



LIVE FROM *Palestine*

TESTIMONIES FROM
THE NONVIOLENT
RESISTANCE

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUP

VOLUME 2

NO. 1

MARCH 2004

Jayyous The Olive Harvest and the Wall

By Francesca Rosa

Oct. 24, 2003
The women of Jayyous
march to the Wall to
protest being separated
from their farmland.

Photo: Francesca Rosa

The presence of violence and destruction, hunger, humiliation and great economic losses are a daily reality for Palestinians. Those living in the West Bank have been facing a serious additional challenge to their basic livelihood: the illegal separation Wall. There is also a different Palestine from the one defined by the violence of the Occupation—one we rarely hear about in the U.S. This Palestine is one of great beauty and hospitality, a culture which under the enormous hardship of Occupation somehow manages to carry on day-to-day life to an amazing degree. The annual olive harvest is one important part of this culture, and represents the economic and cultural heart of Palestine.

Jayyous is one of many villages affected by the Wall and one of many which hosted ISM

the village via ten dirt roads. Now all of these roads are blocked by what the Israelis call the “Security Fence.” It is better known in Palestine as “The Apartheid Wall,” or simply “The Wall.” This Wall does not run along the “Green Line,” the traditional 1967 border between



Israel and the West Bank. Rather it cuts into the prime agricultural land of the West Bank and some of its most important water aquifers.

Jayyous is located on 13,000 dunums (1 dunum = 1/4 acre), of land. By fall of 2003, the construction of The Wall and accompanying

CONTENTS

Budrus' Nonviolent
Resistance

Ethnic Cleansing
In Rafah

The Death of
Tom Hurndall

Boycott Caterpillar

Your Presence is
Urgently Needed
in Palestine

The olive groves are place of great natural beauty. Some of the trees are many hundreds of years old. The smell of mint and miramia, the wild sage of Palestine, filled the air. Desert wildflowers abounded.

volunteers during the Fall Olive Harvest Campaign 2003. It has a population of 2,800, and was until recently a prosperous farming village. Over three quarters of the population depended on the land for their livelihood. Their lives were seriously affected by the Occupation, but until the Israeli military and “Separation Wall” came to Jayyous, the farmers had unfettered access to their land from

military road had destroyed 550 dunums of olive and citrus trees. None of the villagers have yet been compensated for this loss. Another 8,600 dunums had also been taken over by the Israeli military, severely restricting access to fields and orchards. They also lost access to three wells and ten cisterns which

Continued on page 6

Budrus—Organized Nonviolent Resistance to the Wall

By Kate Raphael and Anna

© 2004 International Women's Peace Service, www.womenspeacepalestine.org



JANUARY 18, 2004:
Budrus is a small village of 1200 people in West Ramallah, three kilometers from the green line. The Apartheid Wall's bulldozers reached Budrus in November, 2003, having already cut a swathe through the neighboring village of Qibbya. In 1953, Ariel Sharon led a massacre of 60 people in Qibbya.

The site of the massacre is still visible today.

The intention of the Apartheid Wall in this area is threefold: to separate Budrus, Qibbya and two neighboring villages from all of their farm land, enclose them within a circular prison of their own separate wall, and install a single gate through which villagers can access Ramallah, their source of hospitals, universities and places of work. The villagers feel that this gate, like many other gates in the wall, could remain almost permanently closed.

Budrus village has united to form a Popular Committee to fight the Apartheid Wall and has chosen the path of organized, nonviolent resistance. Until now, the wall has not become a reality in Budrus. For the past three months, every able-bodied person in Budrus has been going to the olive grove of 30 trees, those first in line for bulldozing, and using non-violent direct action to stop the bulldozers each time they start working. The Popular Committee has convened big demonstrations in the olive grove even when the bulldozers were not working. While in many villages the army's bulldozers have met scattered protests, the people of Budrus believe they can stop the Apartheid Wall! The village says their secret is that everyone is united against the Wall and works together, no matter what their party affiliation. Because of their united strength, the village has defied every curfew declared by the Israeli Occupation Forces in order to continue the non-violent resistance.

Recently, however, the Apartheid Wall contractors' bulldozers have been backed up by much more military might and the police have started making midnight raids into the village to arrest Popular Committee activists and even young boys. There has been a concerted attack on Budrus village's non-violent resistance.

