



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER IN SYRIA'S TROUBLE

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BUILDING RESISTANCE

AS SQUATTERS PREPARE TO OPPOSE NEW SQUATTING LAW...

The date the new anti-squatting law comes into force in English and Welsh law has been set for September 1st. The Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS) have issued a warning and a call to arms: "We are going to need to be more organised and look after each other better. We will need legal back-up available on the street, and people will need help moving quickly and storing their possessions. We need networks, linked up with others resisting evictions and attacks on housing rights."

The Eviction Resistance Network (ER) have emerged to counter to the new law and new enforcement techniques. They have already mobilised big numbers to resist several evictions, and their phonenumber is open 24/7.

As SQUASH and ASS are attempting to demystify the new law in terms of who'll be affected, and how best to protect yourself (see the links below), there have been signs that the police might be trying to evict people already in situ in long-term squats come the law change. ER have reported that sections of the new law have been posted on the doors of residential squats in East London by over-eager cops. Whether this is a pre-emptive eviction notice, or just plain intimidation, is hard to tell. New laws are not legally supposed to be applied retrospectively.

NO COMMERCIALS

As SchNEWS has previously reported, illegal evictions have been occurring in Brighton as property owners and authorities get ahead of themselves. Similar events are reportedly happening in Bristol, where residential squats are being thrown out before the law change, along with non-residential property - such as the former building society premises that was illegally attacked by Avon and Somerset police on August 15th.

Gung-ho policing means that the legal stuff is worth getting to grips with, as you'll need the info on why your place is legal to shout at incoming police. The ambiguity of the law (e.g. residential squatting is illegal, non-residential legal) suggests that application of the law will be muddled, and cops

are easily confused. Also worthwhile reading is the Code of Practice of High Court Enforcement Officers, which, amongst other stipulations, states they must act in a "professional, calm and dignified manner... with discretion and fairness" and not allow debtors to threaten violence.

Squatters rights activists are gearing up in other ways. ASS are holding a meeting on Monday 27th of August. Squattastic are also getting together around the second week of September (date TBC) to discuss and organise. Brighton locals SNOB have called for an action to take place at 2pm, October 13th at Victoria Square Gardens, Brighton.

Solidarity is the name of the game.

There's also around 420,000 empty commercial properties in the country. Make of that what you will.

HOME SWEAT HOME

The squatting law is only the start of it. This summer we've also witnessed exposes on dodgy landlords and 'beds in sheds', rapidly increasing rents, government plans to lift rules on affordable housing in new build developments - while 1.8 million families wallow on affordable housing waiting lists, housing benefit caps forcing low-income workers out their homes, Olympic gentrification of London boroughs, a 25% per cent increase in homelessness ...

This year has seen the quagmire of the housing crisis cruelly exacerbated by Tory 'screw the poor' thinking from all directions. Not surprising from ministers more concerned with the profits of their development and financier chums than kids in cramped and mouldy high rises - property firms donated a total of over £3.3 million to the Conservatives in the three years leading up to last autumn.

However the gravity of the situation has led to a boom in grassroots organising against evictions and wider housing rights issues from those within the rental sector. Active groups around the country are fighting for better housing and tenancy rights with mutual aid, addressing individual and community struggles against the backdrop of the need for radical change in the housing

market. Together, they could constitute the embryo of a wider grassroots housing rights movement that the country sorely needs.

New group Housingforthe99 have the stated aim of campaigning against rip-off rents and for secure and affordable tenancies. After demonstrating against the Olympics' bogus claims that affordable housing would be one of the Games' legacies, the group also targeted the National Landlords Association - who represent over a million landlords, lobbying against regulation and advocating insecure tenancies. A Solved action at the end of July saw dodgy letting agents Victorstone forced to reimburse three renters from Bethnal Green over £1200 that they'd tried to steal even though the deal, and the house, fell through. Local groups include Haringey Solidarity Group, Hackney Housing Group and Bristol Housing Action Movement.

* Advice for squats vs. the new law: ASS homepage: <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

* Eviction Resistance: <http://evictionresistance.blogspot.co.uk/>

* For an in-depth overview of the housing crisis, see this offering by the anarcho-academics at Corporate Watch <http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=4178>

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being lippy with a beard...

