

NO MORE FALLUJAHS



28-29 October 2006

A weekend of nonviolent civil disobedience against the occupation of Iraq

On 8th November 2004 the US – with British assistance – launched a massive assault against the Iraqi city of Fallujah. Hundreds of civilians were killed, tens of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes and US forces used white phosphorus – a substance that burns down to the bone – as a weapon. The city itself was completely devastated.

This October, a month of activities - culminating in a weekend of nonviolent civil disobedience against the occupation - will mark the anniversary of the attack.

The massacre

The original US codename for the November 2004 assault on Fallujah – “Thanksgiving Massacre” (*Telegraph*, 24 Dec 2004) – turned out to be remarkably prescient.

War crimes

The city was placed ‘under a strict night-time shoot-to-kill curfew’ with ‘anyone spotted in the soldiers’ night vision sights...shot’ (*Times*, 12 Nov 04), male refugees were prevented from leaving the combat zone (*AP*, 13 Nov 04) and ‘aircraft, comprised mostly of jets and helicopters from [the] 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, dropped or launched more than 500 precision-guided munitions against ... targets in the city’ (*Marine Corps News*, 3 Jan 05).

US war planes dropped 3 bombs on the Central Health Centre clinic, killing 35 patients, including two girls and three boys under the age of ten (*The Nation*, 13 Dec 04). Fifteen medics, four nurses and five health support staff were also killed in the attack.

“My son got shrapnel in his stomach when our house was hit at dawn, but we couldn’t take him for treatment. We just bandaged his stomach and gave him water, but he was losing a lot of blood. He died this afternoon”

Fallujah resident Mohammed Abboud on the death of his 9 year-old son Ghaith (*Guardian* 11 Nov 04; *Independent*, 10 Nov 04)

“I cannot forgive the American crimes when they bombed my town. An entire family made up of 18 members, which used to live nearby, was killed”

Fallujah teacher Ishraq Shakir Mohammadi (*BBC*, 22 Aug 06).

events

28 October 2006

Peace Journey from the UK’s Military Nerve Centre in Northwood.

Meet 11am, Northwood tube station (Metropolitan line tube). Finish 4pm, central London.

Nonviolent direct action workshop and legal briefing.

4.30pm – 7.30pm, Diorama 3, 3-7 Euston Centre, London NW1 3JG (tube: Warren Street).

29 October 2006

“Unauthorised” 24-hour peace camp in Parliament Square to demand an end to the occupation.

Assemble 12 noon, Parliament Square.

The camp will begin with **Maya Evans** and **Milan Rai** reading the names of Iraqis who have died as a result of US/UK military action in Iraq – one year after their arrest for doing this in Oct 2005 (see box). They will also be joined by former UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Iraq **Denis Halliday** and Iraqi artist **Haifa Zangana**.

Please note: this is a potentially arrestable action – see “Legal Briefing”.

Related events

Friday 6 October. Book launch: ‘Don’t Shoot the Clowns’ by Jo Wilding, eyewitness to the April 2004 US siege of Fallujah. 7pm, Housmans Bookshop, London (tube: Kings X).

Sunday 8 October. Nonviolent direct action workshop and legal briefing. 11am - 4pm, Sunrise Room, Diorama 2, 3-7 Euston Centre, London NW1 3JG (tube: Great Portland St).

Monday 9 Oct. Sack Parliament! Anti-war blockade of the Houses of Parliament on the day that MPs return from their summer recess. Meet 1pm, Houses of Parliament. See www.sackparliament.org.uk.

Friday 13 Oct. ‘The “War on Terror” At Home And Abroad’ with Emily Johns (recently returned from a peace delegation to Iran) and **Maya Evans** (first person to be convicted of participating in an “unauthorized” demonstration within 1km of Parliament.) 7.30pm, Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1. Org. by JNV and Voices.