This began on the morning of December 30th, 2003 when a bulldozer headed for the grove most under threat. As soon as the villagers saw what was happening, a call went out from the mosque that the olive trees were being cut! Five international and Israeli activists camping in a school under threat of demolition in nearby Deir Ballut village had luckily slept in Budrus the night before. Together with Palestinian activists from the Budrus Popular Committee against the Apartheid Wall, we rushed down the hill to the olive groves only to be met by soldiers approaching with a paper declaring the area a closed military zone and blocking our way. We were perplexed when a Palestinian activist said we should all return to the village center. On the way we heard another call go out from the mosque and everything became clear when we suddenly saw hundreds of women, girls, men and boys marching directly at the olive grove. Children who had rushed out of their classrooms were still clutching their schoolbooks. At this moment, one of the most well loved activists in the village, Abu Ahmad, shouted "We can do it! We

"We are very grateful for Israeli and international support, but the Palestinians have to make a stand. We're adopting a special strategy, a peaceful strategy. We also all agreed on one thing: We are not against the Israelis or the Jews or the soldiers. We are only against the occupation. If someone asks: Why peaceful? I tell him: I've tried all the ways and the peaceful way works best. The worst thing is to kill the innocent. The Israelis kill day and night and say that we are terrorists. I'm against killing people. All people, Jews and Arabs. I'm not afraid or ashamed to say that. That's why I'm demonstrating peacefully against the fence."

*Iyad Ahmed Murar, interviewed by
Gideon Levy in Haaretz*

"This was taken moments before the soldiers charged up the hill and began shooting rubber bullets, tear gas and arresting internationals. The other thing about this moment is the feeling it evoked in everyone - looking down the hill, watching your land and trees being taken from you, so humiliating, brutal and left one feeling so violated. Also the green line is literally just over the hill. The wall could be moved to the top of the hill without destroying their trees, but no, it has to go through the valley." Brian Malovany, Norcal ISM volunteer

Photo: Brian Malovany

can do it!" The villagers broke up into three groups and started running down the hill towards the bulldozers.

The soldiers immediately began firing tens of tear-gas canisters at the different groups, opening fire just minutes later with numerous volleys of rubber bullets. When groups of small girls were gassed, they took only seconds to recover their breath before marching forward again down the hill. Many people were hit in the legs, head, and arms and carried up the hill to the waiting ambulance.

All the time, more soldiers were arriving and making their way up the hill. The Palestinians and soldiers met three quarters of the way down the hill. Although the bulldozer was relatively close now, it seemed that it would be impossible for us to break through the line of heavily armed soldiers and get to the olive grove.

The sudden arrival of three television crews startled the soldiers. In that moment, an old woman broke through the line and ran at the bulldozer. Different groups started getting around the soldiers. The soldiers recovered their composure speedily and began firing teargas canisters directly at people, but by this time the woman had thrown herself into the hole being dug by the bulldozer. A tiny girl jumped into the bulldozer's scooper as it came down to meet the earth and nonchalantly started reading her schoolbook. Other girls started climbing all over the bulldozer and the driver turned off the engine.

That day was victorious for the people of Budrus. Although some trees had been destroyed, others were saved. And in the face of massive amounts of teargas and rubber bullets, they had advanced down the hill armed with nothing but songs of freedom, forcing the soldiers and the bulldozer to retreat. When the people reached the olive groves and the soldiers were pushed back to where their jeeps were parked, it was the small girls who faced off against the soldiers for the next three hours singing "Free, Free Palestine!" When the soldiers finally got into their jeeps and drove off, the entire village celebrated.

This scene has replayed itself over the past three weeks but with different results. During the past three weeks, the Wall Company has tried seven times to cut more olive trees. All seven attempts have been defeated by the people of Budrus. Four times the people succeeded in forcing the army out of the groves as they did on December 30th, but on three occasions the army attacked with over 200 soldiers, forcing the people back into the village. On these days, dozens of people were taken to hospital with injuries and soldiers opened fire on groups of children with live bullets, before occupying houses closest to the main road and beating the women and children inside. But even these times, the bulldozers did not uproot more trees. At one point, the army declared the entire village a

closed military zone. This did not stop the demonstrations from continuing. The village hit the world headlines when a Swedish Member of Parliament, Gustav Fridolin, and three other internationals were arrested for participating in the demonstrations. All of the internationals arrested were imprisoned and eventually expelled from the country.

