An Open Letter To Mrs. Clinton

By James A. Graff

Mrs. Hillary Rocham Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

I am writing to you because of your record as an advocate for the well-being and rights of children. I write now because you can accomplish more on behalf of children as First Lady and Presidential Advisor than ever before. I am appealing to the same dedication and efforts which earned you the Lewis Hines Award for distinguished service to children and youth, and which led you to serve as chairperson of the Children's Defense Fund. I write to ask your help in ending a foreign government's practice of shooting, beating, terrorizing, and de-educating an entire generation of youngsters. I am also asking your help in addressing the special needs which those practices have generated.

In one heavily populated region where this assault is taking place, one out of every eighteen children under the age of 16 has required medical treatment for injuries inflicted by soldiers during the past five years. In the same locale, soldiers beat up as many as two out of every five children between the ages of eight and fifteen. One in five of those children has been hit by some kind of ammunition those soldiers have fired at them. Almost all children there have experienced night raids by soldiers on their homes and over half have witnessed troops beating up their fathers and other family members. In the past few months, soldiers have once again intensified their use of gunfire against children and blown up more of their homes. It is urgent to end this massive state child abuse. You can help to do this.

You can help because the United States is subsidizing the government which is assaulting those children. The United States also protects that government from U.N. sanctions which could compel it to stop targeting those children and their families. The U.S. and the U.N. could insure that government's respect for human rights. They could insure its compliance with international law. Working together, the U.S. and the U.N. could protect those children. The U.S. has the power to forge a lasting peace for those children, to assure their freedom and to restore hope to them. The U.S. can do all this because it has enormous leverage over that government. To use it, the U.S. need only honor its own laws that make aid conditional on respect for human rights, and fulfill its own obligations to uphold the U.N. Charter and International law.

The government in question is the government of Israel.

The children are the children of Palestine.

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About This Issue

We have sent Mrs. Clinton an advance copy of this issue. The chances of her reading it might be increased were readers to send along their own copy. Many subscribers, I know, save our issues, so if you do send Mrs. Clinton your copy, feel free to write to us for a replacement. (The White House address is 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20500.)

The poem on page 7 is by Hannah Mikhail-Ashrawi, spokesperson for the Palestine delegation to the Middle East peace negotiations. The poem on page 9 is by Angie Bums, a young woman from Georgia, who penned the lines shortly after her recent tour of occupied Palestine. Both poems are about the children.

Should Mrs. Clinton read this issue, and should she want to do something for the children of Palestine, what is she up against? For the answer to that question I urge you to read Paul Findley’s latest book “Deliberate Deception.” It’s mindboggling. The former U.S. Congressman reviews the past 50 years of U.S.-Israeli relations and reveals the extent to which the American public has been lied to when it comes to U.S. support for Israel. The good news is that, on those rare occasions when a U.S. President has told the truth about Israeli violations, the U.S. public has backed its Chief Executive overwhelmingly—a fact, we hope, the Clinton administration keeps in mind.

Other new books from A.M.E.U. include David Grossman’s “Sleeping on a Wire,” an investigation into Israel’s treatment of its Palestinian citizens; Nur Masala’s “Expulsion of the Palestinians,” a documentation of the use of “transfer” in Zionist political thought; Tom Segev’s “The Seventh Million,” an examination by one of Israel’s leading historians of Israel’s Holocaust legacy and how Israel has manipulated the tragedy to accommodate its ideological requirements; and Jim Graff’s “Palestinian Children & Israeli State Violence,” in which the author of our open letter to Mrs. Clinton provides over 138 case studies of child beatings and deaths, along with a directory of human rights organizations that are monitoring the violations.

For details on ordering these and over 50 other recent books and videos please see pages 14-16.

Sincerely,

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director
On average, Israeli soldiers have killed one Palestinian child every eight days for the past five years. During that same period, up until President Clinton's Inauguration Day, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) recorded 25,852 Palestinian children 15 years old or younger treated in West Bank and Gaza hospitals and clinics for injuries inflicted by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

The Jerusalem-based Palestine Human Rights Information Center (PHRIC) calculates that by the end of 1992 Israeli soldiers and settlers had seriously injured over 120,000 Palestinians. PHRIC characterizes a serious injury as one requiring medical treatment, and calculates that injuries to children 16 years or under comprise 30% to 40% of their estimated total. This means that the actual numbers of seriously injured Palestinian children is between 36,000 and 48,000. Not included in this count are the thousands more injured while in Israeli custody.

In 1992, the Gaza Community Mental Health Program (GCMHP) conducted two surveys of Gaza children eight to 15 years old to determine the scope and nature of violence-related trauma suffered by children. The results suggest an assault of staggering proportions: of an estimated 150,000 Gaza children in that age group, between 63,000 and 67,500 were beaten by Israeli soldiers; between 6,750 and 7,000 of them suffered fractures from those beatings; between 34,500 and 36,000 were struck by some form of Israeli ammunition, and over 130,000 suffered the effects of toxic CS and CN gases.

Like many Americans, you may believe that those gases are used only to quell disturbances or disperse demonstrations, such as used, for example, in South Africa, Northern Ireland, and even in Los Angeles. In fact, the mixtures used by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are five times more concentrated than those used elsewhere. Plus, they are used in massive quantities during army raids on Palestinian residential areas. From helicopters they are dumped onto hundreds of homes in the middle of the night. Soldiers even have fired gas canisters into maternity clinics and hospital obstetric and emergency wards. Hundreds of Palestinian women have suffered miscarriages due to inhalation of these heavy gases that cause abdominal muscle spasms and excruciating pain.

In December 1987, the United States rushed about 150,000 canisters of the gas to Israel. They are produced by the Federal Laboratories in Salsburg, PA. Pressure from concerned Americans forced the company to suspend shipments, but canisters continue to find their way to Israel, apparently via South Africa.