Sunday 15 Oct. Iraq War Film Double-bill with Jo Wilding, eyewitness to the April 2004 siege of Fallujah. “A letter to the Prime Minister: Jo Wilding’s Diary from Iraq” (71 mins) and “The War Tapes” (94 mins), followed by Q&A with Jo. 12 noon, Curzon Soho, 99 Shaftesbury Avenue London W1D

“Just ordinary people”

Refugees from the city also claimed that ‘a large number of people, including children, were killed by American snipers’ (*Independent*, 24 Nov 04). “I was trying to get to my uncle’s house, waving a piece of white cloth as we had been advised when they started shooting at me,” Rahim Abdullah (40), a teacher, explained. “I saw two men being shot. They were just ordinary people, they weren’t carrying weapons. The only way to stay alive was to stay inside and hope your house did not get hit by a shell.”

The US State Department subsequently estimated that 25% of Fallujah’s housing was rendered uninhabitable during the attack, a further 25% was severely damaged and 50% suffered light to moderate damage (*FT*, 14 April 05).

500 women and children

As the attack began the (US) Armed Forces Press Service reported that ‘[US] officials estimate that [out of a normal population of about 300,000] between 50,000 and 60,000 people are left in the city’ (<http://tinyurl.com/g8gro>).

Following the attack the director of the city’s main hospital, Dr Rafa’ah al-Iyssaue, stated that ‘the hospital emergency team ... recovered more than 700 bodies from rubble where houses and shops once stood, adding that more than 500 were women and children’ (*UN Integrated Regional Information Networks*, 5 Jan 2005, <http://tinyurl.com/8vrddv>). ‘Two babies were found at their homes who are believed to have died from malnutrition, according to a specialist at the hospital.’ These numbers only cover 9 of the city’s 27 neighbourhoods.

After Fallujah

A year after the attack the *New York Times* described Fallujah as ‘virtually a police state, with random checkpoints and frequent street patrols by marines and Iraqi soldiers, largely Shiite Arabs’ (*New York Times*, 14 Nov 05) and *Sunday Times* reporter Hala Jaber found it ‘impossible not to be shocked by the devastation. Huge areas of what were once homes have been flattened. On countless street corners, mountains of rubbish spew plumes of black smoke into the air. Fields of rubble stretch for as far as the eye can see’ (*Sunday Times*, 18 Dec 05).

This July the rubble was still there and “an estimated 50,000 people ... still had not returned” to the city (*AP*, 11 Jul). Mohammed Jassim (45) - a teacher in Fallujah - recently told the *BBC*: “The drinking water is so bad, it’s not fit for animals. The water and the electricity network works for only between one and two hours a day” (22 Aug).

22 cities

Since Fallujah the US has continued to attack other towns and cities in Iraq, including Ramadi, Hit, Baghdadi, Haditha, Qaim, Karabila, Tal Afar and Sadah. During the period 1 Oct 05 – 28 Feb 06 US warplanes under the control of US Central Command attacked at least 22 Iraqi cities - twice the number struck during the same five-month period one year earlier (*Knight Ridder*, 14 Mar 06).

Sowing the seeds

The city’s devastation has also continued to generate rage and hatred both inside and outside Iraq.

Thus, in the video released by al-Qaeda on 6 Jul 06, the British suicide bomber Shehzad Tanweer – who killed seven people when he blew himself up on a tube that had just left Liverpool Street station - explicitly referred to the UK’s support for “the genocide .of ... innocent Muslims in Fallujah’ as part of the rationale behind his attack (<http://tinyurl.com/z53ye>).

arrested for remembering the dead

In December 2005 Maya Evans became the first person to be convicted of taking part in an “unauthorised” demonstration within 1km of Parliament under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act. In April 2006 Milan Rai was convicted of “organising” the demonstration in question.

The pair were arrested on 25 October 2005 for reading out the names of Iraqis and British service personnel who had died in Iraq, opposite Downing Street. The day before they had read out names outside outside Britain’s military nerve centre at Northwood.

