

About This Issue

May 4 and December 25 are dates that will command front page news around the world this year:

- May 4, because it marks the 5-year end of the Oslo Accords, when Yasser Arafat threatens to declare the birth of the state of Palestine
- December 25, which ushers in the millennium celebration of the birth of Jesus.

"The Camp" has something to say about both events.

It is, in a way, a parody on Palestinian statehood, the negative image of everything a state ought to be; we even thought at one point of titling the issue "Palestinian Camphood."

Located on the outskirts of Bethlehem, "The Camp" is also something of a parable — a modern-day variation on a 2,000-year old theme.

The camp is Dheisheh and our author, Muna Hamzeh-Muhaisen, who has lived there for the past nine years, invites us to meet the people who have lived there all of their lives.

Dheisheh welcomes you.

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

P.S. Our Book and Video section on pages 14 – 16 offers several fine books and videos on Bethlehem, including a recent publication by Betty Jane Bailey, author of our December 1997 *Link* issue, "Slouching Toward Bethlehem."

THE CAMP

BY MUNA HAMZEH-MUHAISEN

The confrontations outside our front gate grew alarmingly intense. A hail of fast-flying stones made a loud thumping sound as they hit the concrete pavement. "Come here you sons of b-----!" yelled the *shabab* from up the road at the soldiers who stood sheltered from view behind our metal gate. "Come here, you cowards."

To this, the soldiers answered the Palestinian youths with a round of live, metal-coated rubber bullets. The sound of the bullets whizzing overhead was sobering. They were so darn close. More stones flew in the air. A windowpane broke. A branch from the lemon tree snapped and fell to the ground. Our courtyard, now sprayed with stones,

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our small house led to one another through the open courtyard and the front gate was the only exit to the street. But the soliders were standing right behind it. We were trapped.

During a momentary lull, Ahmed and I darted out of the kitchen and ran to the bedroom. It was the farthest room from the gate and relatively the safest. On the way, Ahmed looked in on his elderly mother. Too heavy-set to rush out of one room and into the next, Um Subhi sat crouched in the corner by the bed with a peeled onion in her hand. The Palestinians had discovered long ago that sniffing a peeled onion lessens, even if mildly so, the effects of tear gas on the respiratory system. "Stay here," Ahmed commanded her. "I'll be back." Um Subhi nodded and murmured, "May Almighty *Allah* damn them to hell!"

The shooting persisted. A bullet hit a water reservoir on a nearby rooftop and we could hear the sound of gushing water.

Suddenly the air in our bedroom was becoming impossible to breathe. "They're tossing tear gas into the courtyard," warned Ahmed. "Quickly, get a blanket and place it under the door." Before I had a chance to reach for the blanket, Ahmed's hand was pulling at the doorknob. "I have to get my mother." But the moment he opened the door, a thick white cloud of tear gas forced him back into the room. "Dear God! Mother is going to die," he panicked. "Hurry! Cover your face with a scarf and get me one too."

With only our eyes visible, we started out of the room. I couldn't breathe. There was too much poisonous gas in the air. My mother-in-law's bedroom, less than six feet away, felt like it was at the other end of the earth. By the time we reached her door, I was in a very bad state. My eyes burned like hell and I couldn't stop coughing. "I have to get some air! I can't breathe! I can't breathe," I shouted at Ahmed as I ran to the front gate. The soldiers were gone.

I don't remember how I reached the house next door, but when I opened my eyes, I was stretched out on the floor underneath the ceiling fan. Um Ra'ed and her children were crouched beside me and someone was splashing perfume on my face. I started to laugh and cry at the same time. I couldn't believe I was alive. My face and eyes were on fire and I started to cough. "Ahmed! Where is Ahmed?" I screamed, jumping to my feet. By the time he reached his mother and started walking her out of the house, the soldiers had come back and wouldn't let them leave. "Go

back in there and die," they shouted. Luckily, the living room was the room least affected by the tear gas and Ahmed and his mom took refuge there until the soldiers left.

It was November 21, 1990. I remember the date well because it was my 31st birthday. For nearly a week we coughed, sneezed and felt a burning sensation in our fingertips whenever we touched anything in the house. Our blankets, kitchen utensils, and clothes were laden with tear gas residue. Such was life in Dheisheh during the *intifada*.

In March 1999, a group of Palestinian and Israeli graduate students paid me a visit. They were in a "peace" studies program and wanted to tour the camp. As soon as I started recounting incidents from the *intifada*, one of the Israeli students interrupted. "The Israeli soldiers had no interest whatsoever in what was going on inside the camp," he said. "All we cared about was protecting the main road parallel to the camp which thousands of settlers used every day to get to Jerusalem."

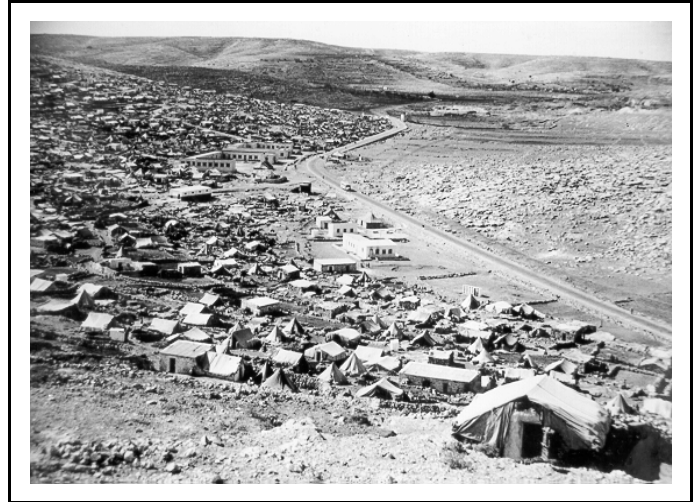
"You talk as if you were here?" I remarked. Staring me right in the eye, the young Israeli admitted that he had indeed been a soldier in Dheisheh for quite a stretch of time. "And all the time when the soldiers stormed into people's homes, beat them up, wrecked their furniture and tossed the hot meals that they were about to eat on the floor, they did it to protect the settlers?" I asked, agitated.

"Look," he protested, "I was in Shati Refugee Camp [in Gaza] on the first day when the *intifada* broke out. We could have easily shot 200 people on the spot and ended everything there and then. But we didn't"

"How generous of you not to kill 200 so you can wait and kill more than 1,000 instead," I interrupted angrily.

The *intifada* wasn't just about throwing stones at the occupation army. It was a reaction to a savage attempt by the soldiers of one nation to humiliate the men, women, and children of another nation. And this humiliation, which occurred at every hour of the night and day, is something that the Israelis refuse to understand.

One of the most difficult things for a Palestinian during the *intifada* was to witness, let's say, a violent demonstration in East Jerusalem and then walk up the street to the Jewish sector of the city. While the Palestinians down the road were being beaten and their shops forcibly closed, their Israeli counterparts were walking their dogs and



Two views of Dheisheh. Left: Camp entrances were sealed by Israeli authorities in response to the *intifada*.—UNRWA Photo. Right: Dheisheh in 1952, when the refugees lived in tents.—Photo provided by M. Muhaisen

drinking cappuccino at outdoor cafes. This contrast never failed to amaze me and always left me with the sense that our occupiers were not Israeli fathers, husbands and sons, but some mercenaries from a far-away land.

This Israeli indifference, in my opinion, has played a major role in widening the gap between the two peoples even after the signing of the peace accords. For example, after a suicide bombing occurs in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the Israelis get up the next day and go to their jobs and schools, whereas the daily life of the Palestinian population, in its entirety, is interrupted because Israel always punishes the Palestinians collectively for the bombings. In contrast, an Israeli settler like Baruch Goldstein can walk into a packed mosque and kill and injure dozens of people without disrupting the life of a single Israeli.

