



## JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM by Naim Ateek

"...How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you were not willing!"  
(Matt. 23:37)

On Good Friday of this year, I took a long walk with Maha and Nevert, my wife and daughter, through the Old City of Jerusalem retracing the steps of Jesus from Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives to his death on Golgotha. The old city was jammed with people. This year the three major feasts of the three monotheistic religions coincided. Muslims celebrated 'Id Al-Adha on Saturday, March 27, 1999; Jews celebrated the first day of Passover on Thursday April 1; and Christians celebrated Easter on April 4 (April 11 for those on the Julian Calendar.)

The narrow streets of the Old City were crowded with the adherents of the three religions, not to mention the several thousand Christian pilgrims and tourists who were there for Holy Week and Easter, each group celebrating in its own way and on its own holy site. At the same time there were children playing, shopkeepers wooing people into their shops, vendors following the tourists as they peddled their goods, village women trying to sell their garden vegetables, and Israeli soldiers in full gear standing on guard.

I turned to Maha and Nevert and said that in all probability these streets resemble those during the time of Jesus. Many people in Jerusalem then were preparing themselves for the feast of Passover. The

city was over-crowded with people who had come from everywhere; and Jesus was passing through the streets, carrying his cross while most people carried on with their normal business. The sight of a young man taken to be crucified by the Roman soldiers was not an unfamiliar sight. There was nothing novel about a criminal or a political rebel being dragged to his death.

The question which came to me as I walked was this: what did the people of

*The Challenge of this Easter is to break the paradigm of domination and replace it with the paradigm of partnership.*

Jerusalem offer Jesus on that last Friday of his life? The Gospel of Luke chapter 23 provided me with the answers. The chief priests and scribes with some of their supporters offered Jesus their accusation and condemnation (vss. 2, 5, 21). King Herod with the soldiers offered him ridicule and mockery (vss. 11, 35, 36). Pilate, the Roman governor of Jerusalem, offered him a death sentence (vss. 24-25). Simon of Cyrene offered him, though forced, a helping hand by carrying his cross for part of the way (vs. 26). The women of Jerusalem offered

him their tears (vss. 27-28). The thief who was crucified on his left offered blasphemy and cursing (vs. 39). The thief on the right offered him his loyalty (vs. 42). The Roman centurion offered his testimony (vs. 47). Joseph of Arimathea offered him his own tomb.

With the exception of a few positive human emotions and gestures, most of the people joined those in power to put Jesus to death and they were successful. They were under the illusion that they controlled the events of history; that they possessed the power to condemn and kill the innocent, release and free the criminal (vs. 18-19), and that no one could stand in their way. This is the deceptive nature of evil and the epitome of human arrogance. The Easter message in essence declares that God will ultimately not allow evil to have the final word. Easter means the victory of God in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christ becomes a model for the victorious life of faith not only for individuals but for communities and nations. It is in reality a new paradigm for victory and liberation to all those oppressed.

Today, many of the people of Jerusalem have been condemned to death by the existing powers "who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build Zion with

*(Continued on page 2)*

# In This Issue

- 1 **Editorial** Naim Ateek
- 3 **The Church of the Resurrection**  
Henry Carse
- 4 **Jerusalem and the Resurrection of Jesus** Peter Walker
- 6 **From the Diary of a Pilgrim**
- 7 **Jerusalem, "Al-Quds," in the Heart of Palestinian Christians**  
Jean Zaru
- 9 **Memory of Flight and Rights in Jerusalem** Tom Abowd
- 11 **Maximum Territory, Minimum Population** Elizabeth Campbell
- 14 **Whose Jerusalem?**  
Ibrahim Matar
- 16 **Jerusalem - between Exclusivity and Inclusivity**  
Albert Aghazarian
- 17 **Our Jerusalem**
- 18 **Jerusalem and I: a Book Review**  
Rufaida Mikdadi
- 19 **A Day of Prayer and Fasting for Jerusalem**  
  
**A Response to Christian Zionist Exclusivism** Tom Getman
- 20 **Yehudi Menuhin on a Shared Jerusalem**
- 21 **Thoughts on Kosovo**  
Jonathan Kuttab
- 22 **News in Brief**
- 23 **Snapshots of Our Activities**

*(Continued from page 1)*

blood and Jerusalem with wrong! (Micah 3:9-10); "who ... covet fields, and seize them; houses, and take them away; they oppress householder and house, people and their inheritance" (Micah 2:2). Under the guise of security, many of Jerusalem's Palestinian inhabitants are being condemned and forced to carry

*We believe in the victory of God. We only await its expression in the lives of the people of Jerusalem today.*

their cross and walk the long way of their via dolorosa to their death. When one looks more penetratingly at the Palestinian Jerusalemites, it is possible to see the crosses many people are carrying – the cross of the loss of their right to live in the city of their birth; the cross of becoming homeless due to the demolition of their homes; the painful cross which people carry when their land is confiscated and their property taken; not to mention the crosses of humiliation and degradation which many people have to carry daily. There is a slow, creeping, planned extinction for the Palestinian Jerusalemites leading to the death of their city for them. Many Palestinians have been continuously living through the events of Good Friday. Their way of the cross has been long and harsh. Their journey of suffering seems endless and full of despair.

As Palestinians carry their cross, many people watch and offer them what they have. Those in power offer greater accusations and condemnations including mockery and ridicule. Yes there are the chief priests, the Herods, the Pilates, and the soldiers. But there are also the Simons of Cyrene who help ease the carrying of the load, the men and women who offer their tears of solidarity. There are also those who get converted on the road. They witness the grave injustice and take a stand for what is right. Such were the testimonies of the thief on the right side of the cross and the Roman centurion.

It is possible to argue that Jerusalem today resembles every city and country in the world that in essence knows not what makes for peace. Therefore, it is futile to hope that justice will be done to the oppressed. Jerusalem really stands for

the divided and polarized communities where ethnic strife is ripe, where the other is perceived as an enemy, and even neighbors expel and kill each other just like the daily atrocities we witness in Kosovo. It is possible to argue theologically that we cannot rest our hope on any earthly justice that will be done when people cannot accept and respect their differences and at-

tempt genuinely to live in peace with one another. It is possible to argue that in the Christian faith, the Jerusalem paradigm was replaced by the Jesus paradigm in his victory over death. For this Jerusalem will always symbolize the broken human family of our world at its worst where even the three monotheistic religions that witness to the Oneness of God cannot exist in peace as neighbors because at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one state and one religion insists on using the paradigm of domination and oppression, and is unwilling to accept the paradigm of partnership and peaceful coexistence.

In spite of this, and because we still believe in the justice of God and in God's power to change things, we continue working for a just resolution to Jerusalem and for the good of all of its people. And the same God who in the resurrection of Jesus Christ brought victory out of defeat, good out of evil, and life out of death, will bring justice and peace to all the people of our land. We believe in the victory of God. We only await its expression in the lives of the people of Jerusalem today.

This is the last Easter which we celebrate in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tragically, this has been the bloodiest of all centuries. It has seen more atrocity and suffering than at any time in history. The challenge of this Easter is to break the paradigm of domination and replace it with the paradigm of partnership. May we pledge to continue working together for all that uplifts and makes us truly human and may we all witness to the victory of God in this Jerusalem as well as in our lives.

*The Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek is Director of Sabeel Ecumenical Theology Center.*

## The Church of the Resurrection *by Henry Carse*

The story is told of a pious woman from a provincial French village, who came to Jerusalem with a group of pilgrims led by their parish priest. As they approached the Tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the simple woman peered inside, and whispered to the priest, "Mon pere, is there anyone still buried here?" To which the astute cleric replied: "Madame, if *he* is in, *we* are out!"

Only Jerusalem can boast the most famous absence in history: the empty tomb. It was called by the Crusaders "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre," but is known throughout the East as the "Anastasis" – the "Church of the Resurrection."

Pilgrims who have visited this labyrinth of stone in the heart of Jerusalem's Old City have described it as unsettling, chaotic, untidy, scandalous, primal, very public, very private, noisy, weird and wonderful. Standing by the rough chunk of limestone called Golgotha, pilgrims have likened it to a cornerstone, a building-stone, a lodestone, a stepping-stone, a living stone in the midst of the dead. One visitor said of the Rock of the Crucifixion that it is "the fulcrum of the seesaw of all our arguments."

Under the soaring dome of the newly renovated Rotunda stands the tottering masonry edifice representing the Tomb of Christ, called by Melville "a sickening cheat" and by a contemporary historian a "hideous kiosk." Paradoxically, although this "tomb" is only the latest in a long line of reconstructions, it is still the echo of one of Christianity's most authentic traditions. Recent research has led scholars closer and closer to the conclusion that somewhere under this "colossal wreck" of a shrine lie the fragments of a genuine first century Jewish rolling-stone burial cave, venerated by the early Christians as the place where Jesus once lay in death.

The history of the Church of the Resurrection, like the history of Christianity, is neither neat nor particularly inspiring. Human greed and religious fanaticism have taken their toll again and again, and

the church has been destroyed and rebuilt many times. The resultant architectural chaos, enshrined now in its mediaeval form, confuses and even repels many visitors. Yet a theological genius lies hidden here, and once appreciated, the ancient stones speak volumes about faith, hope and the human quest for integration of fragmented lives.

The Emperor Constantine, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, determined to set the new faith in the Risen Christ at the theological center of his Empire, sent orders to Jerusalem in 326 AD to spare no expense in building a magnificent basilica on the spot where Jesus rose from the dead. According to tradition, Constantine's plan was implemented by his mother, Queen Helen, who herself visited the Holy Land and took a personal interest in the discovery and beautification of the

*A theological genius lies hidden here, and once appreciated, the ancient stones speak volumes about faith, hope, and the human quest for integration of fragmented lives.*

holy places. Helen's journey was not the first Christian pilgrimage from far places to Jerusalem; evidence of earlier pilgrims can be found in documents and now in archaeological surveys in and around the church. A famous example is the "Domine Ivimus" ("Lord, we have come!") inscription, discovered by an Armenian bishop behind a wall in the Armenian chapel close to the church foundations. This inscription, accompanied by a delightful sketch of a ship with sails furled, may well be the record of Latin-speaking pilgrims who venerated the tomb of Christ here many years before the emancipation of Christianity by Constantine!

The Church of the Resurrection is a witness, not only to the faith of pilgrims, but to the tenacity and fidelity of the local Christian community, the descendants of those who were present at the first Pentecost, and who held to their belief that the death of Jesus was not the end of the story. We must assume that it was from this local group of faithful,

who had survived the persecution of both Jewish and Christian communities by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, that early pilgrims from abroad, and later Constantine and Helen, learned where to search for the holy tomb. Without a consistent local tradition, the places associated with Jesus would have been forgotten.

Bishop Eusebius describes how Constantine's workmen literally excavated the lost tomb from beneath the ruins of a pagan temple. It was a simple 1<sup>st</sup> century burial cave, empty and unadorned, carved into the side of an abandoned limestone quarry, in a place which had been in Jesus' day just outside the wall of Jerusalem. Only a few feet from the tomb stood an outcrop of rock, which had apparently been left in the quarry because it was cracked. In light of what we know of the history of this place, there is every reason to accept the early

tradition that this is Golgotha, the rock where Jesus and two other men were crucified by the Romans on charges of rebellion and blasphemy – the two excises still used by political

and religious leaders everywhere to silence dissenting voices.

These humble finds, soon enshrined in Constantine's Resurrection Church, were to become the inspiration for a wave of pious pilgrimage which put the homeland of Jesus permanently on the map of the Christian world.

Although Constantine's "Anastasis" has long ago been destroyed, the memory of it still lives in the massive 4<sup>th</sup> century foundations still visible in the ancient quarry under the church, in the cracked rock of Golgotha under the crucifixion chapel, and in the majestic Rotunda, carved by Constantine's masons from the living rock to beautify the central tomb.

And yet, Constantine's dream of a Christian Empire, united in both faith and allegiance, has gone the way of all ideologies. In its present disarray, with workmen drilling and polishing, with the nervous grumblings of tired and puzzled tourists, with quarterback angels in black robes and beards guarding the entrance to the empty

*(Continued on page 27)*

## Jerusalem and the Resurrection of Jesus *by Peter Walker*

If you had been a fly on the wall, what would you have seen? Three women making their way out of the city gates on a damp April morning. It was indeed very early. It would be some time before the sun came up over the Mount of Olives. So what were they about? Huddled together, you got the impression that they were hoping their expedition would not be noticed. Something odd was going on.

As it turned out, their hopes would not be realized. This small insignificant expedition would come in time to be emblazoned not just across the city of Jerusalem, but throughout the world. Their secret would be well and truly blown.

And in fact the expedition would be a complete failure – in the sense that they never achieved what they set out to do. A few moments later their mission would be aborted – overtaken by circumstances quite beyond their control.

So began an otherwise normal Sunday in Jerusalem in or around the year AD 33. For literally millions of people ever since, however, that day has been seen with hindsight to be the central day in human history – the moment when God fully revealed his master plan for the universe.

It was the first Easter Day, the dawn of a new age – the day that changed the world.

### The Jewel in the Crown

As Easter is celebrated this year in Jerusalem, it is staggering to think of all the other places around the globe where that same, simple story of the women's failed dawn expedition will be being remembered. It is staggering, too, to ponder just how different the subsequent course of history would have been if that first Easter Sunday had never taken place. No Christian Church, for a start; and probably very little interest in the city of Jerusalem after its sack by the Romans in AD 70.

But on Easter Sunday 1999 perhaps a quarter of the world's population will

have their minds set on Jerusalem and what took place there in the garden outside its city wall. Those strange, early morning events have completely changed the way in which people view not only themselves but also Jerusalem. The Resurrection of Jesus is indeed the jewel in Jerusalem's crown. It is the reason why we love the city and why it will forever have a unique place in our hearts and minds.

### An Event in Real History?

But was Jesus really raised from the dead? For some the Resurrection is not something which happened to Jesus; instead it is simply an event within the faith of the disciples. They believed his 'spirit lived on', that he was still 'with them'. Perhaps this conviction came about because of some hallucinations? Or perhaps the women went to the

*Paradoxically, this place where the Resurrection was first preached can seem one of the most difficult to sustain the Resurrection belief.*

wrong tomb?

But the Christian Church has never seen this as an adequate explanation of what we find in the New Testament. The disciples were not prepared for this event. Nor were they the kind of people to invent such teaching and then courageously uphold it in the face of fierce opposition. The disciples did not steal the body for the fun of it (nor did the religious and political authorities, who would have preferred to find the body, not lose it!)

No, the tomb was genuinely empty and, above all, his followers met him! Jesus was raised from the dead – visibly the same yet somehow different in a transformed Spirit-filled body (cf. I Cor. 15: 20,44). The Resurrection became an experience for the disciples only because it was first of all an event in the life of Jesus. As it says in our historic creeds: "on the third day he rose again."

In fact, if Jesus were not raised, we would probably never have heard of him. We might know of him as one of the

various 'messianic' leaders in stormy first-century Palestine. But to be crucified on a Roman cross outside the walls of the capital city, to put it mildly, was a spectacular failure for any would-be Messiah. It was certainly not the best raw material if you wanted to invent a new, convincing creed! The crucifixion without the Resurrection could never be (either then or now) more than a tragic story of bitter failure, of hopes dashed, of good being overcome by evil.

### Victory and Vindication

But instead, the Christian church explodes on the world-scene with the message that death has been conquered through Jesus Christ. It is a message of unexpected victory, able to turn the world upside down! What did it mean for the apostles and what can it mean for us today?

