

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The greatest moral issue of our time



THE OVERTON WINDOW
IN 1977, following the late Yasser Arafat's speech at the United Nations General Assembly on November 13, 1974, where he said, "Today I come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand" - the UN General Assembly Resolution 32/40B was passed, designating November 29 as a Day for Annual Observance for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

continue with its large scale violations of international law, again, because of the support given to it by its Western allies, especially the United States of America. These violations have been well-documented by a number of professionals belonging to every race, religion and creed. Meanwhile, all justifiable criticism aimed against the State of Israel for its revolting mistreatment of Palestinians is criminally twisted and categorised as 'anti-semitic' by Western governments and mainstream media. I say 'twisted' because according to large numbers of

meaning based on a misapprehension shared by both the killers and their victims... [and] the story of the Khazar [people of the Caucasus] empire, as it slowly emerges from the past, begins to look like the most 'cruel hoax' which history has ever perpetrated". This is of particular significance as semitism or semitic refers not to a race, but a language group, which does not include the Khazars but does include languages from today's Arab countries spoken by Arab people, including Palestinians. One does not have to look far then to see the irony of it all, especially as the State of Israel was initially

the oldest of dirty games - blaming victims, holding them responsible for premeditated, cold-blooded Israeli crimes, committed unaccountably". Fortunately though, despite the Orwellian media coverage, many people around the world are finally waking up to what Nelson Mandela described as "the greatest moral issue of our time". Last year, for example, the European Commission adopted new guidelines for labelling products and goods produced in the illegal settlements in Occupied Palestine, the American Anthropological Association became the largest US academic organisation to approve

may be the fastest, if not the only way, to bring Israeli officials to the negotiating table to work out a solution for the Palestinian people, particularly in the absence of any meaningful criticism by Western governments and leaders. And why not? It worked in South Africa, didn't it? And although I am not a fan of economic warfare through the use of sanctions, etc, the only other time when it can be justified, apart from its use against the apartheid state of South Africa, is in the case of Israel for its gross violation of human rights against the Palestinian people. And the international community must realise that this violation has not been taking place only for a few days or years, but for decades. Entire generations of Palestinians have been denied any semblance of human rights which is clearly the worst crime perpetrated against humanity since the end of the Second World War. For the international community, especially for its leaders, sorting out the Israel-Palestinian problem should be the primary objective, at least if it is to ever claim any form of civility. The wrong that the human race has allowed to be done to the people of Palestine requires for it to stand with Palestine, now, for the sake of its own salvation. In the process, however, it must also recognise that it is the State of Israel, and not the Jewish people in general, that is guilty of committing gross human rights violations and mass murder against the Palestinian people. It is important that people realise that the biggest critics of the State of Israel and those exposing its brutality the most, happen to be Jewish themselves. Let us not repeat the hate, condemnation and mass murder that took place against the Jewish people during the Second World War against Palestinians now, or anyone, ever again. Let us stand beside the Palestinians now, the way the world should have stood beside the Jews back then.

