time for reflection  
and looking forward"**

In the context of "soft power," the solidarity movement has the potential of being a powerful weapon on the side of the Palestinians; but strong solidarity movements do not arise spontaneously – they need hard work. PSC is lucky that it has a base of decades of hard work to build on, done predominantly by volunteers, with a small dedicated team of staff, funded by members. It gives us a strength and independence that many organisations envy and our opponents hate.

We have learnt to have simple messages and a clear focus for our campaigning; that to build alliances you need to find common ground and that we are at our best when we play to our strengths and Israel's weaknesses. It has been our experience that building our campaign on clear anti-racist principles has been a strength.

Racism is Israel's "Achilles heel" – it underpins everything they do. Their means are racist in nature and deed – the wall, the roads, the siege, water, ethnic cleansing, house demolition, marriage and pass laws. To win global action, rather than just sympathy for Palestine, we need to paint that picture graphically.

The key to winning that "tipping point" of global political action, that was eventually so decisive in the case of South Africa, is to demonstrate and prove that Israel is racist in its actions and deeds. It is building an apartheid reality in historic Palestine from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. A small challenge for the New Year, but as Gandhi said: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, and then you win." I reckon we are in phase four!

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# Apartheid shall not prevail



By Mary Clay

**P**alestinians lost a friend and champion with the death of Nelson Mandela but gained a new opportunity to link their fight for freedom with that of black South Africans' struggle against apartheid.

Anti-occupation protesters across the West Bank carried posters of Mandela during their weekly demonstrations. Israeli troops reacted by firing tear gas, stun grenades and rubber-coated steel bullets into the crowds at Bil'in, Kafr Qaddum and Nabi Saleh where they were also commemorating the death of Mustafa Tamimi who was murdered by Israeli forces at a similar rally in 2011.

Several people were injured and dozens suffered from tear gas inhalation. In al-Masara, south of Bethlehem, where another demo took place, Hassan Brejia, coordinator of the Popular Committee against the Wall, said: "Since its beginning the Palestinian revolution has gained its strength from other revolutions including South Africa and its symbol Nelson Mandela who was always a help for the struggle and fighting of Palestinians."

## Letter from a prisoner

Meanwhile Palestinian leaders paid tribute to Mandela and evoked his statement, made in December, 1997: "But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

Marwan Barghouti, a leader of the second intifada who was jailed by

Israel in 2002, wrote an "open letter" to Mandela from Cell No 28 in Hadarim prison where he is serving five life sentences, saying: "During the long years of my own struggle, I had the occasion to think many times of you, dear Nelson Mandela. I think of a man who spent 27 years in a prison cell, only to demonstrate that freedom was within him before becoming a reality his people could enjoy. I think of his capacity to defy oppression and apartheid, but also to defy hatred and to choose justice over vengeance."

He added: "And from within my prison cell, I tell you our freedom seems possible because you reached yours. Apartheid did not prevail in South Africa, and Apartheid shall not prevail in Palestine."

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas also took the opportunity to say of Mandela: "The Palestinian people will never forget his historic statement that the South African revolution will not have achieved its goals as long as the Palestinians are not free."

## Friendship with Arafat

Others were recalling Mandela's close relationship with Yasser Arafat whom he called "one of the outstanding freedom fighters of his generation." Nabil Shaath, former Palestinian Authority foreign minister, said there was a genuine personal warmth between the two leaders that underlined the political links between them.

All this coverage turned a spotlight on Israel's contrasting relationship with Mandela and with South Africa's apartheid rulers. As the BBC's Middle East correspondent, Kevin Connolly, pointed out in a website article on 6 December, Israel was "a close, if secretive, ally and arms supplier to apartheid South Africa and there is a good case to be made that Israeli support helped the all-white regime in Pretoria to last longer than it otherwise might have."

Indeed historians have documented, drawing on South African government records, how Israel and South Africa entered into a secret agreement in 1975, part of which was a pledge by Israel to supply nuclear knowhow to the apartheid regime, and the two countries were widely believed to have carried out a joint nuclear test – see the PSC Factsheet "Israel's Weapons of Mass Destruction," April, 2012.\*

Perhaps it was fear that he would be reminded of this history that caused Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu not to attend the Mandela memorial service in Johannesburg. What is certain is that Mandela's death served to highlight Israel's increasing world position as a pariah state.

## The "tipping point"

This was something that was picked up in a thoughtful article about boycott by Israeli journalist and political analyst,



Demo in Bil'in, 6 December

Chemi Shalev, who is US foreign correspondent for *Ha'aretz* newspaper. He said that the analogy between today's Israel and yesterday's South Africa could "stoke a belief that the former can be brought to its knees in much the same way as the latter was in the late 1970s and early 1980s."

He recalled how the UN first called for a boycott of South Africa in 1962 but this was opposed by many Western countries, led by Britain and the US. However the grassroots boycott campaign eventually forced even the most reluctant of governments to join the international sanctions regime.

Shalev cited a 1998 article entitled "International Norms, Dynamics and Political Change," by political scientists Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, which described how movements develop to shape the behaviour of states and then of the international community.

"The first step, they claim, is 'norm emergence,' when a new norm is championed by NGOs and 'norm entrepreneurs.' The second stage is a 'norms cascade,' when states fall into line to embrace the new norm. And a prerequisite for evolution from the first to the second stages is a 'tipping point' that occurs when a critical mass of events and opinions converge to create the norms cascade."

Shalev wrote that "tipping points" were "hard to predict," but added: "Israel could very well be approaching such a threshold."

Among developments that could be "creating the required critical mass" he cited "Israel's isolation in the campaign against Iran's nuclear programmes; the disappearance of repelling archenemies such as Osama bin Laden, Muammar Gadhafi, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and, to a lesser degree, Yasser Arafat; the relative security and lack of terror inside Israel coupled with its own persistent settlement drive; and the negative publicity generated by revelations of racism in Israeli society, the image of its rulers as increasingly rigid and right wing and the government's own confrontations with illegal African immigrants and Israeli Bedouin, widely perceived as being tinged with bias and prejudice."

Shalev said that the only thing that may be keeping Israel from "going over the cliff" in the international arena is John Kerry's peace process "which is holding public opinion and foreign governments at bay and preventing a 'tipping point' that would dramatically escalate the anti-Israeli boycott campaign."

■ For the full article, see <http://tinyurl.com/pfh9fpa>

\*PSC Factsheet "Israel's Weapons of Mass Destruction":

<http://tinyurl.com/nszdaq26>

# PSC's fight against racism

By Sarah Colborne

**N**elson Mandela's death sharpened the focus on continuing the struggle that he led against racism and apartheid, a struggle in which the Palestine Solidarity Campaign plays a leading part in the UK.

Just a few days before Mandela died, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories held a "Day of Rage" against the Praver Plan – Israel's policy forcibly to expel some 70,000 Palestinians from their homes and land in the Naqab/Negev. The PSC worked to highlight the strength of international opposition; a letter in the *Guardian* signed by Peter Gabriel, Brian Eno, Bella Freud, and Jemima Khan, organised by the PSC and others, significantly rattled those pushing forward this ethnic cleansing plan.

Among the legacies of the struggle against racism, colonialism and apartheid are international bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council which carries out periodic reviews of the human rights record of all countries. The latest review of Israel, released in 2013, was damning.

It said the Council was "extremely concerned at the consequences of policies and practices which amount to de facto segregation," such as Israel's two entirely separate legal systems for settlers and Palestinians living in the West Bank. The Council was "particularly appalled at the hermetic character of the separation of two groups, who live on the same territory but do not enjoy either equal use of roads and infrastructure or equal access to basic services and water resources."

The review also highlighted the swathe of discriminatory laws targeting Palestinian citizens of Israel<sup>1</sup>. These include the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Provision) which denies Israeli residency or citizenship to Palestinians from the Occupied Territories who marry Palestinian citizens of Israel; the separate education systems; the Admissions Committees Law which gives private committees full discretion to reject student applicants deemed "unsuitable to the social life of the community," and the discriminatory

planning policy "whereby construction permits are rarely if ever granted to Palestinian and Bedouin communities and demolitions principally target property owned by Palestinians and Bedouins." In addition, the Council was "greatly concerned" at Israel's policy of "demographic balance" which has been a stated aim of official municipal planning documents, particularly in Jerusalem.

**"Using social media and e-tools, the PSC reached over 200,000 people with the message"**

Throughout 2013 the PSC worked hard to expose Israeli racism and respond to the Palestinian call for international action against the Praver Plan. In February the PSC jointly organised a meeting with Sami Abu Shehadeh and Mahmoud Zwahre which compared the situation of Palestinians living in Israel with those in the West Bank. Using social media and e-tools, the PSC reached over 200,000 people with the message and kept up pressure on the Middle East Minister.

The Action Plan for the coming year, to be put before the AGM for approval, includes strategies for a national campaign to challenge Israeli racism and apartheid policies. The aim is to keep piling on the pressure until that crucial "tipping point" is reached.

<sup>1</sup> Adalah maintains a directory of more than 50 discriminatory laws in Israel.



# Faith groups under attack

By Hilary Wise

The Israeli government and a variety of Zionist organisations have long been pouring huge resources into “hasbara,” meaning “advocacy” or “propaganda” in Hebrew. This involves both promoting a positive image of Israel and hounding and intimidating those they say are guilty of the “new anti-Semitism,” which amounts in practice to any criticism of Israeli policies and actions.

The bodies involved in this hasbara campaign range from the immensely powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) to internet-based organisations such as Honest Reporting, BBC Watch and the Jewish Internet Defence Force, and poisonous personal blogs.

Christian churches, having by definition a special interest in the Holy Land and what is happening there, are increasingly coming under fire from such sources for noting and deploring Israel’s policies of oppression and dispossession, which affect Christians and Muslims alike.

Methodists in the US and the UK have for years been outspoken in their concern over the plight of the Palestinian people. The report *Justice for Palestine and Israel*, presented to the 2010 Methodist conference, was harshly criticised by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council, the Chief Rabbi and the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ).

Despite these groups demanding that the report be withdrawn, it was welcomed and endorsed by the conference delegates, including its proposal for the boycott of illegal Israeli settlements. The Methodists were rewarded with headlines such as the *Jerusalem Post*’s “The banality of Methodist evil” – a clear reference to Nazi persecution of the Jews.

In 2012 the Methodist conference joined with Christian Aid and the Quakers in calling for a complete ban on settlement goods. However, later that year the “Methodist Friends of Judaism” (MFJ) was formed, part of its remit being to “combat anti-Semitism *in all its guises*” (our italics).

It appears to have been effective in that part of a motion put to the 2013 conference expressing “concern over the deteriorating situation in the West Bank making a ‘two state solution’ more and more difficult” was removed after the Chair of the MFJ, the Rev Bruce Thompson, claimed the Church could find itself in legal trouble if it made what he claimed were “false accusations” against Israel. But the pressure did not stop the call for a debate within the Methodist Church on BDS – a debate that is ongoing.

**“Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams stated that the EAPPI was in no way anti-Israel”**

The Methodists are not the only targets. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is well known for its work in providing protection for people under threat from the IDF and settlers in the OPTs, through mediation and by their very presence. It is an initiative of the World Council of Churches, administered in the UK by Quaker Peace and Social Witness. On their return, participants report on their experiences and campaign for a just peace in the region.

But now the EAPPI is under fire. At the 2012 General Synod of the Church of England a motion was tabled praising the “vital work” done by the EAPPI and “encouraging parishioners to volunteer for the programme and asking churches and synods to make use of the experience of returning participants.”

The CCJ, headed by its chairman, the Rev Nigel McCulloch, was again at the forefront of a massive lobbying campaign to remove the motion, saying it could “seriously impair” relations between Christians and Jews in the UK. In fact the motion passed by a margin of four to one, thanks in part to the then



Methodists call for BDS. Photo: Mondoweiss blog

Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, who stated that the EAPPI was in no way anti-Israel.

There was also support from the Foreign Office: the FO Minister Lord Howell said that the government believed the EAPPI “provides a useful independent monitoring service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.”

Nevertheless the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews accused the Synod of “riding roughshod” over the Jewish community and called the EAPPI “an inflammatory and partisan programme” while the Jewish Chronicle ran headlines like: “Church endorses Israel hate agenda” and “Jewish stereotypes revealed in ugly Church of England debate.”

After a series of meetings with the Board of Deputies, the Quakers seem to have yielded somewhat under the strain, agreeing to “improve” the EAPPI programme by arranging for volunteers to spend more time in Haifa “to experience the suffering of Israelis.”

In May, 2013, the Church of Scotland had the temerity to publish a major report on Israel-Palestine entitled “The Inheritance of Abraham” which questioned some of Israel’s policies, especially in relation to right to the land. Under pressure from the Zionist lobby, however, the report was swiftly removed from their website and a heavily redacted version substituted. Even the simple statement: “No part of the New Testament gives any support to a political state of Israel beyond that to any other state,” was considered offensive.\*

Hasbara exponents are equally ready to target individuals who dare to put their head above the parapet. The Rev Stephen Sizer is well known in Britain and in many other parts of the world as a speaker and writer on the Palestinian question, a strong advocate of interfaith dialogue and an authority on the phenomenon of Christian Zionism, especially in the US\*.