The Resurrection is, first, all about the *victory of God* – God's activity within his created world to reveal his purposes and to conquer

sin and death. It reveals his power; he is no absentee landlord, unable or unwilling to work in his world. It also reveals his love; the human rejection of Jesus is answered by the divine love, which brings good out of evil, which embraces our hostility towards him and turns it into a means of blessing.

Secondly, of course, it is all about the *vindication of Jesus*. In raising Jesus from the dead, God gives to Jesus' life and teaching a whole new meaning and authority. The apostles' claim that Jesus is the true Messiah, indeed God's Son and the Lord of the world, now has substance. And his death becomes no longer a dismal failure, but can be seen as expressing the very heart-beat of God's love – a divine entrance into the place of human sin in order to rescue us, the means of our forgiveness.

Thirdly, it is all about the *validation of hope*. For the apostles the Resurrection unexpectedly fulfilled their hopes but also gave them solid ground for yet further

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

hope – which we too can share. It confirms that God has good purposes towards his material creation; it is a pledge of creation's renewal (Rom. 8: 18-25). It is also a sure pattern for believers as we face our own death. 'Death has been swallowed up in victory'; 'Christ is being raised from the dead, will never die again, so we believe we will also live with him' (1 Cor. 15:54; Rom. 6:8-9). If it were not so, 'I would have told you' (John 14:2).

No wonder Christians get excited about this unique Resurrection message! It is the basis of their faith, the grounds of their hope, and the means by which they can know God's love. It means that Christ is alive today, able to be known and served, ready to travel with them on the road of life's journey. It means that for them their world is changed and that, though events around them often

cause them to question the goodness and power of God, they are confident that God is still working out his purpose of ultimate renewal. Truly for them that first, apparently insignificant, Easter in Jerusalem was the weekend that changed the world.

#### Jerusalem Today

But what does all this mean for Jerusalem today? The above may be 'blessed thoughts' for many throughout the world, but in modern Jerusalem the reality seems quite different. Paradoxically, of all the places in the world, this place where the Resurrection was first preached can seem one of the most difficult to sustain this Resurrection belief. The Christian community is a minority. And for many followers of Christ today their daily experience seems to resonate more with the crucifixion; they still wait for that Resurrection morning. 'How can they sing the Lord's song' in what seems now to be a 'strange land' (cf. Psa. 137:4)?

Strangely, one of the results of the Resurrection is that Jerusalem itself needs to be seen in a new light. In one sense, as said above, the Resurrection is Jerusalem's glory. In another sense, it

### Perspectives on Jerusalem

*"Jerusalem is the earthly point where God came into contact with humanity and where eternity crossed history."* -His Holiness Pope Paul VI

*"Sometimes I have felt great sadness and almost a sense of helplessness: the way forward to peace for the Holy Land and Jerusalem appears very precarious, alternating between progress and hesitation or failure. One has the impression that anything could happen: be it good or bad."* -Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran.

*"What a blessing it would be if this Holy Land, where God spoke and Jesus walked, could become a special place of encounter and prayer for peoples, if this Holy City of Jerusalem could be a sign and instrument of Peace and reconciliation! It is here that believers have a mission of primary importance to accomplish. Forgetting the past and looking to the future, they are called to repentance, to re-examine their behavior and to realize once again that they are brothers and sisters by reason of the one God who loves them and invites them to cooperate in his plan for humanity."* -His Holiness Pope John Paul II

also reveals her darker side.

For the Resurrection was God's act, which overturned the city's verdict on Jesus, which brought divine grace and good out of human evil. In John's Gospel especially, the crucifixion of Jesus in Jerusalem is seen to be symptomatic of the way the 'world' rejects God's light and life. Into the world of sin and darkness, epitomized by Jerusalem, comes the work of God's grace and love.

#### Light and Shadow

So we should not be surprised that dark shadows can still fall across the city. Nor should we be surprised that the first Christians came to see Jerusalem in a radically new light. For this was the 'City of the Great King' (Matt. 5:35) which had yet rejected her true King. It was the city which seemed so evidently to be still 'in slavery with her children' (Gal. 4:25). Above all, it was the city over which Jesus had wept (Luke 19:41). The New Testament writers came soon to fix their sights instead on the Jerusalem 'above', the 'heavenly Jerusalem' (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22), and were convinced that God's universal

purposes had now broken free from their Jerusalem confines to reach the 'ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

So the Resurrection is a brilliant light but it has to be said that it somewhat casts Jerusalem into its shadow. Christian interest in and devotion to Jerusalem will always be marked by ambiguity. Christians of all people have reason to be realistic about Jerusalem's true colors and to be wary about making it out to be something that it cannot be. In itself it is more truly the city of crucifixion. And talk of its 'holiness' turns out in some quarters to be a cover for practices that are far from 'holy'.

So, even if others pin their hopes upon the city, the Christian community will often choose to place them elsewhere – not in Jerusalem itself, but on the one who in Jerusalem was raised to newness of life, the One who knows all about suffering and yet assures us that

good will ultimately triumph over evil.

#### Holding on to the Word of Life

But if the New Testament's response to the Resurrection gives us cause for somber realism about the city, it also encourages us to hold on at all costs to this Resurrection message. It may not be popular, but without it we are sunk. No resurrection; no Christian Church. This is our life, because 'he is our life' (Col. 3:4). Other aspects of our Christian faith may be squeezed out, but to lose this is to lose that which gives us our identity. As one scholar has put it, 'if Jesus is not raised, then redemptive history ends in the *cul-de-sac* of a Palestinian grave' (G.E. Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Christ* [1975], p. 144).

But a Palestinian grave is NOT the end of the story! And that can be cause for deep rejoicing, not just for those living in Jerusalem but also for all those throughout the world who have responded to this unique message: 'He is not here; he is risen' (Mark 16:5). 'Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again!'

*The Rev. Dr. Peter Walker is a New Testament Tutor at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University.(UK)*

## From the Diary of a Pilgrim chosen by George Hintilian

The following are excerpts from the diaries of pilgrims who came to Jerusalem in the 19th century from the book *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Petra, and the Holy Land* by John Lloyd Stephens

The sojourner in Jerusalem who does not care for antiquities can always entertain himself by a study of the pilgrims who throng the city at this season . . . The pilgrims of the cross increase yearly; to supply their wants, to minister to their credulity, to traffic on their faith, is the great business of the Holy City. Few, I imagine, who are not in Palestine in the spring, have any idea of the extent of this vast yearly movement of Christian people upon the Holy Land, or of the simple zeal which characterizes it. . . . The dribblets of travel from America and from Western Europe are as nothing in the crowds thronging to Jerusalem from Ethiopia to Siberia, from the Baltic to the Ural Mountains. Already for a year before the Easter season have they been on foot, slowly pushing their way across great steppes, through snows and over rivers, crossing deserts and traversing unfriendly countries; the old, the infirm, women as well as men, their faces set towards Jerusalem. No common curiosity moves this mass, from Ethiopia, from Egypt, from Russia, from European Turkey, from Asia Minor, from the banks of the Tagus and the Araxes; it is a true pilgrimage of faith, the one event in a life of dull monotony and sordid cares, the one ecstasy of poetry in an existence of poverty and ignorance.

We spent a morning at the Russian Hospice, which occupies the hill to the northwest of the city . . . The establishment has one for the accommodation of rich pilgrims, and a larger one set apart for peasants. The hospice lodges free of charge, all the Russian pilgrims . . . Although all these pilgrims owed allegiance to the Czar, they represented a considerable variety of races. They came from Archangel, from Tobolsk, from the banks of the Ural, from Kurland; they had found their way along the Danube, the Dnieper, the Don. I spoke with a group of men and women who had walked over two thousand miles before they reached Odessa and took ship for Jaffa. There were among them Cossacks, wild and untidy, light-haired barbarians from the Caucasus, dark-skinned men and women from Moscow, representatives from the remotest provinces of great Russia; for the most part simple, rude, clumsy, honest boors. In an interior court we found men and women seated on the sunny flagging, busily occupied in arranging and packing the souvenirs of their visit. There was rosemary spread out to dry; there were little round cakes of blessed bread stamped with the image of the Savior; there were branches of palm, crowns of thorns, and stalks of cane cut at the Jordan; there were tin cases of Jordan water; there were long strips of cotton cloth stamped in black with various insignia of death, to serve at home for coffin-covers; there were skull-caps in red, yellow, and white, also stamped with holy images, to be put on the heads of the dead. I could not but in mind follow these people to their distant homes, and think of the pride with which they would show these trophies of their pilgrimage; how the rude neighbors would handle with awe a stick cut on the banks of the Jordan, or eat with faith a bit of the holy bread. How sacred, in those homes of frost and snow, will not these mementos of a land of sun, of a land so sacred, become! I can see the wooden chest in the cabin where the rosemary will be treasured, keeping sweet, against the day of need, the caps and the shrouds.

### Via Dolorosa

*Jesus our brother,  
as we dare to follow  
in the steps you trod,  
be our companion on the way.  
May our eyes see  
not only the stones that saw you  
but the people who walk with you now;  
may our feet tread  
not only the path of your pain  
but the streets of the living city;  
may our prayers embrace  
not only the memory of your presence  
but the flesh and blood who jostle us today.  
Bless us, with them, and make us long  
to do justice, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with our God.  
Amen.*

*(From the book, Companions of God, by Janet Morley)*

The first day of our visit to this church [St. James Cathedral], in one of the doorways of what seemed to be a side chapel, and which was thickly encrusted with mother-of-pearl, stood the venerable bishop, in a light rose-colored robe and a pointed hood, with a cross in his hand, preaching to the pilgrims, who knelt on the pavement before him, talking in a familiar manner, and, our guide said, with great plainness of speech. The Armenian clergy are celebrated for the splendor of their vestments, and I could not but think that this rose-colored bishop, in his shining framework, must seem like a being of another sphere to the boors before him. He almost imposed upon us.

These pilgrims appeared to be the poorest agricultural class of laborers, and their costume is uncouth beyond description. In a side chapel, where we saw tiles on the walls that excited our envy, - the quaintest figures and illustrations of sacred subjects, - the clerks were taking the names of pilgrims just arrived, who kneeled before them and paid a Napoleon each for their lodging in the convent, as long as they should choose to stay. In this chapel were the shoes of the pilgrims who had gone into the church, a motley collection of foot-gear, covering half the floor: leather and straw, square shoes as broad as long, round shoes, pointed shoes, old shoes, patched shoes, shoes with the toes gone, a pathetic gathering that told of poverty and weary travel - and big feet. These shoes were things to muse on, for each pair, made maybe in a different century, seemed to have a character of its own, as it stood there awaiting the owner. People often make reflections upon a pair of shoes; literature is full of them. Poets have celebrated many a pretty shoe, - a queen's slipper, it may be, or the hobnail brogan of a peasant, or, oftener, the tiny shoes of a child; but it is seldom that one has an opportunity for such comprehensive moralizing as was here given. If we ever regretted the lack of a poet in our party, it was now.

## Jerusalem, "Al-Quds," in the Heart of Palestinian Christians by Jean Zaru

It is difficult and even at times impossible to speak about ourselves *only* as Christians. We are Christians *and* we are Palestinians. We have an identity of our own. It is an identity that cannot be separated from our identity as Palestinians and yet, at the same time, it is distinguished by our unique contribution to society. That is, as Palestinian Christians we are often noted for our long history of serving the wider community through the provision of social services, mainly in the fields of health and education. Palestinian Christians are referred to as the Palestinian embroidery, interwoven and an integral part of the whole population. Because we refuse to separate ourselves from our brothers and sisters and remain loyal to our national identity, the rest of the world has no idea how to handle the "problem" of Palestinian Christians. Although we are the modern heirs of the disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem, we have become unknown, unacknowledged and forgotten. A community that maintained a strong witness to the gospel in the land of incarnation and resurrection. Here, I am talking about a highly educated community, with deep historical roots, and furthermore about a community that is diminishing every day as a result of political, economic, and religious pressures.

I was born and lived all my life in Ramallah, Palestine – one of the beautiful summer resorts in the range of the Jerusalem mountains. It is only fifteen kilometers north of Jerusalem. From the roof of my home, I can look south and see Jerusalem glittering like a ball of crystal and agonize that I am not allowed to go there. Jerusalem has always been for us the center, the heart that pumped life into all of Palestine. We traveled to Jerusalem to go to Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, and all of Palestine. Without Jerusalem, Palestine would be disjointed.

All my children and seven grandchildren were born in Jerusalem. We have been treated in its hospitals. We go there for worship, cultural activities, visits to our family members, for work and for getting visas to travel. Jerusalem is in the heart of every Palestinian. You see it in pictures, carvings, paintings and posters in our

homes, schools, public buildings, taxis and buses. You hear the beautiful songs about it. Jerusalem is called the flower of cities – the holy – the pure. As you walk in its Old City, you can smell the aroma of so many spices and incense. You see all kinds of candles and handicrafts. You are surrounded by a Christian heritage of artistic and architectural achievement that provides a testimony to the power of faith embodied in the history of Christian art. You hear the bells of churches joined by the muezzins' calls to prayer from minarets within the city.

For me, Jerusalem offers freedom of mind, diversity and universality. No one has an exclusive claim to God, but God is within the reach of every creature. Here I learned that the dignity of the individual is more important than all the protocols and rituals, and that our actions should be motivated by love rather than by the law. Prophets, mystics, and priests may point the ways to faith and we may choose to follow whom we will. Many of the words of the prophets, although written thousands of years ago, seem to express the Palestinians' anguish and pain, now and today.

*"I will punish this city because it is full of oppression. As a well keeps its water fresh, so Jerusalem keeps its evil fresh. I hear violence and destruction in the city. Sickness and wounds are all I see. Everyone great and small tries to make money dishonestly; even prophets and priests cheat people. They act as if my people's wounds are only scratches. All is well, they say, when all is not well. Were they ashamed because they did these disgusting things? No, they were not ashamed; and they do not even know how to blush."* (Jeremiah 6:6-7, 13-15)

Then we hear the cry of Isaiah 5:8, "Woe to you who add house to house

*For me, Jerusalem offers freedom of mind, diversity and universality. No one has an exclusive claim to God, but God is within the reach of every creature.*

*and join field to field till no space is left in the land."* And Isaiah 10: 1-2, "You make unjust laws that oppress my people. That is how you prevent the poor from having their rights and from getting justice. That is how you take the property that belongs to widows and orphans."

Palestinians are crying for justice and for the removal of the closure of Jerusalem to the people of the West Bank and Gaza. They are calling for a halt to all confiscation of land and water resources, yet Israel, as the powerful party, seems not to hear their cries. Israel is not abiding by international law and human rights conventions. The Clinton administration is not adhering to US law, which prohibits economic and military aid to nations engaging in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, that is rights to self determination and statehood, the right of return to Palestinian refugees, the right of movement and access to places of worship in Jerusalem and Israel, the right of adequate housing. Israel is doing all it can to dispossess the Palestinians. It considers Christians and Muslims who live in occupied Palestine as resident aliens. We are not recognized as native nor as indigenous people having the right to live where we were born.