LEST WE FORGET
Mohan Mia: An exemplary politician
ENAMUL HAQ
YUSUF Ali Choudhury, popularly known as Mohan Mia, who passed away on November 26, 1971, was a very influential politician of the then East Pakistan but preferred always to keep away from limelight. To him principles and services to people were more important than power and wealth. He proved it over a considerable period of active political life. Mohan Mia was born in an aristocratic zamidar family of Faridpur and became well known for philanthropy and promotion of education among the Muslims who suffered many disadvantages due to their backwardness. Among many educational institutions he founded were Moizuddin High School, Halima Students Home and Halima Girls School to commemorate his parents. The Student Home, created in 1926, was a unique boarding house in which meritorious students enjoyed free residence under the care and supervision of a reputed teacher. In 1945 he set up Baitul Aman on the outskirts of Faridpur town. For this multipurpose agricultural, industrial and educational project Mohan Mia and his two brothers, Moazzem Husain Chowdhury (Lal Mia) and Enayet Hussain Chowdhury (Tara Mia) donated 500 bighas of land. The primary purpose of this pioneering project has been to train up students in technology and craft to stand on their own feet and set examples of self-supportive initiatives in income generation and social welfare. He demonstrated similar vision and initiative as a distinguished chairman of the Faridpur district board for fifteen years. He initiated many endeavours to promote education, facilitate communication and provide health services to people. The people of greater Faridpur remember him as an exemplary human being always ready to spend money from his recourse to advance a good cause of public welfare. He was a very accessible and amiable person and never hesitated to help the needy. In fact, his open-handedness in supporting worthy political and social causes at times put him in financial crisis. In running his zamidar he was most humane to the tenants and broke the tradition of other zamindars by allowing them to approach him as a respected person. He was a democrat per se and never discriminated against people on social or religious grounds. In 1940 he succeeded in keeping Faridpur free from communal disharmony although the rest of British India suffered the worst kind of communal violence. Both Hindus and Muslims admired him for this non-communal attitude. Mohan Mia entered national politics under the leadership of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq as a member of the Krishak Praja Party. Following the election of 1937 Fazlul Huq formed the government in Bengali in coalition with the Muslim League. But when in 1941 Fazlul Huq severed its ties with the Muslim League Mohan Mia stayed on in the league and was the general secretary of the Faridpur Muslim League from 1940 to 1957. He left the party forever when he found that its high command did not support the popular demand of the people for an honourable place for Bangla as a State Language of Pakistan. He also fought vigorously to secure the rights of the people of East Pakistan. Mohan Mia did not see the formal birth of Bangladesh but the intensity of the liberation war convinced him beyond doubt that the emergence of an independent state was imminent. This was so especially after his ceaseless efforts failed to arrange transfer of power to the majority party of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League following its landslide victory in the 1970 election. It became clear to him that the military rulers of Pakistan were prepared to dismember their country rather than share power with the majority people of the eastern wing.



Young Palestinian women are increasingly taking part in anti-Israeli protests in the occupied West Bank.

Jewish scholars (and others), including Emeritus Professor of History at Tel Aviv University, Shlomo Sand, what we call Jewish people today including those in Israel, have absolutely no historic or genetic connection to what is today the land of Israel. In fact, the origin of the overwhelming number of Jews around the world today is from the area of Sumer and Babylon - modern day Iraq. And as author and journalist Arthur Koestler wrote in his book 'The Thirteenth Tribe' "[this] would mean that their ancestors came not from the Jordan, but from the Volga. Not from the Cannan, but from the Caucasus...then the term 'anti-semitism' is void of any

established using the justification that Jewish people were simply being allowed the opportunity to return to their homeland which, Palestine, is not. Nevertheless, according to Jewish author and journalist Stephen Lendman, "Israel bears full responsibility for premeditated violence and brutality, unleashed without mercy against defenseless Palestinians - reminiscent of how Nazis persecuted Jews" ("Israeli Anti-Palestinian Viciousness Rages", Centre for Research on Globalisation, October 14, 2015). And that the "Western, mainly US, and Israeli media suppress what demands headlines, instead play perhaps

a boycott of Israeli institutions and to affirm the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and the British Labour Party's National Executive Committee voted to boycott private security company G4S for its direct involvement with Israeli prisons ("International day of solidarity with Palestine - Looking back; looking ahead", International Movement for a Just World, December 1, 2015). The Israeli government was naturally expected to react quite harshly to these developments; given the extent of its outburst, however, many experts suggest that continuing pressure exerted on the Israeli government through boycott, divestment and sanctions

The apex court's concern



STRAIGHT LINE
In a scenario where the police have not been able to adequately transform it and the political class of the country is not desirably sensitized towards the need to revamp the organisation, the concern of the judiciary to keep the police on the democratic path is gratifying. The police, the government and the judiciary bear a mutually informing position to one another in a democracy. A progressive police force provides effective teeth in matters of fair and impartial law enforcement. In recent times, when the awareness among the people about their democratic rights is growing and the concept of human rights has pervaded almost all spheres of democratic activities, the pattern of police functioning has acquired an added importance. The democratic and human rights of the people invariably interact with the process of criminal justice with which the country's police is directly involved. In the above context, the November 13 report in this newspaper appears very significant and salutary. The said report records the Supreme Court's observation to the effect that: "In our country we find no concern of the police administration about the abusive powers being exercised by its officers and personnel. The department has failed to maintain required standard of integrity and professionalism". It is also