It is precisely at these moments, when Israelis like the student-soldier express such blatant indifference and arrogance, that I wonder what Anne Frank would think if she were to see what sort of occupiers her people have become.

What, I wonder, would she have thought had she been with us at two in the morning that bitter cold winter night? We were fast asleep in our warm beds. Suddenly a mad banging on the front gate awakened us. Knowing it was the soldiers, but not knowing what to expect, we let them in.

"Get out here!" the officer barked at Ahmed. And for the next three hours, Ahmed, Saeed, Mahmoud and all the males in the neighborhood were forced, at gunpoint, to whitewash the political slogans written earlier in the evening on all the concrete walls. The women, standing at their windows, watched in the dark.

The ice-cold air flapped through the men's flimsy pajamas and their fingers could hardly hold the brushes and buckets of white paint. Anyone who refused to obey was certain to be hit with rifle butts until his screams awakened all the sleeping babies and hard-of-hearing grandmothers in the entire block.

Saeed resisted that night. We all watched as the soldiers shoved his face on the pavement and then squeezed it with the soles of their boots. The rifle ends did not spare a spot in his body. Steady, hard blows, one right after the next.

"You're going to kill him," pleaded Um Saeed as she rushed toward her son. "Go inside you whore!" spat a soldier as he grabbed her by the hair and dragged her away, pushing her hard against a nearby wall.

Then the stones started falling. Dheisheh was awake and fighting back, always fighting back. "Come here you b-a-s-t-a-r-d-s," yelled the *shabab*. "Come here and fight like men you sissy sons of b-----," they screamed into the night in half Arabic and half Hebrew. The soldiers raced after them as they called for reinforcements over the wireless. Moments later, Israeli jeeps started driving in. Welcome to Dheisheh, Anne Frank!

Dheisheh lies less than two miles south of downtown Bethlehem on the main Jerusalem-Hebron Road. It is one of 59 Palestinian refugee camps established after the 1948 War in the West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, and one of 20 camps in the West Bank. Of three camps in Bethlehem, it is the largest

Most of the 40 villages from which Dheisheh's refugees originally came were located near Hebron and Jerusalem, in areas that are now part of Israel. After 1948, Israel destroyed all these villages and built Israeli colonies in their place. The refugees were farmers accustomed to living on 125,000 acres of privately owned land, 5,000 of which were planted with olive trees; suddenly they found themselves squeezed together in a small, over-crowded camp. Today, Dheisheh's more than 9,500 refugees live on a 90-acre stretch of land.

The living conditions of the refugees in those early years of dispossession were filled with hardship and extreme poverty. Grandmothers are often heard telling their grandchildren how they used to walk for miles on end to gather dry twigs and sell



them to area bakeries for a handful of pennies that were barely enough to put food on the table. And they tell of that bitter cold winter in the mid-1950s when the snow and gusty wind toppled their tents, forcing the women and children to take shelter in nearby caves.

The grandchildren, born with concrete roofs over their heads, electric heaters to keep warm, and TV sets to bring them closer to the world, don't necessarily understand the extreme hardships of what seems a very distant past. They do, however, listen and remember all the tiny details that collectively constitute their history and serve to remind them of their identity as refugees.

Dheisheh Will Not Fall Again

Mid-December 1995. Hundreds of boys pushed their fingers inside the wire holes and climbed up the 20-foot high barbed fence. As the shouts and whistles of the men, women and children urged them on, the boys clung to the fence and started swinging violently. Giving way under their weight, the fence finally came tumbling down.

Young boys raced to the dozens of long metal rods which, until moments ago, held the fence in place, yanked them out of the ground, and happily dragged them home. The metal screeched against the pavement, making a horrendous and irksome sound. But the noisy and euphoric crowd was too busy celebrating the moment to really care. At long last, the half-mile-long fence that Israel's military occupation erected in mid-1987 along the main road leading to the camp was gone. Dheisheh no longer resembled a maximum-security prison.

A group of boys emerged from the crowd and rushed to the metal revolving gate standing smack in the center of the fence. For 12 long years, the gate was Dheisheh's conduit to the world after Israel's military had sealed all the other camp entrances with unsightly stacks of concrete-filled barrels.

The boys climbed over the gate and tried to tear it down. "Get down from there," screamed the men. "The gate is going to stay." The crowd shifted restlessly. Opinions differed. Some wanted the gate to remain; others wanted it removed. "Let's keep it as a souvenir," someone shouted. "Leave it to remind our children of the occupation's ugliness." The crowd agreed. In the

end, three years passed before someone thought of giving the souvenir gate a fresh coat of paint—this time in the green-red-black-and-white colors of the Palestinian flag.

The redeployment of Israeli troops from parts of Bethlehem in December 1995 also witnessed the pullout of Israeli troops from Dheisheh. The camp, along with other parts of Bethlehem, was being turned over to the control of the Palestinian Authority in an area known as Zone A.

Although many were skeptical about the terms of the Oslo Accords, the redeployment nonetheless meant freedom. For the first time in many years, camp residents could walk in the streets after dark. For the first time, no one had to worry about being stopped by an army patrol and getting his or her identification papers checked. Suddenly, the notion that you could, just for the heck of it, drive to Bethlehem at midnight made grown-ups as happy as children being handed lollipops.

Excited by their newly found freedom, a group of *shabab* hung a large banner over the main road leading to the camp. "Dheisheh will not fall again," it read in Arabic, English and Hebrew. Someone with a bulldozer volunteered to remove all the concrete-filled barrels blocking Dheisheh's numerous entrances as onlookers gathered to watch. Young Dheisheh men, who once were in the forefront of resisting Israel's occupation with stones, now were parading in the streets in their new Palestinian police and military uniforms. Dozens joined the Palestinian security forces. Displaying Palestinian flags had been an illegal, punishable offense; now they fluttered proudly from rooftops and TV antennas. The taste of freedom is so sweet.

Or is it?

December 1995 was not even over when a new reality began to sink in. Happy to be rid of Israeli army patrols, Dheisheh woke up one morning to see two army jeeps, one Israeli and one Palestinian, driving slowly along the Jerusalem-Hebron Road. To their great dismay, the refugees discovered that, according to the Oslo Accords, the entire Jerusalem-Hebron Road was to be under joint Israeli-Palestinian control. Once again, Dheisheh's children found reason to throw stones at the occupier. Only now, when stones are thrown at Israeli jeeps, the jeeps that go after the protesters are Palestinian.

The refugees also quickly realized that, as a result of Oslo,

they were no longer free, as they had been, to go to any part of Bethlehem. Now the district of Bethlehem was divided into three zones and Israel was still in control of the lion's share.

Reality set in. The dividing line between Zone A (under full Palestinian control) and Zone C (under full Israeli control) can be a single sidewalk or a street. Several Dheisheh residents still wanted by the Israeli authorities don't dare venture beyond concrete blocks marked gray and yellow to denote the boundary between zones. Should they cross over from one part of a street to the next, they risk being stopped and taken away by a passing Israeli army patrol.

Ever so quickly, the young men who joined the Palestinian security forces and the civil service were faced with yet another harsh reality: how to make do on an income totaling around \$200-\$400 a month. The arrival of the Palestinian Authority brought with it an unprecedented rise in consumer prices and an unexpected increase in utility and telephone bills. How to make ends meet, pay bills on time and put a decent meal on the table has become the foremost issue on everyone's mind.

The paycheck that arrives at the end of the month is barely sufficient to last for more than one week. With no unemployment benefits and no social security, the majority of Palestinians struggle for subsistence. Indeed, if Palestinian society didn't depend on the extended family support system, it is very likely that hunger would join hands with poverty and crush people.

