



TESTIMONIES
FROM THE
NONVIOLENT
RESISTANCE

LIVE FROM *Palestine*

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUP

VOLUME 16

NO. 1

JUNE 2018

Editor: Jeff Pekrul

IN THIS ISSUE

At Home in
Solidarity
pages 1-2

The Other Side
of the Wall:
An Eyewitness
Account of the
Occupation in
Palestine
page 3

The biggest ques-
tion from the ISM
speaking tour:
Why?
page 4

The Spectacular
North America
ISM Tour
page 5

Palestinian and
International activ-
ists plant olive
saplings on village
land ordered for
confiscation by
Israel in Burin
page 6-7

Call for Volunteers
page 8

AT HOME IN SOLIDARITY

By Billy, April 2018



Since Syria took down the Israeli fighter jet in early February, the F16s have been circling more frequently overhead. Their droning sounds distinct as they drop light flares and play war games in the sky. I get lost looking up, forget where I am, retrace my steps and find myself on our rooftop in Palestine. I lose track of time and realize counting back, I've been here for two months...

The days were stunning, it seemed the sky got bluer the longer I stayed. The almond trees bloomed and budded before my eyes, I remember the air heavy and sweet with the smell of them.

As an international visitor to the West Bank, specifically al Khalil/Hebron, I grappled with many aspects of Palestinian life. The grave poverty, the apartheid roads, the military checkpoints, the child arrests and the constant presence of soldiers and weaponry—all of this shocked me. What was even more shocking, was the normalization of it all. On the other hand, and despite being from the United

States, the people of Palestine welcomed me wholeheartedly.

Al Khalil is unique; only there are illegal settlements within the heart of the city side-by-side Palestinian homes. This lends itself to immense harassment and tension. At the same time, the vibe is ghostly and desolate. Shops closed, demolished abandoned homes, chipped paint, trash everywhere, cats and kittens amuck and empty streets. It feels like there are three different dimensions of this city: Palestinians, illegal settlers, and military. All existing in the same place, yet invisible to each other, but when the three groups materialize and interact, problems arise. Otherwise, they ghost along in denial of the others' existence and accustomed to 70 years of occupational life.

I never looked forward to Fridays. It was as if space and time collided. Aliens descended. Earth flipped upside down. Young demonstrators peacefully protesting the occupation that strips them of basic human rights, while soldiers

Continued on page 2

retaliate with ambushes, tear gas, stun grenades, live ammunition and rubber coated steel bullets. As ISM-ers, we document the violence, the arrests and the human rights abuses.

I decided to go to Palestine after Donald Trump's decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, thereby claiming Jerusalem the capital of Israel. As US citizens who oppose social injustice, we have a

The people of Palestine are strong and not going anywhere despite systematic racial and ethnic cleansing. My cheeks remain rosy with adrenaline and gratitude to have shared space with such resistance. The Israeli occupation is powerful but the resistance is more powerful and full-hearted and I feel at home in solidarity with Palestine. ■

Not only is now a call to action to travel to Palestine and work on the ground with ISM, but also to put pressure on our local congress people and senators to constantly call out the human rights abuses and the blight of Palestinians under a continuing military occupation.

responsibility to be allies with Palestinians. Solidarity can take many shapes. Not only is now a call to action to travel to Palestine and work on the ground with ISM, but also to put pressure on our local congress people and senators to constantly call out the human rights abuses and the plight of Palestinians under a continuing military occupation.

Billy spent two months in the West Bank in early 2018, her experience working in solidarity with Palestinians has pushed her to further pursue working within the scope of freedom of movement and refugee resettlement in the Bay Area.

Palbox

www.palbox.org

Palbox is a wonderful way to support Palestinian farmers, craftspeople and the International Solidarity Movement.

We thought you might like to take a peek inside the next Palbox and discover a handful of organic & handcrafted goodies. It's the perfect

***A handmade
Palestinian
necklace ships
in the next box!***

holiday gift that supports Palestinian farmers and artisans! Get one before the rush!



The Other Side of the Wall: An Eyewitness Account of the Occupation in Palestine

By Paul Larudee, April 2018

Live from Palestine, the newsletter of the International Solidarity Movement support group in Northern California, has been publishing reports from ISM volunteers for fifteen years now, but only twice before to our knowledge has the ISM experience been expanded into a book. This one is very special indeed.

Richard Hardigan joined ISM at a very critical time in 2014, which is part of what makes his book so compelling. While he was there, three teenage Jewish settlers were kidnapped and killed. Israeli forces arrested hundreds of Palestinians and imposed debilitating restrictions on all of the West Bank. Then they attacked Gaza, killing more than 2,000 Palestinians.

But *The Other Side of the Wall* is compelling for other reasons, as well. Richard is an excellent and thoughtful writer, who provides vivid descriptions, personal thoughts, background information and analysis, as well. He did much more than recount his experience; he did background research to make sense of it.