These events were part of an international week of action to mark the 1st anniversary of the 29 October 2004 Lancet report on excess deaths in Iraq. The latter concluded that at least 100,000 such deaths had already occurred.

This October Maya and Milan will recreate their protests in Northwood and Whitehall.



Mil and Maya reading the names of the dead before they got arrested in October 2005

In late 04, Ali Fadhil – whose Channel 4 documentary about the aftermath of the Nov 04 attack on Fallujah won an award from Amnesty International – observed that ‘by completely destroying this Sunni city, with the help of a mostly Shia National Guard, the US military has fanned the seeds of a civil war that is definitely coming’ (*Guardian*, 11 Jan 05). Since then Iraq has indeed been plunged into a civil war that is currently claiming scores of lives on a daily basis.

Ending the occupation

‘Can anything be done to lead [Iraq] out of this savage civil war even if it is too late to stop it?’, Patrick Cockburn – Independent Middle East correspondent and as sympathetic and knowledgeable an Iraq-watcher as any - asks (*Independent*, 25 Jul).

As Cockburn notes, ‘Conflict was always likely after Saddam Hussein as a deeply divided Iraq tried to recover from his disastrous rule. But it was the added ingredient of a prolonged US and British occupation that ensured this conflict would be so extraordinarily violent’ (*Counterpunch*, 15 Jun). His conclusion? ‘Ending [the occupation] is essential if this war is to be brought to an end’ (*Independent*, 25 Jul).

further reading

After Fallujah: Unpunished US Killings Spark Iraqi Resistance by JNV, 6 August 2003 (<http://tinyurl.com/hs266>)

Onslaught: The Attack on Fallujah by JNV, 17 November 2004 (<http://tinyurl.com/rdx74>)

Remember Fallujah by Voices UK and JNV, October 2005 (<http://tinyurl.com/973wm>)

Iraq: the Logic of Withdrawal by Anthony Arnone, The New Press, 2006

what we are demanding

- an immediate end to the US/UK military occupation of Iraq
- massive reparations and debt cancellation so that Iraqis can rebuild their country free from foreign interference
- prosecution of those responsible for war crimes



On 2 April 2006 300 people took part in a 4-hour "unauthorised" anti-occupation demo in Parliament Square on the 2nd anniversary of the April 2004 US massacre in Fallujah. Although no permission was sought for holding the demo, the police took no action to prevent it. (pic: Molly Cooper)

get involved!

Sponsor a tent: £15 will enable us to buy one tent (see tear-off slip below). All tents not in police custody on 30 Oct will be distributed among the sponsors.

Anti-war art: contact us if you would like to contribute anti-war artwork to decorate the tents in the peace camp.

supporting groups

"No More Fallujahs" is organized by the Mass Action Group (see box) and supported by: Act Together: Women's Action for Iraq, Birkenhead CND, Birmingham University Against the War Society, Blackpool and Fylde CND, Bolton CND, Brent Stop the War, Bristol Stop the War Coalition, Cambridge Town and Gown Against Warmongering, CND, CND Cymru, Darlington for Peace and Justice, Falmouth Peace and Justice Group, Greater Manchester and District CND, Hastings Against War, Headingley and District CND, Highland Justice Not War, Huddersfield STW, Hull Stop the War, Iraq Occupation Focus, JNV, Kingston Peace Council, Labour Against War, Leicester Stop the War, Lewes and District CND, London Catholic Worker, London Federation of Green Parties, London Region CND, Milton Keynes Gulf Crisis Group, Musicians Against Nuclear Arms, Norwich Stop the War, Nottingham Stop the War, Oswestry Coalition for Peace, Oxford for Justice & Peace, Peace Plan Group, Radical Activist Network, Redbridge Against the War, Red Pepper Magazine, Sevenoaks CND, Sherwood for Global Justice and Peace, Smash EDO, South Tyneside STWC, Steering Group of the Barrow in Furness Peace Coalition, Stevenage Coalition for Peace, Stop the War, Voices UK, Wallasey CND, Wandsworth Stop the War, Warwick and Leamington Green Party, West Midlands CND, Wrekin Stop War, Wrexham Peace and Justice Forum and Yorkshire CND.

your questions answered?

