



Chip Hires/Gamma Liaison

Such legal precepts as innocent until proven guilty, the right to trial by a jury of peers, the right to face one's accusers and protection against self-incrimination are nonexistent for Palestinians.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The inhumanity of Israeli prisons

Palestinian inmates suffer cruelty, deprivation

By George Katslaficas

The six-month-long spotlight on the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza has raised many difficult issues for Israel. One of the most troubling is the systematic mistreatment and torture of thousands of Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

Since 1967, more than 300,000 Palestinian men, women and children, roughly one-fifth of the entire population of the West Bank and Gaza, have been imprisoned in Israeli jails. Practically every family has had one of its members imprisoned.

According to Israeli figures released in April, there are now at least 10,600 Palestinians in Israeli custody, making the proportion of their prison

population higher than that of South African blacks.

Many Palestinians have already died in Israeli prisons and detention centers, and many more have been physically debilitated or disfigured, psychologically scarred or driven insane, raped, gassed, beaten, burnt with cigarettes, hooded with excrement-soaked material, bitten by dogs and had electric current driven through their bodies. The Israelis believe they can break the spirit of the resistance through these measures, but the net effect of their brutality has been to create a population that has ISRAEL, Page A24

George Katslaficas is an associate professor at Wentworth Institute of Technology and author of "The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968."

Israel

Continued from Page A21

nothing to lose and is therefore unafraid to fight tanks with slingshots.

Palestinian prisoners are not only subjected to beatings and various forms of torture, they are denied adequate food and medical care. They live under conditions of horrific overcrowding and deficient sanitation, and even minimal standards regarding the treatment of prisoners — adequate food and water, a minimum of space, toilet facilities, family visitation, reading material, proper lighting and ventilation — are either scantily provided or not provided at all. It goes without saying that such American legal precepts as innocent until proven guilty, the right to trial by a jury of peers, the right to face one's accusers and protection against self-incrimination are nonexistent.

According to Joseph Algazy, secretary of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, the prisoners' health is often precarious, not only because of the deficient diet but also as a result of the lack of sun

and ventilation, the overcrowding of the cells and the absence of toilets in many of the jails.

Palestinians arrested in the West Bank and Gaza are in an even worse situation. Residents of the occupied territories can be arrested without charges and jailed without trial for a six-month period of "administrative detention," a jail sentence that can be extended again and again at the whim of the Israeli military.

Ironically, in 1951, the Knesset, Israel's parliament, declared that the laws now in force in the occupied territories "are incompatible with the principles of a democratic state." But the Israeli authorities attempt to justify these measures by charging individuals whose detention is questioned with being "terrorists," members of "illegal organizations" or "opposing the occupation."

Reports of torture, beatings

The worst aspect of prison conditions in Israel is the systematic physical and psychological mistreatment of prisoners. As early as 1968, the International Committee of the Red Cross published a report documenting the techniques of torture in Nablus prison, which took the following forms: burns from cigarettes and

Israel's failure, despite a growing file of evidence of mistreatment and torture, to agree to an independent inquiry into its prison system remains a major obstacle toward establishing humane standards for the treatment of its prisoners.

fires; beatings on the sexual organs delivered with steel rods; dog bites; use of electric shock on the temples, mouth, chest and genitals; shackling and blindfolding of prisoners for days.

The government of Israel denied the truthfulness of the Red Cross report, and,

two years later, the Israelis similarly stonewalled an extensive file of evidence compiled by Amnesty International, which documented the "brutal torture" of Arab prisoners in Israel. In 1975, when a United Nations committee reported that "physical violence" was used "very frequently" against Palestinian prisoners, Israel again denied any wrongdoing and refused to allow an independent investigation of its prisons. Finally, in 1977, the now-famous London Sunday Times report was published, implicating the prison system in Israel in a campaign of torture "organized so methodically that it cannot be dismissed as a handful of 'rogue cops' exceeding orders." Once again, of course, Israel categorically denied the reports of torture, but the Swiss League for Human Rights concurred with the Times report and stated that "torture is commonly and systematically practiced."

Only in 1980, when the American media carried the story of two Palestinians who were killed in Israeli prisons, were some reforms introduced, reforms that also coincided with the Camp David peace accords. These reforms appear to have limited the number of cases of electric-shock torture, although other forms of torture were substituted.