Stephen has been subject to sustained Zionist attacks since 2006, mainly through blogs like notorious Zionist website, Harry’s Place. A key contributor to the website from about 2010 was Nick Howard, son of Michael Howard, the former leader of the Conservative



PN editor, Gill Swain, working with the EAPPI in Tuba, South Hebron Hills

party. Nick became an ardent convert to Christianity and studied theology but was turned down for ordination by the Church of England.

In November, 2011, Nick emailed Christopher Hill, Bishop of Guildford, demanding Stephen be suspended from his post as vicar of Christ Church, Virginia Water, in Surrey, for posting a link to a website which had allegedly contained anti-Semitic material. He also demanded Stephen be subjected to the Clergy Disciplinary Measure, an extremely serious procedure which would probably have meant the end of Stephen’s career as a minister of the Church of England.

The Bishop replied: “I see nothing which would merit disciplinary matters, not least because differing political opinions are definitely exempted from disciplinary proceedings in the Church of England according to the Clergy Disciplinary Measure.”

From then on the campaign was taken up by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Council of Christians and Jews.

Michael Howard had been appointed a trustee of the CCJ in 2009 – the CEO, the Rev David Gifford, said in explanation of the appointment: “He has a lot of ideas and is very vocal... the Board’s new focus will be tackling anti-Semitism... big time.” Part of that focus, apparently, was to hound Stephen Sizer, accusing him in a press release in March, 2012, of conduct “unbecoming a clergyman” and even referring the matter to the Surrey police.

In October, 2012, the Board of Deputies made a formal complaint against Stephen, alleging that he had made anti-Semitic statements and had deliberately introduced his readers to anti-Semitic websites. Stephen had in fact removed the link the previous January and offered to meet leaders of the Jewish community but the offer was turned down. When no disciplinary action was taken, Nick Howard again reported on the story in the *Jewish Chronicle*, under the headline “Church’s apathy on anti-Semitism.”

However an array of writers, politicians, academics and clergy from different faith groups, including many members of the CCJ, were quick to express their unqualified support for Stephen.

Clare Short, former Secretary of State for International Development, wrote to Stephen’s bishop: “Part of the evil that is being done through

**“Part of the evil that is being done through this complaint is to frighten people from speaking out against the terrible injustices being inflicted on the Palestinian people”**



Stephen Sizer (centre) with Ibrahim Hewitt of Interpal (left) and Ahron Cohen of Neturei Karta

## Bethlehem Unwrapped

**B**ethlehem Unwrapped was a brilliant and hugely successful festival held over Christmas at St James's Church in London's Piccadilly that attracted thousands of people to witness and reflect on the impact of Israel's brutal Wall.

It began with the construction, in the courtyard of the historic church, of a life size recreation of the eight metre high concrete Wall, designed by writer and director, Justin Butcher, who invited members of the public to share their reactions to it by contributing graffiti. After Christmas the festival included performance poetry, stand-up comedy and a fabulous feast cooked by renowned chefs Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi.

A key event was a discussion by a panel including Bethlehem film-maker Leila Sansour, ICAHD founder Jeff Halper, and Alan Johnson from the British Israel Communications and Research Centre. A representative from the Israeli embassy who accepted an invitation pulled out at the last minute. The festival culminated in a wonderful concert featuring world famous violinist, Nigel Kennedy, who composed a special piece for the evening, called "The Bridge," which he played with Jewish violinist, Tom Eisner, and a Druze citizen of Israel, Mustafa Saad.

Afterwards the packed crowd stood out in the rain, clapping and cheering as one panel of the Wall was brought down and a Palestinian dabke troupe came dancing through the gap.

Justin Butcher worked with the Rev Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James's, plus nine other groups to create the festival. Inevitably, the event attracted vitriolic

Wall going up



Writing on the Wall



Wall coming down



The Bridge



opposition from supporters of Israel, much of which was directed at Lucy Winkett who was bombarded with hundreds of emails,

some of them extremely vicious and threatening.

Writing in *The Guardian* on 2 January, she said that the church council had unanimously decided to host the festival in order to support "a peaceful Palestinian principle known as 'beautiful resistance.'" She added: "In liberal democracies and free societies it must be possible to raise and debate these issues, including in art or poetry, without demonising anyone or being demonised ourselves."

this complaint, and similar complaints against others, is to frighten people from speaking out against the terrible injustices being inflicted on the Palestinian people.

"These complaints help to generate fear that similar hurtful and damaging allegations will be made against anyone who seeks to expose the grave breaches of international law being justified by Christian Zionists and those Israelis who favour Israel expanding its control over the whole of historical Palestine..."

Ilan Pappé, Israeli Professor of History at Exeter University, wrote, with reference to sharing a platform with Stephen: "There was not a hint of anti-Semitism in anything Stephen wrote or spoke about. On the contrary, the message was always clear – a concern that some of Israel's policies and ideologies can create a misguided association of Judaism with dispossession, colonisation and discrimination.

"This is why there are always many Jews, like myself, who work in close association and collaboration with Stephen for the sake of a universal goal of bringing peace and justice to Israel and Palestine. This is also why many progressive Jews read and rely on Stephen's scholarly work and come in great numbers to attend his talks."

For the time being the witch hunt has been suspended: the police never acted on the complaint made against him;

the CCJ appears to have withdrawn from the fray, after considerable acrimonious internal debate; and the Board of Deputies has had to be content with a "conciliation process" in which Stephen Sizer reaffirmed his long-standing principles: "I care passionately about the safety of the Jewish people and the right of Israel to exist within internationally agreed borders. I have always opposed racism, anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial as well as Islamophobia and the denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination and will continue to do so."

But the blogosphere is keeping up the harassment and one can only imagine the stress caused by such remorseless attacks. Moreover Stephen has been left with hefty legal bills, despite being exonerated, much as the University and College Union was cleared last March on all ten complaints of harassment brought by a Jewish member, but still faces a legal battle over costs which could virtually bankrupt the union.

This use of what has been called "lawfare" is a major weapon in the hasbara arsenal. Facing relentless opponents requires immense courage.

\*The two versions of before and after redaction can be read on [www.stephensizer.com](http://www.stephensizer.com).

# Bethlehem: an isolated ghetto



**W**ith the Christmas season turning attention to the story of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, the PLO took the opportunity to produce a new fact sheet about the reality of the town today. It makes grim reading.

It says that the Bethlehem Governorate has "effectively been turned into a ghetto through Israeli policies aimed at annexing vast swathes of Palestinian land, with no regard for the people who live there, or the cultural and spiritual heritage of the place."

The Palestinian government controls only 13% of the 608 square kilometres of the Bethlehem area; the rest being controlled either by Israeli settlements or occupation forces. The Palestinian population is estimated at around 205,000 while there are 105,000 Israelis living in 21 illegal settlements on Palestinian land.

The report says that the Christian and Muslim communities are being "hemmed into the built-up urban areas," while the green areas, agricultural land and space for urban development around the city are being seized. "For the first time in over 2000 years of Christianity, the holy cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem are almost fully severed from one another."

## To the North:

Bethlehem is stifled by the Israeli settlements of Har Homa, Giva'at Hamatos, Gilo and Har Gilo. Israel has unilaterally annexed 22000 dunums (22km<sup>2</sup>) of land belonging to the towns of Beit Jala, Bethlehem and Beit Sahour.

The monastery of Mar Elias, the starting point for the Christmas procession to Bethlehem, now sits between the settlements of Giva'at Hamatos and Har Homa. Most of the land around it has been illegally seized by Israel to expand settlements.

The monastery of Cremisan faces a similar fate as it awaits a court decision on whether Israel will annexe the green areas around it belonging to 58 Palestinian families to build the Wall.

## To the East:

The settler road 356, which is mostly closed to Palestinian traffic, runs south from Jerusalem, acting as a physical barrier

between Bethlehem and other parts of the West Bank.

The road runs close to Oush Ghurab ("Crows Nest"), a hill in the village of Beit Sahour. It is the only area available for the town's expansion but settlers are trying to claim it and have prevented the development of several projects in the area, including a hospital.

North of Oush Ghurab, the village of Nuaman has been completely trapped between Har Homa settlement, the Wall and road 356. An Israeli checkpoint that does not allow public transport through is the only entry point which means that children have to walk 6km each way to get to school.

## To the South:

In the South East, the settlement of Efrat and the Wall seize yet more Palestinian land while to the South West the settlements of Tekoa and Nokdim confine the Bethlehem district. Settlement construction will eventually sever the connection between Bethlehem and Hebron for Palestinians.

Israeli settlers have prepared the ground for a further expansion of the Efrat settlement towards the village of Khirbet Nakhle, in the proximity of the ancient Artas village (where the pools of King Solomon are located). This is one of the most dangerous settlement plans unveiled during 2013.

## To the West:

This area is affected by a network of settlements, part of what Israel refers to as the "Gush Etzion" area. According to the map of the Wall, the villages of Nahhalin, Husan, Wadi' Foukin, Jaba', Khamat Sakariya and Battir are in the process of being separated from Bethlehem, where most of their jobs and services are. Their only remaining link with Bethlehem is a tunnel built under settler Road 60.

Settler Road 375 links the settlement of Beitar Illit, built on Wadi Foukin's lands, to Road 60, facilitating access to Jerusalem for the mainly Jewish Orthodox settler population. Beitar Illit's population has increased from 5500 settlers in 1995 to an astounding 46,000 today.

## Conclusion

Israel continued to announce the expansion of settlements throughout 2013 and the report concludes: "The reality in Bethlehem is bleak. In a period of negotiations, during which Palestine and Israel are supposedly trying to reach the end goal of the internationally endorsed two-state solution, it is clear that the current Israeli government has no intention of reaching such a solution.

"The Bethlehem Governorate, like all other areas throughout the occupied State of Palestine, is suffering from an ongoing campaign of colonisation which has a severe and detrimental impact on individuals, families and communities, as well as taking us further and further from the prospects of a just and lasting peace."

■ For the full fact sheet, see <http://tinyurl.com/lj6v4gj>

# Christians respond to Kairós

By Pat Gaffney

In December, 2009, a call came from the Christian leadership of Palestine entitled *Kairós Palestine – A Moment of Truth*, described as “a word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering.” Kairós is a Greek word meaning a decisive time, a moment of intensity, and has in recent years been applied to critical moments in the history of people who are oppressed or treated unjustly. Calls such as this are not new to the Christian community.

In South Africa in 1985 a Kairós document was launched, a biblical and theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa. It informed and helped to move church communities globally to unite with NGOs, trade unions, professional groups and students in political action against apartheid.

Kairós Palestine speaks of occupation as a “sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights.” The duty of the Christian community, it states, is to resist this occupation but to do so with the “logic of love,” by peaceful struggle which results in ways of force giving way to ways of justice.

Disappointingly, official church structures in the UK have made little or no response to this call. Instead, grassroots activists within the churches, theologians and faith-based NGOs have taken up the challenge. I see this as strength because such networks are more likely to make things happen and are great allies for the PSC and other campaigning groups.

A discussion and consultation began in Iona, Scotland, in 2012 to “challenge the deafening silence of most churches.” Out of this a British Kairós network formed which set itself the task of creating a resource for Christians in Britain to help them get to grips and work with the Kairós call. In August, 2013, *Time for Action: a British Christian response to a Moment of Truth, the Kairós Palestine document*, was launched at a meeting of 500 people at the Greenbelt Christian Festival.

*Time for Action* faces head-on our shame as a nation for Christian anti-Semitism and the part this has played in creating within the Jewish community the need for a safe national homeland. At the same time, it recognises our complicity, since the Balfour Declaration, in political policies that have added to the suffering of the Palestinian community and their rightful demands for justice.

The document also rejects any theological support for occupation or land cleansing that is endorsed by so many Christian Zionists. Instead, it affirms the teachings within the Jewish-Christian scriptures that call

for the pursuit of justice, the protection of the poor and the sharing of land as a condition for being in the land.

One of the most important aspects of *Time for Action*, and one which perhaps exposes the problems that the institutional churches have in supporting Kairós Palestine, is the way in which it holds together the tension between working for justice and working for interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

**“Official church structures have made little or no response to this call”**

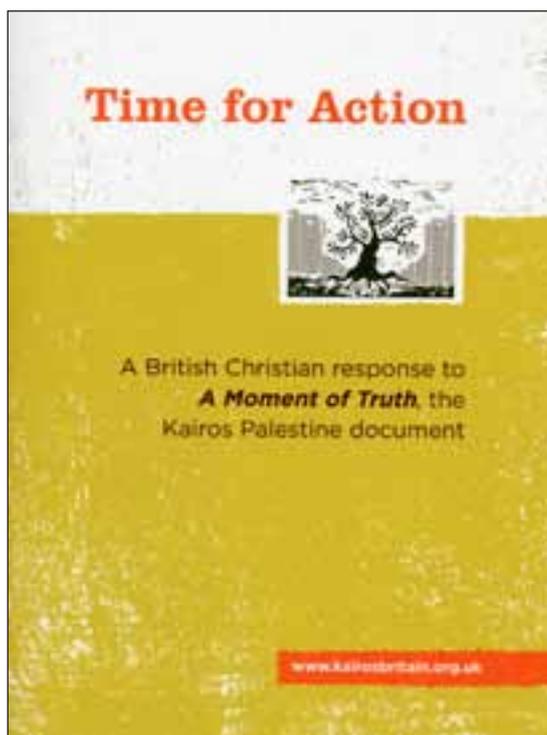
Some churches and many NGOs have become embroiled in defending any work they undertake on behalf of justice for Palestinians, often at a cost to their own work. Maintaining good Jewish-Christian relations and dialogue is important but not at the expense of being silent on behalf of the Palestinians. Being open and honest about these tensions is not easy, but they must be faced and partners must be found at local and national level that can help navigate these difficult paths.