A hunt sab was arrested on Thursday at a Surrey Union pre-season meet. Brighton sabs were waiting by the kennels when hunt members forced them to move using the "ger 'orf moi land" private property clause. The sabs had moved to the public footpath when the local cops showed up and asked them to remove face coverings.

Although most of the sabs were masked up, our hero's facial features were covered only by his beard. He told police "it's not a face covering, it's my beard and it's the only one I've got." The sab went on to question how private a public footpath is these days, until the cops got tired of having their authority questioned and nicked him under a more than slightly dubious use of section 50 of PACE.

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

Copyleft
Published in Brighton since 1994

IT'LL BE ALAWITE ON THE NIGHT?

In the year and a half since the immolation of a Tunisian street vendor sparked off a region-wide revolution, the Arab Spring has gone from a wildly utopian, broadly secular hope in Egypt's Tahrir square, through to a mess of Byzantine politics and bloody armed uprisings and foreign interventions. Despite the bloodshed in Yemen, Bahrian and Libya, the most lethal chapter in the history of the Arab Spring is undoubtedly the Syrian Uprising.

A series of popular mass demonstrations brought forward horrendous repression by the Ba'athist security forces, who saw Western spies, Al Qaeda Operatives and Mossad agents behind every protest. By responding with massive brutality, the Syrian state helped make its own paranoid prophesies come true - today CIA agents and Saudi funded Salafi jihadists work side by side to overthrow the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Ba'ath Party has form when it comes to massive repression. The infamous Hama Massacre cemented former leader Hafez al Assad's reputation for brutality. To quell a Muslim Brotherhood-inspired revolt, in 1982 his forces massacred between ten and twenty thousand people in the city of Hama, where the revolt was strongest. Hafez al Assad, current president Bashar's late father, was said to be particularly pleased that not a single photo of the mass killings and near destruction of much of the city made it out to the press. Such is the ruthless nature of the Syrian Ba'ath party.

BLOOD BA'ATH

But how things have changed since the '80s. Not only do we now live in the age of camera phones and Youtube, but media in the Arab world has been revolutionised by the rise of Al Jazeera - the Doha-based news outlet funded by Qatar's king, Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa al Thani. Founded in 1996, Al Jazeera has been a breath of fresh air into an Arab media world previously dominated by near-identical state propaganda channels that specialised in dictators' puff pieces. Post 9-11, Al Jazeera's coverage of the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq made Al Jazeera the last word in speaking truth to power. When CNN and the BBC were busy showing planes taking off and landing, Al Jazeera showed the devastation they wrought on the cities they bombed. Despite US protestations, it was not an accident that their offices in both Kabul and Baghdad were blown up by US missiles.

And so, in early 2011, when the Arab Spring erupted, Al Jazeera had the credibility and the experience to cover the twin revolutions of Tunisia and Egypt better than any other major news channel. But despite an officially hands-off policy, Al Jazeera has never been independent of the Qatari royal family. Al Jazeera doesn't just support Qatari

foreign policy, Al Jazeera is Qatar's foreign policy. For a long time Qatar was akin to a Middle-Eastern Switzerland- friendly with Iran, yet host to a major US base, part of the Saudi-dominated Gulf Cooperation Council but hosted Taliban negotiations, and even held some contact with Israel.

With a population of less than two million (of whom some 80% are foreign guestworkers) and with perhaps one-third of the world's readily available natural gas, they've become very, very rich, and have used their wealth to turn Doha into a world financial hub.

Much like Saudi Arabia, the Qatari monarchy claims legitimacy through its support of Islam and traditional Arab values (not that those traditions go back very far - Wahabist puritans did a thorough job of destroying most evidence of Arabia's religious plurality in the 19th century). However, unlike Saudi Arabia, Qatar is very supportive of the international group of modernising Islamists known as the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan in Arabic). The Saudis hate and fear the Brotherhood as the only force with a reasonable chance of toppling their monarchy. Yet Qatar has embraced the Brotherhood, offering money, training and, crucially, airtime to Brotherhood movements and supporters around the world. Qatar's own Muslim Brotherhood dissolved itself in 1999, arguing that the Qatari state had fulfilled its obligations. Many now have senior positions in Qatar's government.

