

CEPPal

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Newsletter

Summer 2001

Houses of Resistance

In February of this year, Jeff Halper and Salim Shawemreh, members of The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), toured across Canada and the United States in an effort to raise awareness about the Palestinian home demolitions being carried out by the Israeli government in the Occupied Territories. Mr. Shawemreh's home had been demolished twice by the Israeli Authorities on account of not having the appropriate building permits; permits, nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. Each time Salim has rebuilt.

CEPPal co-sponsored their talk in Edmonton on February 8th about the on-going injustices facing the Palestinians, such as house demolitions, and the reasons why Barak's "95%" offer was in fact nothing short of an open-air prison sentence for the Palestinians.

On April 4th, after returning from their Canadian tour, the all too familiar scene repeated itself for Salim. For a third time, workers frantically removed the Shawemreh Family's furniture before the Israeli bulldozers arrived. Mr. Halper's efforts to stop the bulldozer were unsuccessful and a local Rabbi was arrested for using his car to block the bulldozer. Eventually, the home was completely demolished - this time the foundations were ripped up and trenches dug under the house to prevent its rebuilding.

Since 1967 some 7000 Palestinian homes have been destroyed on the West Bank, in Gaza and in Arab East Jerusalem, more than 2000 since 1987, leaving 30,000 people homeless, destitute and living in fear and trauma.

The work of ICAHD and other organizations has made a difference: in 1999 "only" about 100 homes were demolished, down from 277 in 1998. Yet 2000 demolition orders remain outstanding in the West Bank, another 2000 for East Jerusalem, altogether threatening some 6000 families.

The motivation for demolishing these Palestinian homes is nothing short of intimidation. Although an elaborate system of planning regulations, laws and procedures gives it a legal facade. The goal is to confine the 3,000,000 residents of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza to small, crowded, impoverished and disconnected enclaves, thus effectively foreclosing any viable Palestinian entity and ensuring Israeli control even if the Palestinians achieve some form of internal "autonomy."

Canada, must denounce: the massive expropriation of Palestinian lands for Israeli settlements, by-pass highways and industrial parks, closures and all forms of economic warfare such as the Israeli government's uprooting of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian fruit and olive trees, exploitation and depletion of Palestinian natural resource, environmental degradation (as Israel has moved its most polluting industries to the West Bank), as well as house demolitions.

CEPPal sends its deepest condolences to the Shawemreh family as well as the 18 other families whose homes and public school were cruelly demolished on April 4, 2001. Peace through justice will prevail.

Media Watch

As the violence continued to escalate in Palestine over the summer, the importance of our support for the Palestinian struggle for freedom continues to grow.

The relative silence resonating from most of the western country's governments, is in essence, support for Israel's violent oppression of the Palestinians. It is our governments that empower the Israeli government to defy international law. As such our struggle to make our governments listen, is as real as the Palestinians in Gaza City and Ramallah.

To this end, CEPPal has mobilized to attempt to attack the stereotypes and misconceptions of Palestinians prominent in the media today and to bring the reality of their plight to Canadians and in turn their government.

CEPPal met with the editorial board of the Edmonton Journal to discuss how a more balanced a more accurate and balanced depiction of the crisis can be portrayed to Canadians. We have established a mediawatch to continue to monitor and local and national news. For this we need your help!

To join CEPPal's media watch group, please send an email to: CEPPal@canada.com with the subject: "mediawatch"



<http://CEPPal.tripod.com>

email: CEPPal@canada.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

1 Year of Resistance 12,522 Days under Occupation

Rally: Saturday October 5, 2001
12 noon, University of Alberta, Administration Building

One year after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising, much blood has been shed, but the fundamental issues of inequality, occupation, house demolitions, water diversions and the right of refugee return have all but been forgotten.

** 19 years have past since the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camp massacres. The man who was found responsible for these massacres is now the prime minister.*

** 3 generations of Palestinians have been born in refugee camps, exile or military occupation.*

** How many more will have to live and die in refugee camps until the world opens its eyes?*

Stay Posted for more details on the rally on the CEPPal events website. (<http://ceppal.tripod.com/CEPPal/id3.html>).

NETWORKING

Supporting other grass-roots organizations

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is a national humanitarian society that provides a wide range of health, social and other humanitarian services for the Palestinian People throughout the Middle East.

PRCS was established on 26 December 1968. In 1969 the Palestinian National Council (PNC) mandated the Society the responsibility for health and social services for Palestinian people inside and outside Palestine. To-date, PRCS continues its activities in Palestine (along side the Ministry of Health and other NGOs), Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and other locations.

Please visit them at: <http://www.palestinercs.org/>

VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in getting more involved with CEPPal; continuously or for a specific upcoming event please contact us!

PAST EVENTS

Right to Return Rally

April 7, 2001
Edmonton, Alberta

On Saturday April 7, CEPPal along with 136 other organizations worldwide, staged a rally and march in support of the Palestinian refugees' human right to return to the land that they fled over 53 years earlier when Israel invaded Palestine. The United Nations has endorsed the return in resolution 193 which states: "...the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date." This UN resolution was passed in 1948, 53 years ago.

Over 150 Edmontonians of varying religions and ethnic backgrounds showed their support at the rally which commenced at E.A. Corbett Hall at the University of Alberta campus and made its way along Whyte Avenue. The march ended at the Strathcona Farmers market;

"How many poets, scholars, and athletes have been born and died in the refugee camps and we will never have known of them?" the crowd of listeners, was asked. The event was covered by CBC and the A-Channel.

Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country." The return of the refugees is their human right.

To view pictures of the Edmonton rally visit our web-site:
ceppal.tripod.com/CEPPal/id7.html
For pictures of the world-wide rallies see:
www.al-awda.org

"When I despair, I remember that all throughout history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they can seem invincible but in the end they always fall. Think of it..always." ~ Mohandas Gandhi

CEPPal is not affiliated with any groups mentioned in this newsletter, but supports either in whole or in part, their efforts to find a lasting peace for those in Israel and Palestine