

The Link

*Published by Americans for
Middle East Understanding, Inc.*

Volume 40, Issue 1

Link Archives: www.ameu.org

January-March 2007

One Man's Hope

by Fahim Qubain

AMEU Board of Directors

Jane Adas (*Vice President*)
 Hugh D. Auchincloss, Jr.
 Elizabeth D. Barlow
 Edward Dillon
 John Goelet
 Richard Hobson
 Anne R. Joyce
 Hon. Robert V. Keeley
 Kendall Landis (*Treasurer*)
 Robert L. Norberg (*President*)
 Hon. Edward L. Peck
 Lachlan Reed
 Donald L. Snook
 James M. Wall

AMEU National Council

Hon. James E. Akins
 Isabelle Bacon
 William R. Chandler
 David S. Dodge
 Paul Findley
 Dr. Cornelius B. Houk
 Cynthia Infantino
 O. Kelly Ingram
 Moorhead Kennedy
 Ann Kerr
 Mary Norton
 Marie Petersen
 Dr. John C. Trever
 Don W. Wagner
 Miriam Ward, RSM

Executive Director

John F. Mahoney

About This Issue

This issue begins in a West Bank refugee camp. It is December 1987, the first intifada has begun. A Wall Street Journal reporter, Geraldine Brooks, is on assignment to profile a "stone-throwing Palestinian," and finds Ra'ed, a 15-year-old, who tells her that he'd like to be a doctor, but is fated to be a terrorist.

In Texas, Dr. Rex Repass, an ophthalmologist, reads the Journal story and sends Ms. Brooks a \$100 bill to give to Ra'ed, along with the promise that he will pay for medical school if the boy wants to become a doctor.

Brooks returns to the refugee camp with the \$100 and pledge, but learns that Ra'ed is in an Israeli prison, serving a five year term for throwing a Molotov cocktail at Jewish soldiers.

Five years later, when Brooks phones Dr. Repass to ask if his offer still stands, she's told the doctor is dead, killed in a plane crash. Ra'ed, who had been teaching himself English in prison, says, upon his release, that he would like to study English and become a teacher. Geraldine Brooks pays for his education at the Palestinian-run Bethlehem University. In 1998, Ra'ed is one of ten students in a class of 60 to graduate with honors from the University.

By now, though, the second intifada is underway, and Raed's dream of teaching is not going to happen; to care for his mother and siblings, he deals cards at Jericho's casino, and waits tables in Tel Aviv cafes.

Another reader of the Journal article was Fahim Qubain, a Palestinian-American living in Virginia. He also contacted Geraldine Brooks and,

as his *Link* article explains, he, too, is reaching out to other young Palestinian refugees, who are anxious to learn, but lacking resources.

Leaving the University on the day of his graduation, Ra'ed asked Geraldine if she'd like to visit the nearby Church of the Nativity. Yes, she said, noting she had never been inside. Surprised, he said he thought every Christian who comes to Bethlehem visits the church.

"You never asked me my religion," she said. "What is it?" he asked, thinking she was going to say Buddhist. "I'm Jewish."

After a long pause, he said, "I don't understand why you, a Jew, would help me."

The question, of course, can be asked of any human being who helps another. And the answer, as we see in this issue, is both simple and profound.

Our latest books and videos are listed on pp. 13-15.

We are saddened to report the death of David Nes, a career State Department officer whose postings included Saigon during the Vietnam conflict and Cairo during the Six-Day War.

David also served on AMEU's board of directors from 1986 to 1993, and was a member of our National Council from 1993 until the time of his death this past May.

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

AMEU (ISSN 0024-4007) grants permission to reproduce material from *The Link* in part or in whole. AMEU must be credited and one copy forwarded to our office at 475 Riverside Drive, Room 245, New York, New York 10115-0245. Tel. 212-870-2053; Fax 212-870-2050; E-mail: AMEU@ameu.org; Website: www.ameu.org.

I was born in the mountain town of Ajlun in Jordan—then known as Trans-Jordan. Ajlun is famous for its vineyards, olive groves and the castle built by a Saladin commander in 1184 and enlarged in 1214 AD during the crusades.

My father, Issa, migrated from Nazareth—our ancestral home. In fact, my half brother and his extended family still live in our Nazareth home, which is probably 300 to 400 years old. My half-brother and his family are now Israeli citizens.

Like my two older brothers before me, I was sent at the age of 12 to The Friends Boys School in Ramallah on the West Bank. Traveling alone, I took a taxi to Amman, then another one to Jerusalem, then a bus to Ramallah, some 10 miles away.

Those last ten miles were the most exciting. 1936 was the year of the second Palestinian uprising against Jewish immigration. Our bus was escorted, probably by accident, by a convoy of British troops. Anyway, the bus stopped, as it usually did, at the entrance of the school. I got off with one old suitcase on a Sunday afternoon scared stiff, but excited as I stepped into the unknown. I was immediately taken to the dining room for lunch and was served okra stew and rice. I had hated okra at home but I was so scared I never uttered a word. I ate it, and have loved it ever since.

My six years of boarding school (from 6th grade to senior year—the 12th grade) at the Friends were the wonder years. I thrived, and the school became my home. My intellectual curiosity and love of books was boundless. I devoured most books in the school's very good library. I read every Charles Dickens novel, Zaidan's (the founder of al-Ahram) series of novels of Arab history, as well as many books on history, biography, religion, poetry, and so on. In my senior year, I even read Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations" and Karl Marx's "The Communist Manifesto," although I suspect I did not fully comprehend them. I also became a member of the Religious Society of Friends—the Quakers.

My mother died when I was two years old and was buried in Nazareth. My father died in 1941 and was buried in Ajlun one day before I arrived from school to attend his funeral. I graduated from high school in 1942. At that point, my future looked

uncertain. I had no money to continue my education at such schools as the American University of Beirut. I spent one year with the Arab Legion as an office clerk, followed by one year at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, and so on. None seemed to meet my inclinations, ambitions or expectations of myself. Finally, I decided to try my fortunes in the United States. With some money I had from the sale of property my father left me, I arrived in New York on May 23, 1946.

I immediately teamed up with Shahir Daher to form an export-import company, essentially trading between the U.S., Jordan and Palestine. Shahir was one of the nicest and most amiable persons I have ever met. Originally from Beitunia, a village near Ramallah, he was educated at Cambridge University as a lawyer. For reasons beyond the interests of this article, our company collapsed within a year or so.