You may get a better idea of what all this means for Palestinians if you were to imagine 53% of the American population, like theirs, to be under the age of 17. Then imagine what it would mean for Americans if foreign soldiers had seriously injured at least 5,460,000 of their children over five years by shooting them, beating them and blanketing their neighborhoods with highly toxic CS and CN gases. Such is the scale and impact of Israeli state violence against Palestinian children.

What follows are a few of the hundreds of recorded case studies.

Cases of Child Beatings

When the IDF beats up children, two or more soldiers are usually involved. They use their rifles, 60 cm. wooden or fiberglass truncheons, and their fists. They kick children with their heavy boots, and they sometimes use iron bars or bricks. As a rule, they repeatedly strike their victims "all over the body". Other "standard" methods are 1) repeatedly smashing their victims' heads against walls or army vehicles, and 2) repeatedly striking their foreheads to cause hairline fractures at the base of their skulls. Males, including children seven or eight years old, have been repeatedly kicked in their genitals; females, including teenage girls, in their abdomens. By December 31, 1992, the IDF so badly beat 982 Gaza children under the age of six that they required professional medical treatment. Four year-old Ali was one of them.

On February 10, 1989, Ali aimed his toy gun and made clicking noises at a passing Israeli patrol. He was playing near his house in Jabalya refugee camp (Gaza). Seeing this, three of the soldiers raced over. One grabbed the toy and stomped on it, and then grabbed Ali's right hand as another soldier held the child from behind. The third soldier "...began to pound Ali's outstretched arm with his wooden truncheon. The soldier holding Ali's arm out slapped him hard across the face over and over again." Neighbors tried to intervene but were prevented by the rest of the patrol. The soldiers "...continued slapping his face and pounding his arm with the truncheon until the arm broke." Then another soldier "lifted Ali high into the air and dashed him to the pavement. Just as he hit the ground, the soldier who had been slapping his face struck him on the left shoulder with the butt of his rifle. ...When the three soldiers finished with Ali, they rejoined the patrol and continued down the street."
ings, probably because more of them are beaten and beaten more savagely than their younger brothers and sisters. UNRWA reported 3,655 Gaza children six to ten years old treated for such injuries.

Nine year-old Mohammad, an early victim of such beating when soldiers raided his home in Gaza, tells his story:

...I ran to my room and hid under my bed. Some soldiers beat on my door with their gun butts until it was smashed... I could see only their big boots from under the bed...one pair of those big boots turned and slowly walked towards my bed. I was shivering a lot and squeezed my eyes shut so I wouldn't cry in front of the soldier, but the tears came out anyway. The soldier pulled me from under the bed, lifted me up like a pillow, screamed at me to tell who had thrown stones, and threw me onto the floor. I lay between his boots and he took out his knife...Then he raised the knife in his two hands and raised it high over his head, and plunged the knife downward until it stopped an inch from my forehead. I screamed and screamed and so did he. Then all the soldiers ran into my room and they all kicked and beat me terribly with those big sticks. The soldier with the knife kicked me in my back, my stomach and between my legs while the others hit me with sticks. After these beatings, I could not walk and was carried from my home to a military vehicle where I found two other boys, 12 and 7, both bloody from beatings. The soldier with the knife beat us as we were taken to a military compound. The soldier who took me out [of the vehicle] lifted me high over his head and threw me down onto the ground as hard as he could. He stood over me screaming, "Who throws stones?" I couldn't speak at all then. He took one of my feet and dragged me along the ground on my back to a room and shut the door behind us. I was then interrogated by about ten soldiers who continued to beat me. Then one of the soldiers carried me to the prison gate and threw me outside. One of them said, "If we catch you throwing stones, we'll kill you."

The occupying authorities are technically not permitted to hold children under 12 in detention centers, which explains why Mohammad was thrown outside the gates after soldiers had finished with him. He crawled home.11

There was a major shift of practice after Moishe Arens replaced Yitzhak Rabin as Defense Minister in June 1990. Not only was there a dramatic decline in the number of child gunfire deaths and injuries, but there was also a dramatic decline in serious beating injuries among pre-teen Gaza children. This decline, however, was followed by a re-escalation to 100 beatings per month between January 1992 and the end of February 1993, as Rabin re-imposed his "iron fist" policy on Gaza.

The beatings described by nine year old Mohammad during his arrest and interrogation are standard practice. There is no evidence of any change since the beginning of the Intifada. In 1989, PHRIC published a collection of affidavits from children ranging in age from 12 to 16 years, all but one of whom reported prolonged beatings when taken into custody and during interrogation.12 Two years later, PHRIC published a report on electric shock torture used against eight Palestinians ranging in age from 14½ to 23 who, risking IDF retaliation, signed affidavits. All had been accused of minor offenses such as throwing stones and hanging flags.13 The shocks were administered by the application of "...thin wires attached to their heads, necks, legs and genitals. The methods used suggest that interrogators, who appear to have belonged to a peripatetic interrogation squad calling itself the "Black Scorpions," had training in how to apply electric shock "...to the human body so as to leave minimal scarring or other lasting physical evidence."14 All were repeatedly beaten. Some were threatened with execution and sterilization, including the 14 year-old.15 Two 16 year-olds were forced to witness each other's torture. All were hoisted and handcuffed, and most were handcuffed in painful positions, subjected to sleep deprivation, and deprived of food. An interrogator also burned the right eyelashes of the 14 year-old who was told that his home would be demolished. Most were exposed to the winter's cold while hooded and handcuffed.