Will I get arrested if I come to the peace journey on the 28th Oct?

No. There is no reason that you should be arrested for taking part in the peace journey.

Can I take part in both the "peace journey" and the nonviolent direct action workshop on 28 Oct?

Yes. These have been deliberately timed so that this is possible.

Will I get arrested if I take part in the 24-hour peace camp in Parliament Square?

It's a real possibility, particularly if you refuse to disperse following an announcement by the police (see "Legal Briefing"). So far, dozens of people have been arrested for taking part in such "unauthorised" demonstrations. However, not everyone who has taken part in such actions has been arrested eg at the Mass Action Group's last action in April 300 people took part in an "unauthorised" 4-hour demonstration in Parliament Square, with placards and giant puppets, but no-one was arrested.

You will probably receive a warning – and be given one last chance to leave – before being arrested, but there are no guarantees.

Can I have plans for Monday if I'm going to risk arrest at the peace camp?

No. The police could move in to arrest people at any point during the 24 hours and even if you're arrested on the Sunday there's no guarantee that you'll be released before Monday.

What if the police cordon off Parliament Square?

This is unlikely, but if they do then we will set up camp as close to the Square as possible – on the pavement if necessary.

What if the police don't arrest us?

If the police don't arrest us there are plans to hold a series of anti-war workshops and discussions in the Square, as well as music, street theatre etc...

Why haven't you applied for permission to hold the peace camp?

Over the past 3½ years US-led forces in Iraq have killed tens of thousands of Iraqis – including many thousands of civilians – and pushed the country into civil war. Detainees have been tortured and hospitals bombed. Whole towns and cities have been attacked and tens of thousands of Iraqis forced to flee their homes.

Those of us taking part in the peace camp on 29 Oct will be risking arrest, a criminal record and a possible £1000 fine, to demonstrate our opposition to these horrors in the strongest possible terms and to demand a major part of the solution: an end to the occupation.

Do I need to bring my own tent, and if so could it be confiscated?

The organisers have purchased a stock of between 20-30 tents for use on 29 October. These will be decorated with anti-war artwork. Please contact us ASAP if you would like to take responsibility for one of these: 0845 458 2564 or gabriel@voices.netuxo.co.uk. If you bring your own tent it could be confiscated and / or "arrested" by the police – so if you're not willing to risk this, don't bring it!

legal info

The offence for which you are most likely to be arrested if you take part in the peace-camp on 29 October is participating in an "unauthorised" demonstration. Under section 132 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act it is an **offence to organise or take part in a demonstration in a public place within the "designated area"** (up to 1 km around parliament) **if authorisation has not been given by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner.** Participants may be subject to a fine of up to £1000.

It is also possible that you could be arrested for some other offence such as highway obstruction eg. if you're standing on the pavement and do not move when asked to by a police officer.

Instead of arresting you, **the police are entitled to ask for your name and address** - and for you to sign a statement - if they think that you are committing an offence. This means that the police can report you to the CPS who may decide to charge you later. **You do not have to give them this information but if you refuse you may be arrested anyway.**

Legal support on the day - Bustcards containing basic legal info - and advice on what (not) to do if you've been arrested - will be distributed on the day. There will also be legal observers at the demonstration and a post-action support line for anyone arrested.

If you're arrested - If you're arrested it is quite likely that you'll be charged and convicted. You will then have a criminal record. If you think this could cause you problems (eg. at work) check this out *before* you risk arrest

If you are thinking about risking arrest on 28/29 October and you've never been arrested before then we highly recommend you take part in one of the two legal briefings that are taking place in October (on the 8th and the 28th).