Shahir went on to work as an advisor to the Saudi delegation to the United Nations, and I got a low level clerical job at the office of the Palestinian U.N. delegation. During this time I received an unparalleled education in international relations. I was able to attend many of the U.N. debates on Palestine and other international issues. I also met many of the Arab political luminaries of the day such as the legendary Faris al-Khourri (then the foreign minister of Syria), Jamal al-Husaini (then president of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee), Nuri al-Said (then foreign minister of Iraq), and even managed a handshake with Prince Faisal (later King Faisal) at a Saudi reception at the Waldorf-Astoria. This exposure served me well several years later in my graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin.

Guilford College

I soon concluded that the only way I could achieve my ambitions was to obtain a university education.

With encouragement from a Quaker friend, I took a bus from New York and eventually landed at the campus of Guilford College in North Carolina. Literally with suitcase in hand, I walked over unannounced to the president's office. I told him I was a graduate of the Ramallah Friends School, that I had no money for tuition, but wished to enroll. Without batting an eye, Dr. Milner, said, "Welcome home to

Guilford." I do not know how it was worked out; I did not pay Guilford anything, or very little, when I was a student there. The college provided tuition, room and board, as well as lodging at the dorm during vacations. Several years later, when I could afford it, I paid the college every penny I owed. My gratitude to Guilford is unbounded. The college paved my way to a better future.

An interesting incident took place at Guilford which foreshadowed my later deep involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian problem. A Christian minister by the name of Carl Herman Voss, who was the head of a very ardent pro-Zionist Christian organization, was invited to speak at the college. In his lecture at the morning convocation, which included the entire student body as well as faculty, he launched forth with the most virulent pro-Zionist, anti-Palestinian propaganda.

As he spoke, I was getting angrier and angrier, and finally could not stand it any longer. I rose from my seat and asked the faculty presenter, who was sitting on the stage next to the speaker, if I could speak.

Surprised by the unexpected request, he said yes. I shouted that this is nothing but un-adulterated, false propaganda, and Dr. Voss should be ashamed of himself. I was given a standing ovation by the assembly, and the whole place was in an uproar.

But that was not the end of it.

I wrote letters to the Greensboro Daily News and the Christian Century magazine describing the affair. A few days later, I received a telegram from Voss threatening that if I did not retract what I wrote, he would have me deported by the immigration authorities. Instead of being intimidated, some 50 students wrote a letter of protest to the Christian Century and the Greensboro Daily News in which they enclosed the contents of the telegram. Several exchanges followed in the Christian Century in which Voss accused the Guilford students of being ignorant, undisciplined thugs. Eventually, Voss decided that he was losing the public relations battle, and decided not to respond and to let the matter die.

I spent two years and two summers at Guilford taking some 21 hours of course work each semester, plus 12 hours in summer school, the maxi-

mum allowed. During the last regular semester, I was taking 21 hours at Guilford plus 12 hours, unknown to the college, by mail at the extension division of the University of Wisconsin. By the end of the summer session I had completed all my requirements for a B.A. degree.

The University of Wisconsin

A friend had made arrangements for me to enroll at the Political Science Department at Wisconsin. So as soon as I was finished with the summer session at Guilford in late 1948, I took off on a bus—my mode of transportation in those days—to Madison. I received my MA at the end of the school year, and started my Ph.D. studies the following fall with an appointment as a teaching assistant in a political science course on international relations.

I married in November 1951, a marriage that lasted only four years. In 1952, I was given a fellowship by the Social Science Research Council under which I spent a year in the Middle East traveling in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain. My research served as the basis for my Ph.D. thesis and eventually my first book. During this trip, my son Philip was born at the American University Hospital in Beirut.

After my return from the Middle East, I spent two years completing my course work, passing my doctorate exams, and going through a rather unpleasant divorce. I also taught once-a-week seminars for adults on the Middle East at the university extension divisions in both Madison and Milwaukee, as well as writing articles on the Middle East for the Milwaukee Journal.

Those were the high days of the McCarthy era when the hunt for "communists" and "liberals" by the senator was in full swing. In my adult seminar in Madison, I noticed a woman busily writing every word I said, and I became quite jumpy that she may be one of McCarthy's head-hunters. I began to be very careful what I said.

The Washington Years

By 1955, I had completed all my course work and passed my doctorate exam. I had nothing left to do but write my thesis, which I could do anywhere. I was then offered and accepted a job at the Human Relations Area Files at Yale University to direct a

program of country studies of all countries of the Middle East and North Africa for the U.S. Department of Defense. Many Middle East specialists at various U.S. universities were involved in this enterprise including Princeton, Harvard, Columbia, California (at Berkeley), Brandeis, and others. Some 15 studies were written on countries of the Middle East under this program.

By late 1956 the program was completed, and I moved to Washington, DC, looking for U.S. government employment—without success. In the meantime, I completed and submitted my Ph.D. thesis, and started working on my first book.

I also began to do unclassified research work for various government departments, and eventually was recognized as a credible specialist on Middle East affairs. I also hooked up with the Middle East Institute as its unpaid research director, which essentially gave me an office to work from, and various other services.

As such, I did many studies for various U.S. government departments, including State, USIA, Education, and others. In addition, I taught graduate seminars on the Middle East at George Washington University, wrote and reviewed articles in learned journals and lectured extensively on the Middle East.

My first book, “The Reconstruction of Iraq,” was published in 1958 immediately after the collapse of the monarchy, followed by “Crisis in Lebanon,” published by the Middle East Institute, and then “Education and Science in the Arab World,” funded by the National Science Foundation and published in 1966 by Johns Hopkins University Press and the Oxford University Press. This book was later revised and published by The New York Times. The Soviet Union, I was told, purchased 100 copies.

In 1964, I married my wife Nancy, who had just graduated from Harvard with an MA in Middle East studies. Nancy was working as a research assistant to Dr. Halford Hoskins, a friend of mine who was then the Senior Specialist in international relations at the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress and a professor at the American University. Our two children Edward (1966) and Helen (1968), were both born at the George Washington University Hospital in Washington.