The Israeli organization B'Tselem, which received the prestigious Carter Center award for its human rights work, issued a report in June 1990 on the interrogations of Palestinians between the ages of 12 and 17.16 It documented the methods used which include: 1) severe beatings, 2) threats against relatives, 3) beatings while hooded and tied, 4) beatings while the minor is put into a closed sack tied around the knees, 5) tying hands to a pipe behind the back, 6) confinement in one of three types of spaces: a) a dark cell with a toilet, roughly 1½ meters by 1½ meters b) a cell as high as a person but so narrow that a person cannot sit, and c) the "box" or "coffin" which is a box approximately 1 meter by 60 cm, with a depth of about 80 cm.17 At the end of interrogation, the detainee is supposed to sign a confession in Hebrew. Interroga-
tions usually take place at night. One 12 year-old testified that he was beaten for three hours, put into the “lock-up” (the narrow cell with the toilet) for half an hour and beaten again.18

Children have been “tied to the pipe” which means being tied in a twisted position out-of-doors, sometimes for hours or overnight. Children have also been put into the “grave” which means putting them into a box in a crouching position for hours, often with their hands tied behind their backs.19

The Jerusalem-based Women for Support of Women Political Prisoners published the testimony of 16 year-old Laila who was arrested on February 13, 1989 and, like so many other youngsters, held for months before coming to trial:

I was standing on a side road, when I saw several girls running and four civilians carrying pistols chasing them. I was afraid and started to run too, but I fell. I was caught and put in a car where I met a girl friend from school who had been caught just before me. In the car, the men ordered us to open our legs and they beat us between the legs: they even tried to penetrate me with their clubs. When I resisted, they tore the zipper off my pants.

One of the soldiers had a metal wire. He bent the edge and placed the wire around our necks, pulling our heads back and forth.

During the interrogation (at the Russian Compound in West Jerusalem), my hands and my legs were cuffed, and my wrists started to bleed. When I refused to sign a form written in Hebrew, the content of which was not translated to me, a woman interrogator named Marcelle hit my fingers with a metal ruler until they began to bleed.

One day when I was staying in a regular cell, my friend was removed. After a while we began to worry and asked a policewoman called Ruhama what had happened to her. Ruhama told us our friend had died. We continued to ask her until she took me to the dining room. My feet were cuffed and my hands were tied to an iron railing above my head, my face touching the wall. Ruhama and some other policemen beat me violently.

The night before my trial I was taken into a small room. Three men threatened to rape me unless I confessed to throwing stones. They brought a metal wire and threatened to insert it into my vagina, unless I confessed. The day of the trial when we were walking along the corridor, one of the soldiers tripped me. When I fell down, he started to “ride” on top of me.20

The second survey by the Gaza Community Mental Health Program shows that 19% of the children interviewed had been detained, suggesting that almost 30,000 Gaza children have been subjected to beatings in custody and a significant number to torture during interrogation. Officially, Israel permits “moderate physical and psychological pressure” during interrogations of “security suspects”: the practice was condoned by the Landau Commission Report, although the nature of permissible “pressure” is contained in a still secret section of that report. Amnesty International, while documenting maltreatment of Palestinians in Israeli custody, condemned the public sections of that report as well as the maltreatment it legalizes, and the widespread torture AI documented.21

Palestinian fathers cannot protect their children from being tortured. To underscore this pain, soldiers often beat fathers in front of their children: 55% of Gaza children have witnessed such humiliations.22 For this reason, women often intervene to protect children from the soldier’s guns and clubs, although they too risk being savagely beaten.23

Fourteen year-old Rana Al-Masri was killed trying to intervene. She and her mother were having tea with relatives on January 14, 1989 when soldiers grabbed her 17 year-old cousin, Suleiman and started beating him. There were no demonstrations that day and there had been no stone-throwing in the neighborhood. The women rushed out to try to get the soldiers to release Suleiman. The soldiers fired tear gas at the women, but the canisters did not ignite. One of the soldiers then opened fire at a distance of about nine meters (ten yards) with a volley of PCMBs (16.5 gram plastic-covered metal balls). Rana was hit in the head. Her mother screamed when she saw her daughter’s blood and brains on the ground.24

Women and girls have also clashed with Israeli soldiers, but more often play supporting roles in confrontations, bringing stones and water to youths “on the front line”. I witnessed just such a confrontation in front of Ramallah Hospital in 1988 on International Women’s Day. Around the time of the clash, Rasha Houshieh was standing behind the glass door to the veranda of her grandparents’ home in nearby El Bireh. An Israeli jeep slowly passed on patrol because of demonstrations in nearby El-Ameri refugee camp. One of the soldiers spotted Rasha. The jeep stopped, he got out, walked over to the house, aimed and fired. A rubber coated bullet ripped out Rasha’s right eye. Rasha was thirteen years old at the time.

When Rasha’s mother tried to rush her to the hospital, the soldiers kept them for ten to fifteen
Two weeks later he was at New England Deaconess Hospital under the care of Dr. Anthony Sahyoun who had successfully transplanted intestines in laboratory animals. No human being had survived that operation: Dr. Sahyoun decided to insert a catheter into Mohammad's chest through which he could be nourished.

When he returned to Dheishe, Mohammad was welcomed by 5,000 people. He was the "living martyr of the Intifada" who had survived against overwhelming odds.

We were concerned lest Mohammad be killed by a beating by soldiers or by exposure to tear gas. Camp conditions also raised the risks of fatal infection. We sought some protection for him by insuring that the IDF knew that foreigners and their embassies were especially interested in his well-being.

Despite that, soldiers arrested Mohammad just days after his gall bladder had been removed. They wanted his brother, Nidal, and were going to hold Mohammad hostage until Nidal gave himself up. Protection came from the camp: almost 2,000 people confronted the Israeli patrol holding him just outside the fences surrounding the camp. They released him with the warning that unless Nidal surrendered, they would return and beat him.

Mohammad died of heart failure on October 22, 1990. A few days later, soldiers raided his home and destroyed the scrapbooks Nidal had so carefully assembled on his brother.

When I visited the Abu Akers last August, Mohammad's pictures hung on the living room wall over a large bouquet of brightly-colored artificial flowers.

More than 200 other Palestinian families memorialize their children in the same way.