Several actions are called for. First, to “go and see,” encouraging individuals and groups who make visits and pilgrimages to use travel companies and NGOs that will open their eyes to the reality of occupation – to see the people and not just the holy places. Second, to take political action – taking part in lobbying and advocacy work (it was encouraging to see more church-based groups involved in the November Lobby); to explore the options of divestment and economic sanctions directed against the Israeli policy of occupation.

Thirdly, to use resources for worship, study and prayer with church communities to tell the story of occupation and guide people to action for change. This could include taking part in the annual World Week for Peace in Palestine/Israel; exploring church investments and use of resources; twinning with Palestinian churches, schools villages and towns, or becoming a Kairós congregation. To date 13 organisations and several hundred individuals have endorsed *Time for Action*.

- For more info and to obtain *Time for Action*, see [www.kairosbritain.org.uk](http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk)
- Kairós Palestine website: [www.kairospalestine.ps](http://www.kairospalestine.ps)

**Pat Gaffney is General Secretary of Pax Christi, British Section**



# Journey towards hope

Student **Jas Irban** was taken to a PSC meeting in Newcastle by her dad at the age of 15. She has never forgotten what she heard there about Palestinian dispossession and living under occupation. Now 21 and studying at Falmouth University, Jas spent time this summer on a cultural exchange scheme called “Journey Towards Hope,” led by youth exchange group, Zajel. Here she describes an unforgettable experience.

I decided to go on the Zajel summer camp because I wanted to see for myself how young people in Palestine manage to make the most of life and get their voices heard, despite being treated like they don't deserve the freedom that is a human right enjoyed elsewhere in the world. The determination and energy of the Palestinian students would have been inspiring in any normal situation but in the context of living with daily oppression, I found their dedication to learning all the more incredible.

During the exchange I and other international volunteers led various classes at An-Najah University in Nablus such as English Conversation and Public Speaking. We also got to explore Palestine and attend informative lectures about the history and politics of the occupation. Lectures included talks by former hunger striking prisoner, Hassan Safadi, by photographer Alaa Badarneh who discussed the difficulties and dangers he faced in his job, and by Professor Alaa Abu Dheer who spoke of Israel's violations of the right to education.

One volunteer who should have joined us was interrogated for eight hours in Tel Aviv airport, denied entrance and then deported, all because she is a Muslim and therefore deemed a “security threat.” This was the group's first taste of the kind of discrimination and injustice that Palestinians face on a day to day basis.

In our classes, some students had family members who were incarcerated in Israeli prisons without due cause and they did not know when they would see them again. Some had to be up at five in order to wait at checkpoints for hours to get to the university. Others were from refugee

camps and had the usual night of disrupted sleep from tensions in the overcrowded camps and harassment from Israeli soldiers entering overnight.

Despite these adverse circumstances and sickening mistreatment, the students value their education highly and are eager to learn. Ramsis, from Balata Refugee camp, showed us the bullet holes in the walls of his family home and told us: “They come here to harass and intimidate us.”

He threw himself into education from a young age, encouraged by his grandma, and knows five languages. He refuses to let the violence, inhumanity and trauma he has experienced turn him to revenge. He says: “I have a good heart, I am a peaceful person,” and advocates non-violent resistance.

Challenging the stereotype of a supposed clear-cut divide between Palestinians and Israelis, students in a class discussion emphasised that it is the Israeli military and government they are against and by no means the Israeli people. One student discussed the complex nature of ideological misrepresentation of truth in the mainstream media in Israel: “If you are told from birth the Palestinians are bad people, they did this, this and this, then sure you believe it. I don't blame the people for believing it... I blame the media who give the wrong story.”

One evening we were invited to the Palestinian Youth Orchestra's concert at the university where the exceptional talent and beautiful music lifted people's spirits, if just for a few moments. As the music hit a crescendo, the unity and dedication of the musicians allowed the audience to transcend a collective weariness from lives filled with too much suffering. Such exhaustion from oppression is consistently turned into action, as the students and professors alike refuse to give up hope for their freedom and their dreams.

Student Maryam stood up in class to say: “We have a lot of difficulties, a lot of obstacles that stand in our way, but I don't

think we should give up our dreams. If I want to be an engineer, I'll be an engineer, if I want to be a doctor, I'll be a doctor. I'm not going to let anything get in the way of my dreams.”

Working with the students at An-Najah was inspiring beyond words and strong friendships across borders were forged. The international volunteers all left a little piece of our hearts rooted with the olive trees and we will never forget the determination, strength and kindness of our Palestinian friends.

Zajel is running volunteer camps next year, for more information contact [zajel.camp@gmail.com](mailto:zajel.camp@gmail.com).



Jas, centre, with new friends Muna, left, and Abeer

# Teachers go to learn



## By Beth Davies

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) sent a high level delegation of 12 members to the occupied territories in October. During the week we visited schools and met with many organisations such as the General Union of Palestinian Teachers.

The reason for the visit was a fact finding mission and to show solidarity with Palestinian teachers. The NUT is particularly concerned about the plight of Palestinian children, some as young as 12, illegally detained by the Israeli armed forces.

Whenever the delegation visited schools we were moved by the enthusiasm, energy and ambitions of the children and young people we met. In Nablus we met students in an UNRWA funded school in a refugee camp, whilst in Ramallah the school had been built with the support of the Spanish Government. In Nazareth we met older students in a municipal school.

Teachers in East Jerusalem and students in Nazareth told us of the Israeli government's imposition of a curriculum which excluded any references to Palestinian history and culture. The great Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, for example, appeared nowhere in the texts the Education Ministry endorsed. The history curriculum promoted an exclusively Zionist narrative seeking to erase all memory of pre-1948 Palestine and, of course, never referred to the Nakba.

This picture of a seriously distorted educational diet was endorsed by Professor Nurit Peled who told us about the racist treatment of Palestinians in Israeli textbooks. In contrast she confirmed that, having examined Palestinian textbooks, she saw no corresponding evidence of anti-Jewish prejudice.

Soon a report on the visit will be published by the NUT with clear points for future action. In addition to sending this delegation the NUT has:

- written to Alistair Burt, Minister for the Middle East, asking what progress has been made in Israel in implementing the 40 recommendations of the 2012 report on Children in Military Custody;
- highlighted the plight of children in detention to over 300,000 NUT members in our magazine, "The Teacher;"
- given full support to the Action for Palestinian Children campaign and

the Defence for Children International-Palestine speaking tour.

We were so impressed with the dignity of the teenagers we met and the enthusiasm of the children in the primary schools. The welcome we received was warm and thoroughly humbling.

I urge you to read our eye witness accounts and support us as we fight for the rights of generations of Palestinians. We are proud to be their voice.

**Beth Davies is President of the NUT and was the delegation leader**

## Mahmoud Sarsak marries

Mahmoud Sarsak, former member of the Palestinian national football team, was married in September to Victoria Dyas in London (right). Mahmoud was on hunger strike in an Israeli jail for three months in 2012 and later came on a speaking tour of the UK where he met Victoria. In October he was invited to the annual Congress in Slovenia of FIFPro, the international organisation representing professional footballers, where he gave a very well received presentation. At the Congress FIFPro awarded the Palestinian Professional Players Association special membership status which will enable them to seek funding and support.

The **Red Card Israeli Racism** campaign, which organised Mahmoud's visit to the UK, will be lobbying UEFA members in 2014 to try to ensure that Israel is not made one of the twelve hosts for the new-



format UEFA Euro 2020 competition. It will also be campaigning for the suspension of the Israeli Football Association (IFA) from FIFA.

The Campaign will call for the removal of the UEFA Women's Under19 finals in 2015 from Israel and will be demonstrating against any matches between British and Israeli teams that are scheduled by UEFA. Finally, it aims to establish supporters' groups for Palestinian teams in the UK and to spread the anti-racism message across the football world.

- Follow developments/get involved via [www.rcir.org.uk](http://www.rcir.org.uk)

# Speaking up for children

## By Kiri Tunks

A speaking tour organised by UK Action for Palestinian Children and Defence for Children International-Palestine in November was a huge success. It brought together diverse groups and campaigners to demand action on abuses of Palestinian children's human rights perpetrated by the Israeli army.

Muhammad Al Rish, a former child prisoner who is now a journalist at Al Quds newspaper, and Ayed Abu Eqtaish from DCI-Palestine visited nine towns and cities and spoke to hundreds of people. Meetings were hosted by a broad range of groups including branches of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, university Palestine societies, trade union branches, Amnesty and twinning groups. The pair also addressed the Palestine-UK Social Work Conference in London.

There were very productive briefings with senior lawyers from the delegation that produced the *Children in Military Custody* report (CIMC).<sup>\*</sup> This was a UK Foreign Office funded delegation of nine lawyers who travelled to Israel and the Occupied Territories in September, 2011, to assess the treatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military law.

The report was published in June, 2012, and made 40 recommendations for Israel to implement regarding the treatment of children in custody. Our pledge demands are based on this report.

Ayed and Muhammad also briefed officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, MPs and peers at a Palestine All Party Political Group in the House of Commons, and trade union officers.

Following the tour, a grateful Muhammad sent this message: "For me, the experience was more than wonderful; I'm convinced now of the idea that there are people from the other side of the world knocking on the walls of silence and seeking to spread the fact of crimes of racism and oppression.

"What you're doing for Palestine is a humanitarian service of great people appreciating the meaning of humanity and freedom and we stand by your side to provide what is necessary for the success of the campaigns organised by you."

One outcome is that the FCO have committed to sending the lawyers from the CIMC delegation back to Palestine in March to check on progress made. This means the government feels under pressure to act on this issue and this only

happens because people like you are keeping the issue in the public eye.

Help us keep up the pressure on our political representatives by asking your MP to sign the pledge for human rights for Palestinian children.

■ You can check if they've signed here: <http://action4palestinianchildren.org/has-your-mp-signed>

■ You can ask them to sign here: [act.palestinecampaign.org/lobby/107](http://act.palestinecampaign.org/lobby/107)

We'll be working in 2014 to ensure the pressure continues to build on our government to act.



Ayed, left, and Muhammad, with Jude Lanchin, a lawyer on the CIMC delegation

<sup>\*</sup>[www.childreninmilitarycustody.org](http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org)

## Two boys, two laws

In September Military Court Watch, which monitors the treatment of children in Israeli military detention, submitted a report, "Two boys, two laws," to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Basing its submission on "the legal principle that no state is permitted to discriminate between individuals over whom it exercises penal jurisdiction on the grounds of race or national identity," the report outlines how discrimination in the treatment of children in the Occupied Territories has arisen because of the illegal settlements.

The result is that if a Palestinian child throws a stone at an Israeli child living in an illegal settlement on occupied land, the Palestinian will be dealt with in a military court, but if the roles were reversed, the accused Israeli child would go through the civilian juvenile justice system. "Not surprisingly, the civilian system has far greater rights and protections than its military counterpart," says the report.

The differences are summarised in this table:

#	Description	Israeli child		Palestinian child	
1	Minimum age of criminal responsibility	12		12	
2	Minimum age for custodial sentences	14		12	
3	Age of majority	18		16-18	
4	Prohibition against night interrogation	Yes		No	
5	Legal right to have a parent present during questioning	Yes (exceptions apply)		No	
6	Legal right to consult with a lawyer prior to questioning	Yes		Limited	
7	Legal requirement for interrogations to be audio-visually recorded	Partial		No	
8	Maximum period of detention before being brought before a judge	12-13 yrs	12 hrs	12-13 yrs	24 hrs
				14-15 yrs	48 hrs
		14-17 yrs	24 hrs	16-17 hrs	4 days
9	Maximum period of detention without access to a lawyer	48 hours		90 days	
10	Maximum period of detention without charge	40 days		150 days	
11	Maximum period of detention between being charged and conclusion of trial	6 months		1 year	

# Aid – time to stop?

**By Gill Swain**

Is it time to stop sending aid to Palestine? Designed to support the “peace process” and lead to a “two state solution,” the billions of dollars which have been poured into the occupied territories have manifestly failed in this purpose. Now increasing numbers of voices are being raised to say that the aid actually pays for and therefore prolongs the occupation and it must end.

Palestinians are one of the most subsidised peoples on earth. From 1994, shortly after the Oslo Accords were signed, to 2006 when Hamas won the parliamentary elections in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, international donors gave \$8 billion in aid, according to international relations expert, Anne le More.\*

In December 2007, during the Paris Donor Conference which followed the Annapolis Conference, the international community pledged over \$7.7 billion for 2008–2010 in support of the Palestinian Reform and Development Programme (PRDP). The US and Canada pledged 11% of this sum, Europe 53% and Arab countries 20%.