The result is that this book is effective on many levels. From the point of view of the ISM, it should be required reading for any prospective or actual ISM volunteer, and form part of the training and preparation. But we should hope that the readership will be much wider, because it is capable of dispelling both lingering and deeply entrenched illusions that readers may have about Israeli attitudes, intentions, policies and practices. The author witnesses the brutality of the Occupation and the countless forms of humiliations the Palestinians face on a daily basis, such as violence meted out by both soldiers and settlers, long waits at checkpoints, home demolitions, travel restrictions, unfair economic practices, arbitrary detention and arrest, and long prison sentences. It will be a wakeup call to many if not most readers.

Richard was also more prepared than most ISM volunteers. He had lived and taught in Egypt and his Arabic was good enough to understand and communicate a lot of what he saw and heard. This is not expected of volunteers, but it is a big advantage. He also took elaborate preparations to protect himself from being blocked from entry to Palestine. ISM volunteers are advised to do this, but few

are as cautious as Richard, which is a pen name. In some ways, his preparations can be considered a handbook for volunteers.

I found it hard to put the book down. Richard's experiences and reactions reminded me a lot of my own a decade earlier with the ISM, and I found myself reliving the places and sensations from that time, which were often the same as Richard's. I thank him for that. But you don't have to have been to Palestine in order to appreciate this book. The only cautionary note for those who have not yet been, however, is that it may impel you to go. In that case, the ISM will be ready and waiting.

OTHER REVIEWS

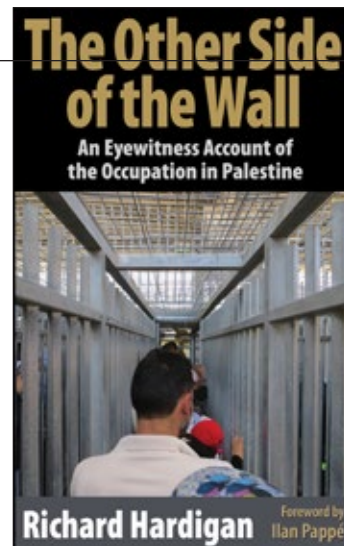
"A brave, poignant, and invaluable exposure to the daily suffering and dangers endured by the Palestinian people living under a cruel occupation that has lasted for 50 years with no end in sight. Richard Hardigan is no spectator of this ordeal, writing as one who has for some months stood shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the Palestinians, inspired by their extraordinary resolve, resilience, and above all by their loving hospitality. Every American should be forced to read this illuminating book!"

—Professor Richard Falk, former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967.

"Richard Hardigan ... has written what we have been waiting for for years: a measured, you-are-there account, ..., a vivid journal that takes us past slogans and ideologies."

—Philip Weiss, co-founder and editor of Mondoweiss

Richard Hardigan is the pen name of a professor based in California. He has spent several years teaching and lecturing at various universities in the Middle East. In 2011 he was caught up in the Tahrir Square uprising in Cairo. He has worked with human rights organizations in the West Bank and in the Palestinian refugee camp of Shatila in Lebanon. ■



The Other Side of the Wall:
An Eyewitness Account of the
Occupation in Palestine
By Richard Hardigan

Publisher: Cune Press
6" x 9" x .5", 184 pages
10 black and white photos
Further Reading Index

Distribution
US: Ingram, Baker&Taylor,
other major wholesalers
Europe: Gazelle
Middle East: Levant Group
Publication: May 15, 2018

Contact: Scott C. Davis,
Cune Press
206-930-1659
publicity.osw@
cunepress.com

Richard Hardigan,
richardhardigan.com

The biggest question from the ISM speaking tour: Why?

By Katie Miranda, April 2018

Why are they doing this to Palestinians?... There is simply no answer to the question “why” which makes any logical sense.

The first week of April I had the honor of being a part of the North American International Solidarity Movement speaking tour. The idea for this tour came as a result of a meeting between various ISM support groups worldwide and people working on the ground with ISM in Palestine. One of the concerns our Palestinian partners had was that there were very few people coming to Palestine to work with ISM. The tour was our response to that. Our aim was to raise awareness about ISM’s efficacy in supporting Palestinian nonviolent resistance and the role that international volunteers play in reducing violence against Palestinians.

I spoke in Sacramento and at Claremont College in California. The next day I flew to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and spoke at al Rasheed Islamic Center, followed by the University of Alberta and finally at the Multicultural Women and Senior Services Association.

I used the following story as an example of how creative nonviolent resistance can reduce and interrupt violence.