Luckily, the extended family is still strong in Dheisheh. Married sons with children will share their meals with their parents and unmarried siblings if the family has a single income. If someone suddenly has unexpected guests and they're out of coffee and don't have the necessary change to run to the store, they send their child next door to borrow some. If someone needs construction or renovation on their home but cannot afford paid workers, they can easily rely on cousins and friends. Helping out one another, sticking up for each other, loaning each other money, consoling each other—all beautiful, human traits that make life in Dheisheh so wonderfully bonding despite the immense hardship.

Where Did Santa Go?

The year must have been 1965, or maybe it was 1966. I don't quite remember. What I do remember is that it was Christmas time and my maternal grandparents' house on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem was bustling with an exciting pre-holiday activity.

Grandma Marie was in her large kitchen baking gingerbread cookies. The aromatic smell of ginger and nutmeg seeped through the house as she pulled one tray of succulent cookies after the next out of the hot oven. Grandpa Attallah, meanwhile, was busy decorating the tall, pine Christmas tree. By the time he was done, we had the most enchanting Christmas tree I had ever seen.

On Christmas Eve, Grandma prepared a feast for us. Afterwards, we gathered in the warm living room where Grandpa played the piano and we sang Christmas carols. I remember standing next to the piano, as was always my habit, and watching Grandpa's dark long fingers, with the many brown spots, easily glide across the black and white keys. It was

one of those rare times in my childhood, and even in my adult life, when I have felt completely safe, loved, and happy.

Now the year is 1998 and I'm spending another Christmas in Dheisheh, an eye-blink away from the manger where Christ was born. A small, artificial Christmas tree stands on a corner table in my living room, looking lifeless, unattended and out of place. I don't even bother turning on its colorful lights at night. Somehow, there isn't much to celebrate this year.

Hunger strikes and demonstrations to demand the release of the more than 3,000 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails have been in the headlines for most of December. Then came the joint U.S.-U.K. air strikes against Iraq, the sickening way in which the West has tried to justify its slaughter of human life, and the revolting acquiescence of most Arab governments to the whole affair.

And if all this isn't enough to put a damper on our holiday spirit, the Palestinian Authority has done its share. For one week in mid-December, it closed six local TV stations and a radio station, and arrested nine Palestinian journalists. Their crime: covering anti-U.S. demonstrations, which spread in the Palestinian Territories following air strikes against Iraq.

On Christmas Day, and with very little to feel joyful about, I visit my next-door neighbor. Time spent with her six wonderful children might be the remedy to ease my pain. I walk in and find the kids watching live TV coverage of the Christmas parade in Bethlehem.

"You guys don't know anything about Christmas!" I tease.

"Oh yes we do," blurts 8-year-old Maram. "It is when Santa Claus wears his funny red suit and goes around giving gifts and candy to children."

"No, stupid, he has a funny white beard, not a funny red suit," 9-year-old Khloud adds quickly.

"He is fat," giggles 6-year-old Rana.

"How do you know what Santa looks like?" I ask.

"We see him on TV. He has a big bag full of gifts and he gives them to the children," volunteers 10-year-old Malak.

"Aunt Muna, how come Santa does not come to our house?" Maram asks unexpectedly. I stare at her.

"You don't know anything," Malak answers. "He only visits the Christians and we are not Christian, isn't that right Aunt Muna?"

All eyes turn to me, waiting for the intelligent answer of an adult. "Well, this is true, but many Muslims put a Christmas tree in their homes and join the celebrations in Bethlehem. Christmas is a holiday for everyone," I explain.

"So how come Daddy does not take us to Bethlehem?" asks 4-year-old Zuzu.

Before I have time to think of an answer, Khloud throws her small arms in the air and says, exasperated, "Because, silly, if we go, Daddy will have to buy all of us toys and sandwiches and soft drinks. It will cost a lot of money."

Everyone is quiet, as if trying to make sense of what Khloud just said. "The Christians are so lucky," concludes Maram.

I open my mouth to speak when suddenly a popular video clip of an Egyptian song starts on TV. Maram races for the remote control and turns up the volume. The girls start to dance, forgetting all about Santa Claus and Christmas.

As their giggles fill the room, I get up to leave. The girls run to me, clinging to my arms and waist. "Please stay and have breakfast with us," they all scream. I smile and ask what they'd like me to bring them for breakfast. "It doesn't matter, Aunt Muna, just say you'll come," they all shout. I smile at them and tell them that nothing in the world would make me miss breakfast with them.

Nearly 60 percent of Dheisheh's population are children under the age of 16. With the exception of a handful of children whose parents can afford to send them to expensive private schools in Bethlehem, the children attend classes in the two Dheisheh schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). When they finish the 9th grade, the children then have to transfer to public schools outside the camp. Overcrowding in the camp's schools requires the student body to be split into two shifts, one in the morning and one in the afternoon; even with that, class sizes exceed 30.

A single cultural center in Dheisheh provides some children with activities, but hardly enough to cover the need. With no extra-curricular activities to occupy their time or broaden their horizons, the majority of the children spend their free time playing in the camp's alleys. There are no public parks and no playgrounds to keep them off the streets, and the dire economic conditions of their parents also mean that very few have toys at home.

Although Bethlehem is very near, most children only see the city when they go with their mothers when it is time to shop for clothing. Most have never been to Jerusalem. Outings or picnics are as rare as a cool breeze on a hot summer's day.

Of course, the children are too young to fathom closures or to really comprehend poverty. Instead, they are a vivacious lot, very bright and certainly capable of looking out for themselves at a very young age. The camp is their safe haven, and in its streets and alleys they quickly learn how to dodge approaching cars, how to defend themselves against older and meaner kids, and how to coax their parents into handing over the change they bring back from the store. It is survival of the fittest at work.

In the nine years I've lived in Dheisheh, I don't recall seeing a child who is a sissy or a cry-baby. On many a winter day, I've watched the kids next door walk by themselves to the camp's medical clinic to get treated for the flu and then watched them run home with medicines in hand.

On occasion I would ask the kids to fetch me hot bread from a nearby bakery, only to hear them say that the bakery had just closed for renovations. "How do you know?" I always find myself asking, only to get the usual answer--"We know everything."

Diary of a Closure: 1993

Early morning hours have been quiet in Dheisheh. Birds chirp. Pigeons coo. In the backyards, chickens stir. A pigeon flies, shifting from an almond tree to a nearby television

antenna. A chicken cackles.

The mornings have been delightfully serene since Israel imposed a closure on the West Bank more than two weeks ago. I don't hear the footsteps of laborers as they leave for work at the crack of dawn. I don't hear men coughing as they walk past my bedroom window. I don't hear doors open or slam shut. The refugee camp stays peacefully still and nothing disturbs the silence.

But by late morning, Dheisheh is wide-awake and the air is filled with noisy sounds of human activity. Drills power on and off. Hammers tear down old walls. Welding machines make a deafening screech. People call out to one another. Children play in the alleyways. Babies cry. Peddlers use their vocal cords as loudspeakers to sell cheap foam mattresses, pans and teacups. A group of youngsters follows an old peddler through our neighborhood, mimicking his every word. The weary man shoos them away, but the kids keep coming back. The peddler curses under his breath. Soon, the tormentors get bored. They laugh and go back to playing hide-and-seek.

The voice of Egyptian singer Warda blares from a neighbor's ghetto blaster. "When you're near, you fill up my senses. When you're away, you fill up my senses," Warda croons.

Nida' and Ezyia, teenage girls from next door, walk in and out of my house all day. First, they want to borrow a cassette tape. Then they come over to secretly smoke a cigarette they sneaked out of their father's pack. Later they drop in to ask if I want an ice cream cone from the store.