As a new generation grew up under occupation, reports of torture began to focus on Al Fara'a and Ansar 2, detention centers where the inmates are primarily teen-agers. In March 1984, the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights reported that detainees in Al Fara'a were subject to "torture, brutality and inhuman conditions," conditions which were designed to "break the detainees." A report by the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists also found that Fara'a was "not a normal prison but an intimidation center," a fact verified by affidavits from 20 youths who claimed they were severely beaten, forced to sleep on urine-drenched floors, sexually molested or otherwise mistreated.

The latest report of torture was released in November 1987, when the Landau Commission, an official panel of the Israeli government, verified the fact that for almost two decades, the Shin Bet, the Israeli equivalent of the FBI, had routinely used "physical pressure" during interrogations and consistently lied in court about how "confessions" had been obtained. Although the Landau report documented systematic perjury and brutal interrogation methods, it also recommended that "no criminal action be taken or be allowed against the Shin Bet operatives" because of "the necessity of preventing rampant terrorism."

Reports of prisoners gassed

In order to appreciate further the degree to which the state of Israel has become that which it should most obviously detest, one more example is needed: the use of gas on prisoners. As early as 1977,



Chip Hires/Gamma Liaison

An Israeli prison in Nablus.

the London Times documented this technique of torture, but more recent reports indicate that the use of gas, or "Ya'akobson" as it is called, probably after its inventor, is becoming more common. In January 1984, the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights published a document in which Baruch Meiri, correspondent for Ma'ariv, interviewed a prison guard:

"Those who are outside find it difficult to believe that such a thing could happen here, in a country in which there are so many people who have suffered or lost their families in gas chambers in Europe," the guard was quoted as saying. "... It is true that gas is used in prisons. But as far as I have seen, it is only used in cases of prisoners' riots or gang fights."

The tragedy that has befallen the people of Palestine finds no more cruel chapter than in the treatment of those unfortunate enough to have been arrested by Israel. Given the growing file of evidence of mistreatment and torture in Israeli prisons, it would appear that United States human-rights criteria for aid, criteria that legally apply to all countries receiving taxpayers' money, have not been enforced with regard to Israel. This is unfortunate, not only for the Palestinians in Israeli jails, but also for the citizens of the United States, whose tax dollars help finance these jails. Israel's failure to agree to an independent inquiry into its prison system remains a major obstacle toward establishing humane standards for the treatment of its prisoners only as long as the United States allows the current situation to continue.



Israeli soldiers with a suspected Palestinian terrorist.

Randy Bellnaky/Gamma Liaison

and can be metered out.

the process by which and protected, especially ing services may be in- inappropriate goods are of Congress, eager to pro- tractors in their constitu- ves further pollute the pro- lther on their own initia- of others.

undoubtedly spawn more promptly or with the in- administration and a new y. The search for blame ocedure, but truly effective inate the extent to which ads the government into services that it may not ss than full value for tax

ie main endorse a strong ry establishment, as their nt Reagan makes abun- support, however, does not wasting funds on projects are the principal objective little output. Contracts of g more than a much high- han the sort Reagan ran ily in 1980. They fully de-

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essed by the EPA report - and water ratepayers will value of the project. ends? Have pollution-con- decreased the dangers, or fect?

ources Authority recently re- decline in the level of PCBs. at PCB contamination is be necessary to consider t spots under the federal

mers to know whether the are eating is safe? are complete mystery. Fish and rry, and it is reasonable to caught eight to 10 miles Quincy Bay from which will be as equally con-

d shellfish be tested in the t, poultry and other foods

perhaps, but considering percentage of fish and shell- ultry is harvested directly esting program is not like- t may, however, be possi- of commercial landings. ng fish and shellfish from llar inshore waters should ut the full implications of



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

6-22-88

Israel's record on the rights of its prisoners

Publishing misleading information could be either an editor's carelessness or an attempt at deliberate disinformation on the part of the writer. The Globe apparently did both when it published the June 5 article by George Katsiaficas "Inhumanity of Israeli prisons." The Globe's readiness to use baseless allegations, exaggerations and fabrications is at best unfortunate.