Much of the aid has been conditional. According to a 2013 Congressional Research Service report, in order for US aid to be dispersed to Palestine it must first meet certain requirements. These include: preventing Hamas and other resistance organisations from conducting “terrorist” operations against Israel, fostering stability, prosperity and self-governance in the West Bank and promoting the two state solution.

Furthermore, aid has often been withheld to exert political pressure on the Palestinian Authority when its actions upset Israel. In 2012, for instance, US aid was delayed to punish Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for pursuing recognition of Palestinian statehood at the UN. As a result, public workers went for months without wages.

And the process goes on: in November Secretary of State John Kerry announced the US would provide an additional \$75 million to create Palestinian jobs and help them improve roads, schools and other infrastructure. US officials said the sum was designed to boost Palestinian public support for the faltering peace talks by showing them tangible benefits from the process.



*Chloe Ruthven (left) and Lubna Masarwa on the road*

Yet despite all these billions the Palestinian economy has deteriorated since the 90s because of the stranglehold of the occupation, according to a World Bank report published in early 2013, with the “productivity of the agriculture sector having roughly halved and the manufacturing sector having largely stagnated.” Today a massive 40 per cent of Palestinians are living in poverty.

A recent film, *The Do Gooders*, made by a British artist, Chloe Ruthven, who is

**“Despite all these billions the Palestinian economy has deteriorated since the 90s”**

the granddaughter of a couple who were among the first aid workers in Palestine, takes a look at how the aid industry works and who benefits.

In the West Bank Ruthven found more well-meaning international volunteers per inhabitant than anywhere else in the world – one NGO has been set up just to handle them. She met young people on gap year adventures running projects such as teaching young men how to be gardeners, older people who had gone to find out about the situation and were blogging about it – one told Ruthven she had 40 followers – and activists who put themselves in the line of fire at the Gaza border.

In Ramallah she saw professional aid workers living in five star hotels and relaxing in cocktail bars after a hard day’s aiding. She visited road building projects funded by USAID where the road being built was for Palestinians, leaving the existing road for the sole use of settlers and thus promoting the apartheid system which is developing in the West Bank.

She met an elderly farmer in the Jordan Valley who showed her sacks of flour and lentils given him by UNWRA to stop his family starving. They were stale and infested with bugs. “I don’t want stale flour and lentils,” he said. “I want Israel to leave my land so that I can live and graze my sheep.”

She also met a Palestinian water engineer who told her that USAID had invested \$45 million in the Eastern aquifer, completely uselessly. Under the Oslo Accords Palestinians were given control over this aquifer while Israel had control over the other two West Bank aquifers and it was running so low it could not be developed, he said.

Ruthven had set out to examine whether her grandparents’ modern day equivalents were doing any good





### Ruthven's aid working grandparents

and everything she saw made her feel thoroughly uncomfortable. Meeting Lubna Masarwa, a forthright Palestinian activist and survivor of Israel's murderous assault on the Gaza aid ship *Mavi Marmara*, rubbed more salt in her wounds.

Masarwa, who develops into the central figure in the film, acted as her guide. She was uncompromising in her belief that all aid agencies, from the smallest NGO to the huge international donors, should get out of Palestine as soon as possible. "I don't think internationals here really care about changing anything because nothing is changing. It is just getting worse," she said.

The film was shown in the autumn at various venues in London, including the British Film Institute, which were followed by question and answer sessions with both Ruthven and Masarwa. At the Frontline Club for journalists and aid workers, Masarwa said that what the aid actually does is help Israel deal with the occupation and that Israel should be made to meet the cost itself.

Asked how Palestinians could survive without aid, she said: "It is a disaster anyhow. You have thousands of Palestinian children without medical treatment. Since 1948, what has aid done for Palestine? I don't have more

freedom, less checkpoints, less wall. I have nothing."

She said that Palestine does not need "empowerment," or "workshops" or lectures from outsiders on what methods to use in its resistance to occupation. She wanted all the internationals to go home and work for Palestinian rights in their own countries.

"I don't need some German guy to come to Silwan to teach me human rights. I need internationals to work at pressurising your governments to put pressure on Israel to end the occupation," she said.

■ To see Q&A sessions with Masarwa and Ruthven, check out:

[www.frontlineclub.com/screening-the-do-gooders-qa/](http://www.frontlineclub.com/screening-the-do-gooders-qa/)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF7puBt\\_ALU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF7puBt_ALU)

\* "International Aid to the Palestinians after Oslo," Anne le More, 2009.

# Paying for the Occupation

## By Jenny Tonge

**W**e all seem to accept the need for aid to Palestine. A howl would go up if anyone suggested it should be reviewed, but in these days of austerity on the home front and questions about the effectiveness of foreign aid and "value for money" it is time we took a long hard look at the aid given to the Palestinians.

I am not talking about the humanitarian aid which flowed after Operation Cast Lead or the brilliant work done by the NGOs.

A meeting was held recently in New York to coincide with the UN Assembly's annual meeting where John Kerry, US Secretary of State, said that he was confident he could raise another \$4 billion dollars for the faltering economy of Palestine to "bolster and extend the peace process."

We hear often from the Palestinian Ambassador that his people want to be free of occupation and aid in order to run their own economy. Reports by the World Bank recently have pointed out that the Palestinians could do just that if they were free of Israel's iron grip on all their resources from land and water to the fish in the sea.

**"We, the British taxpayer, are paying for the occupation"**

And what is there to show for all this aid? Certainly no improved infrastructure (if you discount the fancy hotels in Ramallah), and a malnourished population. In Gaza, of course, conditions are appalling and getting worse. Many will recall how improved infrastructure has been repeatedly bombed by the Israelis over the years.

So what is all this aid for? It is to bolster the Palestinian Authority, pay their wages, and in some cases their lifestyles,



strengthen security and keep the "terrorist" organisation of Hamas at bay, even though many of us still recognise Hamas as the victors in the only democratic election the Palestinians ever had.

We, the British taxpayer, are paying for the occupation of Palestinian lands by Israel, on the pretext that it is encouraging the peace process which has now gone on for 40 years!

Palestinians may suffer more, in the short term, if we withdrew aid, but as the majority of them are not benefitting from it anyway, why not pull the plug and force Israel to pay or get out?

In 2014, let us combine the campaign for boycott of everything Israeli with a call on our government to stop paying for Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza.

**Baroness Jenny Tonge is a veteran campaigner for Palestinian human rights**

# Palestine – a European problem

By Hugh Lanning

Two events during one rain-soaked November week in Brussels turned the spotlight on the shifting debate taking place within Europe on Palestine. Together they highlighted a belated realisation by a growing number of European politicians that the EU is paying a lot of the cost of the occupation of Palestine even though it is not really centre stage in the political process, its participation in the Quartet notwithstanding.

The first event was the very well supported lobby of the European Parliament by the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP). The lobby's prime objective was to protect the guidelines published by the European Action Service (EAS) on funding in Israeli settlements – the EAS, headed by Baroness Cathy Ashton, is the EU's first attempt at a co-ordinated foreign policy.

On the face of it, the guidelines are not particularly controversial being mostly designed to rationalise existing regulations. At their core was the principle that EU money should only be spent on EU programmes within boundaries recognised by the EU. This meant that the settlements – being on occupied land and illegal under international law – did not fit within any definition of where EU money should go.

The guidelines were adopted by the Commission in July for implementation in January 2014, but were greeted by a torrent of diplomatic anger from Israel with support from US Secretary of State John Kerry.

During their meetings with a broad range of politicians, diplomats and officials, lobby members were surprised to find there was no mood in Brussels to shift on the guidelines themselves. We could detect an almost physical frustration and annoyance amongst most people we spoke to with Israel's assumption that it had a right to be able to tell the EU how it could and should spend its money.

However, perhaps inevitably, the EU reached a compromise with Israel over the application of the

guidelines to the EU's research programme, known as Horizon 2020. Under it, Israel had to pledge that programme funding would not be used on projects in the settlements. In return, Israel gained access to the much bigger part of the funding even while publicly undermining the guidelines by saying it will refund any monies lost to the settlements directly.

Nonetheless the publication of the guidelines has been greeted as a great leap forward by some and used as an argument to support participating in discussions with Israel. The principle the guidelines expound is "to ensure that the EU conforms with international law on the non-recognition by the EU of Israel's sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967." This should be expanded to a full ban on all settlement goods being imported into the EU.

The lobby was immediately followed by the conference, organised by the Socialists and Democrats group within the European Parliament, excitingly named "On the Middle East Peace Process: New Paradigms for Israel and Palestine." It was well attended with numerous big hitters from the European social democratic left, a significant number of high profile Palestinian speakers and the Israeli and Palestinian representatives to the EU.

Both events took place in the context of the talks convened by John Kerry but we found the Europeans' concern focussed very heavily on the consequences of these talks failing. Most of them felt that, after the decision not to bomb Syria, the US would be less inclined or able to mount a further significant intervention for many years. With the US now less dependent on Middle Eastern oil, its attention might shift further East to China and elsewhere.

It was recognised that failure of the talks would pose great

difficulties for the EU. One senior diplomat described that outcome as the EU having to deal with Israel as a "one state reality" from the Jordan to the Mediterranean – a major trading partner, too close to ignore, in which it had invested billions, but which was clearly a rogue state out of compliance with so many principles and aspects of international law that the EU formally espouses.



*Palestine flag outside the European Commission, Sept 2011*

## Lobby of Parliament

The new e-tool on the Palestine Solidarity Campaign website proved brilliantly effective in organising the annual Lobby of Parliament in November. It makes contacting your MP very simple and with its help at least 255 MPs were asked to meet their constituents.

Over 400 PSC campaigners travelled to Westminster from all over the country to take part in what turned out to be an incredibly hectic, effective and inspiring day, much busier than the previous year. Scores more arranged to see their MPs in their constituencies.

The Lobby was backed by 40 charities, faith or campaigning groups and focussed on four main issues: UK trade with settlements, the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli courts, the demolition of Bedouin villages and the fuel crisis in Gaza. PSC office staff had produced briefing papers on these issues and more which proved very popular.

Former MP Martin Linton was on hand to give wise advice on how best to approach MPs. He said it was essential to adopt a friendly, not a belligerent, tone and to say who you represent, such as all PSC members and sympathisers in the constituency, or your union, so that the MP understands you are not a lone voice and that Palestine is a vote changing issue. He added that MPs are impressed by specialist knowledge, so tell them if you have visited the OPTs and go armed with a few “killer facts” which might be new to them.

Finally, he advised members to go with some – not too many – “clear asks.” This could be for the MP to sign Early Day Motions or write to a minister such as William Hague. You should be sent a copy of such a letter and of the reply which can be used on PSC websites. Always follow up!



**Caroline Lucas MP addresses the rally**

The day ended with a rally addressed by MPs David Ward, Caroline Lucas, Michelle Gildernew, Katy Clark, Andy Slaughter, Sir Bob Russell, Richard Burden, Mark Durkan and Jeremy Corbyn, and by NUT president, Beth Davies, Palestinian ambassador, Manuel Hassassian, and Baroness Jenny Tonge.

*(cont. from previous page)*

For how long could the EU continue to ignore Israel's violations without the fig-leaf of the Oslo process?

**“There is clearly potential –  
with a long way to go –  
in Europe”**

European speakers at the conference expressed almost desperation for a “two state solution” while they recognised the reality on the ground is making this increasingly impossible and that there is no vision of an alternative. Interestingly,

## Manaeesh in North London

**By Martial Kurtz**

A new Palestinian cafe has opened in a prime spot in the trendy North London district of Stoke Newington. Called Tatreez, it has an understated frontage, with the bread oven being the main feature visible through the window, but the inside is stylish, warm and elegant.

Set in monochrome with wooden tables and seating, it features big prints of traditional Palestinian embroidered women's dresses – or Tatreez – after which it is named.

The menu is vegetarian and the main feature is the Palestinian traditional manaeesh, the oven baked flat bread (or pizza without tomatoes, some might say) with various toppings. The beautiful smell of zaatar, the Palestinian mix of herbs which is



traditionally the main ingredient on the manaeesh (made of wild oregano, sumac and toasted sesame seeds) is what I first noticed. The manaeesh is so fresh and delicious it took me right back to places like Haifa and Ramallah where I first ate it years ago.

Ful (made of fava beans and tahini) and stuffed mini aubergines are the only main dishes. What lifts the ful above the ordinary are toppings of fresh vegetables, a kick of lemon juice and the sweetness of olive oil. Eaten with freshly baked bread, this hit the spot and left me craving for more. Drinks include Palestinian wine from Cremisan and Lebanese beer.

The place was busy, with many younger local customers, and low key music gave it a lovely atmosphere to relax and chat. Tatreez manages to turn Palestinian culture into a contemporary culinary, even cultural, experience firmly rooted in tradition.

■ Tatreez Cafe, 188 Stoke Newington High Street, London. N16 7JD Tel: 020 8616 5434  
[www.facebook.com/tatreezcafe](http://www.facebook.com/tatreezcafe)

representatives spoke from countries such as Germany, Belgium and Holland – countries not usually vocal – one describing Palestine as a problem caused by Europe exporting its guilt for which it should now take a greater responsibility.