Palestine is the homeland of Jesus. Most of the highlights of Jesus' life took place in Jerusalem, from preaching in the Temple to the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, along via Dolorosa to the crucifixion and finally the resurrection. For Palestinian Christians, the experience of Golgotha is not a distant past or a sad memory; it is part of everyday indignity and oppression. Our Via Dolorosa is not a mere ritualistic procession through the narrow streets of the old city of Jerusalem but the fate of being subjugated and humiliated in our own land. Yet the Resurrection and Easter is considered the great feast to celebrate. It gives a message of hope and unity, a message of life, and of confronting and overcoming death. This image has special meaning for people living under occupation. Since the time of Jesus and after the resurrection, Jerusalem has been considered the mother of all churches, but now

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

ironically the Jerusalem churches have mother churches in England, Greece, Rome, Germany, and the United States.

The pressures of the Israeli occupation, the military closure of Jerusalem since March 1993, the confiscation of land, the building of new Jewish settlements, the ethnic cleansing and Judaization of the city, the harsh economic conditions, the house demolitions, the confiscation of Jerusalem ID cards, the divided churches, the history, politics, and theology of many Christian groups, and the unreliability of outside help have led most Christians to emigrate. The prospect of a Holy Land Christianity reduced to stones, a museum or "tourist faith" without people is very serious, and strikes a blow at the very foundations and the very idea of Christianity – this is also a tragedy because Palestinian life and history would be poorer without the Christian presence.

Our contribution to Palestine and the welfare of its people has always been beyond our numbers. In architecture, business, education, medical services, law and politics, Palestinian Christians have achieved much. Indeed this contribution may explain the intensity of the Israeli pressure on the Christian community. In addition, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic fundamentalists make the life of local Christians more difficult and the situation of women less hopeful.

The Palestinian Christians of the Holy Land – all of them, from the shopkeeper to the political leader – want to continue where they are – in Jerusalem and Palestine. Their claim is historic and their achievements and contributions to the community as a whole are clear. They have reason, along with their Muslim compatriots, to believe that they are worth saving, and they cannot comprehend why others treat them as a threat. But this problem is not talked about openly and one cannot solve a problem without pointing it out or naming what the problem is.

As I speak, not only are Christians and Muslims from Gaza and the West Bank prevented by Israel from worshipping in Jerusalem, but they are also severely de-

### I am from There:

by Mahmoud Darwish

*I come from there and I remember,  
I was born like everyone is born, I have a mother  
and a house with many windows,  
I have brothers, friends, and a prison.  
I have a wave that sea-gulls snatched away.  
I have a view of my own and an extra blade of grass.  
I have a moon past the peak of words.  
I have the godsent food of birds and an olive tree beyond the ken of time.  
I have traversed the land before swords turned bodies into banquets.  
I come from there. I return the sky to its mother when for its mother the  
sky cries, and I weep for a returning cloud to know me.  
I have learned the words of blood-stained courts in order to break the rules.  
I have learned and dismantled all the words to construct a single one:  
Home.*

prived of education, medical, economic and social interaction with Jerusalem. So Christians in Jerusalem are isolated from their brothers and sisters in the West Bank and Gaza. Also since 1967, there has been a total disruption of the pilgrimage of Christians from Arab countries, and it has prevented a sense of community and exchange that, at one time, took place between Palestinian Christians and the fourteen million Arab Christians in the Middle East.

Over one million Christian visitors come to the Holy Land every year. Most of them come and go without being involved in the passion of Christ, without responding to the needs of the sick, the hungry and the captives. It is not enough that we are unknown victims, but we are also obliged to explain these visitors' statements of support for the State of Israel. Unfortunately, due to this situation, our energy is consumed in reacting rather than acting.

The city of Jerusalem is important for Jews, Christians, and Muslims but under the control of Israel for the last three decades, Israel has assumed absolute control over the city. It has exercised power and legislated laws in favor of Jewish interests only and it often uses religious reasons to justify our dispossession and deprivation. We are asking to be treated according to international laws, conventions and rights. But it is as

if we are knocking our heads against the wall for the Israelis claim they have divine rights that are over and above international legitimacy, UN resolutions, universal declarations of human rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention. There are countless numbers of statements and resolutions by churches, church leaders, human rights organizations – both local and international – that try to share with the rest of the world what is happening to us in Jerusalem and in Palestine.

Nevertheless, I am reminded of what Jesus told his disciples: "You have eyes but you do not see, you have ears but you do not hear." How long do we need to go on explaining? It seems like a voice in the wilderness of oppression, occupation, and deprivation. How long do we have to cry out "God! God! Why have you forsaken us?" But it is your will God, not ours. Is it God's will that we continue to suffer? Is it God's will to submit to injustice? Does the understanding of peace mean to be passive, nice, walked over? They talk to us about peace – peace that is achieved by pounding the opposition into submission, peace maintained by crushing protests against injustice, peace for the rulers at the expense of the ruled.

In the last few years all of us have watched anxiously the Middle East peace process. We should not forget that the real issue in these talks is Palestine and

(Continued on page 26)

*Jerusalem is a microcosm of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It can either be a barrier or a gateway to peace.*

## Memories of Flight and Rights in Jerusalem by Tom Abowd

*The Story of the 1948 Ethnic Cleansing of Jerusalem's Palestinian Population*

More than any other place, Jerusalem has become the most intense site of conflict between Palestinians and Israelis in the twentieth century. Known as Yerushalaim to Israeli Jews and Al-Quds to Palestinian Arabs, the city is where this contest assumes its most violent, impassioned, and severe form. Since 1948, experiences of Palestinians in this city and elsewhere have been those of military occupation, dispossession, and forced exile.

Israeli Jewish encounters in Jerusalem—though diverse—have been largely antithetical to those of the Muslims and Christians of Palestine.

The battle between Israelis and Palestinians for Jerusalem dates from at least 1948 and it is the differing memories of this watershed year that underscores the diverging experiences in the city for each national community. 1948 is, at once, a moment celebrated by Israelis as the birth of their nation-state and as the fulfillment of what many Jews refer to as a biblical promise. For the Palestinians, citing their experiences of exodus and expulsion, the year is known as Al-Naqba, or "the catastrophe." Over the course of the Spring and Summer of 1948, roughly 700,000 Palestinians—2/3 of the Arab population of Palestine—were removed by force or fled in fear. Nearly 35,000 of these exiles came from the urban neighborhoods of Jerusalem that are today referred to as "West Jerusalem." This article will focus on this highly charged and symbolic city and the fate of those Palestinians who were forced out of their city during the tumultuous year of 1948.

Before their exodus 51 years ago, thousands of Palestinians resided, worked, and were schooled in largely middle-class and wealthy Arab neighborhoods outside the Old City walls, in Jerusalem's western side. These neighborhoods—Katamon, Talbiye, Baqa, Musrara, Mamilla, and others—were established in the early part of the twentieth century and grew in size and stature during the British rule over Palestine, 1917-1948. Palestinian sociologist Salim Tamari, citing recent UN-



*Before their Diaspora (Source: courtesy of Nadia Theodory)*

RWA records on refugees, writes that these exiles and their descendents now number more than 84,000 people, the majority of whom still reside in the Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem areas. Christian and Muslim refugees from these areas still hold the keys and titles to their homes in West Jerusalem and still demand the return of their property.

### **The Transformation of Jerusalem's Arab Character**

While the right of these Palestinian refugees to return to their land is an internationally recognized one and enshrined in various United Nations Resolutions, actualizing such desires has been blocked by the State of Israel since 1948. In the wake of the Arab exodus from Jerusalem, Israel's first Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, expressed delight in the dispersal. As he explained to fellow Zionist leaders in the Spring of 1948, "From your entry into Jerusalem, through Lifta . . . there are no Arabs. One hundred percent Jews." He continued by calling for the refugees return to be blocked.

During the first five years of Israel's

*With the exception of their keys and deeds, the memories of these exiles - memories of a former Jerusalem-are all they possess of their homes and livelihood.*

existence, the new Jewish state consolidated its hold over Palestinian territory by razing to the ground most of the 418 Arab villages depopulated by Zionist forces in 1948. In certain urban areas such as the west side of Jerusalem, Israel was content to remove the non-Jewish population and then seize their properties and homes. These different practices of ethnic erasure vastly altered the landscape of Israel/Palestine, often leaving only traces of a former Arab presence. Israeli historians

have documented these practices of appropriation and looting and contend that the housing of Israelis within these Arab homes began to be carried out within weeks of Israel's conquest of Jerusalem's West side and the flight of the refugees. Such strategies of settlement were not so much devised as a correction for a lack of housing for new immigrants, but rather as a political strategy designed to preclude an unconstrained, diplomatically engineered return of the displaced to their cities and villages.

### **Palestinian Refugees Remember**

Refugees from Jerusalem relate knowing little or nothing of the Zionist designs to seize their property at the time of their removal. In dozens of interviews with these exiles, nearly all suggest that those who fled believed the flight to be a very temporary one. The decision to leave most of their movable property behind seemed only natural, they say, given what was thought to be their impending return after the fighting stopped. Echoing the assumptions of most other refugees, one former Palestinian resident of the Qatamon neighborhood remembers that: "Everything we owned we left behind. Our homes, our pictures, family heirlooms, our entire history, if you will. We thought we would be able to return in a matter of weeks if not days—you know, a short vacation, a long weekend!" This "short vacation" however, has now eclipsed its fiftieth year and the struggle to reclaim their homes and properties remains a central feature in these

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

refugees' lives.

With the exception of their keys and deeds, the memories of these exiles—memories of a former Jerusalem—are all they possess of their homes and livelihood. Though these items have not allowed these families to reclaim their property, they are of immense importance in the struggle to remember their city as presently constituted by Israel. Former Arab areas and locales of historical significance in West Jerusalem have been renamed. Palestinian neighborhoods have been altered and given Hebrew names: Talbiye has become Kmemiyut; Katamon is now known as Gonen, Baqa was renamed Ge'ulim, Salameh Square in the once fashionable Arab neighborhood of Talbiya, has been re-designated as Wingate Square. Street names have also undergone a vast renaming process. Today, Christians and Muslims living in the West Bank and Gaza are prohibited from entering Palestine's most important city. Their movement is precluded for the simple reason that they are Palestinian and not Jewish.

#### International Opinion on Jerusalem

Like Palestinian memories of exodus and Israeli policies of removal there is another important link between past and present in the city. This is the view of the international community on the status of Jerusalem and the rights of Palestinian refugees. In March 1999, a very dramatic and important document was drawn up by the European Union. In it the body affirmed that Israel's occupation and appropriation of Jerusalem was viewed as illegal and in violation of the very United Nations resolutions which brought Israel into being over fifty years ago. The implications of this document are immense. Not only does it underscore the broad international consensus on the question of Israel's illegality in Jerusalem, it also implies recognition of the injustices done to Palestinians in the city since 1948 and not just since Israel's occupation of the West Bank,

Gaza, and East Jerusalem in 1967.

The force of such EU sentiments—along with a recent United States Government declaration that East Jerusalem is occupied territory—have caused immense embarrassment to the current Is-

*If this principle of restitution applies to these Jewish victims from Europe, should not the same principle also apply to Palestinians who were victims of an immense and vast series of thefts?*

raeli government. Highly significant in these recent declarations is that the White House—Israel's closest ally and source of billions of dollars of annual aid—would assert that Israel exists as an illegal force in the city Israelis consider as their capital. However, these declarations remain only words on paper if the same countries and communities do nothing more to help remedy the injustices committed in and since 1948.

#### Jerusalem's Future

Many issues relating to Jerusalem might well be discussed and debated in the context of the Oslo Accord's final status negotiations. However, if the historic injustices committed against those forced from their homes in 1948 is not dealt with forthrightly, it is difficult to understand how a genuine peace will ever come to Israel and Palestine. As Tamari affirms, "Final status negotiations over the future of the city have created the atmosphere and the conditions for pressing these historical rights [from 1948] of Arab Jerusalemites to the

forefront. The fact that most of these [Palestinian refugees] are still alive, or have immediate offspring who are alive, renders their patrimony more present than historical."

Jerusalem's future status, therefore, must be dealt with in the context of over fifty years of dispossession, discrimination, and exclusion of the native Christian and Muslim Palestinian communities.

Luckily, there exists a precedent for dealing with and remembering crimes committed decades ago. The theft of Jewish property by various European countries and banks (most notable Swiss banks) during the 1930's and 1940's have been brought up with greater intensity in the last decade by various Jewish bodies. These powerful claims for reparations and for the return of stolen property are legitimate, even fifty years later, and those whose property was stolen by Germany and others in the 1940's must be compensated fairly. But if this principle of restitution applies to these Jewish victims from Europe, should not the same principle also apply to Palestinians who were victims of an immense and vast series of thefts in the late 1940's?

As Edward Said, Palestinian scholar and refugee from the former Palestinian neighborhood of Talbiye, noted in a recent speech to Israeli academics about the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948. "The point is not to forget the past but to try to redress the injustices of the past that are reflected in the present and institutionalized in the present." Without such an active remembering of injustices and a commitment to correct them, crimes of a former period will continue to repeat themselves in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

*Tom Abowd is a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. He is doing his dissertation research on contemporary Jerusalem*



*Palestinian Refugees 1948 (Source: Arab Studies Society)*

# “Maximum Territory, Minimum Population” by Elizabeth Campbell

Jerusalem: *THE* Laboratory for the Policies of Zionist Colonialization

The information contained in this article is based upon the years of experience and knowledge gathered by the Alternative Information Center and the expertise, in particular, of the AIC’s director, Michael Warschawski, who is the leader and guide of the AIC’s Greater Jerusalem Settlement tour. The purpose of this article is to discuss in detail the five stages of calculated Zionist planning and implementation of conquering and controlling both East Jerusalem and what is today referred to as Greater Jerusalem. If one is able to understand the goals of Zionism concerning Jerusalem, then s/he can also understand the overall aims of Zionism concerning all of Israel and the 1967 occupied territories.

## Stage 1: Planning

From the beginning, one of the most significant dilemmas facing Zionism was how to control the maximum amount of territory with a Jewish population, which was by far the demographic minority. Because Jerusalem was and remains the most extreme point of friction between the Israelis and Palestinians, it was first necessary for the Israelis to develop an extensive and complicated plan to be executed slowly through various stages so that the end result was complete Jewish control of all of Jerusalem and the *Greater Jerusalem* area (which today includes approximately 12-15% of the West Bank).

Shortly after the 1967 War, an inter-ministerial committee, composed of the Jerusalem Municipality, the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Police and the Israeli Army was created to fulfill the Zionist goal of controlling the land and clearing away the demographic presence of Palestinians. This committee has fulfilled and maintained its aspiration of “72-28.” That is, their objective is to ensure that the Palestinian population in Jerusalem never exceeds 28%. A secondary aim is to ensure that this percentage declines steadily. The mechanisms in place

to realize this goal stem from the above mentioned ministries whose work includes respectively, occupying the land, controlling the population, repressing any Palestinian national presence, and isolating the Palestinian Jerusalem population from the rest of Palestinian society.

The goal of achieving a “United Jewish Jerusalem” includes the land of West Jerusalem and the territories of the West Bank annexed to Israel in 1967. Before the war, the total area of Jerusalem was 38 square kilometers. After the Israeli annexation, the area totaled 70 square kilometers. The borders of the annexation are neither historical, nor are they borders of Jordanian Jerusalem. They are instead the result of an order given by the Israeli government of 1967 to a group of Israeli senior officers: “maximum territory, minimum [Palestinian] population.”

