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O JERUSALEM!

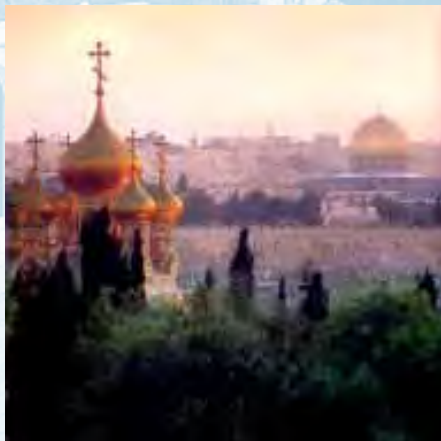
IF YOU ONLY KNEW TODAY ...

by Naim Ateek

Jerusalem remains the key to peace. Ultimately it is what happens to Jerusalem that will determine whether a viable peace is achieved or not. Unless the international community can build peace on a just foundation, it is difficult to imagine a permanent resolution of the conflict. It is important to say from the outset that without the ability of the international community to override the policies of the government of Israel towards Jerusalem and curb its illegal actions, peace will always be a mirage, and disaster will always loom on the horizon. If Israel continues to violate international law through its unilateral actions of "Judaizing" Jerusalem then the pain and difficulties incurred in any future solution would be much greater. The international community must make it very explicit that without applying the principle of sharing the city by Palestinians and Israelis there is no hope for settling the conflict. Any proposition that gives an edge to Israeli rights over the rights of the Palestinians is doomed to failure and the tragic price is

violence and bloodshed for many innocent people.

Therefore, there is a fundamental statement to which we must adhere. Peace is only possible when the principle of justice and fairness as expressed in international law is exercised. Left alone Israel cannot do this. It is already up to its neck in this quagmire. It has lost the ability to discern the basic requirements for peace and what is good for its own people. It has become drunk by its military



power, blinded by a narrow interpretation of Jerusalem's past history, and with impunity disregards the rights of others as it slights international law. The tragedy of the Israeli government today is the fact that it does not know how to make peace. It is good at making and winning wars, but it is bad at making peace. It cannot even imagine peace without domination. It has no vision of peace without exclusive sovereignty and control. It is obvious to many people that Israel's claim to Jerusalem is narcissistic and exclusive and cannot embrace the Palestinians. The Psalmist said that he places Jerusalem above his highest joy (Psalm 137:6). In other words, the only way forward is to set Jerusalem above our own narrow and exclusive selfish desires and consider what is appropriate for it and for all of its children. Any approach to Jerusalem that stems from an egotistic nationalist desire is dangerous because it shuts out the other.

With the benefit of historical hindsight one can say that Jerusalem has three children whom she adopted at different intervals in her long history. Her motherly

love embraces all three without bias or distinction. If any of them is negated or marginalized, Jerusalem suffers a tragic loss and its beauty is marred. Tragically, however, the three children have never been able to share their equal patrimony. Whenever one of them assumed sovereignty, he denied and suppressed his brothers' rights. This is the way western Christians behaved during the Byzantine and Crusader periods. This is the way Muslims behaved during their long rule of the city, and this is the way Israel behaves today. Although all like to claim a higher morality when they governed the city, history attests to the fact that none of them practiced it. We must, therefore, begin by a general confession that all three have sinned against each other and against their mother city. Whenever in control, we all acted with military arrogance, religious superiority, and prejudice against others.

Israel's control of Jerusalem came with the 1967 war. It, too, wanted to reclaim its rightful patrimony from which it had been denied. One would have expected the government of Israel, that claimed to be democratic, to practice a higher morality by making the city truly a city of peace. Instead it embarked on a course that would 'Judaize' the city and make it exclusively its own. Instead of using modern technology for the benefit of creating a Jerusalem that can be a paradigm of peace, they embarked on implementing a policy that is as exclusive and chauvinistic as other conquerors have done before. Israel denied most Christians and Muslims of the West Bank and Gaza Strip access to the City. They cannot even go to worship in their holy places. Furthermore, it allowed a number of extremist religious settlers, with unlimited funding at their disposal, to dispossess Palestinian Muslims and Christians through bribery, deception, distortion, threats, and the terrorization of women and children, and to replace them with Jewish settlers in the heart of the Muslim and Christian quarters of the city. Israel has been designing and shaping Jerusalem for the benefit of the Jewish community. What Israel has been doing to Jerusalem is the same policy that Israel



has been doing to the whole land. In fact, whereas today under international pressure Israel is beginning to concede a small area of land on the West Bank for a Palestinian state, in its avarice, it is devouring Jerusalem totally and completely. What Israel is doing to Jerusalem will never produce peace. Through its own doing, Israel is building its own future of pain and instability and inviting greater hatred, violence and bloodshed. Israel refuses to learn from Jerusalem's history believing that it is capable of reversing that history and charting a new course that no one in the future can reverse. It is acting as if Jerusalem still exists in a B.C. era, as if neither Christianity nor Islam has emerged as equal heirs. What Israel is doing today can only be a recipe for disaster.