For more info on the arrest process and other possible offences see the briefings on the Activists' Legal Project web-site:

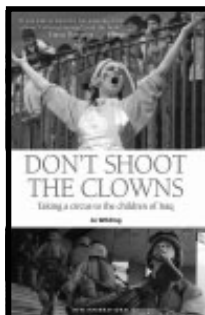
contact your local media!

If you're taking part in the weekend - and especially if you're taking part in the camp on 29 October - why don't you contact your local media to let them know what you're doing and why.

Whilst there will be national media work done around the camp, local media offers opportunities to get the action's message out to tens of thousands of people in ways that we just can't do nationally. So go for it!

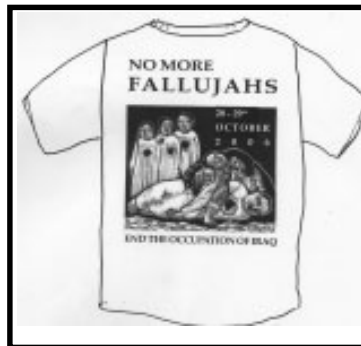
If you don't have experience of doing media work then George Monbiot's short "Activists' Guide to Exploiting the Media" contains (almost) everything you need to know: <http://tinyurl.com/zg8a7>.

A sample press release is available on request from 0845 458 2564 or gabriel@voices.netuxo.co.uk. An FAQ sheet on the occupation and the encampment - in case you need to do local media interviews - is also available.



***Don't Shoot the Clowns: Taking a Circus to the Children of Iraq* by Jo Wilding (New Internationalist, 2006) £8.99.**

An account of Jo Wilding's experiences in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. She witnesses both the invasion and the April 2004 siege of Fallujah first-hand. Jo's book can be obtained direct from the New Internationalist - see www.jowilding.net - and will be in bookshops from October.



"no more fallujahs" t-shirts

Printed on fairtrade cotton and featuring artwork by Emily Johns. £7 each, incl p&p. Buy one to wear at the camp!

accommodation

Crash-pad accommodation will be available on request the Friday and Saturday evenings. Please contact us ASAP to book a space and find out where it is!. Please bring camping mats, sleeping bags etc... Please note that there will be no storage space at the accommodation on the Sunday (so if you're coming to the camp, don't bring anything that you wouldn't want to be arrested with!)



what to bring to the camp

Tents (see FAQ) - A sleeping bag + mat - Food (we aim to provide food as well but the more the better) - Water - Warm clothing and waterproofs (remember that it's October!) - Placards, banners etc... (the more colourful and creative the better) - A good book (or books) in case you're arrested - Your positive energies!

Please don't bring: Alcohol or drugs - Pets - Anything that could be construed as a weapon eg. a penknife.

The Mass Action Group

"No More Fallujahs" has been organised by the Mass Action Group, an ad hoc collection of activists who were involved in organising the 2 April "Naming the Dead" mass act of civil disobedience in Parliament Square (the first mass act of civil disobedience against the occupation of Iraq to take place in the UK since the 2003 invasion - see <http://tinyurl.com/orq9e>).

Over the past 6 years members of the Mass Action Group have also helped to organise the following events: the August 2000 "Die-in for the People of Iraq"; the 21 October 2001 mass sit-down protest in Whitehall against the bombing of Afghanistan; the 2 December 2002 "Warzone Whitehall" die-in; the 19 January 2003 mass blockade of Britain's military nerve centre at Northwood (where 70 were arrested - the largest such action to take place in England in the run-up to the invasion); the 15 February 2003 mass sit-down in Piccadilly Circus following the big anti-war march; the 5/6 April 2003 "Reclaim the Bases" weekend of direct action at military bases across the UK.

Contact details: www.rememberfallujah.org, 0845 458 2564 and gabriel@voices.netuxo.co.uk