QATAR IN THROAT

But with the Arab Spring and the Libyan conflict, Qatar's Al Thani monarchy has turned its back on its former policy of neutrality, and has used the uprisings as a chance to try and gain greater power through a combination of military force and big stick diplomacy. Al Jazeera gave the oxygen of publicity to the uprising that toppled Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, with the (successful) gamble that the post-Mubarak government would be dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, and thus ideologically and politically allied to Qatar. The most visible shift of Al Jazeera from pseudo-independent news organisation to full-blown Qatari propaganda machine was the firing of longtime AJ chief, Palestinian Wadah Khanfar in late 2011 - his replacement was Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim Al Thani, a member of the Qatari royal family.

It was highly unlikely that Gaddafi's regime, the politically repressive yet financially generous Libyan Arab Socialist Jamahiriyyah would have fallen without military intervention. So the Qatari leadership squandered Al Jazeera's credibility on spreading the stories of rape and mass murder that helped green-light NATO's

military intervention. Qatari officers and weapons spearheaded the rebels' military on the ground, whilst the Qatari state used major oil deals to financially underwrite the rebels' Benghazi leadership.

After an 'easy' victory in Libya, Qatar and its Islamist allies tried to pull off the same trick again against the Syrian Arab Republic. The second time would not prove quite so straightforward. Two major obstacles prevent Syria from becoming a Libyan rerun. On the international scene, Chinese and Russian intransigence has definitively blocked any UN Security Council resolutions authorising military force. Both these independent powers feel justifiably tricked into supporting a limited 'protection of civilians' mandate, one that has before become immediately a legal figleaf for regime change. And just as importantly, the Syrian Ba'ath party has proved to be a much harder beast than the former Libyan dictatorship.

ASSAD STORY

Hafez al Assad (current leader Bashar al Assad's father) virtually destroyed the Muslim Brotherhood's Syrian chapter in the 1980s. Even though Bashar al Assad has been a little more liberal, tolerating mild criticism and some cultural / religious diversity, membership of the Muslim Brotherhood warranted the death penalty. Like father, like son.

Qatar's former neutrality has been replaced with membership of an 'Axis of Bullies' - along with the neo-imperial powers of the USA, Great Britain, Turkey and Saudi Arabia - whose interests have all converged on destroying the Syrian Republic. Most of them share an interest in taking down Iran's most important ally, but for the Islamic states (i.e. Turkey and the Gulf monarchies) the replacement of an apostate regime for a Sunni Islamist one is a prize worth killing for in and of itself. Commentators who claim intimate knowledge of Qatari relations have said that the formerly close Qatari-Syrian relationship soured when Bashar Al Assad refused to consider bringing in the Muslim Brotherhood into the Syrian political system. Ever since then Qatar has sided with the anti-Syrian alliance.

But this regional great game is being played with grave risks. Syria is a complex mosaic of faiths, religions and cultures with origins that go back millennia. Just as happened in Iraq and Lebanon, sectarian conflict could tear the country apart. To give just a flavour of Syria's diversity: not only are there villages in Syria that speak Aramaic (the language of Jesus) but there others tucked away where Satan (Shaitan) is worshipped - just as in pre-biblical times when Jehovah was just one god in the pantheon. Yet some 70% of the population is Sunni,

AS SCHNEWS TAKES AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE SYRIAN CONFLICT

and the Syrian Ba'ath party is dominated by people from the minority Alawite sect. Sunni grievances at being ruled by a minority faith has become the backbone of the resistance to the Syrian state. The more the conflict has been militarised with Saudi/Turkish/Qatari money, weapons and fighters, the more that the sectarian Sunni tendencies of the uprising have come to dominate. And within that the Sunni bloc, the most extreme Islamist groups are becoming ever more prominent. The same groups of jihadist fighters that were previously killing Shi'ite civilians and American troops alike in Iraq have now turned their suicide vests on Syria. And not only on the Ba'ath regime but also the minority faiths that are perceived as Ba'ath sympathisers.

Syria's Christian, Alawite, Palestinian, Jewish (Damascus has a sizeable Jewish population - they tend to keep their heads very firmly down), Kurdish and Druze groups all fear repression from the Ba'ath party. But more than that they fear potential genocide and ethnic cleansing, Iraq style, from an empowered religious majority forcing its hegemony on Syria's minorities.

