



our
developing
world

odw voices fall 2013

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P1

Our favorite poster: *The People of Nicaragua say:*

The Most Beautiful Victory Will Be The War We Avoid

And if we keep up the pressure we might AVOID a war on Syria!

Israel/Palestine *an excellent article.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/opinion/sunday/two-state-illusion.html>

When we told friends and strangers alike that we were going to Israel/Palestine to meet with non-violent activists on both sides and some working together **everyone** said, “that’s so important! We never hear about that”. The response was the same when we returned! People are hungry for this kind of hopeful news! And the people we met were inspiring!

Issa Amro Our guide in Hebron

“The Israeli soldiers, police and the settlers tried to stop the work, no way you can stop us, we are always winning by our non-violence resis-



tance.”

Telling about rebuilding demolished buildings jointly with Israelis and internationalists with ICADH founded by Israeli Jeff Halper who also showed us the recent settlements beginning to encroach

in more Palestinian villages and towns. Palestinians have black watertanks on roofs: Settlers don’t need to import water.

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In Al Tuani where Israeli settlers in Hebron came down to burn the crops and poison the water there is an Italian support group, Operation Dove which stands in solidarity with the people and documents and publicizes what happens.



Kefra Al Afra led the women to rebuild the school that had been destroyed by the Israeli military (IDF). The women built early in the morning while men kept watch for the IDF. Men built in the late evening while women kept watch. They now have 11 grades! She also founded the Handcraft Coop which we were pleased to support!



Nabi Saleh, one of the villages we saw tear gas cannisters made in Pennsylvania. One of the men said: "Your tax dollars are killing us"

The trauma especially of the children who were handed down from the second floor to the first and finally to the ground to get away from the tear gas lobbed into the apartment. One two year old wouldn't let her mother touch

her or care for her because she thought she was throwing her away.

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In Ramallah, one of the biggest Palestinian cities, with many Israeli check points, Qalandia being the most infamous which we went through, a family was notified that their son's body remains (having been in a numbers only grave site for 10 years) was being returned to them. They were responsible for the expensive DNA identification to see if it were their son who had been killed. Since no names are attached to these remains often families find they are not their loved one and so no closure is available to them possibly ever.



We also met Sam Bahour , a Palestinian American telcom businessman married to a Palestinian. At first he had a visa (every 3 months he had to leave, never knowing for sure if he'd be allowed back in.) Then they stamped his passport "last entry" so he had to either take his family to the US if he could get visas for them or apply for Palestinian citizenship through Israel's bureaucracy)

He chose the latter and finally got it but he was stripped of his license plate that had allowed him to enter East Jerusalem so he lost all those customers. He'd also applied for air rights to put up cell towers but after three years of waiting got only 2 1/2 rather than the 6 he'd asked for because an Israeli company was given the rest (in Israeli occupied Palestinian Ramallah) Obviously, the authorities

would like him to take his family and leave!



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Graffiti on the the wall..30 feet high with barbed wire on the top and often on the bottom snakes through the cities and villages of East Jerusalem and the West Bank supposedly to separate (that's what the Hebrew word for the wall means, just like apartheid=separateness) the Settlements from the Palestinians. But it also separates Palestinian villages from each other and from their farm lands. The absentee law gives the Israeli state any property unused for 2 years! Roads are for settlers only.



Nomika Zion of Sderot, the Israeli village closest to the border checkpoint to Gaza told us of the trauma never knowing when carpooling children to school whether shelling was going to start. Everyone was traumatized and counselled. But after the cease fire in '09 they realized that they had to develop a relationship with the Gazans.

They formed Other Voice, started Skype conversations and then had three Skype conferences.

Despite knowing she'd be ostracized she wrote a letter which went global: "If we don't treat Palestinians as human beings with dignity as we are we'll lose our own humanity."

