



# MEND UK

PO Box 51762, London, NW1 4QJ Tel: 0207 491 3223

<http://www.mend-uk.org/> <http://www.mendonline.org/>  
[info@mend-uk.org](mailto:info@mend-uk.org)

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 2007

Mend Central Office - P.O. Box 66558, Beit Hanina, East Jerusalem - Telephone: + 972 (0)2 656 7310/2988 - Fax: + 972 (0) 2 656 7311 ☪ Regional Mend Centres: Nablus - Refidia, next to Al-Rawdah Mosque, Dardouk Building, 1st floor - Tel /Fax: + 972 (0) 9 233 9333 ☪ Hebron - Beer El-Sabe St., near The License Office, Alnours Building, 3rd floor - Tel/Fax: + 972 (0) 2 229 1706 ☪ Ezzarieh - Main St., Kubsa Junction, Al-Khateeb Building, 3rd floor - Tel/Fax: + 972 (0) 2 279 1956 ☪ Jericho - Amman Road, Al-Walajah Building, 1st floor, Tel/Fax: +972 (0) 2 2326124 ☪ Qalqiya - Abed el-Rahim St., Falastine Building - Tel/Fax: +972 (0) 9 294 6896 ☪ Ramallah - Al-Quds main road, next to the Gas Station - Tel/Fax: +972 (0) 2 240 6710 ☪ Tulkarem - Shweki Road, next to the Cultural Center, Above the Palestinian Coordinating Office - Tel: +972 (0) 9 268 6020, Fax: +972 (0) 9 268 4228

## What we're up to in Palestine

Activists from MEND's offices all over the West Bank participated in a workshop on Campaign Building given by Yvonne Davis under the auspices of the US Consulate.

"Leading the Way Together", the film of the summer camp is being edited and is nearly ready. The Menders have been holding local meetings and have been gaining new members, especially in Tul Karem. We are now looking at possible summer camps, both in Palestine and possibly also in Italy or Greece.

**"There is so much violence in Israel and the occupied territories that an organisation such as MEND is an enormous asset at a difficult time. I have no difficulty in being quoted as a strong supporter of your objective of seeking social progress through non-violence and democracy in Palestine and in the wider region"**  
**Sir Malcolm Rifkind, MP**

Following the successful Parliamentary Launch of MEND UK in July 2006, a number of prominent MP's have pledged support for MEND, including... Mark Lazarowicz, Martin Linton, Richard Burden, Edward Garnier, Kerry McCarthy, Jeremy Corbyn and, Clive Betts.

Following the successful regional nonviolence seminar in Amman, MEND has held meetings with Nova of Barcelona (the organizers of the seminar) about various concrete ways of consolidating this network.

On the 5,6, and 7 February, Dr. Bernard Lafayette, who used to work with Dr. Martin Luther King, will be coming to give some intensive nonviolence training.

"Towards a Culture of Tolerance and Coexistence", the final meetings for the schoolchildren are being planned in Hebron and Ramallah. We are developing a proposal to continue with this unique and excellent project and to expand its reach as we finalise the curriculum.

## ... and in the UK

A series of debates "Can non-violence work in Israel / Palestine?" are being organised in conjunction with the LSE. More information to follow - [www.mend-uk.org](http://www.mend-uk.org)

Gillian Mosely, Trustee, has had meetings with The Board of Deputies and The Revd. Anthony Ball of Lambeth Palace. We are looking to continue and strengthen these connections, and others, in the future.

MEND UK is hosting a benefit indie / acoustic gig at the Rhythm Factory, Whitechappel, London on Thursday 8th March. A number of other fundraisers are coming up - watch this space!

## Touring Palestine By Gillian Mosely, Trustee of Mend UK

Last autumn I spent some time with MENDERS from all over the territories. I was incredibly heartened to watch youths from a number of cities engaged in a lively debate about suitable content for the update newsletter they were preparing following the MEND summer camp they had all attended. Articles posited ranged from interview to expose and were all overseen by an impressive media professional. This all took place at a university in Ramallah, and I was happy to sit and watch.

Nour who runs the MEND centre in Tulkarem traveled to Ramallah to collect me and the two of us drove up to Tulkarem in a bus for the second 'leg' of my MEND tour. Passing four checkpoints - highly visible with huge queues of cars - we finally made it to Tulkarem in just over two hours. Here almost twenty MENDERS and a number of the centre's volunteers, had turned up to meet me.

We all sat around a table, with a local school-teacher as translator, and talked about them, their lives and what MEND had done for them and their outlook on life. I had been upset by the check points - just looking at them is bad enough - but the children I met were so engaging and interested that I soon forgot about this daily reality in Palestine. They wanted to talk about nonviolence.

Most of the children I met have been involved with MEND for at least a year and unlike many of their contemporaries who have not been fortunate enough to participate in Mend's workshops, these youths all had dreams. One serious looking girl wants to be a psychologist; another, an archaeologist. They wanted to know if as a Jew I was scared of travelling to Palestine. I think my laughter at this question might have confused them. I hope it also reassured. As I was leaving, a young boy pressed a cake and fruit juice he'd been clutching into my hands. Even in one so young, the Palestinian tradition of hospitality was very much in evidence.