What was fascinating about both events was the seriousness and breadth of the debate taking place. I came away with the positive feeling that, just as there has been progress in the UK in support of Palestine, there is clearly potential – with a long way to go – in Europe. The negative side of the week was the absence of a UK presence: the PSC was welcomed as the British voice but there was not a single official UK speaker at the conference and just a handful of sympathetic UK MEP's at the lobby.

The European elections in May will provide a vital opportunity for Palestine to be raised as an issue with candidates as Europe will be an increasingly important battleground in the campaign for a free Palestine.

# “It’s like the canals of Venice... but with rivers of sewage”

Numerous aid agencies working in Gaza sent out urgent appeals for donations in December to help families stricken by the worst storm in 50 years which came in the wake of devastating power failures and rivers of sewage flowing through the streets.

And as the people were struggling to survive, Israel launched a wave of air strikes on Christmas Eve which killed two people, including three year old Hala Abu Shbeika, and wounded two of her siblings plus seven others, after a Palestinian sniper killed an Israeli working on the border fence. On 2 January, an Israeli sniper shot 16 year old Adnan Abu Khater near the border fence who later died of his wounds.

The massive storm, named Alexa, struck in mid-December when torrential rains of more than ten inches killed two people and forced thousands of residents to flee their homes. Hamdi al-Shami, 54, who woke up in the densely populated Zaytoun area of Gaza City on 11 December to find waist-high water flowing down his street, told the UN news service, IRIN: “With every passing hour, the water level was rising. It was incredible. We called rescue teams to help us before it was too late. It was not only the electricity issue; we were also cut off from basic needs and clean water.”

Alaa El Jadbaa and her one-year-old child had to flee to a nearby school to spend the night with no food, clothes or blankets. “I left everything I own at home. My only concern was how to get out safely with my son,” she said. “My neighbours and I made many calls and finally I was evacuated by crane! It was scary, but at least we are safe.”

These two months of horror began when Gaza’s only power plant was shut down on 1 November due to a lack of fuel after the Egyptian authorities destroyed most of the tunnels that had allowed the entry of cheap fuel into Gaza. Estimates put the figure of the amount of fuel reaching Gaza at less than 20,000 litres per week, down from nearly a million litres per day prior to June.

Power cuts lasting 12 to 16 hours each day left many of Gaza’s almost 1.7 million residents without access to clean water, sanitation or hygiene. Then on 13 November, the Zaytoun pumping station failed and more than 35,000 cubic metres of raw sewage overflowed into the streets. “It’s like the canals of Venice in Gaza City,” Majed Abusalama, a Gazan human rights activist, told *The Huffington Post*, “but with rivers of sewage.”

Even before the power crisis, 90 million litres of raw or partially treated sewage was already being dumped in the sea



PHOTO: YASSER SHANNI

daily, according to a United Nations report published in August, 2012. With the electricity cuts the quantities increased and sewage was also dumped in lagoons and open channels.

On 15 December, Israel allowed 450,000 litres of fuel into the Gaza Strip to enable the power plant to resume operations. The fuel was bought from Israel by the Palestinian Authority using funds donated by Qatar and transported via the Kerem Shalom crossing. But Israel closed the crossing again following the outbreak of violence, causing the power plant to be shut down once more.

The health risks of the situation are urgent and obvious. Even before the storm, due to the power crisis, only 15 percent of Gaza’s population received water for domestic use daily. Twenty percent received it every two days, 25 percent every four days, and 40 percent every three days. When the water comes on, it is generally just for five to six hours. The 25 small-scale desalination units used to provide water to approximately 160,000 people were also affected by the fuel shortages; as a result, their production dropped by 75 percent.

The health risks are a concern to Ashraf Bargout, also a resident of Gaza City’s Zaytoun area, who has seen his children fall into the dirty water several times. He is struggling to clean it up.

**“Does the world wait  
for a catastrophe to happen  
before moving?”**

“Why does no one answer our calls to solve this issue once and for all?” he said. “We don’t want to see our houses flooded, or our children drowning or becoming sick. Does the world wait for a catastrophe to happen before moving?”

Electricity cuts have a severe negative psychological impact on Gazans who are already traumatised by being fenced into the world’s largest open air prison. But they have also led to the deaths of 16 people since the beginning of 2012, including 14 children, according to the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights.

Nine people sustained burn injuries, of whom five were children. Al Mezan says the black outs also prevent people from realising their right to health as the medical services, including dialysis centres, surgical operating rooms, intensive care units and blood banks, all rely on electricity supplies.



## Little ships of hope

PHOTO: HUSSAIN ABDEL JAWWAD, DEMOTIX



PHOTO: MAJDI FATHI, DEMOTIX



**A**mongst the gloom, one day of joy stood out for over 200 children and 60 adult volunteers, plus 39 high school and university student helpers, in November. The children, aged from four to 15, including 25 orphans, gathered at the Gaza Port to launch a flotilla of “mini arks” into the sea to symbolically challenge the Israeli blockade.

The little model boats, measuring 40cm long, had been sponsored by supporters across the world who donated over \$9,000. They had been made by carpenters, blacksmiths and tailors and carefully painted by the children who took them out to sea in small fishing boats and lowered them into the water like messages in bottles, carrying their cry for help to the outside world.

The event, organised by Gaza’s Ark, was a huge success. Even the weather cooperated with sunshine streaming down onto the many smiling faces of the children, the younger of whom carried paper mini arks and Palestinian flags.

Most of the children remember the Israeli attacks of December 2008/January 2009 and November 2012 that left so many traumatised and the opportunity for a moment’s escape from their daily realities was much deserved and needed.

About 120 mini arks were successfully launched before the wind picked up and it was considered unsafe for the final trips out in the fishing boats. Another event is planned to launch the remaining mini arks.

■ For a video of the event see: <http://tinyurl.com/kwaklb2>

## Dr Eyad Sarraj: a towering figure

**D**r Eyad Sarraj, who died in December aged 69 after a long struggle with multiple myeloma, was a towering figure in Gaza’s society. He was not only Gaza’s first and preeminent psychiatrist, but the living exemplar of open non-violent defiance of occupation.

Eyad came to Gaza as a child refugee from Bir al Saba (now Beersheba) in 1948. With the Israeli occupation in 1967, he knew the trauma of family arrests and imprisonment when his father and brother were taken for interrogation.

After studying in Alexandria and London, he returned to Gaza in 1977 and, ten years later, working in defiance of curfews and through the trauma of Israeli military attacks on the young generation engaged in the First Intifada, he had found his focus: children, women, and men victims of violence in Israeli jails.

Sarraj’s research and practice transformed his society’s attitudes of stigma and denial around mental illness and victims saw effective interventions change lives that had seemed crushed. With his characteristic ability to do the impossible, he created the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme in 1990 and soon built a team of 40 specialists. The Programme was recognised and supported around the world and became a backbone of Gaza’s coping strategy.

The texture of his life was set in the assassinations, bombed homes, arrested fathers, attempted suicide bombings and their consequences of trauma and dysfunction in every day’s work. He became the pre-eminent spokesperson for this grim reality and was tireless in writing and speaking to the world of what Occupation meant.



**Victoria Britain**

# Israel to drill for oil in West Bank

By Jonathan Cook

Israeli investors had reason to celebrate in October with the news that Israel may soon be joining the club of oil-producing states, in addition to its recent finds of large natural gas deposits off the coast.

Shares in Givot Olam, an Israeli oil exploration company, rallied on reports that it had located larger oil reserves at its Meged 5 site than previously estimated. The company believes that the well is sitting on exploitable reserves of as much as 3.53 million barrels.

Only one cloud looms on the horizon. It is unclear how much of this new-found oil wealth actually belongs to Israel. The well sits on the so-called Green Line, the armistice line of 1948 that formally separates Israel from the occupied Palestinian territories.

According to Palestinian officials, Israel has moved the course of its separation wall to provide Givot Olam with unfettered access to the site, between the Israeli town of Rosh Haayin and the Palestinian village of Rantis, north-west of Ramallah.

Israel and Givot Olam have made access difficult, arguing that Meged 5 is affected by an Israeli military firing range next to it, in occupied Palestinian territory. But what seems clear is that the oil field extends over a very large area, with much of the reserves believed to lie under Palestinian territory in the West Bank.

The Palestinian Authority announced in November that it will start searching for oil near Rantis, in other words, in the same oil field as Meged 5. The PA further claimed contracts will be signed with British companies in the near future to produce natural gas from sea reserves off the Gaza coast.

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah announced the oil drilling in an interview for Palestinian TV. He also said that natural gas production on the sea reserves found in 1998 will begin in 2017. He added that he had spoken in London with British



Givot Olam founder Tuvia Luskin at the drilling site

Although the Israeli energy and water ministry declined to comment publicly, a senior official privately told Al Jazeera that the field extended at least 125 sq km and possibly as much as 250 sq km.

According to the Oslo accords, Israel is obligated to coordinate any exploration for natural resources in shared territory with the Palestinian Authority and reach agreements on how to divide the benefits.

Ashraf Khatib, an official at the PA's negotiations support unit, said the Meged oil field was part of Israel's general "theft of Palestinian national resources."

"There's lots of money in it for Israel, which is why the occupation has become so prolonged," he said.

Gidon Bromberg, director of Friends of the Earth Middle East, said his group would submit questions to the Israeli government about Meged 5.

"If there are reserves of oil under the occupied territories, then absolutely Israel

must talk to the Palestinian Authority about any exploration being undertaken to extract them," he said.

The expectation of a dramatic increase in future profits for Israel from drilling at Meged 5 comes shortly after the World Bank issued a report arguing that Israel is destroying any hope that a future Palestinian state could be economically viable.

The report said Israel's occupation is preventing the Palestinians from exploiting key natural resources, either by plundering them for itself or by making them inaccessible to Palestinians through movement restrictions and classifying areas as military zones.

**"Israel is destroying any hope that a future Palestinian state could be economically viable"**

The World Bank focuses on Area C, comprising nearly two thirds of the West Bank, which includes most of the Palestinians' major resources including water aquifers, Dead Sea minerals, quarries and archaeological and tourism sites. It is also where much of the Meged reserves are likely to be located.

Israel's energy and water ministry is led by Silvan Shalom, a close ally of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and a supporter of Israel's settlement programme. Trade and industry minister, Naftali Bennett, is the leader of the pro-settler Jewish Home party and has repeatedly called for Israel's formal annexation of Area C.

According to the World Bank's research, the Palestinian Authority could generate at least \$3.4bn in extra annual income if given full control of Area C – though that figure does not take account of the expected boom in oil revenues.

Even the income from resources identified by the World Bank would increase the PA's GDP by a third, reducing a ballooning deficit, cutting



Petroleum as well as Said Khoury, president of Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC), about producing gas and that he believed the production would provide 150 million dollars in annual revenue.

## Unions campaign for action on Palestine

By Sarah Colborne

During 2013 we saw further advances in trade union support for Palestine. At the TUC Congress, the PSC stall was buzzing with activity and a fringe meeting organised by the PSC heard firsthand accounts from representatives of Unite, NUT, UNISON, ASLEF, TSSA and Thompsons Solicitors who had participated in one of our delegations to Palestine during the year and had returned with renewed commitment to campaigning for justice for Palestinians.

The PSC also organised a fringe meeting at the beginning of the Labour Party conference which acted as a “scene-

setter” for debate on Palestine during the week and raised trade union demands for a foreign policy based on justice, human rights and international law. The packed meeting heard from Kevin Maguire of the Daily Mirror, MPs, and representatives from unions including TSSA and UNISON.

Around 1000 people attended one or more of the many events on Palestine at the conference and thousands visited the PSC and Jews for Justice for Palestinians’ joint stand, including members of the Shadow Cabinet. Our challenge in 2014 is to ensure that Labour Party policy actively reflects the views of its members and affiliates on this issue.

unemployment rates that have reached 23 percent, easing poverty and food insecurity and helping the fledgling state break free of aid dependency.

But none of this could be achieved, said the Bank, as long as Israel maintains its chokehold on Area C – or what the Bank calls “restricted land.”

Mariam Sherman, the World Bank’s director in the West Bank and Gaza, said: “Unleashing the potential from that ‘restricted land’... and allowing Palestinians to put these resources to work would provide whole new areas of economic activity and set the economy on the path to sustainable growth.”

Israel’s long-standing policy towards resources in the occupied territories suggests it is unlikely to honour its obligations under international agreements on the spoils from the Meged oil field.

In the case of the region’s main aquifers, which lie under the hills of the West Bank, Israel has demolished hundreds of Palestinian wells to maintain its exclusive control over water resources. Settlements and military bases have been located over the main extraction points.

A report by al-Haq earlier this year showed that Israel took 89 percent of the total water withdrawn from the West

Bank aquifer, leaving the Palestinians with only 11 percent. As a result, Israelis had on average 300 litres of water a day each, compared with just 73 litres for Palestinians – below the 100 litres per capita recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Regarding another key resource, Israel’s Supreme Court ruled in 2011 that a dozen Israeli firms should be able to continue extracting stone for construction from West Bank quarries because the occupation was no longer considered temporary but had become “prolonged.”

The ruling was widely criticised by legal experts, who argued it ignored prohibitions on resource theft in international law, including the 1907 Hague Convention. The PA has estimated the annual value of the stone quarried by Israel at \$900m.

Israel’s announcement in recent years of discoveries of large natural gas deposits in the Mediterranean has increased tensions with neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon, which has claimed that Israel is drilling in areas where maritime borders are disputed.