Jerusalem is the patrimony of its three children. Jerusalem did not stop evolving after David conquered it a thousand years before Christ according to the biblical record. Her motherly love embraced her three children and gave them roots in the city. If we seek a genuine peace, it is futile to argue who of the three has a greater claim. We must accept the way history

has evolved and developed. This is the reality of Jerusalem today as many of us see it. This is the reality we need to address if we are serious about peace. We need to stand against any of the three heirs that attempts to define Jerusalem in an ethnic and exclusive way. Ultimately Jerusalem itself would repudiate and repel such an attempt. It is doomed to fail.

A PROPHETIC PARADIGM FOR PEACE

Psalm 87 provides us with a prophetic paradigm for Jerusalem that critiques Israeli government policy for the city and can guide our vision for the future of Jerusalem. This Psalm must have been written by an inspired poet, a liberation theologian who had a vision of Jerusalem that embraced all of God's children without excluding any of them. Biblical scholars believe that this Psalm was written after the Jewish Exile in the 6th century B.C. The poet transcended any exclusive, narrow nationalist, or xenophobic theology of his day when he pictured God as saying,

"I will include Egypt and Babylonia when I list the nations that obey me; the people of Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia I will number among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Of Zion it will be said that all nations belong there and that the Almighty will make her strong.

The Lord will write a list of the peoples and include them all as citizens of Jerusalem." (Psalm 87:4-6 GNB)

The Psalmist envisages Jerusalem as a city that includes among its inhabitants even the worst enemies of ancient Israel, Egypt and Babylonia. (The latter was the country that destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C.) It is a city that people of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds can claim affiliation to, as though they were born in it. It is a city of peace that welcomes people as citizens. It is God who grants them citizenship in the city. Such words provide a refreshing vision of peace that comes out of the Hebrew tradition. It is indeed tragic that such a vision has not impacted Israeli decision-makers.

AN INCLUSIVE VISION OF PEACE IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Therefore, how can we translate an inclusive vision of peace into the political arena? I would like to present an outline of a vision, the sort of approach that takes into consideration the basic principles of justice, fairness, and equality for all the people of the city. This is only an attempt to stimulate people's thinking regarding the future of the city. It can be the initial step in opening the way to a more ambitious vision of peace. Without any shadow of a doubt, and in order for a genuine peace to be achieved, it is important to satisfy the political and religious needs of both Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem.

Political Needs

In this vision:

1. East Jerusalem, outside the walled Old City, but including all the settlement areas that Israel has confiscated from Palestinians and annexed into Jerusalem, becomes the recognized capital of the Palestinian state. Israelis who choose to live in the Palestinian capital of Jerusalem must know that they are living in Palestine with all the responsibilities that that entails.
2. In order to satisfy the political needs of Israel, West Jerusalem becomes the recognized capital of Israel. Palestinians who live in that area are responsible to Israel.
3. Jerusalemites, whether Israelis or Palestinians, can reside in any part of the city but their citizenship remains intact.
4. Jerusalem outside the walled Old City becomes two capitals for two sovereign and independent states, Israel and Palestine. It must, however, remain an open city for all of its inhabitants and for all the people of the land. Within its designated boundaries it is the capital for either Palestine or Israel. A democratic rule must apply equally for all its citizens whether in the east or west. Such a vision does not favor one side over the other. The lines between east and west

could follow approximately the 1967 line. Certain adjustments might be necessary but it must be subject to the principle of fairness and equality.

Religious Needs

In order to satisfy the religious needs of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, the following guidelines need to be taken into consideration:

1. The Old City within the walls incorporates the major holy sites for the three religious communities of the land. (The Christians have a number of sites outside the Old City, e.g. on the Mount of Olives but by and large the most significant sites are within the walls.)
2. The Old City must be declared as a special holy zone that is outside the direct jurisdiction of either Israel or Palestine.
3. A special international charter must be formulated by the United Nations for the governance of the holy zone. It must include political and religious representatives from inside Palestine and Israel as well as the international community.
4. All shady Israeli expansions into the Muslim, Armenian, and Christian Quarters since 1967 giving Israel an edge over the other inhabitants of the Old

City must be considered null and void.
5. Access to the holy places must be protected and guaranteed for all people of faith.