In 2006, my dance partner Jonas Moffat and I were practicing our fire dancing and juggling skills while on checkpoint watch on Shuhada Street in the Tel Rumeida area of Hebron during the daytime. We were getting ready to perform with fire later that night for the children of Tel Rumeida, but during the day we practiced without fire and Shuhada Street which is typically empty on a week-

day was the perfect place to rehearse. We noticed about half a block down the street that some Israeli soldiers were pushing, shoving and detaining some Palestinian men at Checkpoint 56 and because ISM volunteers always intervene whenever they witness violence by soldiers against Palestinians, we went down to investigate.

Do you ever find yourself just doing something really weird while in a tense situation? Well, that’s exactly what happened. Because I was nervous about what was happening in front of my eyes, and because I knew I had to do something about it, I announced to everyone present; the soldiers and the Palestinians, that Jonas and I would be doing circus performance. I started swinging my (unlit) fire chains and Jonas started juggling. The soldiers stopped shoving and manhandling the Palestinians and started laughing at us. One of them even started doing backflips. They Palestinians were let go and eventually went on their way. This is an example of a successful ISM action, disrupting violence and freeing detained Palestinians. ISM can’t single-handedly end the occupation but we can improve the lives on individual people.

During my talk I explained the apartheid situation in Hebron: how Palestinian residents live side by side with ideologically extreme Israeli settlers who believe violence is justified against Palestinian residents in order to push them out of Hebron and all of Palestine. Palestinian residents are not allowed to drive cars in Tel Rumeida including ambulances, busses and taxis. Israeli ambulances, busses and taxis do not serve Palestinian residents, therefore, if a Palestinian needs to go to the hospital and cannot walk out of Tel Rumeida into the Hebron city center, she must be carried or wheeled out in a wheelchair. Palestinians in Tel Rumeida have died because they were unable to get to a hospital quickly enough.

After my talk at the University of Alberta, I had dinner at my host’s home. Tariq is an 87-year-old doctor who had just retired two years ago. He came from a well-to-do Indian family and told me how growing up, he lived in a huge house with his parents and brothers and sisters. That changed when he was 15 and was forced to flee India for Pakistan with only a suitcase because it was no longer safe for Muslims in his area. His family lost

Khalid Yaqub



everything and had to start from scratch, as refugees in a new country. He said he never held any hatred for Hindus and always treated all of his medical patients equally, no matter if they were Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Hindu. I could see the sincerity and bewilderment on his face as he was processing in his mind what I had said during my talk: that Israeli ambulances will not serve Palestinians. That made no sense to him. As a survivor of ethnic cleaning, it was even harder for him to understand because he held no hatred or resentment to the group who forced him to flee.

Tariq and several other people at the talks asked me the same question:

“why?”

“Why are they doing this to Palestinians?” My initial response was to jokingly say “that’s beyond my pay grade.” But I did owe them some explanation because as someone from a Jewish background, I have more insight into the psychology of Zionism than others. I still struggle with explaining intergenerational trauma that has been passed down through Jewish families, the meaning behind the phrase “never again,” the Israeli mentality of “everyone hates us and we don’t care.” I can’t even answer the question myself because even after being involved in Palestine activism since 2005, I am still shocked, really and truly shocked at what happened in Gaza last week. I am shocked every time an innocent Palestinian fisherman is killed while fishing off the coast of



Khalid Yaqub

Gaza. I’m shocked every time a Palestinian child is beaten and arrested. There is simply no answer to the question “why” which makes any logical sense.

Katie Miranda is a painter, jewelry and apparel designer, calligrapher, and cartoonist. Her speciality is sterling silver, gemstone and Arabic calligraphy jewelry which is sold on www.katiemiranda.com. She is a contributing cartoonist for *Mondoweiss* and *Middle East Eye* and is the founder of *Palbox*, www.palbox.org; a quarterly subscription box featuring products from Palestine with profits going to the International Solidarity Movement. ■

The Spectacular North America ISM Tour

ISM volunteers are getting into Palestine. The other NGOs are honest about their intentions, and Israel turns them away. We lie about our intentions and we get in. Sorry, but that’s what we have to do.

But our supply of money and volunteers is very low because people are beginning to forget who we are and what we do. So we decided to do a major promotional and recruitment tour in North America. Speaking on the tour have been ISM coordinators Rana Nazzal and Islam Maraqa, and long term volunteers Katie Miranda and Joe Catron. By the time you

read this, the tour will have done 28 different presentations from Halifax, Nova Scotia and Edmonton, Alberta to Claremont, California, Boston, Massachusetts and Birmingham, Alabama.

But we’re broke!

The tour definitely gave us the outreach we wanted, and we are receiving volunteer applications. But it cost tens of thousands of dollars, and we’re currently more than \$10,000 in debt as of this writing. And ISM-NorCal is still committed to sending money to Palestine every month, in fact hoping to triple our

commitment so as to equip the ISM organization there with the staff, facilities and equipment to be more effective than ever.

So please help.