The Palestinians have located their own significant gas field just off the coast of Gaza. In 2000, the then Palestinian president Yasser Arafat

declared the site “will provide a solid foundation for our economy, for establishing an independent state.” However, Israel has repeatedly stymied efforts to extract the gas, arguing that the profits would be used to fund terrorism.

According to one analyst, Anais Antreasyan, the most plausible interpretation of Israel’s actions is that it hopes eventually to “integrate the gas fields off Gaza into the adjacent Israeli offshore installations,” thereby “blocking Palestinian economic development.”

In the view of Antreasyan and others, Israel’s aim is to prevent the emergence of the kind of independent Palestinian economy that would follow if the Palestinians were able to tap lucrative income streams from the gas fields off Gaza and the likely oil under the West Bank.

“This way,” said Ashraf Khatib, “Israel can more easily keep the Palestinians struggling from day to day, just to survive economically.”

**This is an edited version of an article first published by Al Jazeera. See more from Nazareth-based journalist Jonathan Cook at [www.jonathan-cook.net](http://www.jonathan-cook.net)**

Meged 5 oil field



# BBC tells Israel's story

By Amena Saleem

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign has continued to work hard over the past year to uncover and challenge bias and inaccuracies in the BBC's reporting of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

One of the main focuses of the campaign has been the BBC's insistence on referring to Jerusalem, in its entirety, as an Israeli city.

Constant challenges from the PSC resulted in the revelation that the BBC has accepted Israel's illegal creation of facts on the ground with regard to Jerusalem.

In May 2013, the BBC Trust wrote to the PSC to explain that it had received advice from its Senior Editorial Advisor, Leanne Buckle, on the subject.

The Trust wrote: "The advisor (Buckle) acknowledged that Israel's sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem was not recognised under international law. However, she considered that Israel had *de facto* control over the entire city in a political, administrative and military sense. She also noted that Jerusalem was administered as a single entity by the Jerusalem municipal authority which made no distinction between East and West."

On this basis, the Trust said the BBC would continue referring to Jerusalem as an Israeli city.

In July, the PSC wrote to the BBC listings magazine, *Radio Times*, about a crossword clue it carried where the required answer to a clue reading "major Israeli city" was "Jerusalem."

This response was received: "While *Radio Times* is no longer owned by the BBC, Ben Preston [editorial director, *Radio Times*] has noted the recent statement by the BBC's Senior Editorial Strategy Advisor, Leanne Buckle, that the corporation allows Jerusalem to be referred to as an 'Israeli' city, notwithstanding questions of international recognition and East Jerusalem."

**"The BBC's arrogance is breathtaking"**

The BBC's arrogance in thinking that it has the right to overrule international law and international opinion is breathtaking. It is also shocking to see a news organisation, whose public funding is premised on it maintaining its impartiality, taking a clearly political decision on how to frame its reporting.

But is it surprising? This year, the BBC's new Director General, Tony Hall, has made two interesting appointments: to the post of Director of News and Current Affairs, which the *Guardian* has described as "arguably the most important editorial job in Britain," Hall appointed James Harding, the openly pro-Israel former editor of *The Times*.

(In a debate at the Jewish Community Centre for London in 2011, Harding said: "I am pro-Israel" and that in reporting on the Middle East at *The Times*: "I haven't found it too hard" because "the *Times* has been pro-Israel for a long time." However, he also

stressed the need for balanced news reporting and said he was also in favour of a Palestinian state).

To the post of Director of Strategy and Digital, Hall appointed James Purnell who, as a Labour minister, was Chair of Labour Friends of Israel.

These are worrying times at the BBC, but the PSC's persistent challenging has led to some important recent victories against the organisation's inaccurate news reporting.

These include having complaints upheld against Newsnight (BBC One) for claiming only part of the West Bank is occupied, the World at One (Radio 4) for alleging that Israeli soldiers were killed in Gaza on the same day that Rachel Corrie was crushed under a bulldozer, BBC News 24 for presenting a pro-Israeli commentator as being independent during bulletins analysing Israeli assaults on Gaza, and BBC Online for printing factual lies told by settlers.

BBC news reaches 81% of the UK every week across television, radio and online.\* This is a massive audience and our licence-fee is paying for this output. It is vital that this huge audience is properly informed about Palestine and the occupation and the PSC will continue to monitor and challenge the BBC with the aim of bringing about positive change in its coverage.

\*Source: BBC Media Centre; 16th April 2013.



A protest at BBC Brighton

# Academics join the call

Over 400 distinguished oral historians and academics from every continent sent out a call to all academics to boycott the June “International” Oral History Conference being organised by the Oral History Division of the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

When the appeal went out in December the two main international scholars who had agreed to deliver keynote addresses, Alessandro Portelli and Mary Clark, had already withdrawn but the reasons for the boycott remained unchanged.

Dr Salman Abu Sitta, one of the signatories, said: “The Hebrew University on Mount Scopus has used confiscated Palestinian land which made its owners homeless. Its ‘experts’ have been instrumental in confiscating the land of Palestinian citizens of Israel.

“The University is part and parcel of the racist policies of Israel against Palestinians, whether citizens of Israel or under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Participating in its activities means condoning this racism and prolonging the suffering of Palestinians. While the whole world is remembering the legacy of Mandela against apartheid and racism, it would be a shame to help perpetuation of these practices by Israeli academic institutions.”

## ASA votes for boycott

Meanwhile, in a highly significant move, the National Council of the American Studies Association (ASA) voted to endorse the call from Palestinian civil society for an academic boycott of Israel, following their annual meeting in Washington in November.

The resolution that was approved by the Council recognised that, due to the occupation, Palestinian students and scholars face severe obstructions to their right to education through “restrictions on movement and travel that limit their ability to attend and work at universities, travel to conferences and to study abroad.”

The National Council then opened the question to the 5000 strong membership to ensure that the adoption of the resolution adequately represented the association. In a vote that attracted 1252 participants – the largest number in the history of the organisation – 66.05 percent endorsed the resolution, while 30.5 percent voted no, and 3.43 percent abstained.



**The Hebrew University built on Palestinian Mount Scopus. A tunnel road links it to the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim**

## Israel demands action

Israel asked the British government to “lean on universities to prevent their participation in academic boycotts of the country,” according to a report in *The Times* in November.

In a meeting with the UK’s Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts, Israeli Science Minister, Yaakov Peri, urged Willetts to “to try and put some more influence on the vice chancellors to see who are the speakers, who are the leaders for the movement.”

Peri also expressed concern “about invited speakers to certain universities expressing anti-Semitic views,” and said that “he had instructed the Israeli Ambassador in London to inform Mr Willetts if such an event was about to take place.” According to a report in the Israeli media, Willetts responded to Peri’s concerns by outlining the ways in which the British government is seeking to “curb these [BDS] activities.”

This development comes soon after the discovery that the Israeli Embassy in London employs two people with the full-time brief to monitor and counter BDS attempts in the UK.

## Levy calls for sanctions

The respected Israeli commentator, Gideon Levy, called for international sanctions against Israel to end the

occupation in an article in *Ha’aretz* in November. He said that the case of Iran proves that sanctions work. And he pointed out that by signing the Horizon 2020 agreement for scientific research in which the EU bars funding for projects in the settlements, Israel “gave a hand to the first official international boycott of the settlements.”

However, he argued it was absurd just to boycott the settlements since every Israeli “organisation, institution or authority is somehow involved with what’s going on beyond the Green Line.” Instead the time had come for sanctions. He said the “masquerade of peace talks” should be dropped because “as long as Israelis don’t pay a price for the occupation or are blind to it, they won’t end it. That’s the truth.”

## End of contract with G4S

After being approached by BDS South Africa, the renowned Cape Town based Trauma Centre has terminated its ties and contract with security company G4S. Trauma Centre chairman James Taylor said it noted “with great concern” the allegations of G4S’s “complicity in the illegal incarceration and torture of Palestinians” in Israel and the OPT. He added: “It is because of these serious concerns, which violate our fundamental values, that the Board of the Trauma Centre has decided to terminate our organisation’s relationship with G4S.”

# Something serious, something fun...

A discussion on One Democratic State in Palestine (ODS), organised by **Cambridge PSC** with ODS England and Cambridge University Palestine Society in December, was addressed by Ghada Karmi and Ilan Pappé, both of the University of Exeter's European Centre for Palestine Studies.

Ghada Karmi said that although the "one state solution" may sound new, it is the two state concept that is the more recent and alien idea. Before 1948, when she fled Jerusalem with her family, Palestine was one undivided country. Partition dates only from 1948, and a single state would be a return to what was historically the case.

She said that, faced with a stalled "peace process," a single state is the only logical solution: a single political structure guaranteeing the refugees' right of return, the right of present Israeli citizens to remain, and equal rights for all.

Ilan Pappé doubted whether Israel ever wanted a two state solution. He argued that the ethnic cleansing of 1948 was an uncompleted project, failing to achieve a Palestinian-free Jewish state. He urged us, in the UK, to insist that our academics, politicians and media cease fragmenting Palestine by referring only to the West Bank and Gaza while disregarding Bedouins, other Palestinians who are Israeli citizens and the millions in exile whose right of return remains denied.

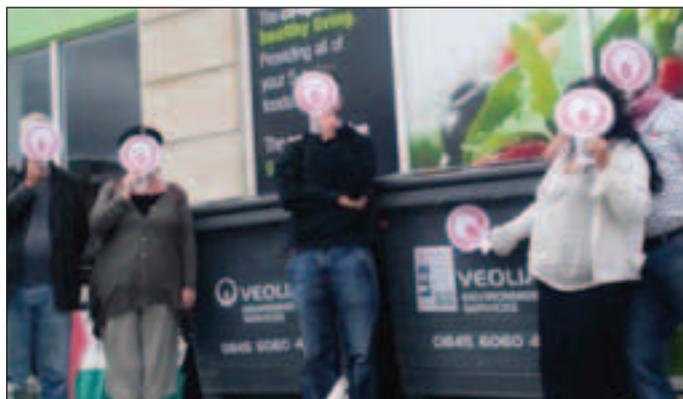
The Cambridge talks and discussion can be seen at:

- Ghada: <https://vimeo.com/81804045>;
- Ilan: <https://vimeo.com/81804044>
- Comments: <https://vimeo.com/82574350>
- The ODS England website is: <http://odsinpalestine.wix.com/onestatepalestine>

The BIN Veolia campaign continues to achieve successes: **Portsmouth PSC**, with members of the University and College Union, met the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Chichester University in December who agreed to include "grave misconduct" as a reason for excluding a company from bidding for contracts. However he said he did not believe there was sufficient legal proof of Veolia's grave misconduct.

With bidding due to open in the spring, Portsmouth are busy organising a petition thanking the university for its willingness to cite "grave misconduct" on its procurement policy and declaring that the signatory believes that Veolia should be excluded on these grounds.

**Bristol PSC** organised a stall outside a Co-op store in September and talked to shoppers about the company's choice



## A date for your diary

### PSC Sponsored Walk 11–13 July 2014

The 2014 PSC sponsored walk will be held in July in the stunning scenery of South Snowdonia. Walkers will be accommodated at the Kings Hostel, just below Cader Idris and near the beautiful Mawddach Estuary. Please sign up to enjoy the delights of walking in this wonderful area while raising money for PSC campaigns and meeting and learning from other activists supporting Palestine.

We hope to arrange three levels of walks from the flat and easy along the Mawddach Trail to the ascent of Cader. So, whether you are an experienced hill walker or an occasional stroller, there should be something to suit you.

The Kings Hostel can be reached by train via Shrewsbury and Machynlleth from where we can arrange transport to the hostel. By car it is about three hours from Birmingham. The hostel accommodates 42 people and further accommodation could be found in the homes of local supporters.

The cost of full board from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon will be £50 per person. We ask that you try to raise a minimum of £100 with a target of £250 each. If you are able to raise £500 we will reimburse your fee!

Each of our previous sponsored walks has been a wonderful success so do book up as soon as you can.

■ To register your interest and for more information, please contact Steve at the PSC office: Tel: 020 7700 6192; email: [psc.admin@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:psc.admin@palestinecampaign.org)



View from Mawddach trail

of Veolia for their kerbside wheelie bins. The store's assistant manager came to say that the entire southern network of smaller Co-op stores would be dropping Veolia as part of a system change in 2014.

Ed Hill says: "We'd like to think this is another success for the BDS movement." Pursuing its "Boycott the Veolia Wheelie Bin" campaign, members are explaining to small businesses about the illegal Veolia activities in Palestine and have designed giant sticky labels to slap on Veolia bins as their own propaganda space.

If anyone spots Veolia bins outside a Co-op store anywhere in the UK, complain to: Rachel Kenyon, Ethics Adviser, c/o The Co-operative Group, 1 Angel Square, Manchester, M60 0AG.

Fundraising took different forms, including a "Picnic for Palestine" organised by the **Faversham and Whitstable** branch. Following a walk from Faversham to Seasalter beach in Kent, some food and chat, plus swimming for some, the group unveiled its new banner illustrating how much land has been taken from the Palestinians by Israel's occupation.