After officially and forcibly annexing the land, the next stage was directed at declaring the function of the lands. 92% of the “unpopulated” lands of Jerusalem were declared green areas. In Israel

green areas, a more sophisticated form of land confiscation, are both used to stop the natural growth and expansion of Palestinian villages and neighborhoods and to eventually use them for the building of new Jewish settlements. From this moment on, Palestinians were forbidden to build in Jerusalem; all newly built houses were/are considered illegal and demolished by the Israeli government. If a family wished to build a house, the Israelis happily and swiftly encouraged them to build just outside the city limits; thus, provoking the first wave of Palestinian emigration.

The Israelis effectively completed this stage of Palestinian ethnic cleansing without engaging in too much confrontation, for the Palestinians were unaware of the stages that would follow. Those Palestinians who left during this stage did so with their Jerusalem ID cards and the belief that their access to Jerusalem was not threatened.

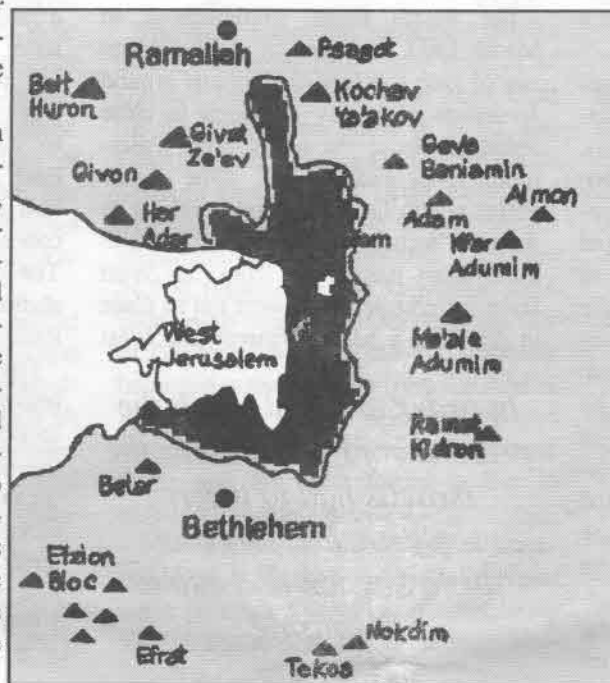
## Stage 2: Residency Rights

After bringing a complete stop to the expansion of Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem, the next stage, implemented in 1995, aimed at controlling the demographic issue. A policy of Palestinian residency rights was developed which aimed to deny access to all Palestinians who did not possess an Israeli-granted Jerusalem residency ID card. Furthermore, of the thousands of Palestinians, who originally left Jerusalem, due to the fact that they were forbidden to build on their land, today approximately 80-85,000 are in jeopardy of losing their Jerusalem ID cards.

Suddenly, Palestinians, who were not originally from Jerusalem, despite, for example, the fact that their spouse was from the city, were denied to lawfully reside (and eventually even enter) Jerusalem. That is, no Palestinian from outside the Jerusalem municipal boundaries has the legal right to live with family members who have Jerusalem residency rights; therefore, this policy

*(Continued on page 12)*

*The triangles represent exclusively Jewish settlements built on expropriated Palestinian land in expanded East Jerusalem. (The Encirclement Policy)  
Source: Alternative Information Center*



(Continued from page 11)

acts as the second stage of Palestinian ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem. Clearly, most married couples, for example, given no choice will consequently move outside the municipal borders in order to simply live together. In doing so, the Jerusalem-Palestinian must relinquish his/her Jerusalem ID card and all of his/her rights to ever live in Jerusalem.

Residency rights also affect Palestinians from Jerusalem who wish to leave the country for business or to study abroad. After a certain period of time, which of course is determined by the Israelis, Palestinians lose their residency rights.

This stage of cleansing Jerusalem of Palestinians leaves them with two options: leave Jerusalem and never return, or stay in Jerusalem and never leave, even for a short-term period – and often under appalling conditions.

### Stage 3: Jewish Settlement Building

Stage one and two were successfully executed by Israel; however, it was not enough to stop Palestinian growth geographically and demographically. The third stage aimed at populating East Jerusalem area with Jews by implementing Israel's policy of massive Jewish settlement. In 1993, for the first time ever, the Palestinians became the minority population (49%) inside their own city. In other words, the Jewish-Israeli presence in East Jerusalem grew from 0% to 51%. Still, it was not good enough, but rather a mere start.

The settlements, so-called the "inner-ring," of Gilo (the largest settlement inside Jerusalem with 34,000 residents), Ramot (including all its various parts), Pisgat Zeev, Neeve Ya'akov, Atarot Industrial Zone, and soon to be completed Har Homa, have precisely been built to surround all of Jerusalem, including the somewhat large Palestinian neighborhoods and villages trapped in between. The settlements gain their strength not by their demographic population (of 190,000) but rather by their mere strategic location and the series of sophisticated by-pass roads which both connect them to each other as well as to Jerusalem. The goal of settlement building, which continues to expand today, clearly fulfills the aim of controlling the maximum amount

### Poem of the Land by Mahmoud Darwish

*A small evening  
A neglected village  
Two sleeping eyes  
Thirty years  
Five wars  
I witness that time hides for me  
an ear of wheat  
The singer sings  
Of fire and strangers  
Evening was evening  
The singer was singing  
And they question him  
Why do you sing?  
He answers as they seize him  
Because I sing  
And they have searched him:  
In his breast only his heart  
In his heart only his people  
In his voice only his sorrow  
And they have searched his prison  
To find only themselves in chains.*

of space or land, by an amazingly small number of Jewish settlers, with a minimum Palestinian presence.

### Stage 4: Separation and Closure

Still, the Zionists, by their mere definition, were not nearly satisfied with successfully accomplishing the above mentioned stages. Zionist ideology has no limits, only the principle of more and more and more . . .

The fourth stage, implemented in March 1993, consisted of creating a series of nine military checkpoints around Jerusalem as a way in which to close Jerusalem from the neighboring Palestinian cities and villages. The checkpoints which have absolutely nothing to do with "security," monitor and prohibit Palestinian movement from the West Bank to Jerusalem and were put in place to delineate a border between the West

*In order to "deal" with the  
presence of Palestinians, the  
Israelis had to invent  
sophisticated forms of  
dispossession and ethnic  
cleansing.*

Bank and "United Jewish Jerusalem." They furthermore serve the purpose of completely separating the West Bank from the remaining Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. This forced disconnection of Palestinian residents living in the West Bank to East Jerusalem consequently aids in the Israeli goal of strangling East Jerusalem politically, economically, socially, and culturally.

Jerusalem was once the center of cultural, administrative, and political life for the Palestinians – not to mention the fact that it contains some of the most holy sites for both Muslims and Christians. Today, for example, Makased Hospital operates at only 60% of its capacity, for those in need of health services are denied access to Jerusalem by the soldiers at the checkpoints. This reality raises a serious dilemma for Palestinians: on the one hand, they are struggling to keep Palestinian Jerusalem alive, on the other hand, their "clients" and those in need of services as important as health, are denied access to the facilities in East Jerusalem. If the hospital, for example, moves to Ramallah to meet the needs of the people, they will be accused of helping the Israelis cleanse Jerusalem; if they stay they cannot help those who need it most.

During stage two, Palestinians were denied the right to live in Jerusalem. Stage four ensures that no Palestinian is even allowed to enter Jerusalem – not even for a single hour. The closure has culminated in the fourth stage of ethnic cleansing, where Palestinian businessmen of all types are forced to leave the city in order to survive economically. Furthermore, East Jerusalem is dying culturally: why host a Palestinian film festival or music concert if no Palestinians can attend? The culture itself is also being forcibly shifted to the West Bank, particularly Ramallah.

The closure also accomplishes another important Zionist goal: the complete separation of the northern West Bank from the southern West Bank. Ramallah, in the north, and Bethlehem in the south, are completely separated from each other as a direct result of the closure of Jerusalem to Palestinians. The only way in which over 1.5 million Palestinians can travel from

(Continued on page 13)

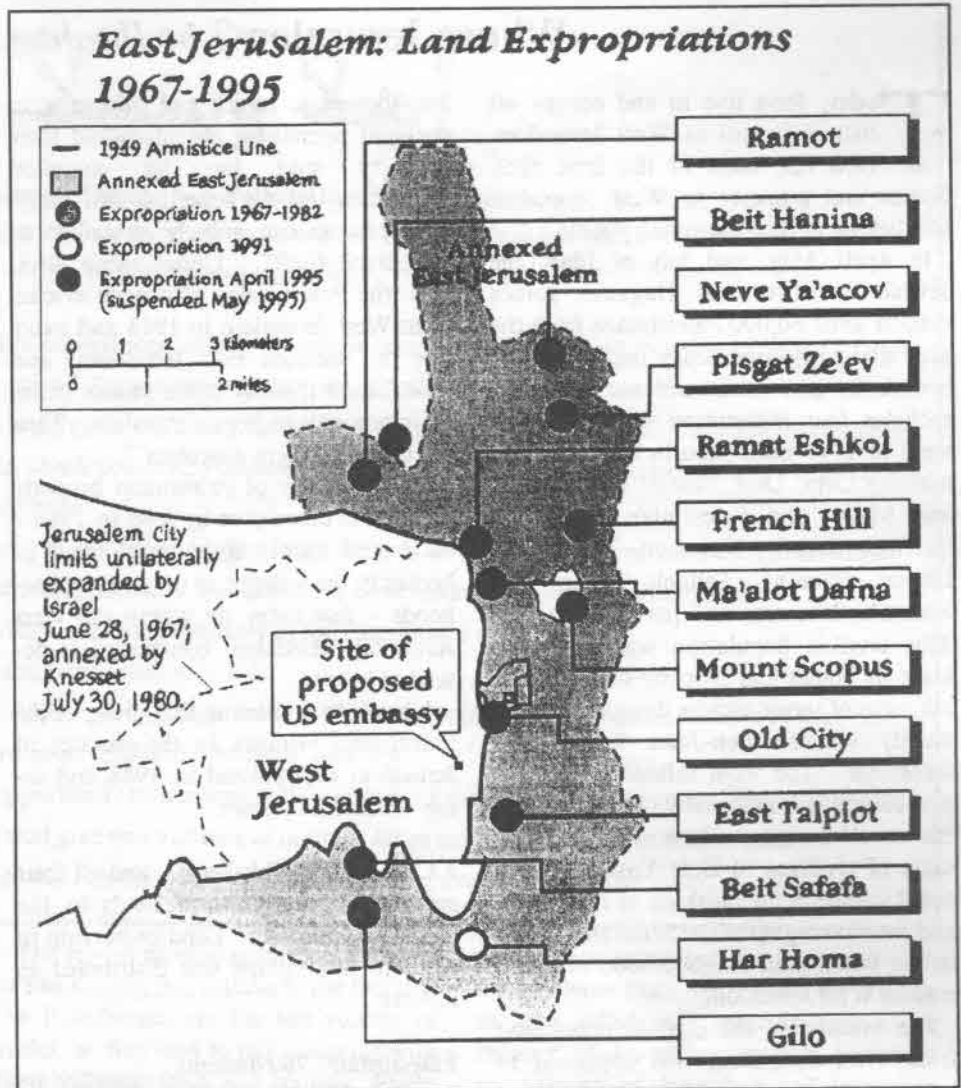
(Continued from page 12)

the north to the south is through the dangerous and often deadly road, Wadi Nar, which means the Valley of Fire or the Valley of Hell. This "trans-Palestinian" highway was [re]built after the closure and remains the only route on which Palestinians can travel from north to south. This road is perhaps the highlight of the *Settlement Tour* in that the participants feel the life of the Palestinians as they traverse through the valley and around the steep and dangerous curves which does not and will not sustain the heavy traffic. The closure has both successfully separated any continuity in the West Bank as well as created a suicidal road on which the Palestinians must travel, tripling the time it would normally take them to go from Bethlehem to Ramallah.

**Stage 5: Greater Jerusalem**

The above four stages successfully Judaized East Jerusalem. The battle has now shifted to *Greater Jerusalem*. This new concept of *Greater* or Metropolitan Jerusalem erupted after Oslo when the Israeli governments no longer proclaimed that Jerusalem will be forever Jewish but rather that *Greater Jerusalem* will be forever Jewish. This stage was implemented to ensure that the land already confiscated by Israelis as well as the "space" would forever remain in the hands of Jews. It furthermore aimed to annex approximately 12-15% more land from the West Bank. The implementation of this final stage includes the building of a series of by-pass roads, which connect the settlements to each other as well as the settlers. Consequently, the former discussion of withdrawal from the West Bank has shifted to a discussion of what percentage of the West Bank can the Israelis afford to give to the Palestinians.

Conquering *Greater Jerusalem* would not be possible in the absence of by-pass roads. The roads are essential in controlling the maximum amount of space with the minimum amount of Jewish settlers. This stage is further aimed at the idea of ensuring that the Palestinians (the demographic majority in *Greater Jerusalem*) are surrounded by Jewish continuity, which comes in the form of these by-pass roads connected to the various settle-



Source: Alternative Information Center

ments. The most important settlement blocks in the "external ring" (see map 2) of *Greater Jerusalem* are Givat Zeev, built on the Palestinian lands of el-Jib and Biddo, which includes Givon Hahadash, Mahane Guivon, and Givat Zeev, and Maalai Adumim – the largest Israeli settlement outside Jerusalem. There are 24,000 residents living in Maalai Adumim on an area more than twice the size of Tel Aviv. Some of the land formerly belonged to the Bedouin from the Jahalin tribe who have now been evicted and transferred to the municipal garbage dump and are even forced to live in garbage-like containers.

Maalai Adumim is an excellent example of what Yitzhak Rabin really meant when he made a verbal agreement to the United States administration guarantee-

ing that "settlements would not be expanded substantially." The formal "municipal territory" of Maalai Adumim as decided by the Israeli Civil Administration, includes all of the land between East Jerusalem and Azaryeh Abu Dis and the settlement of Vered Jericho (located at the border of Jericho). Every new settlement built in this area is considered to be "enlarging, not substantially, the existing settlement of Maalai Adumim."

The other important settlements in the *Greater Jerusalem* area include the Gush Etsion Block, which is connected to Jerusalem by a by-pass road beginning in Gilo, (by-passing Bethlehem and its surrounding villages). This same road leads to Efrat, a settlement which is steadily creeping along from south to north in order to connect the Estonia Block to

(Continued on page 27)

## Whose Jerusalem? by Ibrahim Matar

Today, Jews live in and occupy all that is known as West Jerusalem. However, most of the land area, homes and property in West Jerusalem still belong to the Palestinian people.

In April, May, and July of 1948, the Jewish terrorists and Haganah forces evicted some 60,000 Palestinians from the area that constitutes today the Municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem. This area includes four Palestinian villages which were in 1948 rural suburbs of Jerusalem, mainly, Lifta, Deir Yassin, Ein Karem, and Malha and Palestinian residential quarters, mainly, Katamon, Upper and Lower Baqa'a, Talbieh, Mamillah, Shama'a, Musrara, and part of Abu-Tor. This civilian population was forced to leave its homes and property by a deliberate wave of terror attacks designed to ethnically cleanse non-Jews from West Jerusalem. The most infamous of these acts committed on April 9, 1948, by Jewish terrorist organizations was the massacre of civilians in Deir Yassin, then a small village at the outskirts of Jerusalem, and the blowing up of the Semiramis Hotel in the Palestinian neighborhood of Katamon in West Jerusalem.