This vision carries within it the seeds for peace because it seeks to establish it on the basis of justice and fairness for all. The city of Jerusalem has been conquered and re-conquered no less than 37 times in its long history. It has been subjected continuously to the vicissitude of superior military power with much violence and bloodshed. It is time to give it the status it deserves. It must never again be left to the whims of military power or the exclusive possession of one state. Armed with international law, the international community is capable today through reason and diplomacy to implement a solution for Jerusalem that satisfies the claims, rights, and dignity of all of its inhabitants both politically and religiously. We only need the political will of the international community and the active support and commitment of the major powers to make this work. If the international community of nations is truly serious about the establishment of a just and permanent peace in this region of the world, it can do it. Time is of the essence.

The Rev Naim Ateek is Director of Sabeel



JUSTICE FOR JERUSALEM

By Hind Khoury

There is a sad irony surrounding the city of Jerusalem. The Holy City is central to all three of the monotheistic religions - all of which extol the need for justice - and yet the city is rife with severe injustice.

For more than 38 years, the Palestinian Christians and Muslims of Occupied East Jerusalem have been victimized by an Israeli strategy to claim as much Palestinian land as possible with as few Palestinians as possible. This strategy is most dramatically evidenced by the construction of Israel's Wall around East Jerusalem. The Wall's route extends well beyond Jerusalem's Israeli-defined municipal borders and is being used by Israel to redefine and expand Jerusalem's borders. While the Wall effectively annexes Palestinian land, entire Palestinian communities are left in ghettos, often with a single road or tunnel as their only means of accessing other Palestinian areas. More than 100,000 Palestinians with Jerusalem residency rights will be effectively cut off from the Holy City, forced to access schools, hospitals and even families through Israeli military "gates".

While criticism of Israel's Wall in Occupied East Jerusalem has focused largely on the immediate effects of land confiscations, home demolitions and the isolation of Jerusalem from the rest of Occupied Palestinian Territory, the most devastating impact of the Wall's construction is the collapse of East Jerusalem as a Palestinian commercial, religious, medical and educational center. As doctors and teachers are denied access to the city, Jerusalem's health care and educational institutions will collapse. As Muslims and Christians from the West Bank are denied access to their holy sites, Jerusalem's mosques will serve fewer people and its churches will become museums. East Jerusalem will become simply another Arab ghetto within Israel.

In addition to the Wall, Israel's strategy for the Christians and Muslims of the Holy City

includes the revocation of Israeli residency rights. Palestinian Jerusalemites are Israeli "residents" and not citizens. They only have the right to remain in the city if they can prove that Jerusalem is their "center of life". Those who do not live in the city for a period of seven years can lose their residency rights - to date, more than 6,500 non-Jewish Jerusalemites have lost their right to live in their own city. Recently however, it appears

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that the Israeli government has reduced the seven-year period to only two, making it easier for Palestinians to be forced permanently out of the city.

It happened to my son. Studying in the United States and absent from Jerusalem for two years and one month, he returned to discover that his Israeli driver's license and medical insurance had been cancelled - the first indications that his residency rights were already in the process of being revoked.

In the meantime, Israel continues to build illegal Israeli colonies in and around East Jerusalem where more than half of Israel's 410,000 settlers reside. Israel's goals in East Jerusalem are clear: maximize the number of Jews, minimize the number of Christians and Muslims, grab as much occupied land as possible and ultimately make it impossible for East Jerusalem to serve as a capital of a future Palestinian state. However, without Jerusalem as the shared capital, there is no two-state solution.

As the Palestinian Authority Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, I regularly witness the suffocation of my people. Almost daily, average citizens queue at my office, seeking help for any number of injustices - a demolished home, an exorbitant municipal tax bill, an imprisoned son, a revoked identity card. With limited resources and operating under occupation itself, the Palestinian Authority does what it can for these embattled Jerusalemites. As I meet with these average citizens, when I look into the tired and weary face of a widowed grandmother clutching a tax bill or into the eyes of a helpless young father holding his son and wondering how he will provide for his family, I wonder how it is possible that the conscience of the world has been so dormant.

The stories of the injustice in Jerusalem are not new. The world cannot claim ignorance of the matter. From Israeli human rights organizations to US State Department reports, the plight of Christians and Muslims in Jerusalem is well documented, and though routinely condemned, permitted to continue. Take, for example, President Bush's recent statements that Israel should take no action prejudicing the status of Jerusalem. A fine policy but yet to be enforced.