**Portsmouth and South Downs** branch held a barbecue, a folk concert and a Palestinian meal to raise funds which were divided between PSC and various charities. In September a packed meeting listened to a talk by Palestinian footballer Mahmoud Sarsak who was also interviewed by a local reporter.



**Faversham and Whitstable picnic**

Father Christmas arrived early in **Bristol** and joined the PSC and the newly formed University Palestine groups on their sponsored walk to commemorate the "Pillar of Cloud" attack on Gaza in 2012. During a five-mile route taking in some of the more beautiful parts of the city, they spotted lots of Veolia bins along the way which got well stickered!

## Making the case for BDS

By Adam Waterhouse

In May 2012 I attended the protest against the Israeli national theatre company Habima at the Globe Theatre in London. I felt that my efforts were amply rewarded as I got to speak with many people who approached me. But afterwards I felt concerned that I hadn't always responded to the questioners as well as I might have hoped.

There had often been an element of defensiveness in my responses that failed to acknowledge the fact that the rationale for what we were doing was far from obvious. I decided to write a booklet that would help convince fellow activists of the need for us to explain our position with patience and understanding.

The truth is that there is something seemingly odd about the idea of trying to stop Israeli oppression by means of encouraging people to stop buying Israeli devices for making carbonated drinks (Sodastream) or not attending a performance by a state sponsored Israeli theatre or dance company (Habima or Batsheva).

It is not at all obvious how such actions have the power to deter Netanyahu et al from pursuing their agenda. But acknowledgement of this needn't be a cause of embarrassment. Instead it can underpin the need to deepen our own understanding of the case for BDS and to improve our skill in explaining it.

Supporting BDS is both an expression of compassion and an appeal to the compassion of ordinary and decent people who surely do not support what Israel is doing to the Palestinians. But the ordinary and decent people of the world will only understand this point if we are capable of extending our compassion to them and we understand the barriers that they have to accepting BDS. Without such understanding, we are liable

to mistake ignorance and confusion for callous indifference and to alienate people who could be brought on-side.

The oppression and dispossession of the Palestinians constitute crimes against humanity but the misinformation and distortion of these issues to which we in the West have been subjected also constitute crimes against humanity of a different type. It has taught us to view acts of brutal oppression and dispossession as justified on grounds of "security," and futile acts of resistance by traumatised Palestinians as "terrorist," almost by definition.

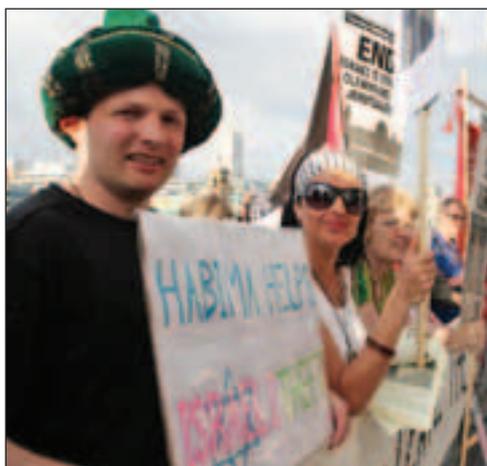
Many of our fellow citizens have been completely sold on this distorted narrative and consequently are unable to feel the slightest sympathy for the victims of Israeli oppression. Surely this amounts to a crime against their humanity?

We need to appreciate the extent to which people's views and opinions are created and not freely chosen. Understanding this point not only provides us with insight into why people respond to us as they do, but also reveals a different approach to BDS advocacy – one that focuses on the individual or target audience that we are trying to reach and that starts by trying to understand their attitudes and beliefs and the reasons for them.

Moral apathy with respect to the plight of the Palestinians arises from a combination of ignorance, fear and self-interest.

But these are not immutable characteristics. They can be replaced by knowledge, courage and compassion and the recognition, within this context, that we must take personal responsibility for trying to end Israeli oppression.

The BDS movement offers a means by which that transformation of public attitude can be brought about, but only if we go about the task of explaining ourselves in the right way.



**Adam (left) at Habima protest**

**Adam Waterhouse is branch secretary of Southampton PSC. Copies of his booklet, *Making a Compassionate Case for Boycott*, can be obtained by contacting [pscscoton@gmail.com](mailto:pscscoton@gmail.com). It can also be viewed online at: <http://tinyurl.com/pbjjx9y>**

# In Brief

## JORDAN VALLEY UNDER THREAT

Israel has moved one step nearer to the formal annexation of the entire Jordan Valley. On 29 December the Knesset Ministerial Committee for Legislation approved a bill which, if passed in law, would effectively make the area part of Israel. This would be a snub to the US proposal that the Jordan Valley and border crossings into Jordan be under Palestinian control, with IDF soldiers posted at the border and the US providing additional security.

Interior Minister Gideon Sa'ar, who supported the bill, said: "There is no separation between settlement and security, and the Jordan Valley is a consensus among Israeli citizens. There's nothing wrong with everyone knowing that the Jordan Valley will remain Israeli in any final status agreement."

Not all members of the Knesset support the bill; Labour member Nachman Shai said: "It is ruining any chance of a treaty and deteriorating us [sic] to international isolation."

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat condemned the bill, saying that it undermined the peace process and that the Palestinian response to the bill should be to seek statehood recognition from all international bodies.



*A tourist shop in Sebastia, one of the towns under threat in the Jordan Valley*

## DIPLOMATIC ROW

Israeli ethnic cleansing of the Jordan Valley sparked an international incident in September, when French diplomat Marion Fesneau-Castaing was manhandled by Israeli soldiers on her way to the village of Khirbet al-Makhoul where homes had been destroyed by the IDF. The soldiers also seized a truck full of tents and emergency aid destined for the homeless Palestinians. Mme Fesneau-Castaing said: "They dragged me out of the truck and forced me to the ground with no regard for my diplomatic immunity. This is how international law is being respected here."



When a complaint was made about this violation of diplomatic protocol, the army simply claimed that it took action to prevent the joint EU-Palestinian

effort to rebuild the homes because they had been built without a license.

UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator James Rawley said the Israeli authorities should "live up to their obligations as occupying power to protect those communities under their responsibility."

## EUROPE SHOWS SOME MUSCLE

Another diplomatic row erupted in December, between Israel and Romania, when Romania demanded an assurance that its workers would not be involved in building illegal settlements in the West Bank.



*Har Homa, largely built by migrant workers*

The Romanian foreign ministry said Bucharest's position would be consistent with "respect for international law, the positions of the EU and the protection of Romanian citizens." (This is in line with the EU guidelines which go into effect in January which ban funding for and financial dealing with projects linked to the settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem).

MK Michal Rozin, chair of the Knesset Committee on Foreign Workers, criticised her government's refusal to agree to Romania's demand: "Israelis are being harmed by the government's activity in the territories," she said. "At this rate, it's only a matter of time until the state gives way to Benjamin Netanyahu's settlement state."

The Association of Contractors and Builders in Israel said there was currently a serious shortage of workers in the industry.

This followed a series of spats between Israel and the Netherlands, when Israel refused to allow the installation of a security scanner donated by the Dutch. The Dutch Foreign Ministry said the main purpose of the new scanner was to facilitate the resumption of exports from Gaza to the West Bank, as well as to Europe and the rest of the world, by providing a solution to Israel's "security concerns." The statement went on: "The Dutch government strongly feels that positive, practical measures are needed to stimulate the ailing Gazan economy and to alleviate the worsening humanitarian situation for the people in Gaza."

In a separate incident, Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans refused to accept an Israeli military escort around the West Bank city of Hebron. During the same visit, he commented on his government's decision to pressure the Dutch company Royal Haskoning DHV into withdrawing from a contract to build a sewage plant for a settlement in East Jerusalem. He said: "All territories beyond the Green Line don't belong to Israel, and if you start a project, you need the agreement of local [ie Palestinian] authorities."

## DOCTORS OPPOSE TORTURE

In December Prof Ruiz, President of the World Psychiatric Association, formally asked the Israeli Psychiatric Association about Israeli physicians' participation in the torture of Palestinian prisoners. He was acting in response to a letter signed by officers of the WPA Section on the Psychological Consequences of Torture and Persecution, and to allegations contained in the report by Physicians for Human Rights-Israel and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel: *Doctoring the Evidence* (see <http://tinyurl.com/l68blrm>).

The report contains numerous case studies pointing to widespread participation by Israeli doctors in the use of torture during the interrogation of Palestinian prisoners.

Dr Frederico Allodi, a member of the WPA, wrote of Prof Ruiz: "He is mindful that this step could also be of significant help to physicians to resist the pressure of the State to submit and engage in unethical practices.

"We do not know the content of the reply of IPA to Prof Ruiz's letter, but we know that IPA has initiated a contact with those Israeli NGOs which authored the above-mentioned report."

The Public Committee against Torture in Israel was short-listed for the 2013 Bremen Peace Award for its work of awareness-raising, educational programmes and protests against immunity from criminal prosecution of the torturers.

They say: "Many doctors also avoid documenting the physical and psychological injuries of torture victims and in doing so, withhold decisive evidence."

## ICONIC HUNGER STRIKER FREED

On 23 December 34 year-old Samer Issawi was greeted by family and supporters at his village near Jerusalem, after 17 months in an Israeli prison. He had been on hunger strike for 266 days.

Originally incarcerated in 2002 during "Operation Defensive Shield," he was one of the Palestinian prisoners released in late 2011 in exchange for the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. However, like many others, Issawi was re-arrested just a few months later.



After months of demonstrations throughout the Occupied Territories and a global campaign for his release, Samer came to an agreement with the Israeli officials who were reportedly concerned that his death in prison would spark riots in the West Bank and further damage Israel's image worldwide.

On 31 December, 26 more Palestinian prisoners were released as part of the conditions agreed for resuming direct peace talks. They make up the third tranche of a total of 104 prisoners to be freed.

## DEAD SEA WATER PROJECT

The Dead Sea, vital to the region's ecosystem, is rapidly disappearing. Every year it loses one billion cubic metres of water, or a metre in height.

The River Jordan, the main source of the Dead Sea, has been reduced to a mere trickle due to excessive exploitation by Israel, Syria and Jordan, while the highly lucrative potash



industry, which relies on evaporation of the sea water, has hugely accelerated its depletion.

On 9 December a deal was signed by representatives of Israel, Jordan and Palestine aimed at slowing the decline of the Dead Sea and at providing more fresh water for the three parties.

Central to the project is the development of a desalination plant in Aqaba, which will have a capacity of desalinating 200 million cubic metres of water each year from the Red Sea. Some Red Sea water will be brought to the Dead Sea via what has been dubbed the "Red Dead Canal," although this will amount to only about 10 percent of what is currently being lost. It is unclear what the environmental effects will be of mixing the much less saline Red Sea water with that of the Dead Sea.

In theory, West Bank Palestinians should receive a 50% increase in their water supply – though it is unlikely that the grotesque disparity in water provision, between that used by the illegal settlements and that available to Palestinians, will be redressed.

## "HASBARA IN ACTION" IN UK UNIS

Canadian Beca Bookman, awarded the Menachem Begin Foundation "Hasbara in Action" award for her work in undermining the Palestine Solidarity movement in her home country, has now been hired by the Union of Jewish Students in the UK as an "Israeli Engagement Officer." The post is funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Community Security Trust (CST), a charity that is supposed to monitor anti-Semitism in Britain. She will no doubt feel quite at home working with Joe Tarsh, the current President of the UJS, who has lived in East Jerusalem, hopes to emigrate to Israel and says quite openly that "UJS should be representing Israel on campus."



Joe Tarsh

Beca Bookman will be working with an "emissary," also employed by the Jewish Agency for Israel, who will have the job of "promoting an understanding of Israel and its ideals."

Last term saw a plethora of seminars, training sessions and panel discussions, with contributions by the Israeli embassy in London, the lobby group BICOM, and Labour Friends of Israel, all focusing on how best to counteract the growing sympathy for the Palestinian cause in UK universities.

[www.hasbarafellowships.org](http://www.hasbarafellowships.org) gives a flavour of the methodology already being used on US campuses, while [www.standwithus.com](http://www.standwithus.com) provides handy rebuttals of any suggestion that Israel's policies are anything other than law-abiding and peace-loving.

## REMEMBERING EDWARD

Last September marked the 10th anniversary of the death of **Edward Said**, one of the greatest intellectuals of his generation.



He is best known, in academic circles at least, for his seminal work *Orientalism*, a brilliant analysis of the distorting lens that had for centuries formed the prevailing western view of the Middle East, its peoples, history and culture.

However, far from living in an ivory tower, Said engaged with the tough political issues faced by his people. He took a particularly strong stand on the Oslo Accords, which he rightly predicted would have catastrophic consequences for their future (see his book *The End of the Peace Process*).

His friendship with Daniel Barenboim led to the formation of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra which performs annually at the summer Proms in London. He is also commemorated in the Barenboim-Said Foundation which funds music projects based on the principles of coexistence and dialogue.

In public meetings and interviews he spoke with great lucidity, passion and dignity. In his last interview, in 2004, with his friend Charles Glass, he talks for over three hours about his life and work: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twNOHzJmvi0>.

PSC is immensely proud that Edward Said agreed to be a Patron of our organisation.