Lexington, VA

For health and other reasons, we moved from the Washington area to Lexington, VA, in 1974. In Washington, my involvement in Middle East affairs was primarily academic. It is in southwestern Virginia where my wife and I became involved activists in support of the Palestinian cause and a peaceful and just settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We were and still are opposed to U.S. policies in the Middle East, and we have made a special effort to bring the Arab side of Middle East problems to the fore in our region, where it previously was unknown.

Our activities included writing articles in The Roanoke Times, the regional paper, in local weekly papers such as the Lexington News Gazette, and in monthly newsletters of such organizations as the Roanoke Plowshare Peace Center. Between 1974 and today, I have written numerous articles on Middle East issues in the Roanoke Times and other publications.

We arranged for lectures at various colleges, coupled often with TV coverage or interviews on Blue Ridge Public Television. The first one, I believe, was in cooperation with the Plowshare Peace Center, which included three separate lectures at three different colleges in Roanoke. The first one was by former congressman David Bowen—who was the first director of the Council for the National Interest—at Hollins College. The lecture was attended by more than 500 people from both the college and the general public. It was covered by the local affiliates of NBC and CBS. This was followed by a debate at Roanoke College, and a lecture by Barbara Lubin at Virginia Western Community College.

The list of lectures and TV appearances is too long to detail here. Among the speakers we sponsored: Bishop Kenneth Cragg from Oxford; Kathy Kelly, founder of Voices in the Wilderness and a Nobel Peace Prize nominee; Hans Sponeck, former U.N. Assistant Secretary General and U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq; Phyllis Bennis; Joshua Ruebner, co-founder of Jews For Peace; Sarah Roy from Harvard; “Three Women” from Jerusalem; Philip Wilcox, president of the Foundation for Middle East Peace; and many others. Some ten colleges benefited from our lecture program, including East-

ern Mennonite College and Bridgewater College in Harrisonburg, VA, Washington & Lee University in Lexington, University of Virginia, several colleges in Roanoke, Virginia Tech, Radford University, Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg and Guilford College in North Carolina.

These lecture tours provided a conduit for leading Middle East figures to address audiences in our area and enabled us to meet presidents and leading figures in local colleges and universities who later became key in the project I consider to be my most important.

The F.B.I. Visit

The start of the first Iraq war in 1990 invigorated our efforts against the Gulf war and against Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people. In January 1991, my wife and I were visited by two F.B.I. agents who interrogated us about how we felt about the war. I was asked many personal family questions.

The visit was accorded considerable unfavorable coverage in the local press. The Washington Post printed a letter I wrote on the subject in a prominent spot on the editorial page. In that letter I noted that F.B.I. Director William Sessions had recently said that the F.B.I. does not interrogate or investigate members of the Arab-American community. It holds a "dialogue" with them. I wrote:

Let me describe some of the principal highlights of my "dialogue" with Mr. Sessions' agents. They did not inquire as to whether I was subjected to any harassment (there was none in my case). But shortly after the gentle amenities were over, we got down to basics. They asked for my Social Security number – which I refused to give, although it is certainly not top secret. They asked for my date and place of birth, and I gave them both, although I told them that it was none of their business...

I have an 80-year-old sister who lives in Damascus, Syria, with whom I have almost no contact. I could not believe my ears when they asked for her name and address. Needless to say, I did not oblige. During our "dialogue," I had a telephone call from my broker. The agents, who heard my side of

the conversation, wanted his name and location.

I ask Mr. Sessions to leave us Arab-Americans alone. He and his agents violate our civil liberties and constitutional rights as American citizens. No number of euphemisms can mask the reality that these visits are demeaning, intimidating and humiliating. But the supreme insult is that they set us apart from the rest of our fellow citizens in our respective communities in this country.

A Discussion Group

In the meantime, with the support of the Episcopalian bishop in Roanoke, I tried to organize a discussion group of distinguished citizens on Middle East issues, but particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli problem. Our first meeting took place at the bishop's offices. At the end of the meeting, I suggested that we continue our dialogue with a dinner at my home in Lexington. The bishop gave me a suggested list of invitees which included Rabbi Jerome Fox. I sent invitation letters to all on the bishop's list, including one to Rabbi Fox. He declined the invitation and, in a letter to me, he wrote:

However, in all candor, if I were free that evening I would not feel comfortable going to your home... I do not know you except for the letter you wrote to the Plowshare Newsletter and Roanoke Times about a month and a half ago. Frankly, that letter was, in my opinion and that of most of the Roanoke Jewish Community, horrendously anti-Israel. It was full of lies, half-truths and twisting of the truth.

I wrote the rabbi back a three-page letter in which I said, in part:

Now let me address your specific complaint about the two articles I wrote which you describe as "full of lies".... I stand by every word, and I am willing to document every statement of fact made. I, on purpose, avoided any Arab sources. My documentation consists entirely from U.S. government materials (the State Department, Congress,

the Export-Import Bank, etc.), reputable research organizations in the United States concerned with the Middle East, Israeli government sources, the Israeli press, and the mainline U.S. press such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Christian Science Monitor and The Wall Street Journal. These are hardly organs of Arab propaganda.

In any case, I would be more than happy to discuss these articles with you privately “one on one,” or in the presence of Bishop Light ... or any one else you choose. Or, if you prefer, I would be willing to discuss with you the issues raised by the two articles in a public forum. In any case, I understand that the people at the Plowshare Peace Center offered to have Mrs. Fox or someone from the Jewish community write a rebuttal in their next newsletter, but she declined the offer.

You take me to task for being “anti-Israel.” That may or may not be true, but even if it is true, it is irrelevant. In the first place, I am not aware that I have to owe allegiance to the Israeli flag and that I have to be “pro-Israel” to qualify as a human being worthy of talking to. I am a U.S. citizen and my allegiance is only to the United States and its interests, and to no one else. In the second place, the Israeli lobby and its Jewish supporters in the United States have made a life time career of being “anti-Arab,” “anti-Palestinian,” and of distorting the Arab-Palestinian image in the United States and Europe. I have no complaint on that score—that certainly is your option if you choose to do so, although I do not agree with it and I, as an Arab, will make every effort to counter it. In short, what I am trying to say is: What makes it all right for a Jew to vilify the Arabs and the Palestinians, but not all right for Arabs to be anti-Israel? ...

You tell me that you would feel uncomfortable having dinner at my home. Well, I have no such inhibitions. Invite me to your home and I shall come! Invite me to your syna-

gogue and I shall come! Invite me to your community center and I shall come! If we perceive each other as the “enemy,” it becomes even more compelling that we try to reach out to each other, and it may turn out that perhaps—just perhaps—we will find that we are not that bad after all. Enemies—if that is what you think we are—cannot reach an accommodation if they simply indulge in rhetoric and futile recrimination. They have to talk to each other.

