**The Palestinian spirit**

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July 31, 2018

In February – March 2017, I was part of a small Veterans For Peace delegation in Palestine. One of our last visits was to a village named Nabi Saleh, where Ahed’s father Bassem Tamimi, his wife Nariman, and Ahed’s three siblings live when they are not in prison. Her older brother is in prison now. After two weeks of experiencing what life is like for Palestinians under Israeli occupation in the West Bank, I had a chance to ask Bassem about the nonviolent, but frontal, resistance to Israeli occupation and colonization.

“Your sons have been beaten and badly wounded and one’s still in prison; your wife is in and out of prison: your brother-in-law was killed by a sniper bullet; you yourself have been tortured in prison; your house is on the list for demolition – why do you persist; why encourage such actions?” I asked.

“We have no alternative,” Bassem replied matter-of-factly, “it is our land and our life. I will not tell my children or my people to acquiesce in the Israeli occupation – ever”.

The following day we Veterans For Peace took part in a protest march to the separation Wall. Later, underneath the tear-gas and sheltered from the ensuing rifle fire, we watched the teens of Nabi Saleh dodge the Israeli soldiers chasing them through the village for two hours. When the Israeli soldiers, so heavily burdened with weaponry they could hardly run, finally went back behind their Wall, the young folk emerged shouting, “We won.” It was a privilege to be there to welcome them back to the Tamimi house and some relative peace and quiet.

Chris Smiley, our delegation videographer, created an excellent 38-minute documentary as part of a serieson our experience in Nabi Saleh called: “One Day, One Village, One Family.”

Ahed ‘Didn’t Get It From the Moon’. This is the expression my Irish grandmother would use to make it clear that tribute and praise should go to the seed-sowers as well as the protagonists themselves. Other traditions use some variant of: “The apple does not fall far from the tree”. Suffice it to say that, from what I was able to witness of the attitude and behavior of Ahed and her three brothers, they are clearly determined to honor the rich legacy of courage and Palestinian patriotism they inherit from Bassem and Nariman – and not only from them.

One might say that Ahed and her siblings are honor graduates of the Bassem/Nariman Folk School, just as Rosa Parks was a graduate of The Highlander Folk School. The common curriculum has to do with courageous persistence in the pursuit of justice. Moreover, our delegation was to discover that Rosa Parks is a revered figure in the Israeli Knesset – well, at least in the modest conference room allocated to Arab members.

Hanging prominently on the main wall were pictures of Rosa Parks, as well as of Rev Martin Luther King, Jr And now I can hear Ahed Tamimi’s voice beneath that of Rosa Parks, who explained in 1992:

“I did not want to be mistreated … It was just time… there was opportunity for me to take a stand to express the way I felt about being treated in that manner. I had not planned to get arrested. … But when I had to face that decision, I didn’t hesitate to do so because I felt that we had endured that too long. The more we gave in, the more we complied with that kind of treatment, the more oppressive it became”.

Nonetheless, they persisted.

Welcome home, Ahed and Nariman.

This article has been excerpted from: ‘Ahed Tamimi and Her Mother are Free – Sort Of’.

Courtesy: Commondreams.org