Some of the crude falsehoods in what the writer calls "the worst aspects of prison conditions" are supposedly based on a 1968 International Red Cross report; however, that report contains no reference to any of the outrageous allegations attributed to it by the writer. Instead, those allegations are quoted, with no attribution, from a brochure published in 1969 by Jordan and some other members of the Arab League.

During its 1969 convention in Istanbul, the International Committee of the Red Cross banned distribution of that brochure because it was based on misinformation and propaganda.

Especially preposterous is the attempt to confuse the use of tear gas, which is common practice worldwide in prison-riot control, with the use of poisonous gas by the Nazis against the Jews.

Numbers, "facts" and conclusions are drawn in the rest of the article in the same faulty, tendentious manner. In fact, Israel has made a unique agreement with the ICRC to allow the monitoring of conditions of detainment. Under the terms of this agreement, delegates from the ICRC are permitted to meet with security detainees on a regular basis. Doctors approved by the ICRC are permitted to examine detainees, who may complain of improper treatment. Complaints made to the ICRC are investigated by the Israeli authorities.

Far from the exaggerated figures quoted by the Globe article, fewer than 5,800 security detainees are in any form of imprisonment in Israel today. Both the military administration and the prison authorities are committed to granting detainees their full rights according to the regulations: food, water, sanitary facilities, medical treatment and legal aid.

Subject to proper behavior, detainees are entitled to regular family visits, gifts, studies, music, television, books and newspapers. There is a constant effort to avoid violence between prisoners, by providing separate rooms to those who complain of threats by their fellow inmates.

The rights granted to detainees are subject to regular inspection by the Israel state controller. International Red Cross teams and representatives of the Israel Human Rights Association. Any allegation is investigated thoroughly. Proper measures are taken whenever a case of mistreatment of a prisoner is proven.

It should be kept in mind that for some of the detainees, among them convicted terrorists, lying comes easily. False complaints and misinformation about prison conditions serve both personal and political goals.

A subtitle of the article deals with "Israeli refusal to agree to an independent inquiry into the prison system." In fact, more international inquiry missions visited Israeli prisons than the prisons in all Arab countries (including Syria, South Yemen and Iran).

As a free, open democracy, Israel is highly exposed to world media coverage. This openness should not be exploited by those seeking a platform to defame Israel.

ITZHAK OREN
Consul of Israel

Boston

Why US corporations stay away from cities

When Digital Equipment Company announced recently that it

its Roxbury manufacturing plant.

Heartless rule

As an individual personal philosophy has been to follow the nevertheless feel that ception should have made in the case of Stacy, forced by the Housing Authority to her home of 25 years than give up her dog.

A double cruelty involved for both this 7-year-old lady and her 1-year-old dog, Goodbo died in the sweltering the move into a new denance was taking place

I had a dog many years ago and know that a strong feeling can exist between this wonderful and its owner. As an English teacher, I can much literature where mals were important story line and to the v life. An example is Eli Barrett Browning, who Flush, was a source of joy and comfort to the poet.

When I directed a play with a dog in the was further convinced dogs are very special and possess human qualities. I Horace responded to lions better than did the cast members.

Many exceptions are concerning business and political matters. Could one have been made when I with a matter of the Men and women - and and woman's best friend deserve better treatment

ROBERT S. SILVER
Malden

Convert empty school into offices for the

It does not make sense ton to pay \$3.2 million in city agencies when one-q Boston's schools are vacant. Some people in the

years his soldiers
ese soil, working
s to impose a Pax
make Lebanon a
riating its strate-
otential, yet main-
se national sover-

one after another.
ebanon: Christian
other Sunni Mos-
were too independ-
icans, the Israelis
in dangers to his
backed Shiite mili-
d its temporary al-
to Arafat.

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prevent his Amal
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Arafat's men in the
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trial for proposing
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North Attleborough.
by the federal Envi-
ncy.

stration now has an
e balance and stand-
al principles it pro-
en development has
into something that
hances, the public's
asures. The adminis-

on Nicaragua has been stymied
by the Arias peace process, the
Reagan administration has
chosen a petty revenge: stop-
ping the Veterans' Peace Con-
voy on its way to deliver hu-
manitarian aid to the people -
particularly the children - who
have suffered most from the
war.