I never heard from Rabbi Fox again. I should emphasize, however, that my literary encounter with Rabbi Fox is not typical. Both my wife and I have made it a point to reach out to Jews and Israelis. Indeed we have many friends among the various Jewish peace groups here in the U.S. and Israel. I also dream what now seems the impossible: that one day there will be a Palestinian and Israeli state living side by side in harmony with each other, and serving as an example of peace and justice to the world.

The New Israeli Visa Regulations

My latest foray into the Middle East quagmire is in response to the daunting new Israeli visa regulations—aimed primarily at Arab-Americans but other nationals as well—which seek to destroy whatever is left of the Palestinian economic and social infrastructure. The American Friends School in Ramallah, established some 120 years ago, may collapse because six of its teachers, all with U.S. passports, are threatened with refusal by the Israelis to have their visas renewed.

I wrote a letter to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in which I said:

...the Israeli government is hell bent on destroying this American treasure, one of the few remaining ties of good will between America and Palestinians and the Arabs in general. Six teachers of this school, all with American passports, have been refused by the Israeli government the extension of their residence visas. The principal of this school has stated categorically that if this were to happen “the school will collapse.” Madam Secretary, it is time that for at least once we do something right on the Palestinian-Israeli problem. I urge you and appeal to you to

take immediate steps to stop this Israeli act of legalized terrorism.

I also alerted at least 200 individuals concerning this problem as well as several Quaker meetings across the country. I believe that at least 1,000 concerned citizens and organizations were alerted to the Israeli visa problem, and some took action.

Enter Geraldine

The inspiration for what I hope will be the most important legacy for which I pray I will be remembered came by way of a wonderful, young and beautiful Jewish lady, Geraldine Brooks, whom I regard now not only as a very close friend, but almost like a member of my own family.

Geraldine was for several years the Middle East correspondent for The Wall Street Journal. She is now a freelance journalist and the author of several books and novels. Her latest novel, "Marsh," won her the prestigious 2006 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

It was Geraldine's article, "Arms and the Boy," in the February 14, 1999 Washington Post Magazine, which was the inspiration for the creation of the Hope Fund. Another version of her article appeared in the London Guardian newspaper of December 11, 1999. Both articles can be found in the media window of the Hope Fund website: www.thehopefund.org. The article chronicled Geraldine's relationship with a Palestinian stone-thrower, Ra'ed, whom she eventually nursed through a B.A. degree at Bethlehem University and beyond.

By the time I finished the article, I was literally crying, and decided I had to do something. I managed to get Geraldine's home phone number and called her, asking what can be done to help the boy. She suggested that we raise a fund to help Ra'ed

come to the United States for study. A few days later I decided that a one-shot proposition may help Ra'ed and make us feel good and noble, but would not solve the basic problem as there are thousands upon thousands of bright Palestinian refugee children whose lives are wasted because they are too poor to get a college education.

The Hope Fund

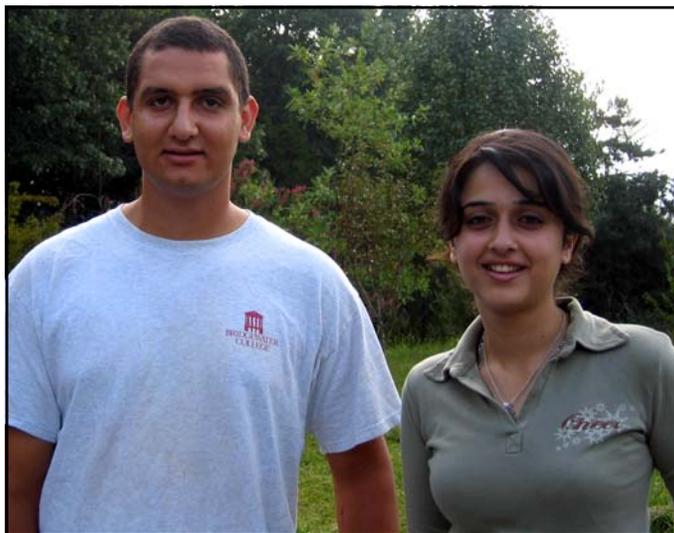
And that is how the Hope Fund came into being. We serve a need that so far is not being met by any other organization. Our primary and only mission is to provide scholarships to the brightest and the most academically qualified among the poorest and most vulnerable in Palestinian society: children of the Palestinian refugee camps.

Ideally, it would have been preferable to have the candidates attend colleges and universities in the Middle East, and particularly in Palestine. Unfortunately, Palestinian colleges are small in number and have very limited financial and other resources, which makes it very difficult for them to

grant four-year scholarships.

In addition, Palestinian colleges are frequently subjected to closure for months and even years at a time, and their students are unable to reach their various colleges because of Israeli checkpoints and frequent curfews. This left us with the practical alternative of study in American colleges. We take Palestinian refugee students not only from the West Bank and Gaza, but also those in the Diaspora in the Arab world.

Once the parameters of our objective were decided, we were faced with the issue of how to go about it. It took over a year to establish the fund's organizational and legal framework. At first, we thought that instead of establishing a whole new en-



Mohammed Haroun and Shireen Abukhiran, both from the West Bank, in a photo taken in August, 2006, in front of the Qubain home in Lexington, VA. Brought from the West Bank under the Hope Fund program, they are in their junior and freshman years respectively at Bridgewater College (VA).

tity, we would operate under the umbrella of a well established and highly respected non-profit charity in Washington, DC. I approached Hisham Sharabi, a friend, then president of the Jerusalem Fund. He immediately agreed to my proposal and an account called "the Qubain Scholarship" was set up. Geraldine's article in the Guardian, which mentioned my name, generated a blizzard of messages of support from British sympathizers, as well as some \$800 dollars. I also was able to raise some \$4,000, plus my own \$1,000. These contributions were deposited with the Jerusalem Fund.

It soon became clear for many reasons that this arrangement was unworkable. I then established our own non-profit organization, which took over six months to do. The Hope Fund was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and later recognized by the I.R.S. as a public charity, which allowed for tax-deductible contributions as well as other benefits. We started out with a small Board of Directors that included me, my wife Nancy, Geraldine Brooks and Rev. Edward Kryder.