Their mother marches into my house. "Nida! Didn't I tell you to hang the laundry hours ago?" she scolds. "And you Ezyia!" she turns to her youngest. "Your father has been waiting for 20 minutes for the newspaper he sent you to buy." The girls make a face and leave. Half an hour later, they're back. Nida' wants nail polish remover. Ezyia wants to escape from the endless housework.

Saeed, the neighborhood's jack-of-all trades, haggles with his friend Musa over the price of the metal window frame he is going to make for him. Saeed shouts at his son Muhammed, "Get your lazy butt over here. I need help."

A truck arrives and dumps a load of sand in our alley. Men and boys emerge from their houses. They load the sand into buckets and haul it into Zuhair's house. When they're done, they stand in the sun to drink the tea with fresh mint that Zuhair's wife has made.

Zuhair needs the sand to build a wall between his house and that of his neighbor, Sara. The two have been fighting and calling each other ugly names for months now. Trouble began when Sara built a window overlooking Zuhair's roof without getting his permission. To punish her, Zuhair wants to block the window by building a high barrier of cinder blocks on his roof. Now that the closure has forced his sons and all their friends to sit at home with nothing to do, Zuhair has all the help he needs to build the wall and paint his house, too.

Meanwhile, everyone in our neighborhood is talking about Husam. The day after the territories were sealed off, all the neighbors heard Husam open the squeaky metal doors of his two garages. Considering that the garages had been closed for



Funeral procession of Mohammed Abu Aker, who was 17 when he was shot during a clash with Israeli military forces. He died two years later following medical treatment at home and in the United States.

years, everyone was curious to find out what Husam was up to.

"He's going to turn the garages into a billiard hall," Aisha says, horrified.

"What a terrific idea," smiles Ahmed. "It'll give the guys something to do."

"I'm going to tell my husband to stop him," complains Salwa. "Our neighborhood will turn into a gathering place for every young guy in the camp."

While the neighbors argue, Husam tears down the wall separating the two garages. He brings in a pool table and the place becomes a haven for many of Dheisheh's young males. The sound of the billiard stick hitting the colored balls already has blended in with all the other sounds in our alley. But Husam is happy. Providing food and clothing for seven children and a wife is not easy. He had a good job working as a laborer in Israel, but now, after the closure, he needs a new source of income.

Two weeks into the closure, our house resembles a coffee shop. With no jobs to go to, my husband Ahmed and his friends have plenty of time on their hands. They sit in the courtyard, drink black coffee, chain-smoke, and spend idle hours talking. None of them complains about the lack of money, the lack of food or the lack of things to do. Instead, they talk about the hike they want to take to a nearby mountain to collect bird eggs. Rawhi knows just the place. He also knows some good edible plants they can collect.

Ahmed proudly tells Rawhi about the chili pepper seeds he planted in our garden that morning. "They're extra-hot," he boasts. "What about me?" protests Rawhi, "Can you give me some to plant?"

Ezyia walks in and asks Ahmed if she can borrow two decks of playing cards for her brother and his friends. A few hours later Ahmed, Rawhi and Nabieh install a bathtub in our new bathroom. They've been working on the bathroom for a week now. But no one is in a hurry. Everyone has time.

Passing away the long hours, days and nights of the closure is an art. You have to be skillful to master it. And when you

become a master, you laugh when you want to cry. You act full when you are famished. You pretend to be deaf when your kids ask for pocket money. You feign indifference when you see your refrigerator cooling nothing but a single bottle of water. And, you spend slow minutes each day pretending that you are alive when you're not.

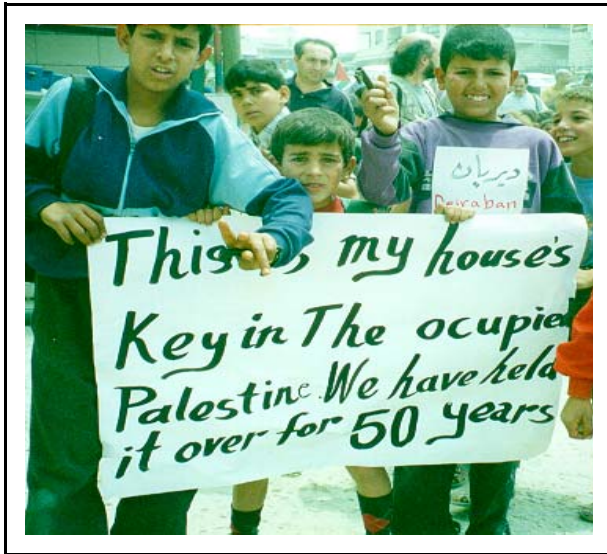
Remembering Our Dead

A monument stands high at one of the main entrances to Dheisheh Refugee Camp. An oblong stone structure resembling the pre-1948 map of Palestine, the eye-catching monument was built in 1997 by the Dheisheh Society of Martyr Families to honor the more than 15 camp residents who were killed during decades of occupation. The monument is there to remember them all, starting with Abdullah Tayieh, a high school student killed in 1956 by Jordanian troops during an anti-Baghdad Pact protest in Bethlehem, and ending with Ali Sajadi, a high school dropout killed in 1993 while handling an explosive device left behind by Israeli soldiers.

A small patch of land surrounding the monument was supposed to be turned into a much needed public park for camp residents, but funding to complete the project never came through. This is hardly unusual in today's Palestinian Territories, where funds are hard to come by to improve the lot of the living, let alone honor the memory of the dead.

While the monument stands high as a constant reminder of those who sacrificed their lives for freedom and independence, it is nonetheless a sad symbol of the state of Palestinian affairs today. The names of Dheisheh's martyrs are not engraved on the monument and not a single tree, or rose bush or decorative plant fills the desolate space around it. The sidewalk and steps leading to the monument are filled with twisted metal rods, discarded wood planks, litter, and other construction debris left by someone who recently built a garage nearby.

Lack of funds, UNRWA's failure to provide the camp with sufficient sanitary services, and the indifference of camp residents are the reasons why Dheisheh's only public monument screams out for tender attention.



Fifty years of dispossession since the Palestinian Catastrophe (*Nakba*) were observed with the May, 1998, "March of the Keys" in Dheisheh. Boys of the camp (left) carry keys to the ancestral homes from which their families were driven by Zionist forces in 1948. Girls (right) carry black flags and wear signs with the names of the 48 villages where their families originated. —Photos by M. Muhaisen

Although Dheisheh's refugees seem to lack initiative in maintaining and beautifying the monument park, there is hardly a refugee, young or old, who doesn't remember the names of the camp's victims and even the years of their untimely deaths.

Nida', 24, looks astonished if someone compliments her for reciting the names. For her, knowing the names of those who died is one of these things in life that she must know, has to know. "They were our martyrs," she states indignantly.

Like so many other young people her age, Nida' cannot forget the pain-ridden years of the *intifada* even if she wants to. During that fateful year of 1989 when a record-high six young refugees were shot dead in the camp by Israeli soldiers, Nida', then 14, was herself shot in the abdomen. It happened during a demonstration commemorating the end of 40 days of mourning following the shooting death of Roufaida Abu Laban, Dheisheh's only female *intifada* victim. Roufaida was shot between the eyes by an Israeli sniper on April 17, 1989.

Before being shot and falling to the ground, Nida' witnessed the shooting of several other young people that day. Her description of the events, the blood, the ensuing chaos is as crystal-clear as though she were describing something that happened just last night. It could be because she occasionally suffers recurring pains from her old injury that makes it so hard for her to forget. But it also could be because she named her daughter Roufaida in honor of her sister-in-law, who didn't live to see her brother Ahmed marry Nida' in 1993. It is hard to say.

Whatever the reason, Nida' never fails to surprise anyone. Out of the blue, she'll blurt out something like, "If Roufaida were alive, she would have finished college by now." Going on as if she were talking to herself, she'll say, "But if she were married, she would have children. I wonder how many she

would have had by now?" As abruptly as she had started speaking, Nida' falls silent, her thoughts trail off, and she quickly wipes the tears that begin to spring from her eyes. Life always manages to go on for the living.

