

Media Spectacles in the West Bank

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/02/06/media-spectacles-in-the-west-bank/

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In the first of an occasional series of student bloggers, we welcome Amanda Nunn, an LSE student, commenting on the media spectacle in the West Bank.

A selection of Amanda's photography can be viewed [here](#).

Men with guns always make interesting news headlines.

Often it is the things, generally less exciting things, which the cameras aren't showing you that really tell you what's going on.

Halfway through my trip to the Palestinian west bank I was checking my email in an internet café, when an unusual amount of shooting start outside the window, unusual because this generally didn't happen during daytime. Although you would think you would instinctively stay inside – you don't. In true British style I went to see what all the fuss was about. To my surprise there was a jeep parading around the town centre, with 10 of the insurgent fighters lounging on it, thankfully firing blanks. It was adorned with Lebanese and Palestinian flags, and pictures of Nasrallah and Yasser Arafat. Anywhere else it would look like a carnival float. I asked a boy what was going on and he told me the war had started between Israel and Hezbollah and that the Lebanese were coming to liberate Palestine. Slightly sceptical, I wondered about getting closer to take some photos. One of the armed men grinned at me so I gathered there was little threat to my safety, so ventured closer. The whole spectacle had been arranged by the militia group, officially to 'improve Palestinian morale' but was in essence a self-promoted posing day for the men. What superficially looked like a terrifying group of terrorists ready for battle, fundamentally was a photo shoot. The camera crews were apparently there before the car had even arrived. When the car veered around a corner, my masochistic curiosity got the better of me and I followed. To my surprise I saw the men posing with their massive guns in various positions around the car directed by the photographers. I saw some of the footage on BBC World that evening talking about the Palestinian resistance continuing and the difficulties of the menacing terrorists on everyday life. But what was going on behind the cameraman's back was far more interesting, the real struggle was going on between huge, fully hijabed women scrambling over the latest shipment of children's clothes that had just arrived. What the cameras also missed was the frequent rolling of eyes at the men, and the general lack of interest or enthusiasm of Palestinians (except of course the young boys and me). People were just trying to go about their shopping without interference, one little old man with a donkey even shooed the car out of his way. Most people view the news with a pinch of salt, looks like we might need even more to get a true taste of what's really going on.

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