Everywhere people said: Please support BDS (Boycott, DInvest and Sanctions). We know how effective this was against apartheid South

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Africa. Israelis and Palestinians alike felt it would be, too.

www.bdsmovement.net **We welcome invitations to share.**

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So many issues and good articles:

[Henry A. Giroux | The Violence of Organized Forgetting](#)

Truthout: As the US continues to progress towards a "social order that is awash in public stupidity and views critical thought as both a liability and a threat," we are slowly losing our ability to defend against the neoliberal war that would divorce power and authority from any sentiment of social morality. **[Read the Article](#)**

SOA graduate involved in criminalization of Indigenous leader Berta Caceres in Honduras

Berta Caceres, the General Coordinator of the Indigenous Lenca organization COPINH, and Tomas Gomez of COPINH's community radio station, were traveling on rural dirt roads to reach the Indigenous Lenca community of Rio Blanco when they were stopped by 15-20 soldiers. The whole area had been militarized just two weeks before in response to the area-wide mobilization against a hydroelectric dam being illegally built in the Indigenous Lenca community of Rio Blanco. The First Battalion of Engineers, commanded by an SOA graduate, occupied the area to protect the interests of the company and enable dam construction to continue in direct violation of ILO Convention 169 and the will of the communities in the area. Our tax dollars continue to support this terror in the coup elected government. It must stop to create the ability for a free and fair election in November. Write the State Dept and elected officials, please!

odw July 3 South Africa/ Botswana Reality Tour is in collaboration with the War Resisters International Conference on Non-Violence in Capetown July 4-8, 2014. First WRI conference on the African continent. A wonderful opportunity to hear from non violent activists from around the world including South Africa and some of our South African friends. Email us of your interest and we'll keep you posted with details.

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“Never doubt that a small group of committed people can’t make a difference. In-

SOFT VENGEANCE

ALBIE SACHS AND THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA



For Immediate release:

We are pleased to announce that *Soft Vengeance: Albie Sachs and the New South Africa* has been accepted to Spotlight on Documentaries at IFP Forum: *Discovering and Supporting Tomorrow’s Great Storytellers Today* September 15 – 19, 2013 New York, NY



“We are excited to be presenting our film *Soft Vengeance* at IFP, which is a world class market for filmmakers and film industry representatives and a great place to launch a film about Albie Sachs’ contribution to human rights and reconciliation.”

-Abby Ginzberg

IFP is the leading gathering of international and U.S. film festival programmers, The Festival Forum is a professional association that advocates for the needs and interests of film festival organizers. The Forum also provides a collaborative platform for members to develop curatorial and operational efficiencies, professional standards and best practices, and leverage their collective interests to the international film community.



Stay tuned for more details this summer on screening times!!!

it’s the only way it happens.” Margaret Mead

deed,

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<http://softvengeancefilm.org/ifp.html>

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Former FISA Judge Says US Must Fix Secret Courts

By Dan Roberts, Guardian UK

Former Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court Judge James Robertson, speaks with reporters after testifying before the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board's workshop regarding Surveillance Programs, Tuesday, July 9, 2013, in

Washington. (photo: Cliff Owen) [go to original](#)

Take action to free Aung Soe! No Political Prisoners must be left behind in Burma's jails!

There are still hundreds of political prisoners in Burma's jails and all the repressive laws that put them in prison still remain in place.

Aung Soe is an activist and a political prisoner who was arrested in April 2013 by the military-backed government in Burma. He is a member of the Rangoon Civil Assistance Network that promotes civil rights in the country. He was arrested for his part organizing protests with farmers to plough the land which had been confiscated by the Burmese government for the Letpadaung copper mine project.

The Letpadaung project is a joint venture between China's Wan Bao Company and the military-owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. The project resulted in land confiscations and environmental

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degradation.



[Share this new graphic that shows just how much profit these tax-dodging companies have stashed overseas, on which they are avoiding U.S. taxes.](#)

Please share *Voices* with others. Tax deductible checks can be sent to address above or on line. Urgently needed for scholarships for 2014 Reality Tour! **SAVE NOVEMBER 23-24 FOR *odw* Int'l Handcraft Fair.**

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