Dheisheh's History on the Net

Ten Dheisheh refugees were killed by Israeli soldiers during the *intifada* (see page 13), including one who was killed while handling an explosive device left behind by the Israeli army. Eight of those killed were 19 years of age or younger. But the youngest of all was Bassam Ghrouze who, at the tender age of 12, was shot by an Israeli sniper one cold February day in 1991.

In April 1998, when students at the Dheisheh UNRWA School for Boys were asked to write a special assignment about their childhood in the camp, 7th grader Mutasem Ghrouze wrote a moving essay about his deceased brother:

Although it has been seven years, I am still sad whenever I remember my brother Bassam. His martyrdom is still fresh in our minds. Bassam was very special and our love for him is deeply engraved in our hearts. He was an energetic, creative and well-mannered child. He acted older than his age and was quite bold.

But in one depressing moment, he was gone. He was shot dead by an Israeli soldier. The soldier's heart was filled with hate and resentment. The soldiers had neither value for human life nor any value for a child's life.

Bassam was martyred on a Sunday. I will always think of that day as a very black day because it left our hearts heavy with sorrow that will stay with us as long as we live.

Yes, Bassam was shot dead on a Sunday. It was February 10, 1991. The sun was almost setting. The sunset took Bassam

with it. He never came back home and he never will. But even though he is gone, his memory will live with us for eternity.

This December, one billion Christians the world over will celebrate the birth of a Palestinian child, born 2,000 years ago, under military occupation, in that "Little Town of Bethlehem." The children of Dheisheh camp on the outskirts of Bethlehem invite those Christians to visit them this Christmas, if not in person, then in cyberspace. Mutasem's essay and several other accounts written by his fellow students have been translated and placed on our newly established Dheisheh camp website.

The address is: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/9836/dheisheh>

Here, in addition to Mutasem, you will meet Fida, 14, whose father spent 27 months in an Israeli prison, held there without charge or trial.

Here you will meet Ala', 12, beaten on the way home from school by an Israeli soldier, and Mahmoud, 12, dragged by his arm across the floor when an army patrol stormed his family home.

Here you will meet Malek, 12, who'll tell you of the time he was caught outside his house during a curfew, and how the soldiers brought him home, beat his father, then went to his father's falafel shop, soaked his money in frying oil, and stole provisions with which he made his living.

And you will meet Firas, 13, who will tell you how the sewage water fills the street in winter and the electricity and heat shut off.

And you will meet Mahmoud, 13, who'll happily tell you of the time the soldiers couldn't catch him because "I was faster than them."

And you will meet Ihab, who will tell you how his two uncles were forced to stand under a water drainage pipe in freezing winter weather.

These are the children of "The Little Town of Bethlehem" at the turn of the millennium.

Life's Four Seasons

The argument became heated. "I was by Abu Ali's hospital bed when he died and I'm entitled to the nkisa," Mustafa roared. "I don't care where you were. I was the one who arrived at Abu Ali's house first," bellowed Hussein. "Take it easy guys. There is no need to make a scene. Abu Ali's father is on his way and he'll tell us who's getting the nkisa."

The hour was close to dawn as the men stood in the darkened alley, waiting for the verdict. Who is going to cook the meal of fresh meat and rice for Abu Ali's family following his burial the next day? This old habit, known as nkisa, is one family's way of honoring another family when death takes a loved one. It is an honor for which families vigorously compete; once taken, the nkisa remains in the deceased family's debt until they can repay it when someone from the other family dies.

The cries and wails of the women at Abu Ali's house pierce the night silence. A car approaches and comes to a stop. "May God rest his soul," the men tell Abu Ali's father as he steps out of the car. After shaking hands with each of the men, the old

man speaks. "My friends, I know that none of you falls short of doing his honorable duty, but in all fairness I have to tell you that Mustafa is the one entitled to take the nkisa. All of you know that, according to our customs, the man who is present at the moment of death is the one who gets it." Hussein starts to argue, but the other men silence him. The matter is settled.

For the next three days and nights, Abu Ali's house is packed with an endless line of mourners who've come to pay their respects. The women sit together and offer Abu Ali's wife, daughters, sisters, and daughters-in-law their sympathy and comfort. The men gather in another room while Abu Ali's sons and male relatives serve coffee and put away the sacks of rice and sugar that were brought.

The constant presence of people seems to absorb the family's initial shock over their loss. Mourning the dead is not a private matter, but one that is shared by the extended family, neighbors, and friends.

Less than two weeks after Abu Ali's death, many of the women who went to console his wife go with gifts to visit Um Issa. Her daughter-in-law has just given birth to a baby boy and the women join her in the celebration of this new life.

At the beginning, I had a tough time understanding how the people of Dheisheh could cry with someone one day and celebrate with someone else the next. Ever so slowly, I began to realize that Dheisheh's small world personifies the meaning of life and death. Death, like winter, makes the tree branches go bare. Then comes spring, or birth, bringing with it new blooms into the world. This is life. People accept it as such and their attitude toward this change of seasons is so very touching and endearing.

Maybe it is the fact that everyone has been living together on this small 90-acre patch of land these past 51 years that makes death so bearable. Ahmed, my husband, was born and raised in the same house we live in today. His neighbors have been the same neighbors all these years. Throughout this time, the children grew up, married, had children of their own, grandparents passed away, and parents themselves became grandparents. While you feel pain in seeing someone you love leave this world, you also watch his children grow and become adults. It is a view of the cycle of life at its best. Simple, yet forever forceful and continuously present.

Perhaps it is this sense of safety that makes Dheisheh feel like home to a stranger like me. I moved between three countries and 17 houses and apartments in my 39 years of life. I don't know the fate of my high school friends in Amman and I lost contact with many of my college friends in the United States. There simply has been no continuity and, therefore, no sense of belonging or safety in my life.

The opposite is true for Ahmed. His friends back in the first grade are still his friends today. They played hide-and-seek together, resisted the occupation together, and went to prison together. Today, they are building professional careers together and even doing their graduate studies together.

I, too, am fulfilling my professional career as a journalist in this 160-mile area that constitutes Zone A of Bethlehem. Barred by the Oslo Accords from covering stories in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, and Gaza, and from working for newspapers

and foreign TV networks in Jerusalem, I found myself, between March 1995 and July 1997, sitting at home with nothing to do. With no children to raise, I began descending into depression. I needed a way back into the profession that I loved so much.

Then, like so many other times in my life, destiny stepped in. A friend helped me reach an agreement with "Palestine Report," an English language weekly published in East Jerusalem. I would send them weekly articles from Bethlehem. Two months later, I sold my antiquated computer and bought a new one equipped with a modem. Through E-mail and the Internet, I was able to turn my life around. Now my articles appear regularly in "Palestine Report," "Middle East International," and other publications in Paris, Jerusalem and London.

"How can you stand living in a run-down place like Dheisheh after living in Washington?" is a question I'm constantly being asked by Americans and Europeans who visit me in the camp.

The answer is simple really: whenever I ride the bus back from Bethlehem after going to town to run some errands, I'm always confronted with the same feeling. The moment the bus stops at Dheisheh and I get off, I feel a sense of relief. The moment I cross the street and walk inside the camp, I feel like the whole place is my home. I can walk here blindfolded and not worry about falling; I can leave my house unlocked and not worry about getting robbed; I can turn the corner to my house and be certain that the kids next door will come running to me with their warm greetings.

During dark moments when I'm melancholy or burdened with the responsibilities of life, a child's knock on the front gate saves me from myself.

"Who is it?" I ask, even though I know who my young visitor is.