Jerusalem is sacred to all three of the world's monotheistic religions and it cannot be the monopoly of just one. The responsibility for preserving a pluralistic Jerusalem is a shared responsibility. Governments have a responsibility to enforce their own policies and in so doing would undermine extremists who believe international abandonment justifies violence. Companies and shareholders have a responsibility to adopt trading policies that hold Israel accountable for its human rights violation. Churches have an obligation to put their faith in practice. And individuals, too, have a responsibility to take whatever action they can in accordance with their own commitment to justice.

Ms Hind Khoury is Minister of State for Jerusalem Affairs

THE PLANNING PROBLEM IN EAST JERUSALEM

by *Raffoul Rofa*

Since its occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has used the planning laws as one of the means of limiting the number of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Thus, after the Six Day War the Jordanian planning law of 1966 was annulled. This left a legal vacuum in East Jerusalem which hampered legal building. Eventually the Israeli planning laws were implemented in east Jerusalem and they are used until the present day.

In the 1980s, the Jerusalem municipality, keeping in mind the need to limit the number of Palestinians in Jerusalem, designated vast areas of land in the Palestinian neighbourhoods as “green land” otherwise known as open space land. This meant that building was and is prohibited on this land that also prevented Palestinians from building or maintaining their homes in the old city of Jerusalem. Ironically, in many cases the municipality sends orders at the same time to house owners to maintain their homes or they will be criminally liable under the municipality rules and regulations. In addition the Israeli planning laws prevent Palestinians from introducing any alterations to the buildings or any kind of construction. If they do, they will be liable under the planning laws. It must be kept in mind that the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem, within its present borders, is roughly around 200,000 having

grown by 33 percent, from around 60,000 in the year 1967. This growth results from natural birth, expansion of city borders, and population movement.

B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, referred to this discriminatory policy as follows: “The planning problem in East Jerusalem is tightly connected with the Israeli policy of limiting the number of Palestinians in the city in the early 1980s; the Jerusalem Municipality began to prepare outline plans for all the Palestinian neighborhoods. Most of the plans are complete, and others are in the process of planning and approval. The most conspicuous feature of these outline plans is the vast amount (some 40 percent) of area that is designated as “open landscape areas,” on which building is forbidden. In the plans that were approved prior to the end of 1999, only some 5,100 dunams (constituting 11 percent of the land in East Jerusalem, after the expropriation of 24,000 dunams mentioned above) were available for construction for the Palestinian population. As is the case with the demarcation plans existing in the West Bank, construction is allowed primarily in built-up areas”.

In addition to imposing restrictive planning policies and laws in East Jerusalem, Israel has expropriated about 24,000 dunams (1 dunam = 1/4 acre) of

land in East Jerusalem from the total amount of land annexed in 1967 (70,500 dunams). This land was used for the building of Jewish housing to the detriment of the Palestinian population of Jerusalem even though most of this expropriated land is privately owned by Palestinians.

B’Tselem refers to this discriminatory policy as follows: “In June 1967, Israel annexed 70,500 dunams [4 dunams = 1 acre] of East Jerusalem and the West Bank and incorporated them within Jerusalem’s borders. From this annexed territory, Israel has expropriated about one-third of the annexed territory - 24,000 dunams - most of it privately-owned Arab property. Israel used this expropriated land for residential construction. By the end of 2001, 46,978 housing units had been built for Jews on this land, but not one unit for Palestinians, who constitute one-third of the city’s population”.

The results of this deliberate policy of discrimination in the planning laws have been many. To mention a few: congestion in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Jerusalem to the extent that slums have been built as in Shufat refugee camp; many people are living in cramped, damp and unhealthy dwellings as is the case in the Old City of Jerusalem; the emergence of the phenomena of “illegal building” in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. B’Tselem explained it thus: “The



consequences of this policy are evident in Palestinian neighborhoods. For example, at the end of 2002, housing density in Arab neighborhoods was almost twice that of Jewish neighborhoods, 11.9 square meters per person compared to 23.8 square meters per person.

The existing situation has forced many Palestinians to build homes without first obtaining a building permit. The Jerusalem Municipality enforces the building laws on Palestinians much more stringently than on the Jewish population, even though the number of violations is much higher in the Jewish neighborhoods”.

The Jerusalem municipality in its capacity as the local planning committee and the Ministry of the Interior in its capacity as the district planning committee tend to enforce the building laws much more strictly in the Palestinian neighbourhoods than they do in the Jewish ones.