The eviction of the civilian population from West Jerusalem was supposed to have been temporary. However, the Jewish State did not comply with United Nations resolution 194 of December 1948, which stipulated the return or compensation of the Palestinians and instead declared the Palestinians as permanent absentees. Palestinian property, which was described as "absentee property", was seized under the Absentee Property Regulations of 1948. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950 the Jewish State passed the Absentee Property Law signed by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion. This law declared as absentees all Palestinian citizens who were not present in Israel on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1948 and vested all their movable and immovable property to the custodian of absentee property. The custodian was given, by this law, full authority to lease or sell all Palestinian property seized not only in West Jerusalem, but in all of Palestine.

In brief, the Palestinians forced in 1948 from their homes in West Jerusalem were

not allowed to return and instead were declared permanent absentees and their property sold by the so-called "custodian" for the benefit of Jews only. This process can only be described as "legalized theft". Under these laws, even the Palestinians who were evicted from West Jerusalem in 1948 and today live in "annexed East Jerusalem" and hold Israeli identity cards cannot claim their property in West Jerusalem. They are called "present absentees."

The inventory of Palestinian property seized and taken over by Jews in 1948 – be it real estate, agricultural land, or homes in the villages or urban neighborhoods – that today lie within the West Jerusalem Municipal boundaries is described below.

A brief description is first given of the Palestinian villages in the district of Jerusalem depopulated in 1948 and today inhabited by Jews.

1. **Lifta and Sheikh Bader**, and all their surrounding agricultural lands to the North of Jerusalem. Land ownership in 1948 in this village was distributed as follows:

<b>Palestinian</b>	7,780 dunums
Jewish	756 dunums
<u>Public</u>	<u>207 dunums</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,743 dunums</b>

Note: 1 dunum equals 1,000 square meters

Thus the Palestinians owned 89% of the land, the Jews 9% and the rest was public.

The old homes of Lifta stand today abandoned, but the more modern homes are today inhabited by Jews. The high school of Lifta is today used as a Jewish religious site. A number of modern hotels such as the Sonesta and the Crown Plaza are built on the property of Lifta. However, more significant is the fact that most of the Israeli government Ministries are built on the land of Lifta. This includes the Israeli Knesset building, the

Prime Minister's Offices, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior. In fact, the Knesset is built on the private property of the Palestinian Khalaf family from Lifta who today live as "present absentees" in the Sheikh Jarrah Quarter of East Jerusalem. The family still holds the title to the property on which the Knesset is built.

2. **Deir Yassin** and surrounding agricultural lands. The land ownership in 1948 in this village was distributed as follows:

<b>Palestinian</b>	2,701 dunums
Jewish	152 dunums
<u>Public</u>	<u>3 dunums</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,856 dunums</b>

Thus, Palestinians owned 95% of the land, the Jews the remaining 5%.

This small village located in the northwest of Jerusalem had a population of 900 in 1948. On April 9, 1948, it was attacked by the Jewish terrorist organization the Irgun Zva'i Leumi led by Menachim Begin. By twelve noon that fateful day, the village fell to the attackers who subsequently committed the infamous massacre of the children, elderly and wounded who were unable to leave the village. Today, the houses in the center of the village are used as a sanitarium for the mentally ill Jews operated by the Israeli Ministry of Health. The village cemetery was bulldozed and covered by a road leading to a new Jewish settlement for Orthodox Jews built on the property of Deir Yassin. The stone quarries that Deir Yassin was famous for have now become a Jewish industrial zone. The village's two room elementary school building is now being used by a Jewish Rabbi, Chabed Labovitch.

3. **Ein Karem** and surrounding agricultural terraces located to the west of Jerusalem were also incorporated in the Municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem, as well as Lifta and Deir Yassin as described above. Land ownership in 1948 in this village was as follows:

(Continued on page 15)

# أهلاً وسهلاً

## Ahlan wa Sahlan - A Palestinian Experience

*Ahlan wa Sahlan* - Arabic for "welcome", literally means when you cross our threshold you are one of the family and you have stepped on even ground.

*Sabeel* welcomes you to visit and share our life experiences, enjoy our culture, savor our food and get to know us better. If you are planning to visit or lead a tour to Palestine/Israel *Sabeel* says "*Ahlan wa Sahlan*" by offering a variety of programs.

- **The Contemporary Way of the Cross** - a different Via Dolorosa where pilgrims can visit Palestinian daily stations of suffering, refugee camps, home demolition sites, check points and colonial settlements. This is a unique opportunity to worship and witness the injustices we endure on a daily basis.
- **Meet the Palestinians** - a Palestinian lecturer will speak on. The Peace Process and the Palestinians; Palestinian Christians; Palestinian women and the church; Palestinian youth and the future; Personal testimonies and historical accounts.
- **'Qissatuna: Our Story'** - a fifty photo exhibit narrating the story of the Palestinians since 1948.
- **A Palestinian Meal** - Enjoy a meal of traditional Palestinian food.
- **Cultural Evening** - Enjoy a Palestinian folklore evening organized by *Yabous Productions* and listen to some of the best musicians in the area and watch and learn some traditional 'dabkeh' dancing.
- **An Ecumenical Worship Service** - an opportunity to worship with members of the local Christian community and choirs.

We have prepared several packages that give you a choice of options. More information and detailed brochures are available at the *Sabeel* and *Friends of Sabeel* offices. Programs will begin Fall 1999.

(Continued from page 14)

<b>Palestinian</b>	13,449 dunums
<b>Jewish</b>	1,362 dunums
<b>Public</b>	218 dunums
<b>Total</b>	15,029 dunums

Thus, Palestinians owned 90%, the Jews 9% and the rest was public.

In 1948, this village had a population of 4,500 predominantly Christian Catholic Palestinians, as Ein Karem is the birthplace of John the Baptist. In July of 1948, all the inhabitants of this village were forced to leave by the Jewish armed forces. Today, all the village homes are inhabited by Jews. The Churches that still exist in the village have become museums without congregations. The Jewish Hadassah Hospital is built on the lands of the village. However, it is one of the major ironies of history that the Yad Vashem, a memorial to the Jewish victims of the Nazis, is built on the terraced land of the dispossessed, exiled, and involuntarily "absentee" Palestinians of Ein Karem.

The Jewish memorial built on the lands of Ein Karem, is a witness to the fact that the Palestinians are the last victims of Hitler, as they had to pay the price with their villages, land and country, Palestine, for the establishment of the Jewish State.

**4. El-Malha.** After Ein Karem, this was the second largest of the four villages. It is located to the southwest of Jerusalem on the borders with Bethlehem. It had in 1948 a population of 3,000 Palestinians.

Land ownership in 1948 was distributed as follows:

<b>Palestinian</b>	2,701 dunums
<b>Jewish</b>	153 dunums
<b>Public</b>	3 dunums
<b>Total</b>	2,857 dunums

Thus, the Palestinians owned 95%, the Jews some 5%.

The Palestinians of this village were forced out of their homes in April and July 1948. Today, all the houses of the

village are inhabited by Jews. Jewish houses have been built over the village mosque, which was used as a club. A number of Jewish settlements including the Stadium of Jerusalem and Jerusalem Mall are built on the lands of Al-Malha.

To summarize, over 93% of the land of these four villages depopulated in 1948, presently annexed to the West Jerusalem Municipality and occupied by Jews, belong to the Palestinians. Almost 30,000 dunums that belonged to these villages have been built upon by the Jews, today they comprise most of the Jewish residential areas of West Jerusalem.

To conclude, in the final status negotiations regarding Jerusalem, the question of the Jewish occupation of West Jerusalem should be negotiated. Ultimately, the Palestinian Jerusalemites, in accordance with the UN resolutions, should be repatriated to their homes, villages and property in West Jerusalem by changing their status from "absentee" to present, or be compensated for their property for those who do not wish to have their property back.

*Abraham Matar is a Palestinian Economist.*

## Jerusalem - between Exclusivity and Inclusivity *by Albert Aghazarian*

The issue of Jerusalem has become a topic for endless discussion at so many levels in so many locations. I am not sure whether further discussion would help in alleviating this problem or aggravating it. The reason is the oversymbolization of the issue coupled with the lack of proper diagnosis of the problem. Symbols are absolute and not subject for discussion. Mythology has further exacerbated the problem. For instance, the myth that Jerusalem has been re-united in 1967 and the prevailing Israeli position that it should never be allowed to be re-divided. During one of those "discussion" sessions on the issue of Jerusalem in some Nordic bushes, I assigned myself the mission of asking about a dozen leading Israeli specialists one standard straight question, face to face, eye to eye: "Do you think Jerusalem is united?" Not a single one said

*Jerusalem is a city of many realities; every individual or community has a mirror of history, of cultural reality.*

"yes". The answers ranged from "Are you kidding?" to "Of course not". Amir Chechin, who served for over 10 years as Arab affairs advisor in Teddy Kollek's and Ehud Olmert's municipality, corroborated that on record. In his remarkable account after leaving office, under the title, "Municipal policies in Jerusalem – a view from within," Chechin clearly states that the city is deeply divided. He provides an inside account of the policies of massive gerrymandering, lack of building permissions to non-Jews and straight apartheid policies. Yet for the general Israeli and a significant portion of Americans, especially in Congress, the city is viewed as united. Nothing could be further from truth.

Jerusalem is a city where people are carrying mirrors. Everyone holds a mirror in only one direction. It is a city of many realities; every individual or community has a mirror of history, of cultural reality. As a true Jerusalemite, if I can call myself that, I hold my mirror but I respect all the other mirrors. The problem is that the

Israeli ruling establishment seeks to marginalize all mirrors except one. Anyway, I don't believe Jerusalem is a mosaic. You can look at a mosaic but a mirror looks back at you. It's more dynamic. There's a dialectical relationship.

Another question that is left unanswered is "What is Jerusalem" – space-wise. The municipal borders of Jordanian Jerusalem encompassed no more than 8 square kilometers. This was unilaterally expanded, so far, to reach at least 80 square kilometers. It is not the end of the road. Plans for Metropolitan Jerusalem and the continuous cosmetic changes seeking exclusion are underway. It should be noted that the mission of drawing the new borders of the so-called "united city" after 1967 was assigned to none other than retired General Rehavam Zeevi. His guidelines were clear; there should be maximum land and minimum "non-Jews". I truly find this term "non-Jews" a very offensive term. A terrorist or vagabond has features, an identity, no matter how unpleasant. A non-Jew does not.

Today, Zeevi has a two-seat faction in the Knesset advocating the transfer of "non-Jews" to 21 Arab countries, but preferably to hell. The standing policy since then required that the number of "non-Jews" should not be allowed to cross the 28% figure in the so-called united city and the Jews should become a majority there. Just before the convening of the Madrid peace talks in 1991, the announcement was made to the world – mission accomplished – there were 152 thousand Jews in East Jerusalem compared to 148,000 "non-Jews". Therefore, there was nothing to talk about. It is estimated that there are no less than another 150,000 "non-Jews" who were excluded from the census because they live outside the unilaterally declared borders of the city in neglected peripheral neighborhoods like Al Ram, Bethany and Abu Dis. When measures were taken to withdraw Jerusalem residence cards from Jerusalemites living in those neighborhoods, a dramatic trek back to "Jerusalem" resulted, bringing in

over 30,000 Palestinian residents. For the first time since 1967, the "non-Jews" have hit a record 31.5% of the Jerusalemites. As a response, there was a temporary halt of the reckless campaign of withdrawing Jerusalem ID cards. Jewish neighborhoods on the highway to Tel Aviv such as Motza were annexed to the borders of the city, against the will of its inhabitants, in order to set the record "right" and claim demographic hegemony.

In trying to justify, say Christian inter-sectarian brawls in the holy places, I use the example of Jerusalem being the mother of several children. It could be natural that children push and shove each other seeking to be closer to the mother. However, if any of the children is declared illegitimate, then the conflict acquires a dangerous dimension. Over the years, I have been passionately following and en-

*The problem is that the Israeli ruling establishment seeks to marginalize all mirrors except one.*

joying the various narratives, accounts, and histories of various groups, sub-groups, and characters composing the city, past and present. I came to the conclusion that the essence of this conflict is making a choice between the monolith and pluralism as well as exclusion or inclusion.

Archaeologists estimate that there are some 27 archaeological layers in our land. While some of us will have more interest, identification and fascination with a certain layer, it should be clear that all layers belong to the land. None is illegitimate. I never doubted Jewish and Israeli identification with Jerusalem. However, the systematic attempts to marginalize, hoping to eliminate all the diversity that makes Jerusalem is not only bound to fail, but it will also be painful, counterproductive and against the spirit of respect for the other which is more needed than ever if a sensible, reasonable future is sought.

*Albert Aghazarian is Director of Public Relations and lecturer of Middle East History at Bir Zeit University.*

## Our Jerusalem

*Cornerstone asked some young Christian men and women to reflect on their life in Jerusalem. The following are some excerpts.*

**W**hen I was asked to write a few words about my Christian Palestinian identity and how living in Jerusalem affects my life, I could not but think about all the injustice that is linked to Jerusalem.

Being born in Jerusalem has given me the two most precious identities in the world: Christian and Palestinian. However, I cannot say that it is easy being both together.

The political situation in Jerusalem constantly presents a challenge to my faith. It was not easy to see past the belief of "freedom in Christ" because we are not a free nation. It is even more difficult to be a good Christian and to love my enemy because this involves looking past my people's suffering, and my own suffering. This emotional turmoil will always be a very hard feeling to overcome.

Jerusalem is a symbol of denied liberty and justice. The need for freedom and self-determination is a constant barrier that holds back our true identity. This reality is irrefutable proof that Palestinians are not a free people. We are deprived of freedom of worship and free access to our revered Holy Places. To deprive freedom, in all its forms, is to strip away our right to be human. The fact of the matter is that Christians and Muslims from abroad have easier access to the Holy Places in Jerusalem than local Christians and Muslim Palestinians.

Ideally, Jerusalem should be a city that reflects harmony and peace, yet it offers neither. It is a torn land that has become one of the most sensitive dimensions of political dispute. Nevertheless, I will always have faith that eventually people of this city will believe in reconciliation and inevitably achieve a true and just peace. We the Palestinian people pray that we will receive a fair share of happiness and freedom in our own land.

*-Marianne Albina, Student, Hebrew University*

**B**eing born and raised as a Christian Palestinian in Jerusalem, the city to me is one of the most mesmerizing and one of the most controversial in the world. I believe that the conspicuous charismatic and holy aura of the city was and still is conducive to the creation of a special bond between Jerusalem and any individual. However, I must admit, apprehensively, that loving the city itself does not necessarily entail being enthralled by all its aspects, since like any other city in the world, Jerusalem has its flaws.

As a Christian, I have always felt and I still feel that I am part of a religious minority: not necessarily a helpless minority, but rather a minority with a strong Christian faith, that aspires to assert that faith despite the decreasing number of Christians in the Holy Land. I also believe that the significance of Jerusalem is not merely due to the fact that I was born here, but rather, on a more spiritual level, the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified in Jerusalem should aid every person to endure the "thorns" of this city.