Cases of Children Killed By Gunfire

The terrible truth is, Mrs. Clinton, that all these crimes against children are subsidized by U.S. tax dollars. Billions in economic and military aid make it possible for Israeli soldiers and settlers to maim and kill Palestinian children.

Israelis and settlers have shot and seriously injured over 25,800 Palestinians during the past five years.26 No one has collected details on all those shootings, but there are details on almost all fatal shootings.27 Most casual observers probably believe (falsely) that most of those children were killed throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. In fact, almost 60% of them were not clashing with soldiers or settlers when they were shot.28

By mid-January 1993, Israeli soldiers had shot 225 Palestinian children to death: Israeli settlers had killed another ten and collaborators had mortally wounded six.29 Most were killed during the first two years of the Intifada. International and domestic pressure appears to have persuaded the IDF to clamp down on their fatal targeting of children before it clamped down on shooting-to-wound them. However, this crackdown did not spare some children from what amounts to summary executions. Fourteen year-old Mohammad Ja'afreh was killed by undercover soldiers who raided his West Bank village on April 1, 1992. An eyewitness gave the following account:

At 3:00 p.m. I was walking in the street in the middle of Tarkumia, on my way to my grandfather's house near the mosque. I saw a military jeep raid the village and some youths stoned it. I did not hear any shooting. The jeep stopped in the middle of the village and youths continued stoning it.
Twenty minutes later I saw two Peugeot cars with West Bank license plates enter the village and go in different directions, then stop in front of the mosque 20 meters away from me. Six people got out of the cars, two were dressed in women’s clothes and the rest in men’s clothes. Two military cars came and the youths ran towards the mosque when they saw them... The people in civilian clothes took their weapons from under their clothes and ran after the youths shooting.

I saw one of the armed civilians shoot towards Mohammad Isma’il Ja’afreh, who is a relative of mine and schoolmate, from a distance of 20 meters. I saw the armed men grab him and pull him by the hair, then I heard the sound of one bullet which the armed person shot at Mohammad from a distance of not more than 5 cms. Mohammad fell to the ground.

For an hour, soldiers prevented medical treatment for Mohammad and for two other boys they had shot. Mohammad died on the ground. The military agreed not to perform an autopsy on condition that Mohammad be buried at 2:00 a.m. with only 15 people in attendance.

The Jerusalem Post gave the official version: Soldiers had fired at three men (sic) who had stoned a car, killing one of them. Mohammed was one of more than 38 children fatally shot by Israeli soldiers who then prevented or delayed medical treatment. Thirty of those children died during the first two years of the Intifada, but the practice continues. As in Mohammad’s case, most (21) of those 38 children were not clashing with soldiers when they were shot. Rana Abu Toyour is a recent example. She was killed on December 19, 1992.

In an unusual departure for the mainstream press, The Toronto Star gave details on the front page:

Rana Abu Thayer (Toyour) was on her way to buy milk for her baby brother when she was gunned down by an Israeli soldier.

She was 9 years old. She was hit by a single bullet which ripped through her tiny body. The bullet entered her left side, tore into her intestines before exiting the other side. She fell instantly to the ground, dropping the tiny aluminum pot she was carrying in one hand and the one shekels (50-cent) coin grasped in the other. As she lay dying in the dust, her body...
jerked in spasms of pain. She tried to call out for help but no sounds escaped her mouth. Israeli soldiers warned witnesses not to help the girl, to leave her alone, to stay in their homes. After 15 minutes, neighbors were allowed to drag her body to safety. They pilled her into a car and rushed her to nearby Nasser Hospital. Doctors pronounced her dead on arrival.32

About 40% of the 235 Palestinian children who died from Israeli gunfire were shot during clashes. Majed Nahhal, 13, was killed by a PCMB which struck him in the head during a stone-throwing assault on an Israeli military compound inside Jabalya Refugee Camp (Gaza) on April 30, 1992. A participant and friend described the scene:

From over the barrels which were about 20 meters from the military camp I could see about 20 soldiers distributed in different areas inside the camp. The soldiers started throwing gas bombs at us but we stayed in our place. Then I saw two soldiers approaching us who stopped at a distance of about 20 meters. One of them pointed his weapon at us and I heard gunfire shots. Majed staggered over the barrels and then fell on the ground. Majed was injured and bleeding from his head.33

The burial took place early in the morning of May 4, the day after Majed died. Majed’s home was then raided by soldiers during the mourning period.

Several children have been shot and then beaten, after which soldiers delayed medical treatment before they died. Mohammad Basel, 15, died on October 3, 1990 of an embolism in his brain. A 16 year old eyewitness gave the following account:

At about 12:30 (September 27) after I left school, four military jeeps raided Yatta and con-
frontations broke out between soldiers and youths in the middle of the town. The youths pelted the soldiers with stones. The soldiers used live ammunition and rubber bullets and tear gas. Shortly after that two soldiers stood in ambush behind two trees across the main street. The military jeeps were not visible, being parked some distance away. As Mohammad was walking one of the soldiers opened fire at him from about 15 meters. Mohammad immediately fell. (He was hit in the chest by a bullet which exited his back.) After he fell, one of the soldiers kicked him on the head and other parts of his body. Another soldier followed and helped the first soldier in dragging Mohammad about 15 meters to the main street. They then threw him into a military jeep which arrived as soon as Mohammad was shot. Three other military jeeps followed. The residents of the town immediately tried to rescue Mohammad, but soldiers stood in their way and began shooting rubber bullets and tear gas canisters. One of the canisters hit the face of the victim’s ten-year-old brother, who fainted and was treated on the site.