Hence you find that indictments are brought in the Municipal Court of Jerusalem against Palestinians from East Jerusalem under sections 145 which specifies that no one shall start to build a building without first acquiring a building permit. The question that imposes itself here is: how will an ordinary Palestinian who owns his own private land, which is now specified as green land by the municipality be able to acquire a permit?

The outcome of the trials in the vast majority of cases is well known: a large fine accompanied with a demolition order postponed for normally one and a half years, and a suspended term of imprisonment should the defendant build without a permit again. Matters do not stop here. Should the defendant fail to acquire a building permit during the one and a half year term, his home can be demolished by the municipality or, as is the case in many situations, another indictment is brought against him for contempt of court under section 210 of the planning laws where another fine is imposed on him, the demolition order is normally postponed for six more months,

Demolition of houses in East Jerusalem, 2004-2005, B'Tselem data

Year	Houses	Number of people who lost their home
2004	96	356
2005 until 31 July	55	179
Total	151	535

Demolition of houses and other structures 1999-2003, official data

Year	East Jerusalem Demolitions by the Jerusalem Municipality	East Jerusalem Demolitions by the Interior Ministry	Total
1999	17	14	31
2000	9	7	16
2001	32	9	41
2002	36	9	45
2003	63	33	96
Total	157	72	229

Demolition of houses 1987-1998

Year	West Bank	East Jerusalem	Total
1987	103	No Data	103
1988	393	30	423
1989	No Data	No Data	347
1990	No Data	No Data	102
1991	No Data	No Data	227
1992	148	12	160
1993	63	48	111
1994	120	29	149
1995	43	25	68
1996	140	17	157
1997	233	16	249
1998	150	30	180
Total	1393+	207+	2,276

and a suspended prison term is imposed which is activated in case a second contempt case is brought.

Here it must be said that in certain situations an administrative demolition order can be issued against a building under section 238(a) of the planning law under which the building concerned could be demolished within 24 hours of the date of the order if the owner does not lodge an objection in the municipal court.

In conclusion the planning issue in East Jerusalem is not a simple one. Politics play a major role in this matter and the law is used to implement Israel's political goals. The result is that the Palestinians, especially in East Jerusalem, are paying a very high price both literally in the form of high fines and homes demolished, and metaphorically in the sense that they are living in many cases in cramped and sometimes unhealthy conditions.

JERUSALEM RESIDENCY RIGHTS

by Maya Johnston

In 2002, Israel banned family unification between Israelis and their spouses from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The ban was initially presented as a security issue, but Israeli officials have since openly admitted that it was part of the government's effort to maintain a Jewish majority in the country.

Due to its blatant racial motivations, the ban received public attention in Israel and abroad. Though well intentioned, this attention has also served to obfuscate reality. Wishing to explain the severity of the ban's implications, journalists and human rights activists have proclaimed that Palestinians would no longer be able to legally live in Israel with their spouses. Yet for many of those affected by the ban, particularly Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, this was true long before it was implemented. The real change the ban made was turning family unification from near impossible to absolutely impossible.

After the 1967 war, Israel illegally annexed the eastern part of the city of Jerusalem, (until then controlled by Jordan) and thousands of acres of West Bank land nearby. The municipal borders of Israeli controlled Jerusalem were expanded to include these annexed territories and their original Palestinian population was given the status of permanent residents in Israel.

Permanent residency is normally reserved for non-Jewish immigrants who had chosen to come to Israel and requested to make their homes there. Residency offers some benefits, including freedom of movement inside Israel (a right denied residents of the OPT), access to the Israeli social insurance system, and the right to sponsor spouses for family unification. It

is also, however, unstable. As it is normally given to people upon their request, Israel views residency as a courtesy which may be extended or withheld at its discretion. By law, the Interior Ministry is authorized to revoke residency under certain circumstances, an authority often exercised against Palestinian Jerusalemites. Additionally, residents are entitled to any attached benefits only inasmuch as Israel continues to recognize their status.



In the case of Jerusalem's Palestinian residents this status is a double absurdity. First, they never moved to Israel nor expressed a wish to live there, but rather found themselves under Israeli control. Second, while their status does afford them freedoms denied to the rest of the OPT population, it also legitimizes an artificial separation between these two populations.

Israel's legal separation of Jerusalem from the rest of the OPT did little to change

the traditional ties between the two areas, ties which included marriage. Yet, these ties clashed with Israel's aim to establish and maintain a clear Jewish majority in the city, an ambition shared by all Israeli governments since 1967. While Israel made efforts to tip the demographic balance in favour of Jerusalem's Jewish population, the Palestinian population continued to grow, partly by marrying residents of the OPT. To achieve its aim, Israel needed to discourage such intermarriage and limit the number of people who became residents through it. Making the family unification process non-viable served this purpose.