## EMMY FOR EMAD

Emad Burnat, co-director of the Oscar-nominated documentary film *5 Broken Cameras*, won an International Emmy Award in November at a ceremony in New York. The film had already won accolades at a number of film festivals and has been shown at independent cinemas worldwide.

The film documents resistance in Burnat's village of Bil'in over several years from 2005, as the villagers protest the seizure of their land and the construction of the separation barrier. While it shows the violence inflicted on the villagers, it also follows the early years of his son Jibril.



Burnat surveys his broken cameras

Receiving the award, Burnat said: "It's a big honour to be the first Palestinian to win an Emmy award. This means a lot to me and my people in Palestine. I made this film to... share my story with you and all the world. We want what you want – peace and liberty. We want a good future for our kids so we need your support and your help. Free Palestine."

The film takes its name from the small digital cameras smashed by settlers and soldiers as Burnat filmed confrontations.

## NO JUSTICE FOR BASSEM ABU RAHMEH

Some of the most moving scenes in *5 Broken Cameras* involve Emad Burnat's close friend, 30 year old Bassem Abu Rahme, a big, friendly bear of a man who kept everyone's spirits up with his huge smile. When he is killed by an Israeli soldier firing a tear gas canister directly at him from a short range, it is shocking and heart-breaking.

The death, in 2009, was documented in videos shot from three different angles. Yet Israel's Military Advocate General, Major General Danny Efroni, decided to close the file in the investigation of the case citing "lack of evidence."



The MAG made his decision in late July, 2013, but it was only conveyed to the Israeli High Court of Justice in September as part of an updating statement by the Office of the State Attorney in a petition filed by Subhiya Abu Rahme, Bassem's mother, together with Bil'in Village Council and Israeli human rights organisations, B'Tselem and Yesh Din.

According to the statement, attorneys Michal Michlin-Friedlander, Udi Eitan and Yehoshua Lemberger from the Office of the State Attorney, had reached the same conclusion.

The videos of the demonstration which led to Abu Rahme's death prove that he was situated to the east of the barrier, did not act violently and did not endanger the soldiers in any way. An analysis of the video footage by visualisation experts determined that the grenade was fired directly at him in complete contravention of open-fire regulations.

## CAN WE HAVE OUR BALL BACK?

A group of children from Kafr Sur, south of Tulkarem, wrote to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon via social media asking him to help get their ball back after they kicked it through the separation barrier into village land confiscated by the occupation forces.

The children told Ma'an News they had the right to play in their own lands and that the occupation was impinging on their human rights by not allowing them to retrieve their ball.



## Abraham's Children

By Heather Stroud

Published by The Other Press

This long and ambitious book tells the story of Fida who, whilst recovering from injuries sustained in the London July 2005 bombings, travels to Palestine to discover more about her Palestinian father and the homeland she has never seen.

She is quickly absorbed into the Palestinian community and its struggles, and the reader is introduced to what it means to live under – and to resist – a brutal occupation.

Fida's journey takes you on a guided tour of the West Bank, the refugee camps, besieged Gaza, the solidarity campaigns and the Gaza convoys. Set at the heart of Palestinian communities, the book tells the extraordinary stories of "ordinary" Palestinians but also pulls into it the perspectives of a wide range of other players in the Palestinian struggle including Christian Zionists, illegal settlers, soldiers, refuseniks and activists from around the world.

It's a challenge at over 800 pages but the commitment in reading it is rewarded as you follow Fida's awakening and growing politicisation. Stroud is a writer and activist who has spent ten years researching in the region and this book would be an excellent introduction to the Palestinian experience for a woefully ill-informed Western audience. And, although the author's voice is not Palestinian, Stroud has worked hard to ensure the characters' stories are based on facts.

For example, part of the story details what happens to the son of the family she is staying with when he is arrested by the Israeli army. Based on evidence from Defence for Children International–Palestine, she gives an honest and horrifying account of the brutal treatment of children in the Israeli military court system. The impact of this experience on a character you have come to know and love is heart-breaking.



This book has the potential to take the story of what is happening in Palestine, and why it matters, to a whole new audience and as such could help to create a new layer of campaigners for justice in Palestine.

## Forgotten Conscripts: a prelude to Palestine's struggle for survival

By Eric Lowe

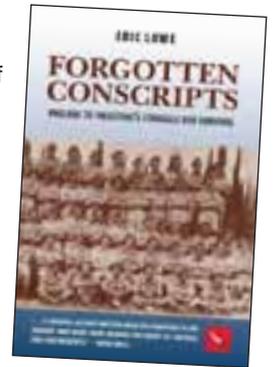
Published by Trafford Publishing

Eric Lowe was an 18-year-old conscript when he was sent to Palestine during the last months of the British mandate as a member, he says, of a "non-combatant army of drivers, mechanics, engineers, store men and clerks, etc." They were accompanied by soldiers who were there mostly for guard duties and none of them were properly "trained or prepared for the violent conflict we were to encounter."

This conflict, coming as it did after the war, featuring no epic battles and making few major headlines was virtually airbrushed from history – rarely mentioned in Armistice Sunday broadcasts, for example. Yet 784 members of Britain's armed services are buried in Palestine, mostly killed by Zionist terrorist attacks, and Eric Lowe has done more than anybody to make sure they are not forgotten.

He edited a magazine called *Palestine Scrapbook* for many years, drawing on hundreds of letters describing their experiences written by fellow conscripts. As was shown in the Channel 4 series *The Promise*, Lowe describes making friends with Arabs whom he found "gregarious and had a comradeship that the troops recognised."

This book is probably of most interest to those who like military history or accounts of military life but it is also a detailed and honest account of the reality from a soldier's viewpoint of the violent birth of the state of Israel.



## Gaza: when the sky rained white fire

By Musheir El-Farra

Published by Sheffield PSC

Musheir El-Farra was born in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip and took part in the Free Gaza Movement's breaking of the Israeli siege in 2008. He was then asked by solicitors representing activists in the Smash EDO campaign to supply case histories which they could use as grounds for accusing Israel of committing war crimes.

As he collected reports of Israel's actions during Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 and January 2009, even he was shocked by the reality of what the victims suffered. He decided to fill in the details behind the bare bones of the stories by meeting some of the families whose lives were devastated in the assault.

The result is a book which Prof Ilan Pappé describes in the foreword as "one crucial and highly significant part" of the struggle for truth and justice which must continue in Gaza.

The case histories record stark examples of violations of international law and other incidents which are sheer inhumanity, more often both. The first one is that of the Deeb family, nine of whom were killed by an Israeli shell landing directly on their house.

Mu'in Deeb describes how his pregnant wife, his mother and four of his children died instantly and a fifth later of horrific injuries. He recalls the characteristics of each child, like Mustafa,



14, who was "very funny, very popular," and the youngest, Noor, who was "the apple of my eye." He says "our life was so lovely together."

The power of El-Farra's book comes in the capturing of these universal emotions and the testimonies of the long lasting effects of having your family murdered. Mu'in Deeb says there is "nothing for me to live for. Every day, I wish I could die."

There is the case of Tahani Eid who weeps for 15 minutes before being able to speak of how her 19-year-old son, Mustafa, was hit by a drone strike on a day the Israeli army had declared a ceasefire, and of Muhammad Shurab whose car was shelled by a tank during a similar truce and whose 18-year-old son, Ibrahim, bled to death in his arms over 12 hours while the Israelis prevented ambulances from reaching him.

These and the other 15 stories in the book are interspersed with descriptions of El-Farra's visits to his family and a flashback to the Free Gaza protest which are a little distracting but also provide some relief to the tragedy. This is an important book of record about cold-blooded war crimes. And it breaks your heart.

**Musheir El-Farra is chair of Sheffield PSC**

■ To order the book, email [dvdnbooks@sheffieldpsc.org.uk](mailto:dvdnbooks@sheffieldpsc.org.uk) or write to Sheffield PSC at 118, Upperthorpe, Sheffield S6 3NF. Cost £8.99 + £3 postage. All proceeds go to children's projects in Gaza.

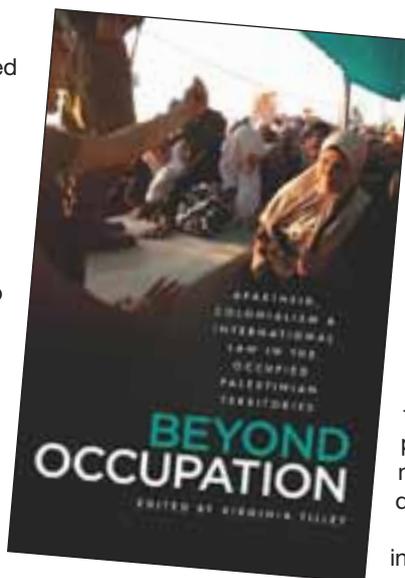
## Beyond Occupation: Apartheid, Colonialism and International Law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Edited by Virginia Tilley  
Published by Pluto Press

The thrust of this important book is the need for an entirely new paradigm in the quest for a solution to the 65 year old Israel-Palestine Conflict. It seeks to answer the mystery why it has proved impervious to the rules of international law and all efforts to find a political solution. It is a study based on a report to the Department of International Affairs in South Africa, conducted as an independent two year project led by the editor. She has had the formidable task of editing for logical flow the mass of evidence from scholars researching whether Israel's policies were truly consistent with colonialism and apartheid.

The preface is both a summary and conclusion in itself of the evidence documented in the two main chapters reviewing Israeli practices relevant to colonialism and apartheid. These make for grim reading; the conclusions at the end of each chapter demonstrate beyond all doubt the extent of these practices and the actual aims of Israeli/Zionist policy being the total domination of the Palestinian people.

This study demonstrates the futility of all the "shallow pageantry of the peace process," the need to determine why



all efforts have so far failed so badly and to look at the entire conflict with fresh and critical eyes.

A viable two-state solution is being deliberately undermined by the continuous building of illegal settlements and the immense infrastructure for the benefit of the Israelis. This is explained by the actual logic of territorial-demographic domination; this true purpose has not been correctly understood.

Thus the collective failure of the international community to recognise Israel's practice of colonialism and apartheid has stalled all progress towards ending the conflict. For too long those seeking conflict resolution have uncritically adopted the Israeli government's claims that its main fear is of Arab attack. By recognising that the Israeli occupation has assumed the character of colonialism and apartheid (which by definition and implication must mean real domination), the mysteries of the failed so-called "peace processes" fall away. Israel's first concern is not about Arab attack but the maintaining of domination.

How to address this? At least this vital new insight shows up that territorial partition will not help. Apartheid and colonialism can only be ended when the doctrine of domination that drives them is finally identified, opposed and ended.

Rev Richard Podger

## Space & Gaze: Conversations with Jean Mohr and Edward Said in Palestine

In 1983 Jean Mohr was commissioned by the UN, on Palestinian poet Edward Said's recommendation, to take photos of some of the key sites in which Palestinians lived. Because the UN allowed only the names of the places to accompany the photographs, Said and Mohr decided to work together on an 'interplay', as Said put it, of Said's personal account of Palestinian suffering and exile and Mohr's photos which they called *After the Last Sky* (1986).

Now, for the first time, Mohr's images and Said's text have been brought together in the form of an exhibition which will run until June at Goldsmiths College in South East London. Borders, migrations, labour, displacement, diaspora and memory percolate through the words and images in *After the Last Sky*.

Both the text and images in *Space & Gaze* prompt a dialogue with voluminous images of Palestinian lives that circulate internationally, inviting reflections on the changes and continuities that have taken place over time, not only with respect to how Palestinians have been seen, but also how they have chosen to see and show themselves.

The exhibition includes contemporary photographers from Palestine – Ahmad Daghlas, Arine Rinawi, Fadi Arouri, Hatem Moussa and Muthanna Al-Qadi. A series of workshops and events aims to extend and develop engagement with the installation.

■ *Space & Gaze*, Kingsway Corridor, Richard Hoggart Building, Goldsmiths, Lewisham Way, London SE14 6NW  
■ For more details see <http://www.gold.ac.uk/methods-lab>



# Abraham Path

A new section of the Abraham Path has been mapped out in the Naqab/Negev. The seven-day route takes walkers through stunning canyons, refreshing oases and fascinating historical sites.

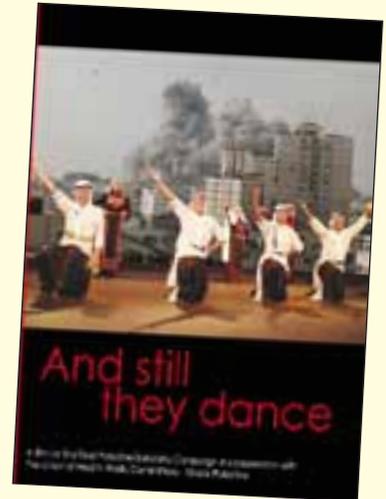
The Naqab is home to Bedouin people who have helped map the trail and will provide some of the accommodation in family homes or tents. The new section joins six others already mapped on the long distance path that retraces the footsteps of Abraham.



For more details see [www.abrahampath.org](http://www.abrahampath.org)

# And still they dance DVD

The story of young Palestinian dancers from Jabalia refugee camp who toured five English cities in 2005. Watch performances, interviews with the dancers and the friendships they formed... and learn what happened when they went home to Gaza.



**Directed by Musheir El-Farra,**  
chair of Sheffield PSC

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