

Israeli Activist Ezra—a Mensch: He Must Remain Free!

Monday 12 October 2009, by [WARSCHAWSKI Michael](#) (Date first published: 25 July 2009).

In the late eighties and throughout the nineties, when more than 100 Women in Black [1] gathered in Jerusalem, each and every Friday, to protest Israeli occupation, there was also a man. A man who used to come and distribute a rose to each woman, and then leave. That man, whose name was Ezra Nawi, didn't look like the usual middle-class young activists we see in anti-occupation demonstrations, but rather as a working man whose roots were in the Arab world. Ezra is a plumber, and soon he became the plumber of the Israeli left in Jerusalem.

From supporter Ezra became soon an actor, and one could see him in every demonstration against the occupation, as well as in the few activities dealing with Israel's domestic social problems.

In the so-called Israeli peace movement, Ezra is atypical: he never established an NGO, is not busy with funders, does not travel abroad for conferences or speaking tours. In fact, he is financing activities from his own pocket and when in need of more money than he himself can provide, Ezra has become very efficient in motivating his friends to contribute money as well as their time; because of his personal example every single day and night, no-one can say no, including when, in the middle of the night, Ezra asks you to join him in the southern Hebron district to try and provide protection for the local population.

The southern Hebron district is Ezra's main field of activity, trying to help the local population to resist the attempts of the occupation forces to evict them from their lands and homes and settler violence. For these activities, Ezra has been paying a very heavy price: his car was smashed, he has often been beaten and the police have arrested him dozen of times for alleged violence against the settlers or soldiers. Ezra's fluent Arabic, but more so his personality, ensures his involvement lacks patronizing condescendence: while never trying to hide his Israeli identity and always letting the Palestinians decide what to do and how far to go, Ezra has become part and parcel of their community and been accepted as such.

And now, the Israeli authorities have decided to send Ezra to jail. No way!

Together with Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein and hundreds of Israeli, Palestinian and international activists, we must erect a human wall between Ezra and the jail. Citizen Nawi (the name of a beautiful film about him) deserves the Alternative Nobel Peace Price, not prison time. The "Alternative" one, because for a great man like Ezra, it will be a dishonor to share the official one after it was given to people such as Henry Kissinger and Shimon Peres.

P.S.

* From Michael Warschawski's blog:

<http://www.alternativenews.org/michael-warschawski/2100-a-great-man-israeli-activist-ezra-nawi-must-remain-free.html>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.womeninblack.org/en/history.html>