Until 1994, Israel did not allow women residents to sponsor their husbands. Israel pinned this discriminatory practice on the claim that Palestinian wives traditionally move in with their husbands and not vice versa. For Israel's purposes this was doubly useful, since at that time, children legally inherited their father's status. Forbidding women to sponsor their husbands meant their children would not be recognized as residents either.

As any benefits attached to residency rely on the continued recognition of the status, when residents of Jerusalem applied for family unification, they first had to prove that they were not just registered as residents of the city, but actively living, working, receiving medical treatment and educating their children in it. To prove this, they were to submit a long list of documents, some of which were difficult or impossible to get. The alternative, an affidavit signed by a lawyer, was often too costly.

This process is called the "center of life test" and failing it meant denial of the application. The couple would then face one of three choices. The family could break up with the non-resident spouse

leaving Jerusalem. To keep the family intact that spouse could remain in the city as an “illegal alien”, constantly fearing arrest and expulsion back to the OPT; or the Jerusalemite spouse could leave his/her rightful home and move to the OPT, thereby risking losing his/her residency.

Passing the test did not necessarily mean the end of the road either. As of 1996, rather than immediately being recognized as permanent residents, approved applicants were entered into a two stage interim phase, officially for 5 years, but in practice for much longer. First, they received special licenses, valid for a year, which allowed them to legally enter Israel while they remained residents of the OPT. Then, they were given temporary residency, which, unlike permanent residency must be renewed annually.

Permanent residency was to follow the interim phase, but no one could be certain that they would make it to the end. Yearly renewal of either status was subject to passing another center of life test. If the couple failed, the non-resident spouse would lose their status and the family would face the cruel choices mentioned above.

When the 2002 ban was imposed, the entire process came to a halt. This meant that the interim phases became permanent. All who had received one of the two temporary grades were destined to remain in that status, constantly having to prove that they live in Jerusalem, constantly at risk of losing it.

The ban on family unification was formalized in the Citizenship law of 2003. Amendments made to the law, touted as a relaxation of the ban, did nothing to change the fact that at present no Palestinian can become a resident of Israel. Yet, as this paper has attempted to demonstrate, this is not a completely new reality. The ban simply sealed off an opening Israel has always worked to make as narrow as possible.

Maya Johnston is a Researcher at HaMoked, Center for the Defence of the Individual.



HAVE A GOOD DAY

by Raja Shehadeh

“Have a good day,” said an unusually well-behaved Israeli soldier at the Checkpoint to Jerusalem after returning my papers. I did not answer. “Have a splendid day,” he said with an impish smile. I still held my lips sealed. With a heavy heart I had decided that as long as the soldiers are blocking the entrance to our city I will not return their greetings.

Before the restriction on travel between Ramallah and Jerusalem in the early nineties anyone could travel with their car between the two cities which were beginning to be connected by buildings along the 10 mile meandering road. It was a pleasant fifteen minute drive. One could see the hills on either side. To the west were the lush hills topped by Nebi Samuel with its mosque and ancient tomb attractively perched in the distant hill. To the east were the dry pale hills that went all the way down to the Dead Sea. After the modest village of Beit Hanina you got to the more posh neighborhood of Shufat beyond which began the descent to Jerusalem, the city which was always bathed with that special light, caused by the mingling of the humid air from the sea to the west with the dry desert air from the east.

From this vantage point you looked down at an almost pastoral city surrounding the walled Old City. High rises were prohibited before the

Israeli military occupation of the city; most residential houses were graced with gardens. You could see a lot of greenery. The Mount of Olives was true to its name, an olive orchard in the middle of the holy city. Now you cannot stop to admire the vista from this point. You cannot hear the silence of the city. Above you runs the bridge built to shorten the distance between Jerusalem and the Jewish settlement of Maaleh Adumim. Below are four-lane highways with fast moving traffic going to the exclusively Jewish suburbs. One of them cuts along the old border between the eastern and western sectors of the city dooming the possibility of any real merger between the two parts. Other roads lead to the exclusively Jewish suburbs that, almost immediately after the Israeli take-over of the Eastern sector, crept and clamped each of the once pastoral Arab villages chocking the life out of them.