Dr. Kryder, then a senior professor at the Virginia Theological Seminary, was, like me, among the first to be moved by Geraldine's article. During our first board meeting, I nominated him to be chairman, with me as president. He continued to serve in that capacity until he resigned in 2004 due to health reasons. Like Geraldine, he was a pillar of support. His dedication and active devotion to the mission of the Hope Fund, and his ability to lobby his former students, friends and other members of his family for donations, were major factors in the development of the Hope Fund. Even in his retirement he continues to be a strong supporter, but we miss his participation and his active guidance.

Since then, the board has continued to grow in both numbers and active participation. It now includes a former college president; a college provost; a former U.S. ambassador; the presidents of American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) and Amideast; Naila Asali, former chairwoman of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC); the executive director of the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA); and several other distinguished Americans. We hope to add three more members to the board in the coming months.

Our next challenge was how to recruit, select and process possible candidates on the ground. Because of our extremely limited financial resources, there was no prospect for us to open Hope Fund offices in the Middle East for such a purpose. Amideast came to the rescue.

Amideast is a highly respected, non-profit, educational organization headquartered in Washington, DC. It has some 30 years of experience in training, testing, recruiting and selecting possible candidates in the Middle East for education in the United States. It also has many offices in the region staffed with experienced educational specialists to carry out the various cultural and educational programs.

Early on, I approached the former Amideast president to see if he would be willing to have his organization serve as the Hope Fund agent on the ground for the selection of prospective candidates. He graciously agreed to do that. Upon his retirement some three years ago, he was succeeded by former U.S. ambassador Theodore Kattouf. Under his leadership, Amideast services to the Hope Fund expanded vastly in both magnitude and variety. Amideast offices on the ground now interview and select candidates, using our guidelines, arrange for English language (TOEFL) and other tests, process college applications, help secure U.S. visas, and make travel arrangement to the U.S. In addition, Ambassador Kattouf has become a patron of our fund, a personal friend, and is now a very active member of our Board of Directors.

Our next challenge, was how to provide the scholarships. With only \$5,000 in our bank account, it was obvious that the Hope Fund could not provide scholarships on its own. At this point, we were in a quandary on how to proceed. But we lucked out. In the year 2000, Roanoke College was trying to expand its international student enrollment. A good friend of mine, Dr. Nasser Barghouty, who was then a physics professor at Roanoke College, arranged a meeting between me and Michael Maxey, the admissions vice president.

Mr. Maxey and I struck a deal. Roanoke College would provide full four-year scholarships to two Hope Fund-sponsored candidates, while the Hope Fund would select candidates with high academic and other qualifications that met the college admis-

sion requirements, process their applications, procure their visas, arrange and pay for travel to the U.S., and for books and student health insurance. This agreement, with some variations, became the general pattern of partnership between the Hope Fund and host colleges.

In addition, the Hope Fund, on its own, provides the candidates with an umbrella of social support. My wife and I meet them at the airport, take them to our home until the start of their schools, and provide them with refrigerators and microwaves, computers, clothing if needed, and even bedspreads and pillow cases. The Qubain home also serves as home away from home during Thanksgiving, Christmas and other school vacations. Often, however, the students choose other options.

Our first two students arrived in August 2001: Khaled from a refugee camp in Beirut, and Hanan from a refugee camp at Ain Al-Hilwa. Both graduated from an UNRWA school in their area, and both were at the top of their senior class. May 7, 2005, was a watershed year for the Hope Fund. Hanan and Khaled graduated cum laude on that day—Khaled in physics, Hanan in bio-chemistry.

We celebrated their graduation by bringing their parents from Lebanon at Hope Fund and Roanoke College expense to attend the graduation ceremonies. You could see the joy and pride in their eyes, that their children could achieve this impossible dream. Both are now in graduate Ph.D. programs, Hanan in bio-chemistry at Virginia Tech. and Khaled in engineering at the University of Alabama at Huntsville.

Since our early partnership with Roanoke College, The Hope Fund has experienced phenomenal

growth. By November 2006, we had raised some \$2.5 million in scholarships given by generous colleges. By March 2006 we had spent \$29,600 in direct assistance to students, as opposed to only \$14,600 in office expenses, making our administrative costs barely 1% of income and scholarships produced—the lowest among non-profit charities.

As of November 2006, we had a total of ten students, five boys and five girls, including the two who graduated in 2005. All are registered by UNRWA as Palestinian refugees. Because they realize that their scholarships provide an opportunity of a lifetime and a passport to a better life, all are very focused and for the most part achieve high academic levels. With our encouragement, they usually enroll in the more demanding study programs such as physics, chemistry, math, and computer science.

Generally speaking Palestinians, refugees or not, receive the best treatment in Jordan and Syria, while Lebanon is most restrictive, and Palestinians from the Occupied Territories are in the worst shape. Gaza, although technically under Palestinian control, is still under severe Israeli occupation. For these reasons, the Hope Fund attempts to recruit most of its candidates from the West Bank,

Gaza and Lebanon.

In addition to Khaled and Hanan, who graduated in 2005, we now have in place eight Hope Fund-sponsored students at various colleges, and we expect at least four, possibly six more scholarships for 2007. Both Haverford and Swarthmore have agreed to provide a scholarship if the candidate meets their very high admission criteria. Columbia College for Women has also made a similar offer, and we are now discussing the terms.



Manal Zaher (left) and Hibba Assi (right) pose with Hope Fund founder Fahim Qubain. Manal, a student at Bryn Mawr, and Hibba, who attends Washington & Lee, came to the U.S. from a refugee camp near Baalbeck, Lebanon.

Gaza

Gaza, where the need for scholarships is most pressing, remains a problem due to Israeli policies.

A few months ago, the Hope Fund entered into a new kind of innovative partnership. An agreement was struck between a Muslim Palestinian humanitarian activist, Sam Rasoul, Roanoke College and the Hope Fund to provide a scholarship for a girl from the West Bank or Gaza. Roanoke College would provide the tuition part of the scholarship, Mr. Rasoul the cost of room and board, and the Hope Fund would identify and select a candidate, secure a U.S. student visa, and pay the airfare to the United States.

It should be noted that it was Mr. Rasoul's initiative and Roanoke College's Michael Maxey's support that enabled this imaginative partnership to be concluded. Mr. Rasoul is a graduate of Roanoke College and a successful young business man in the Roanoke area.