Other eyewitnesses confirmed this account. A doctor tried to intervene but was prevented. He then called the Red Cross in Khalil who contacted the local military headquarters. An ambulance under military guard took Mohammad an hour and a half after he had been shot and repeatedly kicked to Alia Hospital. Soldiers then besieged the hospital and arrested a 15 year-old who had given blood for Mohammad’s operation. After the operation, Mohammad was taken back to Khalil military headquarters and then transferred to Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in West Jerusalem where he was again operated on because of hemorrhaging in his brain. He died six days later.34

Cases of Children Denied Education

As you probably know, Mrs. Clinton, Israeli authorities closed all West Bank schools from kindergarten up for 19 months stretched over more than two years.35 The closures were punctuated by temporary reopenings. This policy guaranteed that young children who were learning how to read and write, and who had just started to master the basics of arithmetic, would have their progress blocked, indeed reversed, in these essential skills. It guaranteed too, that three waves of incoming elementary school children would flood an already understaffed and inadequate school system when schools re-opened.

When Israeli authorities finally permitted West Bank schools to reopen, they ordered that children who had attended some classes during brief openings be automatically advanced to the next grade. They then insisted that teachers not deviate from the set curriculum, which meant that effective remedial teaching was not allowed. Most children had lost so much that they were totally unprepared to cope with the material in the grade to which they had been assigned. At the same time, Israeli authorities continued to treat alternative education classes as criminal activities. They thereby assured that the children they had targeted physically would also be both educationally deprived and stunted in the school system the occupying authorities controlled.

In addition, Israeli authorities dismissed almost one-fifth of West Bank teachers from government-controlled schools. Most schools on the West Bank are government-controlled, i.e., under the jurisdic-
Dear Anne Frank,

I wept at your diary, Anne,
And should I read again
Your plight, I'd sorrow still.
A beast was loosed in Germany
That purged your people from their promised land,
And brought you pain and death;

—While the whole world,
   Not knowing,
   Went quietly on its way—

But now I've been a pilgrim, Anne,
To a not so Holy Land,
Granted to survivors
Who did deserve a promised place called home.

While there I heard the piteous stories
Of others dispossessed;
Called from homes in dark of night,
Bound, driven to a distant border,
Dumped, and never seen again.
I've seen the fear in children's eyes,
Watched them schooled behind barbed wire
Within the range of Zionist guns.
Oh Anne, that yours should do to others
What has been done to them;

—While the whole world,
   Not knowing,
   Went quietly on its way—

By Angie Burns

tion of the military occupation. There are 98 UNRWA schools and
a handful of private schools, all of which have some flexibility the
others lack. Most of the dismissed teachers were fired for “security
reasons”. This means not only that
the system is overburdened with
too many students and too few
teachers, but that many of the older
students, who continue to confront
armed Israeli soldiers and defy
their assailts, now view most of
the remaining teachers as spineless
at best, or as collaborators at worst.
Like soldiers returning from battle,
the students are not disposed to
respect a person's authority just be-
cause s/he is a teacher. Empow-
ered by their participation in the
Intifada, they demand respect and
will accord it to those who they
feel have earned it.

To make matters worse, Israeli
soldiers continue to be stationed
outside most schools. They regu-
larly harass and provoke students
on their way to and from school,
and are provoked by them. Israeli
authorities continue to refuse Pal-
estinian educators’ repeated re-
quests to remove these soldiers
from the vicinity of schools. In-
stead, army attacks on schools con-
continue. One such raid occurred on
November 26, 1991, when “border
police personnel fired tear gas into
the UNRWA girls’ school in Shu'fat
camp in the West Bank, necessit-
ating medical treatment for affected
students and teachers, including
two pregnant teachers; there were
no disturbances in the vicinity of
the school at the time.”

In the 1991/1992 school year
UNRWA reported 17% loss of
school days owing to curfews,
strike days and closures of their
98 schools in the West Bank, com-
pared with a 40% loss the year be-
fore. Although the situation had
improved, UNRWA staff docu-
mented through achievement tests
that the closures had “a detrimen-
tal effect on all students, particu-
larly in the lower grades, and in subjects such as mathematics and science. In Gaza where students lost 12% of the 1991-1992 school year because of closures, curfews and strike days, achievement tests showed detrimental effects of disruptions in all subjects and at all levels. UNRWA Newsletters for 1992 reported over 25 Israeli raids on UNRWA schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and over 24 school closures. The actual number of raids on schools was undoubtedly much higher. From July 1, 1991 to June 30, 1992, UNRWA recorded 117 incursions into their premises (schools, clinics, offices) in the West Bank, and 210 in Gaza, 94 of which involved medical facilities. It is reasonable to conclude that in that period, there were about 200 incursions by Israeli soldiers into UNRWA schools.

These raids are not only disruptive, but they often result in injuries and arrests of children. The possibility of an unexpected raid has its own detrimental effect on the atmosphere in which students are supposed to learn. Both elementary and secondary schools are subject to raids. Incursions involve armed soldiers entering schools, and range from jeeps smashing through schoolyard gates, to shooting, to commandeering the school for military operations against local residents.

Although Gaza schools were not closed in a blanket manner, they were and are closed on a selective basis, shut down by curfews and by strike days and, as we have seen, raided. Gaza students, teachers and school officials have suffered the same kinds of assaults, provocations, and humiliations as their West Bank colleagues. The closures and violence continue despite one fruitless year of the U.S.-orchestrated peace process.

Many Palestinian children cannot catch up. They cannot pass the exams needed to graduate from primary and secondary schools. They need a curriculum designed by Palestinian educators, not one based on pre-occupation Jordanian and Egyptian models controlled by Israeli authorities. They need to catch up, but they also need a reason for catching up.

Palestinian universities and other post-secondary institutions were closed by military order for almost four years. This carried a message not only to the youth who are the primary targets of Israeli state violence and who provided the "person-power" for the Intifada, but for children who might otherwise seek higher education. What also gives a shattering message to children is seeing university graduates ending up as garbage collectors, street sweepers and day laborers in Israel because there are no jobs in a devastated, Israeli-dominated Palestinian economy. If there is no escape from poverty, no hope for a future through education for children whose education has already been deliberately shattered, what options do they have?