Ten men from the village have been taken prisoner by the occupation forces, including Abu Ahmad and his two brothers. Since their arrests, the Israeli regime has stonewalled their lawyers and supporters who have phoned the prison where they are being held. Israeli Knesset member Ran Cohen phoned the prison to protest their arrest and was told they had been released. People knowledgeable about the Israeli military court system fear they will be held indefinitely in administrative detention. The arrest of non violent organizers on charges including the newly imposed illegality, "housing internationals", only serves to expose Israel's intention to smash any non-violent resistance to any of its policies.

In the run up to the International Court of Justice hearing on the Apartheid Wall in the Hague, beginning in late February, bulldozers all over Palestine are working fast and furious to speed up the building of the wall, and giant 25 foot concrete slabs are being erected daily. So far, the village of Budrus, although shot, gassed, beaten, arrested and terrorized by the Israeli Occupation Forces, has managed to stop the Apartheid Wall's trail of destruction through the Ramallah district. ■

Author Kate Raphael, longtime Bay Area activist, was amongst those arrested during demonstrations in Budrus. She was then forced to leave the country upon threat of deportation.



These young girls and others spent three hours on the front line, directly facing the soldiers, singing and inventing impromptu chants.

AP Photo: Lefteris Pitarakis

"I can't overemphasize how involved, strong and inspiring the women of the village were. While the army chased the shebab (young boys) and internationals up the hill, women such as these stopped an army jeep with their bodies & were tear gassed at point blank range." Brian Malovany, ISM volunteer
Photo: Brian Malovany



In Memoriam

Tom Hurndall 1981–2004

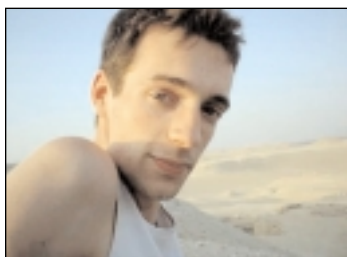


Photo: Kay Fernandes

International Solidarity Movement volunteer, Tom Hurndall, 22, died on January 14, 2004 in a London hospital due to complications with pneumonia. On April 11, 2003, Hurndall was wearing a bright orange jacket and steering Palestinian children away from a firing, Israeli, tank-mounted

machine gun in the Yibna area of Rafah. He shepherded a boy to safety, but when he attempted to aid two young girls, an Israeli Defense Force sniper shot him in the head. The injury left him in a coma.

At a hearing on January 12, 2003, a soldier recently arrested in connection with the shooting of Tom was indicted on six charges: aggravated assault; two counts of obstruction of justice; incitement to false testimony; false testimony; and improper conduct. A second soldier has been detained and is expected to be indicted on charges of obstructing justice and false testimony.

In grieving the death of Tom, it is important to remember the ongoing catastrophic situation in Palestine that he was working to end. In fact, during the nine months Tom lay in his coma, 407 Palestinians were murdered and 1,990 injured. As Tom's mother, Jocelyn, wrote recently in the UK Guardian, "It seems that life is cheap in the occupied territories. Different value attached to life depends on whether the victim happens to be Israeli, international or Palestinian." ■

Campaign to Boycott Caterpillar!

Jan. 18, 2004, Budrus: Soldiers guarding CAT equipment uncertainly confront scores of nonviolent women and children protesting demolition of their farmland to make way for the Wall.

Photo: AP photo: Lefteris Pitarakis

April 23 will be an "International Day of Action Against Caterpillar." Centered in Peoria, Illinois at the company's headquarters, the momentum of international protest against Caterpillar for the role they play in the illegal demolition of Palestinian homes continues to grow. The parents of Rachel Corrie, ISM volunteer killed by a CAT bulldozer in Rafah, have signed on as endorsers along with over 50 organizations from a broad political spectrum. For more information and ways to take action: www.catdestroyshomes.org/ ■

RESIST THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE!

Donate Your Tax Refund to NORCAL ISM.