We welcome your contributions, but can you do a local fundraiser for us? Approach a foundation? Rob a bank? (OK, disregard.) We’re going to try to replicate these efforts in other countries that have ISM support groups, but right now ISM-Norcal is the engine that needs to run the first leg. Please help as much as you can. Thank you. ■

Palestinian and International activists plant olive saplings on village land ordered for confiscation by Israel in Burin

By International Solidarity Movement, March 18, 2018

Palestinians and International activists successfully planted dozens of olive saplings in the north of West Bank in the village of Burin near Nablus. Palestinians and Internationals together laid pictures of prominent activists in front of the planted saplings, some of these activists were killed by the Israeli army others are Palestinian political Prisoners.

ACTIVISTS ACKNOWLEDGED AND REMEMBERED ARE:

Bilal Al Najjar—Martyr from Burin
Munther Amira—Political Prisoner
Tom Hurndall—ISM Activist
Khalida Jarrar—Political Prisoner
Ahed Tamimi—Political Prisoner
Rachel Corrie—ISM Activist
Vittorio Arrigoni—ISM Activist

The action was organized by The Popular Struggle Committee but was also attended by Yahia Kadous the head of the municipal council in Burin, activists from Arab Group For The Protection Of Nature, International Solidarity Movement, Stop The Wall and The Enlightenment Forum Tanwer.

The meeting point for today's action was at the secondary school in Burin, the same school that was attacked three days in a row last week by the Israeli army. The Israeli army fired tear gas and stun grenades at school children on these days and many children and teachers suffered from tear gas inhalation. The army also filmed the children with a surveillance drone before entering the school on the last day of attack to issue a land confiscation order for around 26 dunums, which belongs to the school; this was the same area of land where the olive sapling action happened today. It is also worth

ActiveStills.org



mentioning that the Israeli army has seized 1,000 dunums of land belonging to the school in the past. Israel issued the school with a confiscation of land order for the development of a 'security wall.' A wall is often constructed so that more Palestinian land can be taken behind the wall by the Israeli state.

The village of Burin is surrounded by Jewish only settlements and is directly overlooked by the illegal settlement of Yitzar and numerous illegal settler outposts. Historically these outposts are first recognized by the Israeli state and then developed into permanent illegal settlements. The colonialist settlers from Yitzar are notoriously violent and have attacked the Palestinian villagers and property in Burin countless times often with the backing of the Israeli army.

Everyone gathered at the school in Burin at 11 am. A commemorative plaque was gifted to International Solidarity Movement from the Popular Struggle Committee honoring and in remembrance of Rachel Corrie. Rachel Corrie was killed fifteen years ago on the 16th of

and the martyrs of International Solidarity Movement activists Rachel Corrie, Tom Hurdell and Vittorio Arrigoni In order to protect human rights and justice against imperialism, Zionism and colonialism."

Those lost and politically imprisoned will forever be remembered as the struggle against occupation continues until Palestine is free. ■



"Posters of jailed Palestinian resistance fighters are ubiquitous all over Palestine. I drew my own resistance fighter poster using the design of the apartheid wall as jail cell bars because until the walls are torn down, no Palestinians are truly free."

Poster of Ahd Tammy by Katie Miranda

This Land was defended by the blood of the martyrs of the Palestinian people and the martyrs of International Solidarity Movement activists Rachel Corrie, Tom Hurdell and Vittorio Arrigoni In order to protect human rights and justice against imperialism, Zionism and colonialism.

March whilst volunteering with International Solidarity Movement in Rafah Gaza attempting to prevent the demolition of Palestinian homes when an Israeli bulldozer ran her over.

The army gathered at the top of the hill as the community and activists sang and chanted anti-occupation slogans whilst digging and planting olive saplings. Towards the end of the action, settlers also gathered at outposts but surprisingly the activists were not prevented from planting over a dozen olive saplings. Today's action was hugely successful.

Wael Al Faqih who was present at the action today is active in the popular resistance and also a member of The Enlightenment Forum Tanwer.

Wael stated "This Land was defended by the blood of the martyrs of the Palestinian people



ActiveStills.org

NORCAL ISM Support Group

405 Vista Heights Rd.
El Cerrito, CA 94530

www.ism-norcal.org
solidarity@ism-norcal.org
510-236-4250



For more information or to register: www.ism-norcal.org/

Call for Volunteers

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) needs nonviolent resistance volunteers to stand with Palestinians against the theft and colonization of Palestinian land. You will witness and report human rights violations, participate in nonviolent demonstrations, resist home demolitions and land confiscations, accompany children and patients to school and hospital, remove roadblocks, or just share time with Palestinians, listen to them, and help ensure that their voices are heard. When you return to your community you will be better equipped to advocate for the freedom and self-determination of the Palestinian people.



510-236-4250, www.ism-norcal.org or www.palsolidarity.org ■

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.