

Qalandiya-new 'terminal'-3.1.06

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Congratulations!!! The new terminal was inaugurated today at noon!

We arrived at Qalandiya Square at 13:30 and followed the stream of people entering the terminal to go north. We went unchecked through an open corridor and came to the northern part. There the terminal commander stopped us and informed us that according to an order of Micky Edelstein, the division commander, we were not allowed to be on the premises of the terminal. A phonecall to Micky Edelstein confirmed this. Before returning we observed the car passage, which did not yet pass through the terminal. It was unbearably crowded, the wait was long and the checking deliberately slow.

We wanted to return and queued up with the Palestinians

First stop - there are three electronically operated turnstiles. No soldiers in sight. Orders are given by loudspeakers: `one by one!`, `no pushing!`, `only blue IDs can pass !`. While waiting, the Palestinians can enjoy encouraging electronic messages, such as `welcome`!

Observation - the collective punishment after the stabbing of the soldier 10 days ago continues!

After 30 minutes of wait the turnstiles were opened and about 25 people could continue on their way. We walked along fenced lines and arrive at a row of eight turnstiles, four of which were operated.

Second stop - we choose the least crowded one and waited again. On the other side of the turnstiles we saw a conveyor belt for luggage checking and a metal detector. One by one we were released into the third stop.

Third stop - alongside the conveyor belt and the magnometer were bulletproof glass windows with small slots for sliding in the IDs, heavy metal frames and behind the windows soldiers - at last ! The `communication` took place over loudspeakers and we heard the soldiers screaming as usual: `forward!` `can`t you prepare your ID in advance! (to an old woman) and when the magnometer rang when an old man with a stiff leg passed `Stop! What do you have here, for heaven`s sake`, until the man could explain that he has a nail in his leg.

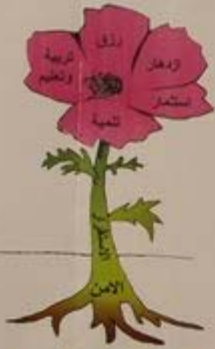
While the IDs were being checked the luggage went through the conveyor belt and fell to the ground on the other side, because no table was attached to the belt.

Obsevation - no physical contact between soldiers and Palestinians, but cursing and bullying as usual, but over loudspeakers!

After this we came to another row of turnstiles, leading out of the terminal.

Without having seen everything, we realized that the terminal is occupation in its most perfected, alienated, bureaucratically cruel form. The key problem, of course, remains unresolved: who has the right of passage. This is decided on another level and there are no ways to change this decision at the terminal.

Another issue is the fact that the Qalandiya Terminal is situated on Palestinian territory and by turning into a permanent border crossing between the West Bank and Jerusalem, it grabs a big chunk of land and brings it to the Israeli side.



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