The Hope Fund quickly identified and selected a young lady from Gaza who was accepted for admission in January 2007. The problem facing us is how to get our candidate, Iman Balbisi, out of Gaza. Gaza is now under siege and no one is allowed to go in or out. This leaves us with what seems like an impossible task of extricating Iman from Gaza to arrive for the start of school in mid-January.

We faced a similar problem in late 2003, when we tried to extricate two of our candidates from Gaza. They were required to go to the U.S. embassy in Tel-Aviv for a visa interview. The Israeli authorities, however, would not allow them to do so.

I even called the U.S. cultural attaché in Tel-Aviv, to no avail. At my request, Dr. Haidar al-Shafie, a prominent Palestinian leader in Gaza, called the U.S. ambassador in Tel Aviv—with the same negative result.

Finally after several months of futile trying, when the exit from Gaza to Egypt was opened for a few days, I instructed our two candidates to escape

with their visa papers to Cairo, which they did.

After waiting for over 50 days, they eventually received their visas and flew to the United States. The Hope Fund paid for their expenses in Cairo, their visa fees (\$100 each), and their airfare.

To add insult to injury, they were interrogated for three hours each by the F.B.I. when they landed at Kennedy airport. As a result the boys missed their connecting plane to Dulles, where my wife and I were waiting for them. After waiting until midnight, we finally gave up and went back to our apartment in a Washington suburb.

The boys spent the night in a hotel near Kennedy airport, became separated from each other, and finally arrived separately the following day. Nancy made several trips to the airport (a total of 200 miles) to pick them up separately. They remained with us in our home in Lexington until the spring semester opened at Bridgewater College in late January. One of the boys returned to Gaza a year later.

When our students face frustrations such as those described above and I am impatient that the program is not growing rapidly enough, I recapture my optimism by reflecting on what has been accomplished in such a short time. I have read and re-read the note sent

to me by Khaled El-Nemr, who graduated Cum Laude from Roanoke College in 2005 and is now in a Ph.D. engineering program. An excerpt of his "thank you" is quoted below:

My name is Khaled El-Nemr, a Palestinian refugee from Beirut, currently pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Material Science Engineering and here is the hope that I followed to get me where I am now... I am the eldest of six kids in a poor family, a hardworking tailor dad and a wonderful mom. My dad has long had diabetes... Our income was very limited and there was no way that my parents could afford university education.

I grew up knowing this and I could not do



Khaled El-Nemr, 2004.

much to change it, but I learned to take advantage of every chance I could. The United Nations provided great schools, so I did the only thing I could do, study. I got so good at it that everyone always knew that I would be the first in my class every month. Here comes my junior year and everyone is talking about their plans after graduation and it is very sad to hear many bright kids say that they would end up in some underpaid hard labor just because they cannot afford school. I was one of those; I did not know what I would do... (In) my senior year, where my hope lights have faded and almost died, my school principal comes around and asks a group of my peers to meet with him in his office. He tells us that we have a chance to compete for a scholarship for higher educa-

tion to the U.S. Here I am now, one of the first college graduates of the Hope Fund at Roanoke College. I never thought I would be one of those young Palestinians to graduate from college. I owe all that to the kind souls of the Hope Fund who had a vision to help the helpless...

Graduation day was a very special day to me and my family. I got to see them standing proud among all the guests when my name was called, their son the graduate... My family and I are grateful to the Hope Fund. Now, I have a better chance to support my family, help them live a life they deserve, and help uplift our society one step at a time. ◀

A Vision for the Future

The Hope Fund has experienced phenomenal success, but if it is to survive and expand, several vital issues need to be addressed immediately: media, funding and moving the Hope Fund from being essentially a cottage industry into a business-like foundation

Since we were established, only a few press articles have appeared about us, mostly in local papers. A few months ago The New York Times had an article on the "education" page about one of our students—Marwa at Randolph—Macon Woman's College—but the Hope Fund itself was not mentioned. This *Link* article may help us with readers who are specifically interested in Middle East issues.

Funding is another major problem. At this time, our mailing list consists of some 200 individuals, mostly personal friends or relatives, who contribute on average \$100 annually. There are no major contributors. Thus far, two friendly charities with large mailing lists, have agreed to send out a special mailing on the Hope Fund, which we hope will encourage similar organizations to follow suit.

This year, we applied to some foundations, but were turned down because they were afraid of running afoul of new U.S. regulations prohibiting contributions to Palestinian government or private institutions. The Hope Fund, of course, is a private, U.S., non-profit charity. All our financial resources, small as they are, go to meeting our office expenses, direct payments to our students who are already enrolled in U.S. colleges, or in payments to colleges on behalf of our students. We do not donate to any Palestinian organization of any kind, be they governmental, private charities, NGOs or otherwise. Every penny is spent here in the United States.

It appears that the U.S. government may relax its counter-productive restrictions which are creating a humanitar-

ian catastrophe of hunger, malnutrition, disease, and lack of medicine in the Palestinian territories, particularly in Gaza. Our goal is to raise at least \$1-million dollars in contributions to meet our expected obligations.

Finally, the Hope Fund needs to become a credible business-like organization. At this moment, my wife and I comprise the entire staff, working pro bono from the kitchen table in our home.

Of course we do so because we deeply believe in the dream of uplifting the lives of as many poor Palestinian young people as possible, and I do not want this dream and this flame to be snuffed out when I am gone. I am 82 years old and in bad health. Sooner or later, probably sooner, some one will have to succeed me. It is therefore most urgent to prepare now for the inevitable, by reshaping the Hope Fund as soon as possible into a viable business entity with a paid director and staff, preferably sited for maximum exposure in an office in Washington, DC. After consulting with several specialists on the subject, we estimate that a budget of at least \$150,000 a year would be needed to achieve this objective.

So I appeal to all people of goodwill—Americans, Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and those who seek peace in Palestine and Israel—to help us in this humanitarian adventure. My wife and I have done our best, but our best is not good enough. Please contribute from the heart. Your contributions are deductible, and we will send a receipt immediately. You can contribute directly on the internet by visiting the "Donate" window of our website at www.thehopefund.org, or by mail to: The Hope Fund, 752 Forge Road, Lexington, Va. 24450. Our telephone number is: (540)-261-7232. Our EM address is fiq@ntelos.net.—Fahim Qubain.