"It is I, Zuzu," comes the sweet voice of the 4-year-old boy from next door.

"What do you want?" I tease.

"Open up. I got you the newspaper from the store."

Zuzu marches into the house, hands me the newspaper and walks right into the kitchen. "Where are the bananas?" he asks.

"We're out," I smile.

"So how about boiling me an egg?" he says shyly.

"The best egg for the best Zuzu," I say, as I kneel down and give him a bear hug.

Wrapping his small arms around my neck and planting wet kisses on my cheeks, Zuzu sighs, "Oh, aunt Muna, you're my darling."

I don't know why, but I cry each time.

Farewell Washington

My journey into Zuzu's arms goes back many years.

When the *intifada* against Israel's military occupation broke out in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on December 9, 1987, I was a pampered Palestinian living the good life in America. While Palestinians back home were changing the course of our history,

I was working on my muscle tone at a local health club in suburban Maryland. While they were facing death and injury, I was dining out at my favorite Ethiopian restaurant in Washington's ethnic neighborhood of Adams Morgan. While their homes were being demolished, I was sipping beer with my friends at the Childe Herald on Dupont Circle. The *intifada* was as distant from my life in Washington as Mars from Planet Earth.

But all this was on the surface. Underneath it all, I was restless and quite unhappy. It was emotionally painful for me to watch the news on TV and see Palestinian women, men and children lash out with nothing more than stones against heavily armed Israeli soldiers. The scenes simultaneously thrilled and upset me. I was thrilled to see that my people were rising against Israel's 20-year long occupation, but I also was upset because I was stuck in Washington away from it all.

Without realizing it, I became hooked to my TV set. Like an obsessed maniac, I spent hours taping every network television news coverage of the fast-spreading confrontations. Then, in the evenings, I would invite my small circle of Palestinian friends over for a replay and watch while my male friends sobbed like children.

Later, alone, I would lie on the sofa and play back the tapes until I had every scene memorized by heart. My sense of pride was simply awesome! For it was Palestine's children of the occupation, not the leadership of the PLO, nor its freedom fighters, who were standing up to heavily-armed soldiers and shouting – with stones – enough is enough.

I could not help but think what a mockery these Palestinian children were making of our political leaders, our guerrilla fighters and our intellectuals. Since June 1967, when Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinians, whether armed with a gun, a pen or an olive branch, have been grappling to gain world opinion.

But there were very few people in the world at large who really seemed to give a damn about us. The world's indifference had become common place. What if we were an occupied, stateless and homeless people? Nobody cared. Rather, much of the world continued to believe that we were terrorists while Israel was a small democracy struggling to survive in a sea of hostile Arab states.

The entire world community had put the Palestinians on a shelf and forgotten about us. At best, we were considered homeless refugees; at worst, we were treated like a bunch of wild-eyed fanatics bent on the destruction of the Jewish state. Reality and image had gotten transposed somehow.

And then BANG! The *intifada* came and took everyone by surprise.

No one anticipated the rise of the children of stones. No one imagined that Palestine's children of occupation would grab world public opinion and twist it to our favor. All of a sudden, the image of Israel changed. Scenes of armed Israeli soldiers firing at Palestinian civilians brought us more in world sympathy and support than all of the previous efforts of the PLO and its allies combined.

My need to be there with the Palestinians at this very critical period in our history was so urgent that I could not

concentrate on anything else. I became moody, irritable and reclusive. By the Spring of 1988, my spirits had hit rock bottom and I could not shake the dark cloud of depression that seemed to linger over my head.

I started hating my life in Washington. I hated McDonalds, hated "Good Morning America," hated The Washington Post, hated going to cocktail parties at Arab embassies, hated uttering shallow words like "nice to meet you" and "have a nice day".

Most of all, I hated my impotence.

Palestinian kids, some as young as seven, were picking up stones and throwing them at Israeli soldiers armed with lethal ammunition and tear gas. Their courage made me feel totally helpless and inept. I did not have the courage to face guns head-on like these kids did. I was a coward, afraid of death. I could never stand a few feet away from a soldier, his loaded gun pointed directly at me, and threaten him with words, let alone with a stone. But damn it! I wanted to. I desperately wanted to be as bold as the young boys on my television screen.

My reasons were selfish, of course. I craved courage for no other reason than to conquer a lifelong fear, my fear of death. Death that came when I was a child and took away my favorite uncle, my grandfather, and then, later, my best high-school friend and my father. Death that left me feeling so cowardly, afraid of losing loved ones, incapable of dealing with the emotions of loss.

I could see that the Palestinians back home were dealing with death every day. Daughters were losing fathers and wives were losing husbands. Their sorrow did not seem to be less felt than mine and their pain appeared to be just as grave. Yet their close encounters with death did not hold them back. Instead, they seemed to be lashing out at it and challenging it every time they took to the streets and confronted the armed soldiers. Ashamed of my cowardice, I craved their courage.

My bout with depression and self-pity lasted through the first six months of the *intifada*. Throughout this time I felt like a bad swimmer in the middle of a turbulent sea, wanting badly to reach the safety of a shore but not knowing exactly how to get there.

I don't remember ever hating myself as much as I did back then.

Just when I knew I had reached the edge, destiny came to the rescue again. It happened one hot and humid Washington afternoon in 1988 and it was my friend "Karim," a brilliant Palestinian writer, who unwittingly snapped me out of my depression. Every week or so, we would meet at the Childe Herald, a popular pub which played 60's music and served sumptuous hamburgers and salads. Over food and drinks, Karim and I would exchange news and views on the latest developments of the *intifada*. Karim did most of the talking, using extremely sophisticated and eloquent words. I listened to him as intently as a pupil listens to a great teacher.

On that fateful afternoon, I sat on my wooden chair smiling and nodding my head as Karim analyzed the situation back home. Suddenly I was struck by an odd feeling, a sort of a *déjà vu* if you will. I had heard these words before, all of them. Karim was repeating himself. Why was I listening to him? I looked deeply into his face and saw something new: a man who

drank too much and a writer too self-absorbed to be as productive as I knew he could be.

It was like looking in a mirror. If I did not do something soon to get out of the rut I was in, I would become like Karim. And I knew I did not want to sit out my Palestinian existence in a Washington pub until it grew too late for me to make a difference.

I threw up when I got home. I had had enough. I wanted out of my depression and self-pity before it was too late. My mind was set. My only chance at survival, at reaching the shore, was to get myself over to the West Bank. Nothing else was going to make me feel better.

Another six months passed before I boarded the plane to Tel Aviv. I had to become an American citizen first. According to Israeli law, Palestinians who carry passports from Arab countries cannot enter Israel unless an immediate family member in the West Bank or Gaza Strip submits an official request with the Israeli authorities on their behalf. Then it is up to the Israelis to approve or reject the request. I had a Jordanian passport and lived in the United States as a permanent resident. I did not have immediate family members in the West Bank.

As an American, however, I could enter Israel anytime I wanted. The irony of the situation did not escape me. Being an American would give me easy access to my country of birth whereas my identity as a Palestinian born in Jerusalem would deny me that right. The decision was easy. If becoming an American will get me home, then I shall become an American.

And I did. The process at the department of immigration lasted from June until December 1988. And on December 13, I stood before a United States district court judge and pledged allegiance to the American flag. That same morning, I went to the U.S. Passport Agency and applied for my very own American passport. Three days later I was booked on a flight to Tel Aviv.

I was in heaven. The entire planet was not spacious enough to hold me. Exactly one year and seven days after the outbreak of the *intifada*, I was finally on my way home. I was going to watch the stone-throwing with my own eyes, smell the tear gas with my own nostrils and hear the sound of gunfire with my own ears. I was going to be part of something terribly frightening and terribly real. My life was about to have meaning. I was about to be part of something far greater and far more important than myself.