The convoy is carrying "oats
for peace," medical supplies,
medical equipment and clothes.
Among the vehicles is an an-
cient but still functional orange
school bus, intended by the
Newton Sister City Program for
the children of San Juan del
Sur.

All across the country, the
convoy has been greeted with
enthusiastic rallies - as the
American people express their
friendship for the beleaguered
people of Nicaragua and their

Using the Customs Service
as its tool, the administration
first agreed to let the convoy
pass without restrictions; five
hours later it reversed its deci-
sion. Convoy members have
been in Washington lobbying
Congress for an end to the em-
bargo.

Unwilling to let the needy
children of Nicaragua suffer
from the teasing behavior of the
Reagan administration, mem-
bers of the convoy have shipped
the oats, medical supplies and
clothing directly, but the vehi-
cles, so essential to schools and
hospitals and villages without
public transportation, still can-
not pass.

DAVID and MARGARET
GULLETTE
Newton Sister City Program
Newton

June 29, 1988

Allegations that shocked for their falsehood

The June 5 Focus article "The
inhumanity of Israeli prisons," by
George Katsiaficas, was nothing
more than a thinly veiled attempt
to discredit Israel by an author
with pronounced anti-Zionist be-
liefs. Both the article - replete
with falsehoods and malicious in-
nuendo - and the author himself
- a college professor and self-
styled expert on the "New Left" -
need to be unmasked. The Globe's
decision to publish the article gave
Katsiaficas's statements a level of
credibility they do not deserve.

Katsiaficas's self-proclaimed
"expose" sought to condemn Is-
rael's treatment of Palestinians dur-
ing the uprising of the past six
months. In the article's first pa-
graph, the author alleged that
there has been "systematic mis-
treatment and torture of thou-
sands of Palestinians in Israeli
prisons." Katsiaficas then went
on to add that this "torture" has
included a number of barbaric
acts, including the "gassing" and
"disfigur[ing]" of prisoners in Is-
raeli custody.

The author's allegations are
shocking, not for their accuracy,
but for their falsehood. Katsiafi-
cas claimed no personal experi-
ence nor displayed any special ex-
pertise supporting the reporter's
posture he took in the article. In-
stead, he pointed to a 1968 Inter-
national Committee of the Red
Cross report, which, according to
Katsiaficas, documents the tortu-
re of Israeli prisoners. In fact,

the report makes no such find-
ings.

Katsiaficas's gross exaggera-
tions and misleading statements
appear designed more to promote
his own anti-Zionist philosophy
than to advance the cause of the
Palestinians. This is not surpris-
ing for a man who proclaimed
that "Henry Kissinger [was] one of
the great mass murderers of histo-
ry" and that "Robert Kennedy
was killed because of his support
for Israel."

These and other equally bi-
zarre views are found in his book,
"The Imagination of the New Left:
A Global Analysis of 1968," cited
in the credits to the Globe article.

Israel's handling of Palestinian
rioting on the West Bank and in
Gaza has aroused controversy
both inside Israel and in the US.
Such disagreements over impor-
tant policy decisions deserve pub-
lic discussion; however, the promi-
nence given to Katsiaficas's base-
less accusations devalues respon-
sible commentary.

The article is a crude attempt
to discredit Israel through the use
of "New Left" dogma masquerad-
ing as academic commentary. It
does nothing to advance a rea-
soned debate addressing impor-
tant issues confronting both Pal-
estinians and Israelis.

MICHAEL N. SHEETZ
Civil Rights Committee
Anti-Defamation League
of B'nai B'rith
Boston

is not elitist is stupid. Of course
it's elitist, and that's why it main-
tains its reputation. As for Brook-
line's tradition of tolerance, it is
elitists superficially because people
here are more likely to align them-
selves on a monetary basis rather
than an ethnic or religious one.

Our "tradition of tolerance"
translates into "It's every person
for himself or herself." This town
is fragmented by internecine
squabbles between the various
precincts, some of which are domi-
nated by cliques motivated more
by power-wielding than public
service.

For sure, George Bush does not
"owe Brookline an apology."