Billions of our U.S. tax dollars go to Israel and its military each year, making the illegal Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza possible. These tax dollars contribute to house demolitions, land confiscation, illegal arrests, torture, ecological devastation and the bombing and shooting deaths of many innocent civilians. Since 1988 the U.S. Congress has approved \$25 billion in loan guarantees and bonds to Israel. This year the official aid package is \$3.8 billion along with another \$200 million provided under the U.S. "Homeland Security" Legislation. Three billion of the \$9 billion promised in loan guarantees has already been delivered.

Many of us are appalled by this but are still not ready to refuse to pay taxes. Do you pay taxes? Do you get a tax return? If the answer to both of these questions is YES, then consider donating part or all of your 2003 U.S. Tax Refund to Norcal ISM. The proceeds will be used to continue Norcal ISM's non-violent resistance work in Palestine. ■



Hell Walking On Earth—Israel is ethnically cleansing Rafah

by Mustafa Barghouti

February 12, 2004 The disastrous cycle of violence gripping Israel and Palestine receives plentiful news coverage. Largely unreported however, are the more insidious aspects of the conflict. Israel has committed a litany of atrocities during its occupation of Palestine, but the crimes visited daily upon the innocent civilians of Rafah are among the most heinous. Even in the wider context of the occupation as a whole, Rafah's situation is particularly tragic, and the conditions imposed on its citizens increasingly desperate. There can be no doubt that Israeli policy in Rafah amounts to a process of ethnic cleansing, and, as has been so often the case throughout history, a humanitarian catastrophe is being allowed to continue unimpeded. The world sits idly by.

The most populous district of one of the most overcrowded regions on earth, the people of Rafah continue to find the land beneath them dwindling as repeated Israeli incursions systematically rob them of their homes, livelihood and dignity. Formally one complete city, Rafah was divided in two following the Camp David settlement in 1978, with one half now part of Egypt. Since then, Israeli settlements have been established along the coast, cutting further into the already divided city. Today, the Palestinian half of Rafah is a disparate collection of squalid camps, hemmed in by a ring of steel, its infrastructure effectively destroyed and its people destitute. Unemployment in the area stands at over 80 per cent. Israel has conspicuously targeted the city's infrastructure leaving sanitation in the camps in a deplorable condition.

On the fringes of the city, one row of houses after another has been erased, Israeli destruction moving at a pace that the crippled local infrastructure cannot hope to counter. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has helped rebuild 200 houses in Rafah, and the Palestinian Ministry of Housing has managed 34. But these figures pale in comparison to the 1,643 buildings demolished and 16,000 Pales-

tinians left homeless by the Israelis. Last week, Israeli occupying troops went on yet another destructive rampage on the edge of the city,

demolishing 31 Palestinian houses and wounding 38 local workers in the process. This one raid alone has left over 400 people homeless.

As well as the demolition of property, the Israeli military grip on Rafah has also been steadily tightened to disastrous effect. Due to its position on the border with Egypt, Rafah is of vital strategic importance to the Gaza Strip's impoverished economy. As such it has, in the egregious logic of the Israeli government, been a natural target for Israel's flagrant intention to crush any semblance of economic self-government in the occupied territories. Local workers seeking access to their jobs in Egypt are repeatedly denied passage at the border, or refused re-entry to the city in the



January 20, 2004: Families sitting amongst the rubble of their former homes after an Israeli incursion into a Rafah refugee camp—400 residents made to flee heavy machine gun fire and 25 homes demolished without allowing residents the opportunity to remove their belongings.

Photo: PCHR Field Worker;
www.pchrgaza.org



evenings. Likewise, access to other towns and cities in Gaza is frequently restricted, disrupting the local economy as much as possible.

