

Right-wing terror against New York family of Mideast activist

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Death threats and harassment organized by right-wing Zionist thugs and abetted by the political establishment and the media have forced the family of an American humanitarian worker in the Middle East who spoke out against the Israeli military onslaught in the West Bank to flee New York City.

The death threats began Easter weekend after Adam Shapiro persuaded Israeli military officials to allow ambulances to enter the besieged compound of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah, where the 30-year-old American has lived for the past three years.

His aim was to bring relief to the many wounded there. But as a result of the continued Israeli military assault, he became trapped in the compound and was widely quoted and interviewed in the media on the abysmal conditions confronting the Palestinian leadership.

In the course of an interview with CNN, he described the Israeli military's scorched earth campaign in the West Bank as "terrorist" attacks, and declared that Israeli troops were going "house-to-house, much like the Nazis did."

Shapiro's views were not new. Previously he worked as a counselor at "Seeds for Peace," a summer camp in the US that brought together Israeli and Palestinian youth in an attempt to foster ties of friendship.

More recently, he has dedicated himself to chronicling the war crimes carried out by the Israeli military since the most recent offensive began. In an earlier dispatch from the Balata refugee camp on the West Bank, he wrote that "the Israeli Army sacked the camp and destroyed homes, cars, property, and lives with wanton abandon and without much purpose. Other than to attack and terrorize a people who have nothing in this world and who have already been made

homeless—and who have remained refugees for over 50 years."

In an eyewitness report from inside the Palestinian Authority compound he stated: "Everybody here is on the ground, sitting on the floor. There's no electricity. There's very little food, people sitting by candlelight, flicking cigarette lighters. I've been here five hours, and there hasn't been any shooting from inside the building. No one here is firing. The Israelis are still shooting at the building.... You can hear the heavy machine guns. You can feel when it hits this side of the building. You can feel it hitting the walls, and you can hear the bullets flying around."

But the wide dissemination of his comments after meeting Arafat provoked a campaign of fascist-style political gangsterism by Zionist elements in New York. Telephone and emailed death threat began deluging the home of the humanitarian worker's parents, Doreen and Stuart Shapiro, in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn. Some callers promised that they would suffer a "fiery death."

Posters went up in the Brooklyn neighborhood urging passersby to call a phone number that carried a recorded message describing Adam Shapiro as a traitor and comparing him to John Walker Lindh, the young American man who was captured during the US massacre of Taliban prisoners in Afghanistan and now faces trial on charges of conspiracy and aiding terrorism. The recording also provided an address, which it gave as the home of the Shapiro family.

Right-wing Zionist factions from the Jewish Defense League to Betar denounced Shapiro in demonstrations, while a web site of one of the groups gave out personal information about family members, urging action against them.

The intensity of the calls for violence compelled

Shapiro's parents, both New York City public school teachers, to flee the city, while his brother, Noah, a Manhattan attorney, is under constant police guard.

The threats of political violence against public employees whose sole purported offense is to be related to an individual who has criticized Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people evoked not a word of condemnation from the city's political establishment, from Mayor Michael Bloomberg on down.

Prominent state politicians, including both Republican Governor Pataki and his Democratic challengers, State Comptroller H. Carl McCall and former US Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo, have joined Zionist demonstrations calling for the expulsion of the PLO mission to the United Nations from New York and marching side by side with the same Zionist hoodlums making death threats against the Shapiros.

Meanwhile, the city's two largest tabloid newspapers actively encouraged this political gangsterism. The *New York Post*, Rupert Murdoch's paper, published three noxious columns by Andrea Peyser denouncing Shapiro as the "Jewish Taliban." Her second column on the subject was headlined "Our latest traitor must live with his vile choice," while a third denounced the Shapiros as publicity seekers for speaking out against the death threats, and suggested that their son secretly hoped to be shot by Israeli troops in order to make Israel "look bad."

Indeed, Israeli troops have opened fire upon journalists and humanitarian volunteers, wounding several and driving back others in an attempt to prevent reports and images of the massacre of civilians and the wholesale destruction of Palestinian towns and villages from reaching the rest of the world.

The threats of deadly violence against the Shapiro family in New York City are an extension of that policy, carried out with the same essential aim of silencing the exposure of Israeli terrorism against the Palestinian people.



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