## From anger to hope By Gianfabrizio Ladini, Mend volunteer

I have been living in Palestine for more than two months and I'm actually working with MEND in Tulkarem. Although the political context is very hard I found a lot of people who strongly believe in non violence as the only path to mend the situation. When I was angry because of what I saw, these people showed me that there is still space for hope, that imagining peace is not a matter of utopias disregarding the reality on the ground, that our dreams of peace can rely on the daily patient work of individuals, groups and organizations acting with the deep conviction that violence involves further violence and that nonviolent objectives need nonviolent means.

In this order of ideas the children have a special place. The youth of today is the man and woman of tomorrow, so that working with children directly helps to build a better future. I met the MEND's staff in Nablus and I joined MEND in Tulkarem. Neither the one nor the other city is without troubles but MEND provides an island of peace where the children find good ways to express themselves in activities like singing, playing or simply discussing. "We're trying to make them love life notwithstanding the reality in which they live" Mohamed told me, MEND's coordinator in Nablus. And they're doing a good job, I tell you. Far from being passive subjects, the children are also eager to discuss issues amongst themselves and with other people; and they are actually promoting nonviolent ideals among both the young and adult. They sing and play in some public events, they record videotapes, they speak with their friends, they distribute stic

Both in Nablus and Tulkarem MEND acts as means to connect the children in the ways they like. It is beneficial in the short term, since they are really happy with what they do, but in the long term as well. They are part of the future and, if the future will be like these parts, then we have a good ground for our dreams.



## WHY NONVIOLENCE IS IMPORTANT TO ME

By Lucy Nusseibeh, Director of Mend

Nonviolence, by which I understand, active nonviolence, is important to me both in respect of who I am and where I live. It is important to me because of my belief in the interconnectedness of all humanity and because of the personal responsibility of each of us in relation to this.

Although I have been interested in nonviolence since I was at school, perhaps if I lived somewhere else, active nonviolence would have been less central to my life. Living and working in Jerusalem, in the midst of the manifestly unjust situation of occupation, and in the context of a conflict that grows increasingly intractable, I, like most others I know here, feel impelled to do whatever I can to help. Living in a conflict zone, I find I cannot be idle or detached, not just in relation to the day to day conditions, but also in relation to the slanders and the abuse of who the Palestinians are. Seeing the level of misperceptions and fears among the Israelis, and the cruel and unjustified stereotyping of the Palestinians as unremittingly violent, as well as seeing the catastrophic results of the use of violence, impels me to focus my work on nonviolence, in particular on training in active nonviolence and working with the media, as the only way to break the current paradigm.

**In a very general sense, I understand violence as the cutting off of potential, of any kind, and nonviolence conversely as its opening up, whether in relation to individuals or to societies. It is therefore an integral part of my humanity and of great importance to me to work with nonviolence rather than violence, and try to reverse the disempowerment and stagnation that I see happening here.**

Nonviolence is important to me as a person, as I believe that we all have the potential for violence or nonviolence (enough psychological experiments have shown how easily students become both perpetrators and victims – equally randomly and with an alarming degree of identification, even as conscious participants in a controlled experiment) and that we are responsible for creating our own realities whatever the circumstances.

When things get difficult, we always have a choice, however limited, of how to deal with the difficulties. Like so many others here, I was stunned when the fighting erupted with such violence in September 2000 (MEND was preparing the launch of an exciting three way video-conferencing project with children from Jerusalem (Palestinian) Tel Aviv (Israeli) and Canada (English and French speaking) around creative responses to Beethoven's ode to joy). To cope with the shock and the stress, MEND continued working, (the sole Palestinian NGO to do so) setting up volunteer groups and even a clinic, and quickly transforming our nonviolence education in schools to trauma counseling and crisis management. Being proactive in a crisis, is part of the essence of nonviolence, and refusing to dehumanize or be dehumanized is another part. When the crisis here and the demonisation were at one of their peaks in the spring of 2002, MEND produced a series of "bumper stickers for rationality" with identical slogans in Arabic and Hebrew, asking questions such as "What about our Children?" or stating "Enough Violence" or "we are all human beings". These were designed as a reminder of our shared values and common humanity, which are fundamental to my belief in the importance of nonviolence. Due to the severity of the crisis at that time of the Israeli incursions, we also kept ourselves extra busy by producing simple handouts that were distributed all over the West Bank and Gaza, with instructions for basic first-aid (which TV coverage showed was seriously lacking) for helping children under stress, how to dispose of rubbish when you are under curfew etc., etc. and we also gathered many donations of children's toys and books for the children of Jenin. This was part of the empowerment and pro-active aspect of nonviolence, which is of obvious humanitarian importance.

Nonviolence is important to me in the current context in the region, as not only has violence proved singularly counterproductive so far, while nonviolence, as practiced during the first intifada of 1987, at least led to some positive change, but also because it does not carry the risk of harm that violence carries. At the time of writing, the Palestinian situation is more tragic than it has ever been with children and adults being killed in interfactional Palestinian violence. In a nonviolent movement, this could not possibly have happened.

**Nonviolence is based on compassion, and requires cooperation and courage. It is therefore important to me as I wish to part of a world that is as much as possible, compassionate, cooperative, courageous, and above all, humane.**