With the available farmland rapidly disappearing, local produce is more and more scarce, with Palestinians increasingly forced to rely on Israeli imports. Meanwhile, the poverty rate in Rafah, established by the World Bank to include those living on less than \$2 a day, stands at 75 per

cent. As usual, the Israeli army's specious justification to the international community for the systematic degradation of Rafah has been the ongoing search for tunnels used by mili-

Jan. 20, 2004: "They demolished the house, the furniture, they killed my son, they shot my son's child, they removed us from the earth, where I should go? Waiting for UNRWA mercy to bring me a tent, or Red Cross blankets?!, I don't want anything. I want my house, my house and that's all. I want to sleep in that rubble now, I don't want to leave. I want to die under the rubble of my house, but I will not leave. I will never ever leave." —Um Amaar

Photo: Mohammad;
www.rafah.vze.com

Continued on page 6

The Olive Harvest and the Wall

continued from page 1

are now located on the western (Israeli) side of the Wall. This amounts to confiscation of two thirds of the town's orchards, farmland and water resources.

In Jayyous, the Wall is a long, chain-linked fence topped by barbed wired and fitted every few meters with motion sensors. A deep ditch lies along the inside of the Wall at all but the gate access points, and huge coils of razor wire snake along the Wall on both sides. Entry to the land is possible only at the guarded gates, creating massive bottlenecks. Heavily



A farmer from Jayyous harvests his olive tree in view of the Wall.

Photo: Francesca Rosa

armed Israeli soldiers patrol the military road in American-made jeeps and Humvees. At times they set up sniper posts in the hills, threatening to shoot-to-kill farmers who might try to scale the fence, desperate to harvest their olives. They also patrol the orchards in an attempt to catch those whose 'crime' is to have been found sleeping on their land in order to stay near their trees.

During our stay in Jayyous (October and November, 2003), the two gates in the Jayyous Wall were supposed to have been opened for 20 minutes each in the morning, afternoon and evening. At West Gate, which is the main farming gate, hundreds of farmers, their equipment and livestock, had to show up at these times and these times only if they wanted to travel from the village to their land and vice-versa. They were expected to be on

time, though the Israelis rarely were.

The money that comes in from the harvest is needed to pay the bills and feed a family for the coming year. Timing and speed of the harvest are crucial. Yet farmers were often made to wait at the gates for hours past the 7:00 AM official opening time—by which point the sun was high in the sky, a very difficult time of day to begin working.

Frequently the Israeli military subjected the farmers to a slow and laborious check of their identity cards. Without these cards the farmers can be arrested, much as under the old South African Apartheid system.

A controversial permit system was also implemented, further restricting access. The permits were good for three months, to be reissued at the discretion of the Occupiers. The harvest is a time when families work together, but often relatives were arbitrarily denied entry because they lacked the necessary permits. As an example of Israeli Catch-22 bureaucracy, one man was issued a permit for his dead father and his small baby. He himself had not been issued one. It took days to straighten this out.

The Israeli soldiers stationed in Jayyous were made up of older reservists and very young soldiers. The reservists often seemed uncomfortable in their role as conquerors, while dutifully performing it anyway. The young soldiers, little more than teenagers with guns, were often rude and disrespectful bullies, taking a peculiar delight in the humiliations, arrests and arbitrary denials of entry they inflicted. They seemed oblivious to the implications of their actions.

One of the jobs of the internationals was to monitor the soldiers' behavior, checking that the gates were open during the officially posted times, calling upon the Israeli human rights monitoring group Hamoked, if we witnessed any particularly egregious behavior. My opinion was that the soldiers tended to behave better when internationals were around because they were aware of the PR implications of treating the Palestinians very badly in front of people who will go home and talk about what they have witnessed, but that was not always the case.

Once in the fields, past the Wall, the situation was very different. Picking olives is often exhausting under the hot sun. Yet the groves are place of great natural beauty. Some of the trees are many hundreds of years old. The smell of mint and miramia, the wild sage of Palestine, filled the air. Desert wildflowers

abounded. Turtles and lizards appeared from time to time, and hawks drifted on the air currents overhead under breathtakingly blue skies. Ancient stone walls, made without mortar from the rocks underfoot, divided the old family plots. We picked with many different families, spending a day or two with each one. The residents of Jayyous have a prodigious capacity for hard work but also for enormous hospitality. Lunch and tea were cooked over open-air fires, and guests were stuffed full of delicious food, most of it grown locally. It was an honor to sit and eat with these families who had been coming to these same fields, harvesting these same trees for generations. Sometimes, for a couple of hours amidst the beauty of the groves and the extreme kindness of our hardworking hosts, it was possible to momentarily forget about the Occupation, but never for very long, because after a few hours, it would be time to go back to the Wall and face the same soldiers all over again. And then the next day, and the next. After Ramadan began, farmers who had had nothing to eat or drink since before dawn, encountered the hardship of having to face hostile soldiers who sometimes made them wait for hours to return home. This was a real trial for the people who worked day after day with the knowledge that this might be the last year they will pick their olives before their land is permanently taken away, leaving them with nothing.