No green areas can now be seen to the left or right. Ahead, the building the Jordanians had planned for a hospital is now the Israeli police headquarters. Further down, the Israeli government has moved in some of its ministries and public offices to further confirm, in case anyone had doubts, that the eastern Arab side of the city occupied through a belligerent action belongs to Israel “forever.” Along to the east the Hebrew University has built fortress-like buildings. Between the hill to the east and the valley reaching down to the Sheikh Jarrah quarter are new Jewish neighborhoods. Amidst these thick and ugly clusters of roads and cramped

Impairing Social Services in Jerusalem

by *Dyala Hussein*

buildings you can hardly glimpse the sparkle of the golden Dome of the Rock serenely resting on the small hill in the heart of the Old City.

The Old City which had been the heart of Jerusalem is now divided once again between the fiercely protected settlers who have re-built their expanded quarter after demolishing large sections of the old Arab neighborhoods. Those who have clung to their homes around the area of the Dome now live with the terror of their homes collapsing. Large scale excavations are taking place to locate the foundations of the ancient presence of the Jewish temple causing continuous tremors. Some say a new touristy underground city is being prepared below those areas where the Arabs continue to live. In one case a woman who was showering fell through the collapsed floor. Touring the Old City used to be an enriching, happy experience now it is a series of rendezvous with heavily guarded unpleasant Israeli soldiers. Around every corner observation cameras record one's every move.

If a city can be compared to a human body Jerusalem's arteries are now blocked with the heavy clusters of Jewish settlements. Money and greed have conspired to turn a once attractive unpretentious city to an ailing metropolis whose heart cannot beat because of clogged arteries. The eternal holy city staggers on without a heart.

Raja Shehadeh is an attorney and a human rights activist

Whenever I sit with people from outside the Middle East, two of the questions I am asked are: "what do you think of the wall around Jerusalem and its impact on your work; how do you deal with the settler issue and what impact does this issue in particular have on your work at Burj?"

Burj Al-Luq Luq (meaning "tower of the storks") Social Centre is a community center that renders different kinds of services to the Palestinian inhabitants of the Old City of Jerusalem. It targets most of the members of the surrounding community, children, youth and adults. It offers sports such as soccer, basketball, volleyball and has a fitness area for body building and group exercises. It also has a kindergarten, a library, a hairdressing and skin care facility.

The Wall around Jerusalem separated the facilities from its lifeline and the rest of its natural extension with the Palestinian land. Several of the Burj's employees come from different areas around Jerusalem, even those living in the suburbs of Jerusalem have been separated from the main city by this Wall. Most of the time employees reach work late and are exhausted from standing in long lines to enter Jerusalem. To avoid this, many have had to abandon their homes in the suburbs and either rent apartments inside the Wall (which are significantly more expensive) or live in the already over-crowded houses of relatives living within the Wall. The impact of accessing Jerusalem as a result of this Wall has also greatly affected the lives of

children. Students whose schools happen to be on the other side of the wall often reach their schools exhausted and unable to concentrate on their studies - this is a main reason why school drop-out rates have multiplied significantly during the past two years.

The Burj Al-Luq Luq Social Centre is built on over two acres of land inside the Old City of Jerusalem. This elevated plot of land overlooks the grounds of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the Mount of Olives, and the rest of the Old City. It is the largest piece of open space in the Old City and it belongs to two well known Palestinian families. In 1991, a struggle broke out over this piece of land as Jewish settlers tried to annex it with a plan to build 200 housing units on the grounds. To protect the land, the inhabitants of the Old City took turns guarding it by camping on it for weeks until finally the Israeli army, realizing this land was not going to be so easy to confiscate, allowed the Palestinians to build. Straight away, the area was declared a social, sport and community centre and construction commenced soon after.

Since then the Burj flourished and was full of activities for youth and families. However, the threat of Jewish settlers never stopped; they appear on the land regularly and threaten to take over the land and expand their settlements. They are always accompanied by Israeli soldiers. A few years later the settlers were able to gain control over some of the grounds under the pretense that the land needed to be excavated and that the Israeli archeology department will be working there. A few

diggings have been made; nothing of value has been uncovered.

Early this past summer, to our surprise, a press release was published in the newspapers in Jerusalem that this piece of land, about half an acre, was to be developed into a Jewish settlement with 28 units of housing plus a synagogue. What this translates into for us is that the Israeli government's original plan of turning this entire plot of land, including our community center, into yet another illegal settlement had begun. All Palestinian institutions have started to mobilize and show solidarity with our center by increasing the level of activity on our grounds. Letters and complaints were sent to all European and American embassies and other foreign and diplomatic missions in the area.