### Cases of Health Care Deprivation, Home Demolitions and Trauma

As you seek to extend health care to all Americans, Mrs. Clinton, I ask you to look at the health care available to children under Israeli occupation.

As Israeli soldiers and "settlers" were intensifying their violence against Palestinian civilians of all ages, and escalating their use of gunfire against youngsters, Israeli authorities were simultaneously assaulting hospitals, clinics, ambulances, and health care professionals. For example, between July 1, 1991 and June 30, 1992, when the scale of Israeli state violence had diminished, UNRWA reported 31 incidents in Gaza where ambulances were stopped and searched, including incidents in which ambulance drivers and accompanying personnel were beaten and their identity cards seized. There were other such incidents in the West Bank. UNRWA recorded 94 incidents in which its own clinics and associated hospitals were entered, including a delivery room in a Gaza clinic while a birth was in progress.

While injuries from beatings and gunshot wounds were peaking, Israeli authorities were cutting funds for government-run hospitals and medical insurance in the territories, and raising fees for emergency services in Israeli hospitals. As casualties rose, Israeli authorities squeezed Palestinian medical services, arrested suspects from their hospital beds, and frequently terrorized patients and staff. They arrested doctors and imprisoned them without charges. They demanded "payment-in-advance" for sick and wounded Palestinians. Families were required to pay an advance of $130 per day for three to four days before their sick or injured could be admitted for treatment in government-controlled hospitals in the West Bank and in Gaza. Gaza, where most of the child gunshot wounds occur, has only one private hospital, and the only neurosurgical facilities available are at Magassad Hospital in East Jerusalem, which means that those suffering serious head wounds have to endure a four hour ride or be sent to Israeli hospitals where they are often neglected and treated badly. About half the hospitals in the West Bank are under Israeli control. The facilities in most government-run hospitals, especially in Gaza, are grossly inferior to those in private hospitals. They are, in fact, substandard.
Some parents have received bills of up to $10,000 from Israeli hospitals to which their dying chil-
dren have been taken by the mili-
tary after being shot by the sol-
diers. As a result of these pressures, the private hospitals were forced to admit patients whose families could not meet the costs of government hospital care, further bur-
dering their already strained financial and professional resources.

Then, there are the home demolitions. I ask you, Mrs. Clinton to consider the trauma Hurricane Andrew must have caused when thousands of Americans saw their homes destroyed, losing not only their property, but all those private memories and personal mementos they contained. Imagine, then, the impact on children when they witness their home being blown up.

Since the beginning of the Intifada, at least 8,500 Palestinian children have watched as Israeli soldiers demolished their homes. By the end of 1992, the Israeli government had demolished 1,700 homes, and partially sealed 348 others.

In November 1992, the Rabin government introduced a new policy of blowing up Palestinian homes as punishment because Palestinians suspected of violence against Israelis or collaborators live in them, or (officially) because they were built without a license. Since most Palestinian homes were built without a license, and since the practice of blowing up unlicensed homes increased 20-fold after the Intifada began, demolishing unlicensed homes is reasonably viewed as a mean of collective punishment and intimidation. The official reason given for the majority of home demolitions was that the house was unlicensed.

Demolishing homes as collective punishment qualifies as a "grave violation" of the IVth Geneva Convention, as do all the practices described above. They are violations of international law, as the United States recognizes by repeatedly voting for U.N. Security Council resolutions reaffirming Israel's obligations as signatory and occupying power, to abide by the provisions of the IVth Geneva Convention. That Convention spells out the duties of occupying states and the rights of conquered people. The U.S. has also guaranteed that no measures have ever been taken to compel Israel to comply either with that Convention or with any Security Council resolutions. President Clinton could uphold international law and security council resolutions by moving to insure Israel's compliance.

You must pile onto all this trauma, the wrenching emotional and economic impact when family members are imprisoned in brutal, unsanitary and health-threatening conditions. At least 100,000 Palestinians have been detained since the beginning of the Intifada. The GCMHP surveys showed that 39% of the children interviewed had a family member imprisoned, and 28% had a brother imprisoned. Indeed, considering the 11,151 days of curfew that have been imposed, almost all Palestinian children have been imprisoned in their own, usually overcrowded homes without fresh food, adequate water or a space to play.

The cumulative effects of Israel's unrelenting oppression on children's psyches are suggested by the GCMHP surveys. They revealed that 50% of the children interviewed violently act out their aggressions; 46% suffer night terrors; 60% are hyperactive and 60% wet the bed. The wounds inflicted on the souls of Palestinian children will never heal: at best they will scar and at worst, they will fester, deepen and erupt into violence. For those wounds to scar, those children must be set free and they must be nurtured by a government they can inherit.

**What Can You Do?**

Mrs. Clinton, you can help the process of reconciliation. You can urge President Clinton not to support Israel's war against Palestinian children. He can do this by upholding existing U.S. law, by
enforcing the ban on aid to countries, including Israel, which grossly and systematically violate human rights. He can insure that Security Council Resolution 681 is implemented, not blocked as it now is. That resolution calls for the High Contracting Parties to the IVth Geneva Convention to deal with Israel’s violations of Palestinian human rights. He can insist that Security Council Resolution 242, declaring the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, be the basis of bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. He can support a U.N. peace-building force to protect Palestinian children and their families from Israeli soldiers and armed settlers until negotiations are concluded. He can acknowledge what the rest of the world recognizes—the right of Palestinians to self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza. He can insist that Palestinian children, like Israeli children, be free, secure and nurtured. He can declare that they too are entitled to a future to live for, not to die for.

You can visit Palestinian children. You can meet Rasha and her family in the West Bank. You can speak with other injured children and talk with Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations. You can discover from Palestinian educators, doctors, lawyers and businessmen what these children sorely need. (I also recommend Jewish-American educators, doctors, lawyers and businessmen.)