*-Irene 'Akra, Student, Hebrew University*

**I** find it humorous that many people around the world refer to Jerusalem, the city where I was born and raised, the "City of Peace." I find the term 'peace' very deluding especially to those who have never visited the city or don't hear much about its daily life. I personally prefer to call it the city of hope; the city where God gave humanity hope through the resurrection of His son to be spread to the ends of the universe. Unfortunately, some people in this very same city, especially those who live in East Jerusalem, suffer daily from attempts to drown their hopes through different unjust measures. When I think of a "peace process", I think of HOPE or more hope than what is really existing. I don't think this is the case for Jerusalem. On the contrary, I believe that the 'peace process' has done the opposite to the Arab population of Jerusalem. More houses are now being demolished and more land is being confiscated for building Jewish settlements and fewer Palestinians can enter the city freely. The saddest thing of all is that no hope is given to help Palestinians at least to envision Jerusalem as a home for both Arabs and Jews! For me as a Christian Palestinian, I see myself being pulled by two very strong yet opposing currents – one that reflects my faith and the other that reflects the facts of daily life in the city where I was born. These two currents create confusion within me. I pray that I will be strong and that I will always hold on to the hope that St. Paul talks about in his epistle to the Romans: "But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for who already has?" Who ever thought humanity would have hope again . . . until Jesus came to live, die and resurrect to give us that hope. And who ever thought that the PNA would ever come to the land and have autonomy after more than thirty years of occupation. Only HOPE had the answers. It seems that in our human nature we seem to focus only on the darker side of life or we are put in a situation where we are forced to see no hope. To hope and pray for a Jerusalem where harmony and equality are clearly shown in all four corners is not too much to envision. To pray for peace is to pray for hope and when we are on the verge of losing our hope, we should remember that God has never promised us a bed of roses but he always promised to be there. . . .

*-Sami Khoury, Sabeel Youth Staff*



## Jerusalem and I: A Book Review by *Rufaida Mikdadi*

**T**his is a book of reminiscences describing the childhood and youth of an Arab woman in Jerusalem" So begins the book "Jerusalem and I," a book about the author and her city - the city of Jerusalem that was appropriated by the Zionist Jews in 1948 when the state of Israel was established.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1967, one month after the Six Day War, the author, accompanied by her sister Dumia, visited their house in the Katamon quarter for the first time in nineteen years. It was the house that had been their home until May 1948 when they were forced to flee from the Zionist underground forces. With feelings of sorrow and nostalgia, they ventured to visit their former home knowing that it was inhabited by intruders. Witnessing the familiar scenes, now shabby and neglected - like the Mamillah Road, which used to be a busy shopping street and which now had become an ugly, dirty slum district, was an overwhelming experience.

Significantly, only one shop remained intact: "it was rather a pleasant surprise to discover Stern's little shop exactly where we had left nineteen years before. I think it is the only shop in that street that has remained unchanged."

When finally they arrived at their former home, a young man in the street told them that the house was being used as a nursery and a kindergarten. Once inside their house, she and her sister Dumia were afraid of being ac-

cused of trespassing (as happened to several of their friends who had gone to visit their houses.) She explained to the new European Jewish proprietor: "This is our house. We used to live here before 1948. This is the first time we have seen it in nineteen years." The elderly European lady was moved, but she immediately began telling them that she too had lost a house in Poland, as though they personally, or the Arabs in general were to blame for that. There was no use arguing with her. Sadly leaving her former home in the Katmon area she says: "It is the people that make up a neighborhood and when they are gone it will never be the same again. The familiar streets were there, all the houses were there, but so much was missing. We felt like strangers in our own quarter."

A Palestinian Jerusalemite to the core, Sakakini writes about the old city of Jerusalem where she was born in her maternal grandfather's house on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1924. The Sakakinis first lived in a house known to their friends as 'Al-Kukh' (the cottage), which was originally an old windmill. The windmill is still standing. It is now partly hidden from view by the newly

erected King's Hotel. This huge building occupies the site where the Mushabbek house used to be (a family friend). Then they moved to a house in the Greek Colony in the southern outskirts of Jerusalem. The 1927 earthquake in Palestine forced them to move to an apartment in a large building on the road to Bethlehem. Later the family moved to the German Colony because of its proximity to the German school where the author and her sister were enrolled from 1931-1937. Finally the Sakakinis had their own house in the Katmon quarter.

By the time the Sakakinis moved to their own home in the Katmon quarter, Palestinian Arab Jerusalem was a boisterous cultural meeting place. Prominent artists as well as intellectuals used to converge on Jerusalem from all over the Arab World. Khalil Sakakini, an intellectual par excellence, used to give lectures in the YMCA, the Arab Orthodox Club in Upper Baq'a,

and other places. There were the great Egyptian writers and journalists: Taha Hussein, Abbas Mahmoud El-Aqqad and Dr. Mahmoud Azmi and the Lebanese writer Michael Ni'aimeh. Also, the celebrated Egyptian actor Yousef Wahbeh played the role of the cardinal in "Kursi el-Itiraf", a play which was performed at the YMCA in the summer of 1935.

Local feasts were great occasions to be enjoyed by everybody. The Nabi Mussa feast - even though

it was supposed to be a religious occasion- was in fact a national day in which all the Arabs of Palestine, Christians and Muslims alike shared. It goes without saying that both Christmas, Easter, the Month of Ramadan, and the Feast of Sacrifice were celebrated with great joy in Jerusalem and all over Palestine.

Hala Sakakini describes life in the city of Arab Jerusalem in simple moving words. "In those years Jerusalem was still an easy going city. Life moved at a dignified pace. Katamon, Upper Baq'a, Tori, Lower Baq'a, Talbieh were all Arab quarters, and the traditional Arab courtesy marked the behavior of the people. In pre-1948 Jerusalem, before Palestine was replaced by Israel, our addresses were simple. Houses had no numbers and streets no names and yet it was so easy to reach a person by post or in person. People living in the same quarter were like one large family."

This happy life was bound to end with the ever-increasing immigration of European Jews claiming that Palestine was their land. - by 'divine right' - and that Palestinians should be forced

(Continued on page 21)

*The Sakakini family with friends in West Jerusalem, 1947*



*Source: Jerusalem and I by Hala Sakakini*

## A Day of Prayer and Fasting for Jerusalem

Sabeel dedicated March 26<sup>th</sup> as a day of prayer and fasting for Jerusalem. Knowing that many people who hold Jerusalem in their hearts have expressed concern about the future of this very significant city, people were invited to lift their prayers for the peace of Jerusalem. We were extremely pleased that many of our friends abroad – mainly in the UK and USA expressed solidarity by holding special services and activities for Jerusalem, in some places using the same prayers and order of worship sent from Sabeel, Jerusalem.

On the last Friday of Lent, the Sabeel Center was open to visitors and supporters who came to express their love for Jerusalem through poems, hymns, reflections and prayers. Some local clergy and internationals meditated in silence but when The Rev. Garth Hewitt and the Christian Aid delegation arrived to express their solidarity, there was music in the air! Some people wrote special prayers on small green leaf-shaped pieces of paper to hang on an old olive tree trunk; these prayers along with the ones collected during the ecumenical service in the afternoon were placed at the foot of the alter of St. Stephen's Dominican Church. The service was a blend of nationalities, languages (prayers were voiced in eight different languages) and music, all united for one same purpose. There was a genuine plea for peace, and as candles were lit, prayers were placed in the large basket and worshippers walked out with olive branches. "The Message from Jerusalem" printed below, which was read at the end of the Jerusalem Day service, is the true expression of the feelings of the Palestinian Christian community which is in line with the statements of Church leaders who call for a shared Jerusalem. In the words of His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I, the spiritual leader of all Armenians,

*The sheen of Jerusalem is its holiness  
The future of Jerusalem lies with its children  
The hope embodied in Jerusalem is its very life  
The Peace of Jerusalem is for all of us*

### **A Message from Jerusalem 26 March, 1999**

*We Palestinian Christians of the Holy Land dedicate this day, Friday, March 26, 1999, as a day of prayer and fasting for our city Jerusalem. Jerusalem today is an occupied city. It came under Israeli sovereignty by a unilateral Israeli decision that violates international law and the consensus of the international community. It is maintained by the power of might rather than justice and right. We therefore declare – peacefully, non-violently and with calm reasoning – that the present situation of Jerusalem can never lead to a secure and durable peace. We refuse to accept it and firmly believe that it is also unacceptable to God.*

*Israel's monopoly of control over the Holy City, to the*  
(Continued on page 20)

## A Response to Christian Zionist Exclusivism by Tom Getman

*The following is a response to the alert put forward by the so-called International Christian Embassy to "Christians from around the world."*

I have just seen the appeal you all have sent out asking for "support [of] Israel's exclusive claim to sovereignty over united Jerusalem."

Two things you may want to consider in your blatant partisan support:

1- For 5000 years any time this city has been under the exclusive control of one power it has been the cause of untold bloodshed; and –2 – Israel's so called "exemplary record in guaranteeing access to biblical sites has been significantly sullied in recent years, and even over this past Easter weekend, when in and around the Old City, streets were blocked off to all traffic except Jewish Pessah worshippers.

For those of us who could not get to Good Friday and Easter services, and for your Palestinian brothers and sisters in Christ who could not even get out of Bethlehem, you are setting yourselves up to be perceived as either hopelessly naïve or liars.

Jerusalem is the spiritual home for 2 billion people ... only 15 million are Jewish. The better part of wisdom would be for "God's chosen" to share it or they will absolutely guarantee being proven the world's rejected once again.

Grace and mercy,  
Tom Getman

*The following is the so-called alert.*

### **ICEJ**

#### **International Christian Embassy (Jerusalem) SPECIAL ALERT**

*The time is rapidly approaching when Israeli-Palestinian peace talks will focus on the final status of Jerusalem and other key issues. The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, is launching a petition drive to demonstrate Christian support for Israel's claim to Jerusalem at this crucial time when tremendous pressure will be exerted to re-divide the city.*

*We are asking Christians from all over the world to endorse and sign this petition, which will be featured in a document of support presented to the state of Israel in March 2000, during the Planning Meeting for the next Christian Zionist Congress.*

#### **STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**

*"We, the undersigned, support Israel's exclusive claim to sovereignty over united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. We commend Israel for its exemplary record in guaranteeing access to the biblical sites in Jerusalem and throughout Israel, and support the continuation of Israel in this role."*

## Yehudi Menuhin on a Shared Jerusalem

Yehudi Menuhin, one of the greatest violinists of the century and a leading figure on the classical music scene, died last month at the age of 82. In addition to his musical career, Menuhin was widely involved in humanitarian activities. He was an outspoken proponent of peace with the Palestinians and opposed the Israeli government's policies with regard to the Arab world. Menuhin believed in an Israeli-Palestinian confederation as a solution to the question of Jerusalem. He called the attempt to keep Jerusalem as a totally Jewish city "hopeless." Too many groups see the city as their capital, he said, and attempts to keep it for a single group will always end in disaster. Most recently, he signed a petition initiated by the Gush Shalom peace group calling for Jerusalem to serve as the capital of both Israel and Palestine.

In an interview to the French newspaper *Figaro* last year he was quoted as saying that "Israel's aim should no longer be to represent

*Exclusivity is the bane of trust and stability; it is self-condemnation to the worst fears, the road to madness, the embracing of the principle of death in the illusion that it can serve life . . .*

a shelter for the persecuted, but rather to be a force for peace in the Middle East. But that seems impossible to me, and it is amazing how much the same illness that characterized Nazi Germany has not disappeared and continued to fester there [in Israel]."

The following are excerpts from an article written by Menuhin for the *Palestine-Israel Journal*.

*Israel must make friends with her nearest people, her actual co-dwellers. It urgently needs a genuine Arab friend, and who better qualified than the Palestinians, among the most open-minded in the contemporary Arab world? How much wiser and far-sighted it would be to share the land with those who love and covet it as much as we do. A friend doubles the joys and divides the pains, shares the defense and the sacrifices required.*

*When my father left Russia to grow up in Jerusalem at the turn of the century and later went to the Herzliya Gymnasium in Tel Aviv, he fraternized with his Arab neighbors quite naturally, played with their children, and was treated free by an Arab dentist. Is it too fanciful to hope for such a relationship to be restored?*

*The tragic fate of Palestinians under Israeli military domination has called forth among the Israelis many wonderful voluntary groups determined to redeem the image of Israel . . . by [performing] many good works which have created an indispensable condition for the peace process. For the peace process is not simply the prerogative of politicians but is posited on the selfless work born of compassion, guilt and good sense. Unless the heart and mind of the majority in both peoples can join in spirit these wonderful voluntary bodies, the peace process may indeed falter.*

*There is no way to negotiate reciprocity. Reciprocity is trust; it is mutual service, respect, care, attachment and independence. One can negotiate on money, territory, goods, resources, commerce, but not on spontaneous and automatic reciprocity; mutual help and mutual gratitude are not negotiable.*

*The Jewish people of Israel must understand that a shared Jerusalem means an undivided country, one without guarded borders; a shared Jerusalem means no enemies or borders.*

*Exclusivity is the bane of trust and stability; it is self-condemnation to obsession and fears, the road to madness, the embracing of the principle of death in the illusion that it can serve life, a reversion of fundamentalism whether religious or political.*

*No, I want my Israel to be of good conscience, generous and strong, singing and dancing with joy and love, in the spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge, and with faith, hope and charity – all Biblical attributes.*

*(Excerpted from "A Shared Jerusalem" by Yehudi Menuhin in Palestine-Israel Journal, Vol. II, No. 2 1995)*

*(Continued from page 19)*

*exclusive benefit of Jews, increases tension between Israelis and Palestinians and exacerbates the violence. Israel continues to confiscate more Palestinian land and property for the building of Jewish colonies. It persists in demolishing Palestinian homes and in confiscating Palestinian's identity cards causing their forced expulsion from the city. Israel continues to close Jerusalem to Palestinians, to deprive them of their livelihood and deny them access to the Holy City even for worship. All these measures, as well as the humiliating and inhumane treatment of*

*Palestinians are in violation of religious, moral, and ethical principles, as well as international conventions.*

*We reaffirm that the city of Jerusalem is a city for two peoples – Palestinians and Israelis – and three religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism; and that its sovereignty must be shared. We, therefore, call upon the Israeli government to halt unilateral changes of the city's character and composition, and the violation of the rights of its indigenous people whether religious or political. We also call upon all peace-loving governments, institutions and individuals to*

*continue working for an end to aggression and the establishment of justice.*

*As we commemorate the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and celebrate his glorious resurrection, we affirm, inspired by his great example, the victory of right over wrong, of justice over oppression and of life over death. We live in the hope of a better future for all the people of our region. We pray to Almighty God, to cause a miracle to happen, to bring about a change in our situation and grant our city and country a just and secure peace.*

## Thoughts on Kosovo by Jonathan Kuttab

The flood of refugees escaping Kosovo had an immediate gut-level impact on Palestinians. It recalled to most of them the tragedy of their own expulsion 50 years ago. There were the same dazed looks on their faces as their whole world suddenly collapsed, and they lost everything overnight, joining throngs of their countrymen fleeing for their very lives. One Palestinian journalist wrote of stories of his family's "long journey of pain" into neighboring Arab countries. Most poignant is the sense of helplessness and despair for the future. Palestinians today still keep possession of their title deeds, or Palestinian passports and dream of the *Return*. It is instructive that these are the very documents being stripped from Kosovo refugees, as their Serb enemies tell them they would never be allowed back again.