KEEPING THE FAITHS

Knowing this full well, the Ba'ath party have perfected the divide and rule game that the French attempted during the colonial period; the Baathists have been very effective at giving rights and preferences to minority groups as a counterweight to a potential Sunni bloc forming. Judging from the massacres and extrajudicial killings that have been committed in the rebel areas, Syrian minorities' fears are very real. One of the prime movers in the Syrian uprising, Sunni cleric Adnan al-Arour, said of the Alawites that Sunnis "shall mince them in meat grinders and feed their flesh to the dogs."

The downfall of the Syrian regime has been predicted for over a year now. But it is possible that the game is changing. The battle of Aleppo (possibly the world's oldest city) has, for the moment at least, reached a deadly parity of violence. Government forces have arrested the military push by the Free Syrian Army that looked like it would take Syria's second city and then march on to Damascus, but have so far failed to advance into the key rebel zones. Despite desertions, the Ba'ath Party has retained the loyalty of the Syrian military, and the overwhelming power of regime tanks and warplanes that have inflicted terrible casualties on rebels and civilians alike. The battle has raged in country's the population centres, and, in the typical fashion of 20th/21st century warfare, has made little or no distinction between combatant and civilian.

Syria has long been seen as the fulcrum of the wider Arab world around which everything else hinges.

Chaos in Syria was never going to stay in Syria for very long. During the early phase of the rebellion, organised Kurdish groups generally stayed out of the conflict. As the rebellion turned into a full-scale military conflict, Kurdish groups (specifically the PKK-affiliated Syrian Kurdish Democratic Party and the Kurdish National Council) declared that they had broken away from Ba'ath authority. What at first glance seemed to be a siding with the rebellion, has turned out to be a much more Machiavellian move.

WHAT'S A KURD?

With the tacit agreement of Bashar al Assad, the Kurds declared an autonomous Kurdish region, not unlike Iraqi Kurdistan. In one move Assad had been able to score a double victory - firstly, he freed up his armed forces in the Kurdish areas to throw at the Free Syrian Army, pushing the battles around Damascus and Aleppo in the government's favour. But, perhaps more importantly, this move has also thrown Turkey's own plans into complete disarray. PKK (Kurdish Worker's Party) allies now control a swathe of territory on the Turkish state's Kurdish populated border, emboldening PKK forces in their armed quest for autonomy in the Kurdish third of Turkey. The Turkish military now has to divide its time between its proxy war in Syria and its efforts on quelling its own insurgency, forcing it to attack allies of its allies in the process. It seems that Bashar al Assad is a devious political schemer after all, and not just a hapless optometrist with a bizarre career twist.

If Turkish foreign policy was for a short, sharp rebellion and a new friendly government they have sorely miscalculated. Syria used to cooperate with Turkey on its 'Kurdish problem'. Now Turkey have handed their mortal enemies the PKK the greatest gift that an insurgency can have - an ally across the border, an area to which they can escape, re-arm and plan, out of sight of Turkish warplanes.

There are signs the uprising's international supporters may be backing away ever so slightly from the rebellion. In a symbolic gesture at the recent Organisation of the Islamic Conference meeting, regional adversaries Ahmadinejad and Abdullah (Iran's president and Saudi Arabia's king respectively) sat side by side, even as the toothless body voted to expel Syria. The message, ambiguous as it is, may be that even as the region's powers meddle in Syria, they may not be willing to risk turning Syria's conflict into a full-scale regional war. However, as recent events in the Middle East have proven, the wishes of authoritarian leaders are not guaranteed to translate into facts on the ground. Reality has a way of undoing even the best laid plans. head



SMASHEDO: STICKY BUSINESS

Two anti-militarist activists were found guilty of aggravated trespass at Brighton Magistrates Court on Thursday(23rd).

In the early hours of April the 27th the two intrepid campaigners, Gavin Pidwell and Jessica Nero, glued themselves to the gates of Mordor (or at least Brighton's secondrate answer to domain of the Evil Eye- the EDO MBM arms factory) - in protest over the sale of components used in military warfare in Afghanistan and Israel. The sale items in question are bomb rack connectors, known in the trade as umbilical cables-Field Replaceable Connector Systems (FRCS) to be precise. They are used by the US and Israeli militaries.