AMEU's Book Selections

All AMEU Prices Include Postage & Handling

To order, put check in left column. Use order form on page 16.

See page 15 For AMEU's video selections.

Authors	Publication	Year	Pgs	List	AMEU	Summary
AMEU	Burning Issues	2007	439	\$16.95	\$12.50	The most relevant <i>Link</i> issues from the past 40 years.
Ateek, N.	Justice and Only Justice	1989	227	\$13.50	\$10.50	A Palestinian theology of liberation.
Awad, N.	Through the Eyes of the Victims	2001	118	\$15.00	\$13.95	Good background history; plus a CD with colored maps.
Baroud, R.	The Second Palestinian Intifada	2006	216	\$18.00	\$16.50	Palestinians respond to ethnocide against them.
Beit-Hallahmi, B.	Original Sins	1993	227	\$19.95	\$12.50	Reflections on Zionism and Israel.
Bennis, P.	Calling the Shots	2000	368	\$18.95	\$13.95	How Washington dominates today's United Nations.
Bennis, P.	Before and After	2003	264	\$17.95	\$12.95	U.S. foreign policy before and after 9/11.
Boyle, F.	Palestine, Palestinians & Internat'l Law	2003	205	\$14.95	\$7.00	From the League of Nations to the present.
Burge, G.	What Land? Whose Promise?	2003	286	\$23.00	\$17.50	What Christians aren't told about Israel and Palestinians.
Chacour, E.	We Belong to the Land	1990	216	\$10.00	\$7.50	What Palestine means to its Christian population.
Chacour, E.	Blood Brothers	2003	240	\$12.95	\$10.95	Updated ed. with introduction by James Baker III.
Chapman, C.	Whose Promised Land	2002	329	\$17.99	\$12.75	Zionism and role of biblical promise; updated edition.
Chapman, C.	Whose Holy City?	2004	253	\$15.99	\$12.50	Jerusalem and the future of Middle East peace.
Chomsky, N.	The Fateful Triangle	1999	578	\$22.00	\$16.95	United States, Israel, and the Palestinians.
Christison, K.	Perceptions of Palestine	1999	380	\$19.95	\$14.95	How U.S. media influences U.S. policy.
Cook, J.	Blood and Religion	2006	222	\$18.00	\$16.50	The unmasking of the Jewish and democratic state.
Cooley, J.	An Alliance Against Babylon	2005	258	\$26.95	\$17.95	Traces the Israeli factor in the US-led invasion of Iraq.
Dajani, S.	The Untold Story	2005	71	\$15.00	\$15.00	The cost of Israel's occupation to Palestinians.
Eddy, W.	F.D.R. Meets Ibn Saud	2005	46	\$25.00	\$20.00	A reprint of the 1954 edition; limited number available.
Ennes, J.	Assault on the Liberty	2002	301	\$30.00	\$25.00	Updated edition.
Esposito, J.	Unholy War: Terror in the name of Islam	2002	196	\$25.00	\$19.95	Good study of militant Islamic groups.
Esposito, J., ed.	The Oxford History of Islam	1999	749	\$49.95	\$47.95	Illustrated history of Islam's faith and culture.
Faber, S.	Radicals, Rabbis, and Peacemakers	2005	252	\$19.95	\$15.95	Conversations with Jews against the occupation.
Fayez, J. ed.	The Colonization of Palestine	1992	48	\$9.95	\$4.00	List & description of destroyed cities, towns, villages.
Findley, P.	Silent No More	2001	323	\$23.95	\$19.50	Confronts America's image of Islam.
Findley, P.	Deliberate Deceptions	1993	326	\$14.95	\$8.00	Former U.S. Congressman on U.S.-Israeli relations.
Finkelstein, N.	Beyond Chutzpah	2005	332	\$22.50	\$17.50	The misuse of anti-semitism & the abuse of history.
Finkelstein, N.	The Holocaust Industry	2000	150	\$13.00	\$12.50	Reflections on the exploitation of Jewish suffering.
Finkelstein, N.	Image & Reality of Israel-Arab Conflict	1995	243	\$18.95	\$17.95	What the facts on the ground are telling us.
Fishbach, M.	Records of Dispossession	2003	467	\$39.50	\$28.50	New facts and figures about the land "swap" of 1947-48.
Gitadi, Naeim	Ben-Gurion's Scandals	2003	340	\$18.95	\$15.50	Updated and revised edition.

AMEU's Book Selections

To order, put check in left column. Use order form on page 16.

See page 15 For AMEU's video selections.