When my mother found out, she hit the roof.

"Are you out of your mind?" she yelled.

"I've never been more sane," I said dryly as we stood arguing in her suburban Virginia home.

"You are going to get yourself killed there," she pleaded.

"But I can also get killed here. I can get run over by a car," I replied.

"It's not the same and you know it," mother said sadly.

I could not tell her the truth. I could not tell her that I did not want to stay in the States and become a second generation Palestinian in exile. I could not become like her, a foreigner assimilated into the American way of life.

Palestine to my mother was a distant memory of a place where she lived for nearly 30 years of her life. Her dream of returning to that place never materialized. I could not bring myself to tell her that I did not want to grow old in exile like she had. That Jerusalem, to me, was neither a memory nor a dream but a real place where real Palestinians live. A place where I wanted and needed to be.

"You're crazy," mother retorted. "You live life chasing after your whims."

"Don't be dramatic mother," I remarked. "I'm going to write articles about the *intifada* and I'll be back in two months."

But I wasn't back until nine very long months later. And I returned only to say farewell to my life in America. This time, I was returning to the West Bank to stay.

"I'm never going to see you again," my mother cried as the taxi came to take me to the airport that cold January morning in 1990.

"Don't be silly Mom!" I hugged her. "We'll see each other plenty of times."

We never did. Mom passed away in Virginia in December 1993, and not having the proper residency papers that would guarantee my return to the West Bank should I leave, I did not attend her funeral. Nor, for that matter have I been to the States since.

Nine years ago I had a shallow understanding of the people who make up the majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Today, I consider myself one of them. Without realizing it, the refugees of Dheisheh, and especially my husband Ahmed, have made me a more mature, more human and more compassionate woman.

For this, I will always be in their debt. To them I dedicate this article. p

Editor's Note: The author of this Link is engaged in an effort to tie all Palestinian refugee camps together through the Internet. Bir Zeit University, where the host server is located, has received seed money for the Across Borders Project. Dheisheh has been selected as the pilot camp for installation of the first Internet center. Web postings will be in Arabic and English.

Noting the "isolation and restrictions on the freedom of movement of the population in the West Bank and Gaza," project organizers see the Internet linkage as a means of facilitating text, audio and video communication between camps and to the world at large. It also is a response to "the urgency of placing the genuine voice of the refugee community on the international stage."

Internet Centers will encourage the collection of camp residents' oral histories for circulation on the Web, along with commentaries on camp life and pictures taken by children who will be trained in photography.

Funds are needed for the pilot project to purchase computer equipment and hire staff. Prospective donors can obtain a complete project proposal by contacting Muna Muhaisen at <muhausen@alami.net>.



Muna Hamzeh-Muhaisen, author of this *Link*, with her husband, Ahmed, and mother-in-law, Um Subhi.—
Photo by Rachel Avnery



Author with her "kids next door:" Rana (left), Malak (right bottom), Maram (right center), Khlood (right top), a neighbor (far right top), and Zuzu (in author's arms). —1998 photo by A. Muhaisen

1

IBRAHIM HANIYEH

BORN MARCH 25, 1953
KILLED MAY 9, 1988

IBRAHIM, 35, WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD BY AN ISRAELI ARMY SNIPER WHILE STANDING BY THE WINDOW OF HIS HOUSE AND BECKONING HIS CHILDREN TO COME INSIDE AFTER CLASHES ERUPTED IN THE STREET. HE DIED INSTANTLY, LEAVING BEHIND A PREGNANT WIFE AND SEVEN CHILDREN.

2

NATHEM ABU JOUDEH

BORN NOVEMBER 28, 1970
SHOT SEPTEMBER 28, 1988
DIED OCTOBER 11, 1988

NATHEM, 18, WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD THREE TIMES DURING A DEMONSTRATION IN DHEISHEH IN LATE SEPTEMBER, 1988. HE REMAINED IN CRITICAL CONDITION FOR 13 DAYS BEFORE HE DIED.

3

NABIL ABU LABAN

BORN JULY 8, 1973
KILLED JANUARY 13, 1989

NABIL, 16, WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST WITH A LIVE BULLET DURING A DEMONSTRATION IN DHEISHEH.

4

IMAD QARAQEH

BORN MAY 30, 1966
KILLED APRIL 15, 1989

IMAD, 23, WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST DURING A DEMONSTRATION IN DHEISHEH.

There is hardly a [Dheisheh] refugee, young or old, who doesn't remember the names of the camp's victims and even the years of

5

NASSER QASSAS

BORN OCTOBER 6, 1973
KILLED APRIL 16, 1989

NASSER, 16, WAS SHOT IN THE HEART DURING A VIOLENT DEMONSTRATION FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF IMAD QARAQEH THE PREVIOUS DAY. AFTER NASSER'S DEATH, DHEISHEH WAS PLACED UNDER MILITARY CURFEW FOR NEARLY 14 CONSECUTIVE DAYS.

6

ROUFAIDA ABU LABAN

BORN DECEMBER 2, 1974
KILLED APRIL 17, 1989

ROUFAIDA, 15, WAS KILLED IN A DEMONSTRATION PROTESTING THE DEATH OF NASSER QASSAS THE PREVIOUS DAY. SHE WAS SHOT BETWEEN THE EYES AND DIED INSTANTLY. ROUFAIDA WAS DHEISHEH'S ONLY FEMALE INTIFADA VICTIM.

7

ALI ZGHARI

BORN 1970
KILLED MAY 18, 1989

ALI, 19, WAS KILLED DURING A DEMONSTRATION IN DHEISHEH. ISRAELI SOLDIERS SHOT HIM FOUR TIMES—IN THE NECK, SKULL, SHOULDER AND UPPER HIP.

8

MOHAMMED ABU AKER

BORN SEPTEMBER 13, 1971
SHOT AUGUST 6, 1988
DIED OCTOBER 22, 1990

MOHAMMED, 19, WAS SHOT ABOVE THE PELVIS DURING CLASHES IN DHEISHEH. HIS STOMACH AND KIDNEYS WERE DAMAGED AND HIS INTESTINES COMPLETELY TORN. HE DIED OF HIS INJURIES TWO YEARS LATER AFTER MEDICAL CARE AT HOME AND IN THE U.S.

9

BASSAM GHROUZE

BORN SEPTEMBER 4, 1979
KILLED FEBRUARY 10, 1991

BASSAM, 12, WAS KILLED BY AN ISRAELI MILITARY SNIPER DURING A DEMONSTRATION IN DHEISHEH. HE WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST AND DIED ON THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL. HE WAS DHEISHEH'S YOUNGEST INTIFADA VICTIM.

10

ALI SAJADI

BORN DECEMBER 12, 1974
KILLED AUGUST 4, 1993

ALI'S BODY WAS SHATTERED TO PIECES WHILE HANDLING AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE HE FOUND ON A HILL ACROSS THE ROAD FROM DHEISHEH. ISRAELI SOLDIERS PATROLLING THE AREA HAD DROPPED THE DEVICE. ALI WAS 19.

According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) statistics for the *intifada* period of approximately 6-1/2 years, 28,753 Palestinian children 15 years old or younger were medically treated for injuries inflicted by Israelis, including injuries caused by gunshots, beatings, tear gas, explosive devices, being run down by military vehicles, and by being thrown onto burning tires.

The Arab World

Seven monographs prepared by the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding. Includes: "Introduction to the Arab World;" "The Maghreb;" "Egypt;" "Israel and Palestine;" "Jordan;" and "The Arabian Peninsula." Comes in an attractive, laminated folder with fine illustrations. Ideal for elementary and high school teachers.

List: \$20; AM EU : \$19 .50

Arafat by Said Aburish, 1998, 360 pp., hard-cover.