The fact that the Serbs feel they are the victims and being attacked by NATO military power changes nothing from the reality that these refugees, just like the Palestinians of 1948, were almost totally civilians forced out of their homes by soldiers and para-military forces who used occasional massacres and threats of massacres to increase the panic and speed the exodus. Jewish forces also used to full effect the attacks of the Arab armies



A Palestinian Refugee Camp - 1948 (Source: UNRWA)

*Jewish forces also used the attacks against the newly declared state of Israel to justify their expulsion of*

against the newly declared state of Israel to justify their expulsion of Palestinian Arabs, and the expansion of the new state beyond the UN mandated area. In point of fact, such ethnic cleansing was a vital necessity to insure the "Jewishness" of the new state, which would have been born with an Arab majority and overwhelming Arab land ownership if the exodus had not been implemented.

The parallels between Kosovo and Palestine were not lost on many Israelis.

One journalist, Gideon Yafet, wrote an article in Haaretz "Kosovo is here" making the clear parallel. Israel's right wing, as well as Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon were also quick to realize the parallel, and refused to condemn Milosovich and his policies. Most Israelis, however, remembered from their own experience the practices of the Nazis against Jews and their hearts truly went out to try and ameliorate the human misery of the refugees.

Such humanitarian concerns by ordinary Israelis are understandable and laudable. Palestinians however can be permitted to be skeptical by the much-publicized official aid that is being sent by the Israeli government and the Israeli army. The height of this apparent hypocrisy came with the announcement that Israel has offered to absorb 100 Albanian refugees in Israel when so many millions of Palestinian refugees, both in the occupied territories and Gaza, are denied by that very same government the right to return to their homes from which they were driven 50 years ago.

*Jonathan Kuttab is an attorney, a human rights activist, and a board member of Sabeel.*

(Continued from page 18)  
to leave their country.

*The following is an excerpt from the book, Jerusalem and I.*

*On other days still we would go for a drive to Ein Karem, [please see Ein Karem on page 14] that lovely Arab village southwest of Jerusalem whose simple stone houses spread out over a mountain slope facing the West. As soon as we arrived there Father would go straight to a local open-air coffeehouse to smoke a narghileh, while Aunt Melia, Dumia and I would stroll up the mountain along the*

*narrow road leading to the Russian convent. From there the views all around were breathtaking. You could see the mountains falling down to the deep valley in neat, cultivated terraces. Everywhere the green of the vines, the vegetables and the numerous fruit trees added to the beauty of the picture. Sometimes we would walk in the other direction to the village spring where we would watch the peasant women filling their beautifully shaped earthenware jars. At the spring there were always a number of women, some coming to get water and others leaving, all carrying their jars carefully perched on their heads and*

*walking freely and gracefully. Most attractive were the little girls of about ten or eleven in their long flowing peasant dresses carrying smaller jars on their heads.*

*On a high spot on the main road, a few kilometers outside Ein Karem, there was another popular café, which the Jerusalemites frequented in summer. It was called Ash-Sharafeh, which in Arabic means The High Spot. Opposite this café across the road to the west was located the Deeb estate. It stretched over a large area from the top of the mountain and few terraces down the slope. From any spot*

(Continued on page 27)

## News in Brief

### Jerusalem Offices Closed

On March 30, the Israeli ministerial committee on Jerusalem decided to close three Palestinian offices based in East Jerusalem, WAFA (the Palestinian news agency), the Prisoners Society, and the office of Ibrahim Qandalaft, in charge of Christian affairs for the Palestinian Authority, claiming that they are direct arms of the PA in Jerusalem. Palestinians sharply condemned the closures saying that the move was a barefaced political ploy by Netanyahu to win right-wing votes. France described the decision as "unjustified" and expressed its hope that Israel will allow the offices to remain open.

### Order to Evacuate

The Israeli Magistrate Court issued a decision on March 30 ordering Mohammed al-Kurd and his sons, Raed and Kamal, to evacuate their home in Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem within 24 hours. The court claims that the land on which the house was built, belonged to Jews 299 years ago. The court also told the family that if they fail to evacuate, they will be fined NIS 1,000 per day, and the father and son will be imprisoned.

On April 28th three more houses in Sheikh Jarrah, next to the Sabeel offices were taken over by Jewish extremists and with the protection of the Israeli army.

### A Musical Event that Crossed the Divide

The Palestinian National Conservatory of Music hosted a unique cultural event at Birzeit University on the eve of January 29, 1999 when world-renowned pianist and conductor, Daniel Barenboim, performed his first piano recital in Palestine. It is the first time ever that a musician of such stature visited Palestine. As if in disbelief, a remarkably enthusiastic audience of some 500 people greeted Daniel with many standing ovations including one they gave even before a single note was played. The glamor of the event was unmatched when the Maestro's long-standing friend and admirer, Professor Edward Said, presented him to the audience.

Works by Beethoven and Chopin echoed in the humble premises of the University, packed with music lovers and special

guests including thirteen and fourteen-year-old piano students from the Music School who were lucky enough to be invited. For them, the impact of this experience will be remembered for years to come.

With his Jewish background in mind, Daniel addressed the audience saying: "I am not a politician, nor do I have any political ambitions, . . . I don't have any solutions to anyone's problems. If I did I wouldn't be here playing the piano." His visit to Palestine, like he had intended it to be, conveyed a clear message: the universal language of music transcends all political barriers and can bridge the divide between enemies. When asked whether he felt his performance had been a success, he responded by saying: "The fact that I played here is of only one importance: is this performance going to be one of many? This is the only measure of the success of this evening."

At the end of the recital, Mr. Barenboim surprised the audience by inviting a talented young Palestinian pianist, 22 year-old Saleem Aboud from Nazareth, to accompany him for a Schubert encore. In recognition of the gesture, the audience responded with enthusiasm and immense emotion.

The performance took place in the hall named after Kamal Nasir, the Palestinian writer, poet, music lover and spokesperson for the Palestine Liberation Organization who was gunned down in Beirut in 1979 by Israeli commandos. The hall named after him has now brought together Jew and Palestinian in a musical event.

Daniel Barenboim is the music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of the Berlin State Opera. He frequently conducts the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and has served as music director of the Orchestre de Paris.

### Facts on ID Confiscation and House Demolition

Following the initial refusal by the Israeli Interior Ministry to release current data in ID card confiscation from Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem, the data

were finally provided to Ha'aretz newspaper.

Jerusalem ID-card Confiscation 1996-1998:

- 1998 - 788 (of these, 618 were confiscated from Palestinians living abroad, 170 from Palestinians in the West Bank.
- 1997 - 606
- 1996 - 689

Based on the new 1998 data:

- The number of ID card confiscations increased dramatically in the last quarter of 1998 (official cases reported for January - August 1998 were 346.)

The number of Palestinian Jerusalemites evicted by ID card confiscation between 1996-1998 stands at 2,092 families, i.e. roughly 8,368 individuals.

Also, according to LAW, a human rights organization, ten houses in Jerusalem and another ten in the West Bank have been demolished since the beginning of this year.

### Scheme for Jerusalem

On April 19, an Israeli ministerial committee recommended the annexation of designated areas to the Jerusalem Municipality and the building of 61,000 housing units in West Jerusalem within the framework of a larger scheme to build 116,000 units by the year 2020. To the north of the city, Israeli bulldozers continued building settler roads, uprooting 20 olive trees (al-Quds, WAFA).

### Demolition

Israeli authorities demolished two houses and one under construction in Issawiye on April 19. The head of the Land Defense Committee in the town said the municipality was threatening to demolish five others by the end of the month and 22 houses have demolition orders. Peace Now issued a statement condemning the demolition saying it was a political attempt to win right wing voters. (al-Quds)

### Orient House

Orient House remained at the center of controversy this week, as Israeli prime minister Netanyahu and the security cabinet moved to close its doors after diplo-

(Continued on page 27)

## Snapshots of Our Activities

### The First Ecumenical Clergy Conference

The sight of clergy strolling down the marina in Tiberias is not an unusual one, but a local, ecumenical group of clergy and



Clergy Conference participants at St. Peter's 'Primacy' Church

lay people walking down together in an obvious friendly manner on the evenings of February 2-5, 1999 did turn many questioning heads in wonder! These were the participants of The First Ecumenical Clergy Conference organized by Sabeel, at the Sea of Galilee Center in Tiberias, who, at the end of a day filled with serious discussions and meditations need to relax. Their attitude, a living testimony of the principles of discipleship clearly reflected the meaning of the Bible verse: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35)

It was love that broke the barriers and created a warm atmosphere for seventy-five people, among whom were forty-five clergymen including six bishops from various denominations and confessions, to discuss the theme, "Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1)." The same friendly spirit prevailed throughout the three days and was evident during worship, hymn singing and lectures, group discussions and leisure time. It was wonderful to discover that some clergymen were not only called to lead spiritually but were gifted in music and poetry. Others were blessed with a sense of humor and the lounge of the Sea of Galilee center will

long echo the contagious laughter of this unique group.

Participants felt that the conference laid a cornerstone on which a better understanding and unity could be built. They expressed the thirst for continued spiritual gatherings feeling the need for unity and the necessity to make religion more vital in a pluralistic society.

The message that was sent out at the end of the meeting expressed gratitude and appreciation to the spiritual leaders for blessing the conference, and emphasized the position of resolve "to seek new ways for working together toward a mature, spiritual life for the good of our churches and society."

The Clergy participants also expressed their love to their parishioners inviting them to "stand firm in their Christian faith, to be strong witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ and to practice love and forgiveness towards each other. By actively participating in all church activities, "clergy and church community" would together "help bring new vitality in the church."

In addition to confirming commitment to serve the church communities and the whole society, the clergy participants pledged "to strengthen relationships and cooperation, . . . to further promote interfaith dialogue . . . and to work for justice and peace for all."

Following the conference, a new sense of empathy and love hovered over the clergy meetings. Galilee priests made special efforts to attend the meetings in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Some

priests participated in the day of fasting and prayer for Jerusalem, spending several hours at the center. Others took an active role in the ecumenical worship service. The Syrian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem hosted the meeting in April, and the Roman Catholic Church in Taybeh hosted it in May. The gathering in July will be in the Galilee.

### Rays of Hope in Gaza

On February 9, 1999, seven Sabeel members arrived at the Erez crossing (the military checkpoint at the entrance to the Gaza Strip) accompanied by Carmen Pauls from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Carmen had managed to obtain permits for the Palestinians to enter Gaza as her guests.

For those who had not been able to visit Gaza since its 'independence,' there were outward signs of positive change: paved roads, improved sanitation systems, green parks, playgrounds, a lot of construction and whitewashed stores. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the Sabeelers to one of the projects that had captured the interest of MCC, *The Culture and Free Thought Association* in Khan Younis started by five women with different political affiliations. They joined forces to make a common dream – to build a society based on principles of justice, equality, and democracy – become a reality.

Today, with five running programs, they provide children, youth and adults with opportunities for alternative education;

*(Continued on page 24)*



Sabeelers at the Latin Church Compound in Gaza

(Continued from page 23)

they encourage cultural awareness through the revival of Palestinian music, drama and arts and they empower women to set up small scale enterprises helping them in the participatory process of developing human resources.

The courage, determination and clear dedication of the group is very refreshing and a sign of hope amidst the political uncertainty, frustration, and impatience of the Gazans.

One cannot visit Gaza without stopping by Father Manuel Mussallam, the Roman Catholic priest, who with his jovial smile and famous blue beret has become a very dear and familiar figure in the Gaza Strip. His welcome was warm, his manner of speech interesting and captivating and his message one of hope. Besides giving spiritual guidance to a small parish of 200 people through regular home visits and Bible studies, he also supervises the Latin School, one of the few private schools, reputed to be the best in Gaza. With 1,200 students, the school is an important point of contact between the Christian and Muslim communities. Many young women wearing headscarves were walking out in the playground and in answer to our question, Father Manuel explained that after regular school hours, extra curricular

courses and programs help empower the whole community. Both parents and children participate in activities planned at the school, and both Muslims and Christians act in the nativity play. Among the many interesting stories Father Manuel tells is that of the Beach camp area (a refugee camp) that was once known as the Christian Beach for the large number of Christian refugees who had gathered there. Today, the parish operates a medical clinic there and Father Manuel celebrates mass once a week with the few nuns who live at the edge of the camp. Nuns, from the order of Mother Teresa, help the priest in various areas of the ministry. Together, they have activated the small Christian community to become a living example of hope. According to Father Manuel, it is Hope not Love that is the greatest virtue of

all, for without hope, how can one survive in Gaza? It is interesting to note that the Palestinian population of Gaza is 1,054,000; about 2000 of them are Christian.

Just before heading back to the dreaded border, the group stopped to have tea by the sea and chat with MCC representative in Gaza. The cooperation that already exists between the two associations is bound to develop.

Sabeel wishes to express its appreciation for all the support we have received from MCC and wishes Carmen Pauls, who has been recently appointed to further her Peace education activities in Iraq, a most rewarding and fruitful stay. You will remain in our prayers Carmen.

#### News from Nazareth



Professor Edward Said and other guests at the book launch, Jerusalem

As part of the plan to define their identity ecumenically and to rediscover their Palestinian Christian roots and religious sites, the Nazareth "Sabeel" family of 50 committed members traveled on Sunday March 7, towards Ein Karem, the traditional "Visitation" site in the hills of Jerusalem.

The group was accompanied by their guide, Father Elie Kurzum, who pointed out sites of interest from Nazareth to Jericho and onto the outskirts of Jerusalem where the bus made a stop to pick up Canon Ateek and Sabeel staff members. Driving through the recently built by-passes and new tunnels, the Galileans observed, many for the first time, the expansion and confiscation of land and uprooted orchards, an intensified pattern of changing the character of the area.

Ein Karem, once a predominantly Palestinian village, is today totally Jewish; it is a haven for artists and an attraction to the multitude of pilgrims who seek to recapture the resonating sounds of "The Magnificat" echoing in the hills of Jerusalem. Ein Karem, also the birthplace of St. John the Baptist, is still a peaceful nook – though not for long – if plans to incorporate it within the scheme for Greater Jerusalem prove to be true.

The prize for the exhausting trek up the hill to the Franciscan Sanctuary was the magnificent view enriched by the Eucharist Service led by father Kurzum and the inspiring sermon of Canon Ateek.

Archmandrite Attallah Hanna met the Sabeelers at their next stop, the Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Cross. Tradition has it that the original wood of the Cross came from this valley of olive groves that extended for many acres and until 1948 covered the areas now occupied by the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament and the five-star luxury hotels. It was a real treat to explore the monastery site – which is not a part of a usual tourist itinerary – and to discover treasures preserved in the special museum.

Lunch in Bethlehem was a pleasant social event as Dr. Saleem Ateek and his family from Texas joined the group to renew contact with old friends from Galilee.

The final pilgrimage site was the traditional Monastery of St. George, the patron saint of the Orthodox Church. This majestic building is situated in "Al-Khader," a village several kilometers from Bethlehem. The village grew around the church, a witness of Christian presence in the area, but, says the Greek priest who has been in the country for thirty years, today he has no parishioners in the village. He explained that he enjoys excellent relations with the villagers and that the church is always attracting people who come to baptize their children, especially those named after the patron saint.

In addition to the explanations offered by the welcoming priest, the visitors were

(Continued on page 25)

(Continued from page 24)

invited to admire the beautiful view from the terrace and enjoyed refreshments before heading back home.

This program initiated by the Nazareth Branch falls under the overall Adult Faith Formation Project, which through educational field trips and purposeful pilgrimages reasserts one's identity and strengthens one's faith and commitment to stand steadfast and work for a just peace for all. The Nazareth Sabeel branch is getting ready to move into their new office at the YMCA.