ALEXANDRA MARK
Brookline

ESL course to be cut

I've heard that the day
program of English as a Second
Language at North Shore Commu-
nity College will be cut 50 percent.
This is terrible news for my fam-
ily. My parents and I came to the
US from Russia two months ago.
My parents don't know English at
all.

We hoped that we could study
English at the college, but after
two months of waiting we heard
the bad news. My parents are en-
gineers, but obviously they cannot
get a job without knowing Eng-
lish.

I have heard some politicians
complain about too many people
being on welfare. But at the same
time the government increases
welfare. Ultimately, it is more ex-
pensive to cut the money for ESL
to spend more money for welfare
and to lose well-educated special
ists.

MICHAEL FELDMAN
Lynn



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Boston, Mass. 02107
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Charges irrelevant to issue of torture in Israel

The responses of Itzhak Oren, the Israeli consul in Boston, and Michael Sheetz of the Anti-Defamation League to my Globe article are verification of Israel's refusal to be truthful about its prisons or to tolerate independent scrutiny of its treatment of inmates.

Both the consul and Sheetz assert that the 1968 International Committee of the Red Cross report contains no reference to torture in Nablus prison. After extended telephone conversations with the Israeli consulate, it became apparent that Oren and Sheetz were referring to the 1968 annual report of the ICRC.

In my June 5 article, I wrote that "As early as 1968, the International Committee of the Red Cross published a report documenting the techniques of torture in Nablus prison . . ." This reference was to the Feb. 26, 1968, ICRC report on Nablus, which documented the specific forms of torture perpetrated on Palestinian prisoners.

My word-for-word source can be found at the Boston Public Library, specifically United Nations Document A/8089, 25th Session, p. 43. As the consul is well aware, the ICRC keeps its reports of torture confidential in order to protect prisoners from reprisals. The ICRC was concerned with the issue of confidentiality, not the truthfulness of the report, as the consul maintained. In fact, the UN report, published in 1971, states clearly that "[n]one of the reports quoted in this publication have been refuted."

Given the clear documentation of torture in Israel, one wonders if the consul will continue to claim that these reports have been refuted. Given his track record, the consul will probably claim that my article has been refuted.

Oren seems to believe that stirring up controversy without merit is the same thing as refuting facts. Nowhere in his statement, however, does the consul deny that more than 300,000 Palestinians have been imprisoned since 1967 or the existence of torture in Israel; nor could he deny it since the Israeli government's own Landau Commission last year verified reports which the Israelis had long branded as untrue.

The consul states that "fewer than 5,800 security detainees are in any form of imprisonment in Israel today." My figure of 10,600 was released by Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's minister of defense, on April 28, 1988.

The consul asserts that "delegates from the ICRC are permitted to meet with security detainees on a regular basis." The 1983 Annual Report of the ICRC (p. 67), however, states that the ICRC was notified by the authorities of only 16.6 percent of the detainees un-

der interrogation in the West Bank.

The consul informs us that the Israeli authorities grant "detainees their full rights according to the regulations." He neglects to mention what the regulations are. In fact, Israel continues to deny that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 applies to its prisoners. The consul's assertion that prisoners are treated humanely is absurd.

To name just one example, at Ansar prison camp in the Negev desert, more than 2,000 prisoners are held in tents in an area where the temperature is often around 120 degrees. According to The New York Times, these prisoners complain of inadequate water and are allowed "no personal possessions - not even a book, a radio or a wristwatch."

In his letter, Sheetz asserts that my "self-proclaimed 'expose' sought to condemn Israel's treatment of Palestinians during the uprising of the last six months." This is untrue. I document torture for 20 years, not six months; my article did not claim to be an expose, since it used material published by the US Senate, the ICRC, the UN, the Swiss League for Human Rights, Amnesty International, the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights and numerous Israeli newspapers.

Sheetz lifts statements out of context from my book and attacks me personally. Even if his charges had any merit, they are irrelevant to the issue of torture in Israel. When an "anti-defamation" league writes such a defamatory letter, what does it say about its credibility?

The consul asserts that "for some of the detainees, among them convicted terrorists, lying comes easily." This is the most blatant example of the anti-Arab prejudice that underlies the consul's entire analysis.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 1988

The Boston Globe