All AMEU Prices Include Postage & Handling

Authors	Publication	Year	Pgs	List	AMEU	Summary
Hagopian, E. ed.	Civil Rights in Peril	2004	322	\$22.95	\$15.50	The targeting of Arabs and Muslims in the US.
Halper, J.	Obstacles to Peace	2005	93	\$19.95	\$15.50	Camp David's ungenerous offer; 15 full-page maps.
Hiro, D.	Sharing the Promised Land	1999	400	\$18.95	\$16.95	Good history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
Jayyusi, S.	Anthology	1996	754	\$22.00	\$17.50	Collection of modern Palestinian literature.
Karmi, G.	In Search of Fatima	2002	288	\$26.00	\$8.00	Poignant memory of Palestinian exile.
Khalidi, R.	The Iron Cage	2006	281	\$24.95	\$19.95	Why Palestinians don't have a state.
Khalidi, R.	Resurrecting Empire	2004	223	\$23.00	\$17.95	Analysis of the US role in the Middle East.
Kushner & Solomon	Wrestling with Zion	2003	379	\$12.95	\$11.95	Progressive Jewish Americans on Israel-Palestine.
Kimmerling, B.	Politicide	2003	234	\$22.00	\$8.00	Ariel Sharon's wars against the Palestinians.
Laird, E.	A Little Piece of Ground	2006	216	\$9.95	\$8.50	A 12-yr.-old soccer-loving Pal. in occupied Ramallah.
Lutz, C & Smith, O.	Christians and a Land Called Holy	2006	168	\$15.00	\$12.95	How faith & politics impact the Pal.-Is. conflict.
Maalouf, A	The Crusades through Arab Eyes	1984	293	\$16.00	\$13.95	The event that shapes Arab and Muslim history.
Masalha, N.	Expulsion of the Palestinians	1993	235	\$11.95	\$9.50	Examines Zionist notion of "Transfer": 1882-1948.
Nathan, S.	The Other Side of Israel	2005	310	\$25.00	\$17.50	How non-Jews are treated in the Jewish state.
Neff, D.	Warriors Against Israel	1988	372	\$19.95	\$7.00	How Israel won the battle to become US's ally.
Prior, M.	Zionism and the State of Israel	1999	304	\$75.00	\$59.50	A moral inquiry.
Prior, M. ed.	Speaking the Truth	2005	254	\$17.95	\$13.50	Ilan pappe et al. on Zionism, Israel, and Palestine.
Reinhart, T.	The Road Map to Nowhere	2006	248	\$18.00	\$16.50	How Road Map is used to seize more occupied land.
Reinhart, T.	Israel/Palestine	2002	280	\$11.95	\$10.95	"Deserves to be read by every American." --Edward Said
Said, E.	Culture and Resistance	2003	225	\$16.00	\$12.95	Author envisions a secular, democratic Middle East.
Sgrena, G.	Friendly Fire	2006	216	\$20.00	\$17.95	Inside story of Iraqi occupation by Italian journalist.
Shahak & Mezvinsky	Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel	1999	160	\$17.95	\$15.50	The roots of Jewish fundamentalism.
Shahak, I.	Open Secrets	1997	192	\$18.95	\$15.50	Israel's weapons of mass destruction.
Shlaim, A.	The Iron Wall: Israel & the Arab World	1999	448	\$17.95	\$14.95	Israeli historian reevaluates his country's official history.
Smith, G.	Deadly Dogma	2006	250	\$12.95	\$11.50	How and why neocons misled American public.
Swisher, C.	The Truth About Camp David	2004	455	\$14.95	\$12.95	Why the peace process collapsed.
Terry, J.	U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East	2005	168	\$24.95	\$15.50	The influence of lobbies on government policy.
Wagner, D.	Dying in the Land of Promise	2001	300	\$18.95	\$8.00	Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to present.
Warschawski, M.	On the Border	2005	228	\$17.00	\$15.50	An Israeli looks at the forces destroying his country.
Warschawski, M.	Toward an Open Tomb	2006	250	\$12.95	\$10.95	From West Bank massacres to The Wall

AMEU's Video Selections

All AMEU Prices Include Postage & Handling

- AJPME, **Beyond the Mirage: The Face of the Occupation** (2002, VHS, 47 minutes). Israeli and Palestinian human rights advocates challenge misconceptions about the Occupation and Palestinian resistance to it. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- DMZ, **People and the Land** (1997, VHS, 57 minutes). This documentary appeared on over 40 PBS stations before pressure was brought to ban it. (See our Dec. 1997 *Link*, v. 30, #5, available on our website at www.ameu.org.) **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Howard Film, **The Loss of Liberty** (2002, VHS, 53 minutes). Updated account of Israel's 1967 attack on the *USS Liberty*. **AMEU: \$20.00.**
- Jordan S., **Dispatches: The Killing Zone** (2003, **VHS** or **DVD**, 50 minutes). British correspondent Sandra Jordan reports on the violence by Israeli occupation forces against international aid workers and reporters in the Gaza Strip. Includes the bulldozer killing of Rachel Corrie. Widely shown on British TV, this powerful documentary has been shown on only a few public access channels in the U.S. To promote its distribution, AMEU is offering it for **\$10.00**. Please circle format choice above.
- Masri, M., **Frontiers of Dreams and Fears** (2002, VHS, 58 minutes). This documentary has appeared on several PBS stations across the country. It focuses on two Palestinian girls growing up in refugee camps in Beirut and Bethlehem. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Masri, M., **Hanan Ashrawi: A Woman of Her Time** (1995, VHS, 51 minutes). Palestine's articulate representative shows that Israel's occupation is far from benign. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Moushabeck, M., **Anatolia: The Lost Songs of Palestine** (2001, CD, 52 minutes). **AMEU: \$12.50.**
- Munayyer, F. & H., **Palestinian Costumes and Embroidery: A Precious Legacy** (1990, VHS, 38 minutes). A rare collection of Palestinian dresses presented with historical background and commentary. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- NEF, **Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land** (2004, VHS, 80 minutes). Excellent analysis of how the U.S. media slants its coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Pilger, J., **Palestine Is Still the Issue** (2002, **VHS** or **DVD**, 53 minutes). Candid assessment by an award-winning journalist of why there has been no progress towards peace in the Middle East. **AMEU: \$25.00.** Please circle format choice above.
- Real People Prod., **Sucha Normal Thing** (2004, **VHS**, 80 minutes). Six Americans document a "normal" day under military occupation in the West Bank.
- Shaheen, Simon, & Qantara. **Blue Flame** (2001, music CD). Grammy-nominated release by 'oudist and violin virtuoso Simon Shaheen and his ensemble. See his Dec. 2006 *Link*. **AMEU: \$15.50.**

Please Use Order Form on Page 16

A Gift Suggestion

The work of AMEU has grown over the past 40 years because supporters have remembered us in their wills.

A bequest of a fixed sum or a percentage of an estate ensures that our voice on behalf of peace and justice will remain strong.

AMEU is a tax-deductible, educational organization. The amount of your bequest is deductible from the amount of money that is subject to state and federal inheritance taxes.

For further information, please contact John Mahoney at 212-870-2053.

To Support The Link

A \$40 voluntary annual subscription is requested to defray cost of publishing and distributing *The Link* and AMEU's Public Affairs Series.

- Contribution to AMEU (tax deductible)
- Please Send Recent *Link* Issues

A check or money order for \$_____ is enclosed, payable to AMEU.

Name _____

Address _____

Zip+4 _____

1/07

Rush Order Form

Place ✓ next to the book or video you are ordering from pages 13, 14 & 15, and indicate quantity if ordering more than one. Make checks payable to AMEU.

No. of Books and Videos Ordered: _____

Total Price (includes USPS postage): _____

Add \$3 for UPS delivery, if desired _____

Add \$3 per book/video for intern'l delivery _____

Total Amount Enclosed _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

MAIL ORDER WITH CHECK TO:

**AMEU, Room 245, 475 Riverside Drive,
New York, NY 10115-0245
Telephone 212-870-2053, Fax 212-870-2050, or
E-Mail AMEU@aol.com**

Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.
Room 245, 475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115-0245