reported that the top brass of police find it hard to tackle crime committed by lower-tier cops and that there is corruption in recruitment and behavioural recklessness is attributed to errant policeman's political links. The apex court further observes: "On a look into the law and order situation, we have reasons to believe that it (law enforcement agencies) has forgotten its core value that it is accountable to the community it serves". The Supreme Court exhorted the magistrates to not stay silent whenever they find infringement of law against torture and death in custody. However, on ground there appears to be very little application of the law to prohibit both mental and physical torture in any situation, and custodial death. Admittedly, the police are a legally sanctioned coercive organisation that is supposed to curtail liberty whenever appropriate under the law. The actual problem lies in the use of power, the control process, both departmental and extra-departmental. Excesses do occur, but there are adequate remedial arrangements in the existing law and regulations. The question is, how often and how seriously resort to departmental and legal actions when situation so warrants. Is there laxity on the part of the supervisory ranks and complements? A casual reading of the procedural legislation, which is the Criminal Procedure Code, would reveal that the judiciary including the subordinate tiers has a distinct supervisory role over the functions

of police, particularly on matters relating to criminal investigation that impinges on human liberty. The entire process from the time of lodging a criminal case leading to the final disposal is under judicial examination and scrutiny. Therefore, the question arises as to how upright and appropriate the supervisors have been. Sadly enough, a portion of the judicial functionaries have come under adverse notice for dereliction of duty and demeanour incompatible with their status

remain pending enquiry against 11 District Judges, 17 Joint and Additional Judges and 18 Assistant and Senior Assistant Judges. Two honourable judges of the High Court, under instruction from the honourable Chief Justice have enquired into allegation of irregularities and corruption of 11 judges of Dhaka and Chittagong region. Unfortunately, a judicial magistrate was arrested for possession of 550 bottles of Phensydyl and was convicted in the lower court but acquitted in the High Court. The government has preferred an appeal against the said order. The above state of affairs is undoubtedly depressing because honourable persons in judiciary decide issues which help to preserve and maintain, in the ultimate analysis, the rights of the common man against the lawless instincts of powerful people. A civilised society expects its judges to display supreme independence and integrity. They are required to take a view of longer range than the period of responsibility entrusted to legislature.

and image. An investigative report on the corruption in court that appeared in Bengali daily Prothom Alo on November 5 makes distressing reading. The report says that 22 judges have been sacked on charges of corruption. Interestingly, a prominent lawyer and rights activist laments that there is no noticeable intervention by the Anti-Corruption Commission with regard to matters of corruption in subordinate courts. The alleged indiscretions and dereliction of duty of judges are varied and accusations

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QUOTABLE Quote
EDWARD W. SAID
You cannot continue to victimise someone else just because you yourself were a victim once—there has to be a limit.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH
ACROSS
1 Polite refusal
6 Ashen
11 Tea party guest
12 Sung story
13 Odometer units
14 Showed over
15 St.'s kin
16 Stage prompt
18 Squid's defense
19 Sardine container
20 Superb serve
22 Enmity
24 Downhill coaster
25 Enticed
27 Yon people
29 Upshot
32 Steaming
33 Easter find
34 Pasture sound
35 Hogwash
36 Negative link
37 Chestnut husk
38 Namely, in Latin
40 Deal maker
42 Boss, at times
43 Sad song
44 Snappish
45 Slalom curves
DOWN
1 Joe of the Jets
2 "Twelfth Night" heroine
3 Starts of gnat and knife
4 Water cooler
5 Firefighter, at times
6 Studied (over)
7 Clumsy galoot
8 Dollar features
9 Stupor
10 Removed underemphatically
17 Experience
23 Grog base
24 Bro's kin
26 Wear down
27 Economy
28 Sweat-shirt variety
30 Hotel area
31 Rich cakes
33 Ledger item
39 Fixed
41 USO patrons

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER
SAFER QANDA
OLIVE UNION
BERET ENACT
ERODES
GABURN FAT
APIECE GINA
FIREHAZARDS
FADE DESERT
ENSUPER BEE
JUDOKA
TEXAN SALT
AGENT UNLIT
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