Well-researched bibliography of the Palestinian leader. Includes his contacts since 1973 with the CIA, and his many secret approaches to Israel. The author, born in Palestine, is former correspondent for Radio Free Europe and The Daily Mail.

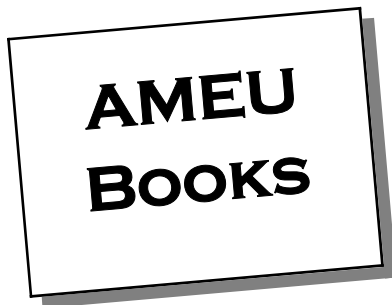
List: \$25.95; AM EU : \$20 .50

Babylon to Baku by Zayn Bilkadi, 224 pp., 12" x 9 1/4", hard-

A delightful—and surprising—history of oil, told with 260 full-color illustrations, many of art and artifacts in the British Museum.

Remembering Deir Yassin: The Future of Israel and Palestine, D. McGowan, M. Ellis, eds. 1998, 150 pp., paper.

WHEN THE DAY COMES TO BUILD A MEMORIAL AT DEIR YASSIN TO MARK THE PALESTINIAN CATASTROPHE, CHANCES ARE IT WILL BE BUILT THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF DAN MCGOWAN (SEE HIS *Link* ARTICLE OF SEPT. 1996), MARK ELLIS (*Link*, APRIL 1991), AND THE MEMBERS OF THEIR DEIR YASSIN FOUNDATION. THIS BOOK IS PART OF THEIR RESEARCH.



See more books (and order form) on Page 15 and video selections on Page 16.

Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, 1993, 227 pp., paper.

A professor of psychology at Haifa University analyses how the dream of political Zionism became both reality and nightmare, and how Zionist settlers purposefully ignore their Palestinian victims.

List: \$19.95; AMEU: \$12.50

Bethlehem 2000: Past and Present by Mitri Raheb and Fred Strickert, 1998, 11 3/4" x 9 1/4", 160 pp., cloth.

History of the culture, religion and present day reality of one of the decisive locales in recorded history. As the millennium draws near, this splendid work with its 130 color photos will put all the hoopla in historical perspective.

List: \$34.95; AM EU : \$ 32 .50

Scattered Like

Seeds by Shaw Dallal, 1999, 192 pp., cloth.

An historical novel about a Palestinian, whose exile from Palestine brings him to the U.S., where his learning in law and nuclear technology returns him to the Middle East. The author is former legal counsel to the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.

List: \$26.95; AM EU : \$24 .95

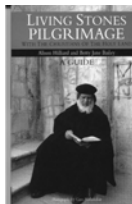
Palestine 1948
50 Years After Nakba
The Towns and Villages Depopulated by the Zionist Invasion of 1948
Prepared by Salman Abu-Sitta.
Based on works by B. Morris, W. Khalidi, B. Nijim, B. Muammer, et al.

39" x 21 1/2" Wall Map of 1948 Palestine shows locations of:
| 531 depopulated towns & villages and gives reasons inhabitants left.
| 33 villages/towns terrorized by Zionist massacres.
| Places worldwide where Palestinians live today.

AMEU Special Price: \$15 .00

The Spirit of Palestine.
10½" X 12½",
244 PP.,
1994, HARDCOVER, 156

ILLUSTRATIONS, MOSTLY FULL-COLOR PLATES. MANY RARE ARCHIVAL PHOTOS. CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE KAREN ARMSTRONG AND ROGER GAUDY. EDITORIAL CONSULTANT: AUSTAIR DUNCAN. COVERS BIBLICAL PERIOD, CRUSADES, ISLAMIC PERIODS, ZIONIST OCCUPATION, AND *intifada*.



Living Stones Pilgrimage with the Christians of the Holy Land by Betty Jane Bailey & Alison Hilliard, 1999, 132 pp., paper.

Includes: Introduction to the denominations present in Jerusalem; historic Christian locations; meditative walks in the city and surroundings: Bethlehem of the past and Bethlehem at the turn of the millennium; Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee and Gaza; as well as lesser known Christian towns and villages; local celebrations; and alternative shopping.

List: \$15.00; AMEU: \$14.50

Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths
By Karen Armstrong,
1996, 471 pp., cloth.

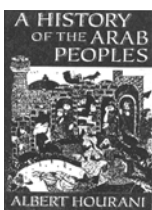
Acclaimed historian traces the history of the holy city under Christian, Muslim and Jewish rulers.

List: \$29.50; AMEU: \$23.50

Arabs & Israel For Beginners by Ron David, illustrated by Susan David, 1993, 218 pp., paper.

With the aid of a skillful illustrator, author traces 12,000 years of turbulent history. The conversational style and comic book format are particularly suited for those new to the Arab-Israeli discussion, although well informed readers may find the approach equally refreshing.

List: \$9.95; AMEU: \$8.95



A History of the Arab Peoples by Albert Hourani, 1991, 551 pp., cloth.

One of the very best histories available on the Arab peoples.

List: \$27.50; AMEU: \$22.50

Unequal Conflict: The Palestinians and Israel by John Gee, 1998, 146 pp., paper.

The author holds that Zionism succeeded because Palestinian society was ill adapted to confront a determined movement of European colonization. He concludes that only by demythologizing the workings of Zionism will it be possible to find a peaceful



Gideon's Spies: The Secret History of the Mossad by Gordon Thomas, 1999, 354 pp.,

The intriguing history of Israel's intelligence organization, told by an investigative journalist who combines the standards of his profession with the skills of a novelist.

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- ÿ Middle East Council of Churches, **Christian Families of Palestine** (1993, 34 minutes). Documents expropriation by Israeli settlers of the land of two Christian Palestinian families. Good for church groups and tourists preparing to visit the Holy Land. List: \$25.00; **AMEU: \$20.00.**
- ÿ IRA, **Children of the Cradle** (1996, 30-minute report on embargo of Iraq). **AMEU: \$3.00.**
- ÿ Masri, M., **Hanan Ashrawi: A Woman of Her Time** (1995, 51 minutes). One of Palestine's most articulate representatives shows that Israel's occupation is far from over – and far from benign. List: \$65.00; **AMEU: \$35.00.**
- ÿ Munayyer, F. & H., **Palestinian Costumes and Embroidery: A Precious Legacy** (1990, 38 minutes). A rare collection of Palestinian dresses with accessories modeled against the background of Palestinian music, with commentary tracing the designs back to Canaanite times. List \$50.00; **AMEU: \$12.50.**
- ÿ AIC, **Seeds of War in Jerusalem** (1997, 20 minutes). The struggle to save Abu Ghneim and Arab East Jerusalem. **AMEU: \$17.50.**
- ÿ PHRM, **Jerusalem: An Occupation Set in Stone?** (1995, 55 minutes). Graphic account of Israel's plan to uproot Palestinian presence from Jerusalem. **AMEU:\$20.00.**
- ÿ DMZ, **People & the Land** (1997, 57 minutes). This is the controversial documentary by Tom Hayes that appeared on over 40 PBS stations. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- ÿ Studio 52 Production, **Checkpoint: The Palestinians After Oslo** (1997, 58 minutes). Documents the post-Oslo situation with off-beat humor and historical insights provided by Palestinian and Israeli activists like Naseer Arad and Hanan Ashrawi. **AMEU: \$27.00.**
- ÿ Kelley, R., **The Bedouin of Israel** (1998, 2 hours). Never-before-seen film of how Israel has treated its Bedouin citizens, including interview with the notorious Green Patrol. **AMEU: \$30.00.**
- ÿ Driver, R., **TV Political Ad** (1998, 30 seconds). This is the powerful 30-second spot that Rod Driver aired on Channel 12 in Rhode Island during his campaign for Congress. Also included are his six "Untold Stories" newspaper advertise-

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