**Holy Land-Hollow Jubilee**

"Holy Land-Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice, and the Palestinians" is the title of the new book which is a compilation of the proceedings of the Third International Conference organized by Sabeel under the theme: *The Challenge of Jubilee- What Does God Require.* The book was first launched in England on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, it was launched in Jerusalem at the YWCA where an invited audience of largely conference participants/presenters and interested friends waited for Professor Edward Said's arrival from Gaza. The absence of non-Jerusalemites was clearly noticeable. In a new show of might at the checkpoints, Israeli soldiers froze



*At the book launch - London*

the traffic at the entrances to Jerusalem, delaying people for over 2 hours, once again disrupting the lives of many Palestinians needlessly. Only the few determined and stubborn ones endured the long wait to cross into Jerusalem; others gave up and returned home. Professor Edward Said, who was the keynote speaker at the Sabeel conference, was invited to present his view on the situation today. Also present was Father Michael Prior, co-editor with Canon Naim Ateek. A delegation from Christian Aid, some of whom are Friends of Sabeel UK, headed directly from the airport to the book launch to share this eventful moment. The Rev. Garth Hewitt ended the gathering with his song "Palestine." Then Professor Said, Canon Ateek, and Father Prior personal-

ized the books with their signatures.

**The Diocese of Lund and Human Rights Seminar**

The Rev. Anna Karin Hammer led a group of eight adults and five students from the Diocese of Lund on an educational tour of the area. Sabeel was asked to facilitate a workshop whereby the Swedes would have the opportunity to hear different peace activists and human rights groups both from the Palestinian and Israeli perspectives. Hilary Rantisi coordinated the program that turned out to be very informative, fruitful and rewarding. A visit to demolished homes and a tour of the Jerusalem settlements, which included encounters with victims of injustice, gave a clear picture of the situation to the Swedes. The Swedish delegation that

included six religious leaders, a politician, and a university professor as well as students who met with Palestinian Christian, Muslim, and Jewish youth will try to work out strategies for future action for justice and peace for all the people of the region.

**Report from Friends of Sabeel UK**

*by Janet Davies*

Friends of Sabeel UK came into being just over two and a half years ago - Christmas '96, following the Sabeel International conference in Jerusalem in January, when a number of friends and colleagues from the UK shared in that major event. Much has happened during the two years with an affiliated membership of 200 and many others on our mailing list. We work through the Ecumenical Church network, and a wider national network

under the umbrella of 'Rediscovering Palestine'. FOS-UK has a small Working Committee and a Theological Think Tank. FOS-UK are now working on a program "The Journey Towards Jerusalem 2000", when Professor Marc Ellis, Dr. Don Wagner, Canon Naim Ateek, will share in an educational program with UK speakers, during May of this year through to the year 2000. FOS-UK is assisting a number of pilgrim groups to meet with the indigenous people in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the Gaza Strip. Those readers of Cornerstone who want to know more about FOS-UK, please see the contact information on the back page of this issue.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, we had the wonderful occasion of the London book launch of Holy Land-Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice,

and the Palestinians in the presence of the joint editors Naim Ateek and Michael Prior and FOS-UK patrons, the Right Reverend John Gladwin, the Bishop of Guilford, and His Excellency Afif Safieh. An equally wonderful occasion was to be present at the Jerusalem launch with Professor Edward Said. Garth Hewitt was able to sing at both occasions, which was an added bonus.

**Meet the Palestinians**

'About 600 prospective tour leaders, clergy, theologians, seminarians, university staff, students, and pilgrims visited Sabeel to meet with Palestinian Christians and to learn more about our everyday struggles and hopes. Groups and individuals arrived from Canada, England, France, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, various parts of Africa, and the USA. The effect of such encounters (even an hour is enough) can be felt through the letters that we receive from the pilgrims and by their determination to work for justice. On his return from such a trip to the Middle East with several University Presidents, Timothy Dearborn, Director, Institute for Global Engagement, World Vision USA, preached about "Holding Together the Holy Land." Twelve Mennonite Bible teachers from 12 different countries had

*(Continued on page 26)*

(Continued from page 25)

two historical, political and theological sessions with Canon Naim Ateek as part of an educational tour organized by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Another MCC tour led by Louise Nussbaumer came from France. Richard Cahill, Director of Middle East Studies Program of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities based in Egypt brought the first batch of 22 students in February and the second in the biannual program will arrive in the fall. The Rev. Andrew Bailey from England, who himself, had participated in the Tantur courses led a group from Bristol. It was also great to see old friends like The Rev Dr Victor Makari and KT Ockels with a group of Presbyterian Church (USA) leaders, who, not only came to see the Palestinians at Sabeel but also their Volunteer in Mission, Catherine Gordon. The Christian Aid delegation on a visit to their partners within the country, not only joined Sabeel for its book launch and Jerusalem Day, but upon the request of Janet Davies, our UK coordinator, they learned about the whole issue of injustice through a Bible study led by Canon Ateek.

The Rev Colin and Carol Morton from the Church of Scotland were also among the dear friends who visited us during this period. Having lived in Jerusalem for many years, they are now involved with the Scottish Palestinian Forum. One of their upcoming programs will be the book launch of "Holy Land-Hollow Jubilee" in Edinburgh on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Another Scottish connection was made when the Rev Dr. Kenneth Ross, General Secretary of the

(Continued from page 8)

Church of Scotland (overseas department), visited Sabeel for what he calls "some precious hours," learning about Sabeel and the situation in general. Also, our friend, the Rev Mitchell Bunting, Bunjie, accompanied by staff and students from Edinburgh University visited Sabeel in Jerusalem, and the Sabeel committee in Nazareth. For Sabeelers, the meeting with Bishops from the Diocese of Chester Inspection Tour was important in order to plan their pilgrimages for the year 2000.

Jerusalem. The Palestinian people have accepted an extraordinary set of compromises required of no other participant. Israel is still not committing itself to withdraw, and there has been no end to settlements, no negotiations on Jerusalem, no compromise on Palestinian self-determination, and no full compliance with the standing agreements. The peace that Israelis are ready to offer we can more accurately call the surrender of our national identity, political rights, and the remaining land on which we live. But, such a vision is a formula for unending conflict. Jerusalem is a microcosm of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It can either be a barrier or a gateway to peace. If Israel insists on its present statements and policy, most of the Palestinians will turn against the Oslo agreements, and this might consequently harm peace with Egypt and Jordan, prevent an Israeli-Syrian agreement, reverse the newly established ties with Arab and Muslim nations and damage Israel's position in the international community.

Jean Zaru is the Presiding Clerk of the Society of Friends in Ramallah, West Bank and Vice President of Sabeel.

### Upcoming Sabeel Events

- May 14  
Launching women's empowerment programs
- May 28  
Women's trip/retreat to Ein Karem
- July  
Youth Leadership Training Programs
- July 20-28  
Sabeel's trip to Greece
- September 18  
Pre-conference Workshop  
West Bank
- October 2  
Pre-conference Workshop  
Galilee

Church of Scotland (overseas department), visited Sabeel for what he calls "some precious hours," learning about Sabeel and the situation in general. Also, our friend, the Rev Mitchell Bunting, Bunjie, accompanied by staff and students from Edinburgh University visited Sabeel in Jerusalem, and the Sabeel committee in Nazareth. For Sabeelers, the meeting with Bishops from the Diocese of Chester Inspection Tour was important in order to plan their pilgrimages for the year 2000.

The Methodist contact was renewed through Bishop Judith Craig who held one of her moving Sunday morning services where several people including Diane Roe, CPT and Nora Carmi shared testimonies of faith. The Rev. Jean Hughes from England, a faithful friend of Sabeel was as always welcomed at the Center. The new Methodist acquaintance was made through Peter Miano. The Rev. Peter Miano, a former Methodist liaison in Jerusalem introduced Bishop Anne Scherrer to Sabeel's ministry. We spent some time with her talking about Palestinian women, theology, and the whole situation. McCabe, a promoter of largely Episcopal pilgrimages fervently supports the work of Sabeel and many of the McCabe groups make a stop at the Center.

This aspect of the ministry of Sabeel – speaking to groups – is very important for we believe that the Church, the seminaries and the universities are effective channels that can help bring a change for justice by teaching an inclusive reading and a comprehensive understanding of the Holy Book. This topic, as well as plans for possible joint activities, were discussed with Bishop Ola Kvarme of Norway. To make the visit to Sabeel even more enriching, we shall soon be able to offer different options varying from a contemporary way of the cross and a lecture to an ecumenical service, a meal and a cultural evening (see page 15).



Cornerstone is the quarterly newsletter of Sabeel. We welcome any comments/inquiries you may have. Cornerstone is made available at no charge; however, we do request a voluntary annual subscription to cover publishing and distribution costs.

For North Americans only, please note that cheques should be made payable to the following tax-exempt organization.

**Friends of Peace and Justice in the Holy Land, Inc.**  
PO Box 4214  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
USA

*(Continued from page 13)*

Jerusalem as well as to surround Bethlehem.

**Conclusion**

Israel has purposely never declared its borders, for the Zionist ideology governing policy-makers mandates only the taking of more and more land. Zionists are like alcoholics, once you start drinking, in the case of alcoholics, or stealing land, in the case of Zionists, it becomes difficult if not impossible to stop. Indeed, it is a disease – in both cases. In short, Zionism is an ideology, absorbed by the majority of Jewish-Israelis, which simply has no limits. There was never an agreement under Oslo to stop land confiscation; therefore, with ease the Zionists confiscated all of the land between the various settlements and announced that any settlement building on these lands was simply a continuation, meeting the natural growth needs, of the existing settlements.

Massive deportation or genocide of the Palestinians has simply not been an option for the Israelis; therefore, in order to “deal” with the presence of Palestinians, the Israelis have had to invent sophisticated forms of dispossession and ethnic cleansing. One such method, implemented through five calculated and planned stages, is explained above. Cleansing the Palestinians in Jerusalem has a direct correlation to each and every one of the various stages of Zionist policy. No one stage would be effective without the others that preceded or followed.

An alcoholic who is forbidden to drink by friends and family must invent sophisticated ways in which to hide and consume his main desire. Likewise, Israel is also forced to find sophisticated measures by which to continue its main desire of stealing land. Both the alcoholic and the Zionist Israeli policy-maker are usually quite successful at first. Their verbal deception and hidden acts can easily continue for some time; however, in the end – in the long-long run – the truth of the effects of the “disease” cannot help but triumph. And a foreign concept, to both the alcoholic and the Zionist, becomes a living reality: enough is enough!!!

*Elizabeth Campbell is a senior staff member at the Alternative Information Center.*

*(Continued from page 22)*

mats met with Faisal Husseini in his offices on Israel’s independence day, Wednesday, April 21. This meeting came on the heels of previous meetings with Husseini, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and diplomats at the Orient House during which the future status of Jerusalem was discussed. These previous meetings met with equal Israeli displeasure, the government revoking three PLC members VIP cards to punish them for meeting with dignitaries in Israel’s self-proclaimed “eternal and united capital of Israel.”

On Monday, May 10th, Interior Security Minister, Avigdor Kahalani signed the closure order, which if implemented could cause riots and bloodshed. Luckily the Palestinians came up with new compromise suggestions, which, together with US and other foreign pressure convinced the Israeli Government to postpone the closure.

The Israeli government later signed the closure and set a 10 pm deadline on May 11th. A group of Israeli peace activists took the case to the Supreme Court and managed to have the order delayed until after the Israeli elections on May 17th.

**Jerusalem**  
by Rima Nasir Tarazi

*Must I die every day because I was born  
Palestinian?  
Because my roots are deeply implanted  
in history,  
Because I was born Arab and have ex-  
isted in Jerusalem  
since the beginning of time?*

*Must I die everyday because I dare  
dream of light and right?  
Because I refuse to be a false witness  
and to suppress the truth by oppression,  
And because I stand as firm as a rock?  
Huge fortresses creep over the gentle  
hills to oppress me*

*(Continued from page 21)*

*on the estate the view was magnificent.  
After the Palestine War in 1948, this  
place was turned into memorial grounds  
by the state of Israel. The Deeb estate  
where we so often picnicked with our  
friends the Shukri Deeb and the Anestas  
Hanania is now known as Mount Herzl.*

*(The author of the book, Jerusalem and  
I, is a member of a well known  
Jerusalem family who had to flee their  
home in West Jerusalem at the height of  
the struggle for the city. Her father  
Khalil Sakakini was an intellectual, edu-  
cator, and a passionate advocate of  
Palestinian rights.)*

*Rufaida Mikdadi is a free-lance translator  
and an interpreter.*

*and block the sun, the sky, and the light  
from my life*

*I yearn for its hills.  
I yearn for its flowers.  
I yearn for its lights.  
I yearn for its innocence and purity.  
I yearn for its sanctity.  
Godly lights shine in Jerusalem,  
Jerusalem shall bring us back to life.*

*My name is engraved in its walls, in its  
alleys. Jerusalem shall live forever.*

*O God we pray for justice and peace.  
God, grant us our rights in Jerusalem  
and give us security.*

*(Continued from page 3)*

tomb, with the happy clamor of bells, with messy nooks and side-chapels filled with soot, dust and old wax drippings, with six Christian denominations engaged in a “cold war” of conflicting chants, with Easter feuds between rival gangs who greet each other with fists and broken bottles, with the beauty of a man weeping at the Stone of Anointing and a mother weeping in the Prison of Christ, the Church of the Resurrection is, as one pilgrim puts it, “an adequate parish church for Jerusalem.” More than that, it is a real expression of the challenges which pluralism poses for Christian faith in the post-modern age.

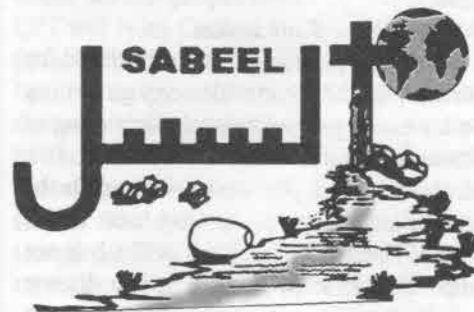
*Henry Carse is the Director of Studies at St. George’s College in Jerusalem.*

## Purpose Statement of *Sabeel*

*Sabeel* is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity among them, and lead them to act for justice and love. *Sabeel* strives to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation, and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. (The word 'Sabeel' is Arabic for 'the way' and also a 'channel' or 'spring' of life-giving water.)

*Sabeel* also works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence, and witness of Palestinian Christians as well as their contemporary concerns. It encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace informed by truth and empowered by prayer and action.

*We would encourage those who feel led to make a financial contribution to any aspect of our work. We too are encouraged when we know that others believe in what we are doing.*



*Friends of Sabeel*  
 North America (FOS-NA)  
 Mrs Elizabeth Barlow  
 P.O. Box 4214  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
 USA  
 Tel: 1 734 764 0350  
 Fax: 1 734 764 8523  
 E-mail: fos-na-admin@umich.edu

*Friends of Sabeel*  
 United Kingdom (FOS-UK)  
 Mrs Janet Davies  
 46 Timms Lane, Formby  
 MERSEYSIDE, L37 7ND  
 UK  
 Tel: 44 (0)1704 872788  
 Fax: 44 (0)1704 878843  
 E-mail: fos@globalnet.co.uk

*Sabeel*  
 Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center  
 P.O. Box 49084  
 91491 Jerusalem  
 Tel: 972-2 532 7136  
 Fax: 972-2 532 7137  
 E-mail: sabeel@planet.edu  
 Webpage: www.sabeel.org