Tracie De Angelis, a long time ISM volunteer who has lived in Jayyous since July of 2003, recently sent the following report: "... in late November 2003, one of the two gates for the farmers in this village was closed permanently. This has had disastrous consequences for the inhabitants of Jayyous. Twenty-five families whose land is located behind the wall

to the south of the village can no longer go to their land. In addition, the permit system imposed by the Israeli Occupation Forces has also had dire consequences and it has become close to impossible for most farmers to be granted access to their fields, trees and crops. The larger implication of this is near total loss of income for a huge percentage of the people in Jayyous ..."

But as difficult as things are, the people of Jayyous are strong and resourceful. To learn more about them and Jayyous you can visit: www.jayyousonline.org. ■

Francesca Rosa is a Norcal ISM volunteer, a rank and file member of SEIU Local 535, and an active member of Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace and Justice



A child in Jayyous stares out past the razor wire.

Photo: www.jayyousonline.org

Hell on Earth

continued from page 5

tants and smugglers extending from the city across the Egyptian border. The fact that Israel possesses ample equipment to discover and unearth these tunnels without resorting to widespread destruction and violence is conveniently ignored.

As the citizens of Rafah are crammed into a smaller and smaller portion of land, stripped of their homes, and enslaved in grinding poverty, the fallacy of Israel's stated objectives is clear. The incursions into Rafah, as elsewhere in the occupied territories, are merely an ongoing land-grab masquerading as a justifiable security operation. New ground for settlement expansion is being prepared and Israeli control of the border is tightened.

The Israeli actions in Rafah are a crime; a reign of terror on innocent civilians. The world has looked on too many times when such crimes have occurred in the past, reacting only when it was too late. Now it runs the risk of not reacting at all as the Sharon administration, already steeped in blood, plunges the civilians of Rafah into further carnage. Alert to the growing "demographic threat" posed by an increasing Palestinian population, the ethnic cleansing has already begun. Unsatisfied with reducing the city to terrified penury, Rafah it appears is to be steadily eliminated. The world must respond. ■

The writer is secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative. Reprinted from ZNet

Speakers Available

ISM volunteers who have recently returned from Palestine are available to make presentations to high school and college campuses, churches, organizations and house parties.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Northern California ISM Support Group needs volunteers to help with local organizing activities. For more information, call 510-236-4250 or email info@norcalism.org

Your Presence is Urgently Needed in Palestine

Volunteers are urgently needed to come to the Occupied Territories from June through August of 2004 to stand with Palestinians against attacks on their very existence. The Israeli government continues to step up its brutal war on the Palestinian people. The International Solidarity Movement wants to make sure **the world is watching**. Norcal ISM will be offering two comprehensive trainings from May 14-16 and from June 11-13 for those interested in volunteering with ISM in Palestine.

ISM is a Palestinian-led movement of Palestinian and international activists working to raise awareness of the struggle for Palestinian freedom and an end to Israeli occupation. We utilize nonviolent, direct-action methods of resistance to confront and challenge illegal Israeli occupation forces and policies.

The first ISM campaign took place in August 2001. During the invasion of West Bank cities by the Israeli military in April 2002, ISM activists were the first to start documenting human rights abuses. Since April 2002, hundreds of ISM volunteers from Europe, North and South America, Asia, the Pacific Islands and Africa have come to participate in ongoing ISM campaigns in Palestine. Come join us in the Occupied Territories and support the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, truth and justice. ■



*July 28, 2003, Jenin:
Some of the 50 ISM volunteers
and 30 Israeli activists who
joined 250 Palestinians in a
march against the Wall during
Freedom Summer 2003.*

For more information or to register: www.palsolidarity.org

NORCAL ISM Support Group

405 Vista Heights Rd.
El Cerrito, CA 94530

www.norcalism.org
info@norcalism.org
510 - 236 - 4250