Paul Hills, the managing director of EDO MBM, was called in court to give evidence for the prosecution case. During the three hour cross-examination he confirmed a range of arms contracts the death dealers are involved in whilst claiming the firm is not breaking UK law. Hills confirmed that EDO MBM did have a contract to supply FRCS cables to Lockheed Martin for the F-35 fighter aircraft. He claimed that, although that the F-35 will be supplied to Israel, EDO MBM cables won't be on the Israeli F-35s. The defendant's Barrister Victoria Kerly asked him, "You cannot be certain that your product which ends up on planes for the American air force does not enable the use of cluster bombs, can you?" He replied: "I can't stop somebody doing something wilfully with our product without our knowledge."

The magistrates court found the two defendants guilty and handed them a sentence of a 24 month conditional discharge and a £200 fine each. Although disappointed with the verdict, the defendants told SchNEWS they're pleased with the information that came to light during the trial and hope it will eventually lead to EDO MBM and Paul Hill being charged.

The sticky pair plan to appeal.

PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

ATOS DISABILITY ASSESSMENTS : ON A PARA TRIP

Who could possibly take a pop at the Paralympics – you'd surely be lambasted from all sides for daring to attack the most worthy, hyped, affirmative national-feelgood festival of sport of all time. Well there's one group of people who don't have to tread the PC tightrope: the disabled. And thousands did just that when they turned out all over the country this week to take part in a week of actions again Atos, one of the main sponsors of the games.

Disabled campaigners weren't directing their anger at athletes nor at the games in general – wheelchairs rolled in Plymouth, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Bournemouth, Northampton, Liverpool, Swansea, Lancaster, Southampton, Edinburgh, Derby, Stroud, Leeds, Bristol, Newcastle, Hull, Reading, Chatham and Exeter as people turned out to take part in 'the Atos Games', a week of actions organised by the Disabled People Against Cuts protest group.

Hundreds turned out in central London to picket Atos' HQ, whilst hundreds more targeted the Cardiff offices, holding a die-in outside the building.

The French-owned company are busy profiting from £100m-a-year government contracts to assess benefit claimants and find huge numbers of them 'fit for work'. They have undertaken this work with gusto, with their default computer-decided position being to boot hundreds of thousands off their benefits, seemingly almost at random, and then see how many of them fight it through the stressful appeals process. Their callous calculation is that the attrition rate of people who don't contest it or don't have enough court-pleas-

ing evidence to win the appeal (more than 40% of claimants eventually have won) will get them to meet their presumably pre-determined minimum percentage of benefit-slashing needed to meet George Osborne's targets for raising cash from the poor to pay for all that bailing out of the rich.

But this profitable corporate strategy has been screwing with the lives of thousands of poor and vulnerable people across the country. People like Philip Bayes, a former council road sweeper retired on medical grounds after reconstructive foot surgery left him unable to stand or walk properly. Atos awarded him zero points and according to his family, refused to look at the occupational health report which had declared him unfit. His ESA was immediately stopped and even though the appeal overturned this after considering the report several months later, the whole experience left him severely depressed.

Or Stephen Hill of Duckmanton, Derbyshire who died of a heart attack in December, one month after being told he was "fit to work" whilst he was waiting for major heart surgery. Tallying with anecdotal accounts from bereaved families, the Citizens Advice Bureau say they have identified numerous cases where the stress of benefit-claim fighting seems to have been a major contributing factor in someone's death (or indeed suicide) shortly after going through the Atos experience.

Last year even a report from MPs was forced to conclude that the introduction of medical assessments Atos-style prompted "fear and anxiety among vulnerable people" and acknowledged

the tests resulted in large numbers of seriously unwell claimants being refused support. But this year Atos have been awarded more contracts worth some £400m to work their evil magic by slashing the number of people on Disability Living Allowance benefits. George Osborne wants 20% savings at least – even though it's been estimated that less than 0.4% of disability claims are fraudulent. No problem say Atos – but first let us big up our brand by sticking our name all over the Paralympics and have some of our grinning managers seen smooching around athletes at medal-giving time.

No wonder that this leaves a sour taste in the mouth for many people – the type of people who might have shared their Atos experiences on an online forum run by CareWatch until it was summarily shut down by the company in an aggressive bit of reputational control. But no worries for the Paralympics organisers whose ethical defence consists of saying that er, without sponsors there would be no games – so why not go the whole hog and boost the budget further by getting cash from landmine manufacturers and Grünenthal Pharmaceutical (the makers of Thalidomide). Hell, why not invite the Eugenics Foundation?