Most of all, you can say that the killing, and the maiming, and the torturing of a whole generation of children must stop.

Or—at the least—that U.S. taxpayers should stop paying for it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

James A. Griffin

--- Endnotes ---

1. Cf. UNRWA statistics on medically treated Intifada-related injuries to children 15 years and under in Gaza from December 9, 1987 through December 31, 1992. They are: 5,290 shot with live ammunition, “plastic” bullets, aluminum bullets, and plastic covered metal balls (PCMBs); 692 shot with rubber-coated bullets; 12,434 beaten; 3,527 treated for the effects of tear gas (CS and CN gases); 128 treated for other injuries, for a grand total of 21,963. Children 15 and under constitute approximately 51% of the Gaza population, estimated at 720,000 (Cf. Facts and Figures about Palestinians, The Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, Washington, D.C., p.4).

2. Figures are based on two surveys of 1,564 and 1,000 children in Gaza, 8 to 15 years of age. The surveys were conducted in the Spring and Fall of 1992 by the Gaza community Mental Health Program. The first sample showed the following: 24% had been struck by ammunition; 45% had been beaten by soldiers; 6% had suffered bone fractures during those beatings; 89% had experienced right raids on their homes; 54.7% had witnessed a family member being beaten by soldiers. The second survey showed: 26% had been struck by ammunition; 42% had been beaten by soldiers; 4.5% had suffered bone fractures from those beatings; 85% had experienced right raids on their homes by soldiers; 53% had witnessed their fathers being beaten by Israeli soldiers. There are approximately 150,000 children in Gaza between the ages of 8 and 15, and approximately 210,000 seven or younger.

3. Cf. statement by Commissioner General of UNRWA in the “UNRWA Newsletter,” #276, 17 February 1993; “Over the last few months, there have been more killings and injuries than at any time in nearly three years.”

4. The Palestine Human Rights Information Center (Jerusalem) listed 241 gunfire deaths of Palestinian children 18 years or younger, 9 deaths from Israeli explosive devices or other assaults, and 36 from tear gas between December 9, 1987 and January 20, 1993. There were between 36,000 and 45,000 injuries requiring medical treatment for children 16 or under: 20% caused by Israeli gunfire, 65% by beatings, and 12% by tear gas.

5. This figure includes UNRWA’s totals of 21,663 Gaza children and 3,889 West Bank children. UNRWA statistics on children refer to persons 15 years or under, and unless otherwise specified here, should be read in that way. PHRIC statistics on children refer to persons 16 years or under, and unless otherwise specified, should be read accordingly. Between January 1, 1989, when they first published monthly statistics on injuries, and May 31, 1992, PHRIC reported 4,738 West Bank children treated for serious injuries, out of a total of 23,461. UNRWA’s West Bank total for five years between December 9, 1987 and December 8, 1992 was 16,730 — 6,731 fewer than the injuries reported to PHRIC. PHRIC has access to more West Bank clinics for reporting purposes than does UNRWA.

6. Numerous instances are cited in PHRIC’s Uprising Update. This explains why so few Palestinians, especially in Gaza escaped those gases, as the GCMHP surveys showed: 92.5% of the 2564 children had been affected by tear gas.

7. Two such incidents were widely reported. In one, 58 infants required medical treatment, and 14 had to be hospitalized in medium to serious condition after soldiers ignited three tear gas canisters inside an UNRWA maternity clinic in Gaza, cf. The Tokyo Globe and Mail, June 13, 1990, p. A-1. Following the massacre of 17 Palestinians at the Haram al-Shari by Israeli border policeman and soldiers on October 8, 1990, soldiers attacked Macassad Hospital where the injured and dead were taken, firing tear gas into the windows of the obstetrics ward, orthopaedic section and into the emergency room, cf. PHRIC, “The Massacre of Palestinians at Al-Haram Al-Shari”, p. 12.

8. There are roughly 1 million Palestinian children 16 or under in the occupied territories. I am assuming a U.S. population of 260 million, and assuming at least 42,000 serious injuries to Palestinian children. Based on an actual U.S. population of about 59 million, the equivalent would be closer to 2,500,000.

9. Reported in The Status of Palestinian Children during the Uprising in the Occupied Territories, prepared by Anne Eliza-

10. See the case of the Zaharneh family reported in PHRIC's Uprising Update, October 1989, p. 388. In its statistics for 1991, UNRWA introduced a category for children under the age of one and listed two for beatings by soldiers.


14. Ibid.


17. Ibid., p. 17.


20. Published on p. 19 of a pamphlet entitled "Women in Support of Women Political Prisoners: Jerusalem".


23. PHRIC death lists show that women and girls comprise a fairly constant 10% of Palestinians fatally shot by Israeli soldiers. PHRIC statistics for medically treated West Bank injuries for 1990 and 1991 also show that in 1990, 1,121 West Bank women and girls were medically treated for injuries inflicted by Israeli soldiers/settlers, representing 17.6% of the recorded total of 6,365; in 1991, 643 women and girls were reported treated, representing 15.7% of the recorded total of 4,079.


26. UNRWA reported 15, 974 medically treated injuries from live ammunition, plastic bullets, aluminum bullets and PCB's in Gaza between December 9, 1987 and December 31, 1992, and 4,508 such injuries in the West Bank. UNRWA also listed 328 deaths from gunfire in Gaza and 674 in the West Bank. To these, one must add 1,676 injuries in Gaza from PCB's, and 2,836 in the West Bank, including one fatality from an RCB in Gaza and three in the West Bank. The total UNRWA reported injury from one form or another of Israeli ammunition is 25,797. Since PHRIC's statistics on medically treated West Bank injuries are both more complete and therefore higher than UNRWA's, the actual total of reported medically treated injuries from all kinds of ammunition is well over 25,800.