The largest turnout of the week is expected on Friday 31st, when DPAC are holding the Atos Games closing ceremony at Atos' London HQ. Some former Paralympians are expected to attend.

Meet this Friday 31st in Triton Square (near Euston Road) at 12:45pm for direct action and creative protest, with plenty of surprises...

For more see www.dpac.uk.net

...and finally...

Now SchNEWS isn't normally a cheerleader for traffic accidents but on this occasion we had to make an exception. Perhaps hampered by the need to steer ever further to the right the BNP crashed their 'Truth Truck' into a low bridge in Sunderland on Monday.

The union jack sporting vehicle was on its way to protest against the use of halal meat in a branch of Subway in the Sheepfolds area of the city when the filthy communist railway bridge sprung its ambush. Whether because of basic illiteracy or more likely due to a patriotic disdain for foreign metric measurements the lionhearted BNP driver ignored the clear warning signs and smashed the truck into the underside of the bridge, causing the suspension of services for several hours.

Cops could only clear the blockade after letting down the tyres and towing the truck out backwards. A more apt metaphor for Nick Griffin's leadership of the party would be harder to find.

Top SchNEWS tip Nick, fascists are supposed to make the trains run on time – not stop them altogether.



Disclaimer

SchNEWS reassures all readers we obviously have no truck with the fash. In fact we dont have a truck. Honest.

RACHEL CORRIE VERDICT: NO JUSTICE

To no-one's surprise the Israeli courts whitewashed the death of Rachel Corrie this week. Rachel was killed in Gaza in 2003 defending Palestinian homes against the Israeli Defence Force's D9 armoured bulldozers.

Judge Oded Gershon flatly contradicted eyewitness testimony by saying that there was no way that the bulldozer driver could have seen Rachel. In case that wasn't enough his 62 page judgement claimed that the area was a 'closed military zone' and that the activists had put their lives at risk by even being there (ignoring the thousands who are forced to live there by virtue of being Palestinian). For an encore he went on to claim that the initial IDF investigation, which consisted only of interviews with Israeli soldiers, and was even criticized by the US ambassador at the time as 'flawed', was in fact entirely transparent and credible.

SchNEWS spoke to one of the International Solidarity Movement activists who was with Rachel when she was killed...

"When Rachel died in 2003, the second intifada was in full-swing and the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq was only two days away. What she and the other international activists with the ISM were doing in Rafah was living on the front-line of a conflict that had claimed hundreds of Palestinian lives in the Gaza strip. Rafah is a town severed in two, a densely populated area with a 200 meter wide no-mans land literally bulldozed through the centre. All structures, houses, workplaces everything were reduced to rubble to provide a free-fire zone for the Israeli military.

The bulldozers would appear, protected by tanks, and start knocking things down. Just days before we arrived on the scene of a demolished

house with the family trying to retrieve their possessions. We slept overnight in houses that were deliberately targetted with gunfire in an effort to drive the inhabitants out. Even the water-tanks on the roof's were shot at to deprive the inhabitants of fresh water

This was why we were confronting the two D9 bulldozers and their tank escort on 17th March 2003. We don't know what their mission was but they had no right to be there at all. We were there protesting and obstructing their work for over two hours – of course they knew we were there – we were wearing hi-vis jackets and shouting at them over megaphones. We were interacting with them – they were shouting at us and firing tear gas.

Rachel's death came suddenley – a bulldozer approached Samir Nasrullah's house. Samir was well-known to the ISM and many activists had stayed in his house. Rachel moved in front of the D9 and began to climb the pile of earth pushed up by the blade. On top of the pile she was looking directly into the bulldozer's cabin. The driver cannot have failed to see her. Moments later she was engulfed by the earth which caused her death"

Of course government whitewashes of crimes committed by troops are universal – Israel hardly stands out in this regard – for example only one British soldier has been convicted of abusing Iraqi prisoners during the entire occupation. In that light Judge Gershon's verdict was utterly predictable.

Rachel's parents have vowed to continue the legal fight and will be appealing to Israel's Supreme Court.

For more The Rachel Corrie Foundation <http://rachelcorriefoundation.org/>

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