27. PHRIC Uprising Updates/Human Rights Updates since January 1989 include carefully verified eyewitness accounts of each gunfire death. Their Updates for the first year of the Intifada include some details on most of the gunfights for that year. The Swedish Save the Children Fund, The Status of Children During the Uprising in the Occupied Territories includes very detailed accounts on each gunfire death of a child 15 years or younger during the first year and a half of the Intifada.

28. About 10% of the slain children were described as either throwing stones of just having thrown stones when they were shot: 64% of the slain children in Gaza, and 54% of those killed on the West Bank were not clashing with soldiers or settlers when they were fatally shot. The following are samples of actual non-clash killings: 1) fleeing raiding soldiers, 2) fleeing a confrontation, 3) walking on the street, 4) summarily executed by undercover soldiers or in custody, 5) standing at the door of his/her home, 6) writing graffiti on walls, 7) playing in front of his/her home, 8) watching a confrontation, 9) going outside after a curfew, 10) being in the vicinity where an incident had taken place, 11) guarding or setting up roadblocks, 12) marching in a peaceful demonstration, 13) on his/her way to or from school, or 14) running an errand.

29. The figures are based on PHRIC's death lists.


31. The record is as follows: First year, 5 clash, 4 non-clash; Yr. II, 10 clash, 11 non-clash; Yr. III, 2 clash; Yr. IV, 4 non-clash; Yr. V, 2 non-clash. PHRIC's published details on 1992 deaths are available at this writing only up to the end of May. The second documented 1992 case appeared in the Toronto Star on Tuesday, December 29, 1992, p. A1 in an article by their Jerusalem correspondent, Bob Hepburn, describing, among other things, the shooting death of Rana Abu Toyour in Gaza.

32. There is some uncertainty over Rana's age: PHRIC gave Rana's age as 11.


34. PHRIC Uprising Update, October 1990, P. 443

35. Cf. Jerusalem Media and Communication Center, "Palestinian Education, A Threat To Israeli Security?"

36. Ibid., p. 34.


38. Ibid., p. 24.

39. Ibid., p. 34.

40. The average family on the West Bank has five children — most of the homes were demolished there; the average family in Gaza has eight children. Demolishing 1700 homes means rendering at least 8500 children homeless. Almost all demolitions occur in the presence of the family, and usually on short notice.

41. PHRIC figures as of the beginning of December 1992.

42. PHRIC, "Human Rights Deteriorate During Rabin Regime and Middle East Peace Talks", March, 1993.


44. The preliminary findings of the survey were reported in Toronto Star, March 1, 1992, p. A16. The statistics presented here are drawn from the GCMH's final report.
New Books

- **DELIBERATE DECEPTIONS:** Facing the Facts About the U.S.-Israeli Relationship 
  Paul Findley, Lawrence Hill, 1993, 348 pp., paper. 
  The author of the best seller "They Dare to Speak Out" now speaks out himself against those whom he accuses of deliberately misrepresenting the State of Israel by claiming that it is a democracy that shuns racism, that it treats all its citizens equally, that it promptly pays its debts to the U.S., that it is vital to U.S. security, that it maintains strict military control over the West Bank and Gaza because Palestinians want to destroy Israel, and that Israelis of today have inherited God-given privileges from the Israelites of biblical times. Findley attributes each fallacy to a well-known authority and refutes it with facts from the public record, often from Israeli sources. 
  List: $18.95; AMEU: $12.50

- **THE NEW PALESTINIANS:** The Emerging Generation of Leaders 
  List: $22.95; AMEU: $22.50

- **ISLAM** 
  Isma'il al Faruqi, Argus Communications, 83pp., paper. 
  Dr. Faruqi headed the Islamic Studies Program at Temple University at the time he and his wife were tragically murdered in 1987. This is a recent reprint of his 1984 work in which the noted Islamic scholar portrays for a Western audience the belief, practices, institutions and history of Islam as its adherents see them. 
  Special AMEU price: $4.50

- **SLEEPING ON A WIRE:** Conversations with Palestinians in Israel 
  The Israeli investigative journalist who wrote "The Yellow Wind," an account of Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, now exposes Israel's treatment of its Palestinian citizens within Israel. His conclusion: Israel risks turning its Arab citizens into political enemies. 
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- **PALESTINIAN CHILDREN & ISRAELI STATE VIOLENCE** 
  Dr. Graff, a Columbia University law professor, has written a landmark study that presents the results of an extensive, and unreported, examination of Israel's treatment of Palestinian children in the Occupied Territories. 
  List: $13.00; AMEU: $7.00

- **EXPULSION OF THE PALESTINIANS:** The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948 
  Based mostly on declassified Israeli archival material, this book documents how the concept of "transfer"—a euphemism for expulsion—has always been an integral part of Zionist plans to "clean the land" of its Arab inhabitants in order to make Palestine "as Jewish as England is English." Prominent in implementing that aim was Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's current Prime Minister, who just recently expelled over 400 more Palestinians. 
  List: $11.95; AMEU: $9.75

- **THE SEVENTH MILLION:** The Israelis and the Holocaust 
  Tom Segev, Hill and Wang, 1993, 593 pp., cloth. 
  One of Israel's foremost historians examines Zionism's problematic response to the Holocaust while it was happening, the new Jewish state's disturbing reception of Holocaust refugees, and how the Holocaust legacy has been manipulated at critical times to accommodate the state's ideological requirements. 
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- **WITH FRIENDS LIKE YOU:** What Israelis Really Think About American Jews 
  A former editor of the Israeli daily Ha'aretz claims that U.S. Jews have no right to criticize Israel because what they give Israel (money) only works against its interests, and what they fail to give (their sons and daughters to the Israeli army) works for Israel. Only the U.S. Jew who packs up his family and moves to Israel is a true Zionist, claims Golon, for only in Israel can Diaspora Jews find a secure future. This is a provocative look at the essence of Zionism. 
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