Burj Al-Luq Luq Centre is now under great pressure of an "occupation within an occupation." Several of our donors are afraid to invest in it as they see the Israeli machine of illegal land confiscation to be much more powerful than our community center, and that without warning, compensation or any legal recourse, Israel will occupy the land and extend their settlement. Most of the surrounding community has begun to depend heavily on the activities of the Burj and what it offers of educational and social services. Solidarity with this cause and awareness of our unjust situation is essential. The future of our children and youth depend on this.

*Dyala Hussein
of Burj Al-Luq Luq*



THE COLONIZING OF EAST JERUSALEM

THE FINAL TOUCHES OF A LONG PROCESS

by Nazmi Al-Ju'beh

The Israeli policy towards Jerusalem was never a secret, but it was never as obvious as now. The successive Israeli governments and all the Zionist parties in Israel agree upon the slogan that "United Jerusalem is the Capital of Israel". They also agree that achieving such an aim is impossible with the existing demographic facts in the city. Therefore, three different and parallel strategies were approved, hence it is not acceptable to have more than one third of the total population of the city as non-Jewish (Goyim).

The first strategy was the continuous redefinition of the city border according to the Israeli needs. After 1967 the needs were to expand the city border to include East Jerusalem and a large area of the West Bank to ensure maximum land for settlement construction and secure their expansion in the future. About 66% of the current Jerusalem municipal border was seized after 1967 from the territory of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The construction of the

current Apartheid Wall around Jerusalem is another step in redefining the border of the city to exclude around 80,000 Palestinians and to complete the separation between the West Bankers and their political, cultural, economic and religious center: Jerusalem.

The second strategy was to worsen the conditions and to increase the "push factors" on the Palestinians in East Jerusalem, so they would leave the city. Under this strategy, we can see the discrimination policies of the municipality, the restriction on constructing Palestinian houses in Jerusalem, house-demolishing policy, confiscating the residency rights of Palestinian Jerusalemites, closing up Palestinian institutions, increasing the tax burden, and disconnecting the city from its hinterland and the rest of the West Bank.

The third strategy, which is of special focus here, was and still is to intensify the colonization policy in East Jerusalem in order to create facts on the ground that will be used to determine the future of the city. This strategy is to be understood in parallel with the previous two strategies and in a comprehensive

framework. The colonization of East Jerusalem aims to fulfill the following Israeli targets:

1. To create a Jewish majority in Arab East Jerusalem so facts on ground (irreversible in their character) will have major impact in determining the future of the city.
2. To isolate East Jerusalem from its hinterland as well as from the rest of the West Bank, to annex it totally to the Israeli market, and to convert it into being dependent on Israeli social services.
3. To disconnect East Jerusalem demographically, economically and geographically from the rest of the West Bank, and to use the "Jerusalem Block" as a barrier stopping the geographic integrity and continuity of the West Bank, thereby dividing it into two isolated islands.
4. To underline the relationship of the Jewish people to Jerusalem vis-a-vis minimizing it, as far as possible, to the Palestinian people.

If we accredit the Israeli official statistics, about 240000 Israeli settlers are already settling in Arab Jerusalem. This number is equal to the number of Palestinians living in Jerusalem. The growth percentage of Palestinian Jerusalemites had exceeded the Israeli expectations and led to crises for the city planners. Hence, the percentage of Palestinians in so-called "United Jerusalem" had this year exceeded 34%, leading to a new master plan (Jerusalem 2020), a piece of racism par excellence. The master plan aims to reduce the number of Palestinians in Jerusalem and to increase the number of Israelis in the same city by changing its borders to fit this need.

The Settlement activity in Jerusalem went through different stages: The first stage which targeted the Old City began immediately after occupying the city (June 1967), bulldozing the Maghribi Quarter in order to create the Plaza in front of the "Wailing Wall". This stage continued later on by the confiscation of non-Jewish

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The third stage is to close up all the gates of the city and to convert East Jerusalem into a slum. The features of this stage are two rings of settlements

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properties in the Jewish Quarter (about 87% of the Jewish Quarter properties are not Jewish) and other neighboring quarters to create an extended Jewish Quarter. This stage continued after the Likud party won the elections 1977, raising the slogan "the right of the Jewish people to settle everywhere in Jerusalem" and led to expansion of the settlement activity to the Muslim and Christian Quarters. Today, besides the Jewish Quarter there are about 85 buildings under settler control throughout the Old City, as well as a very ambitious plan to expand further. The recent activity can be witnessed in the northeastern corner of the city wall at Burj al-Luqluq (see "Impairing Social Services") where the intention is to build about 30 apartments and a synagogue in that very culturally and demographically sensitive area.

The second stage can be summarized as securing most of the open fields around the city for constructing settlements; a major part of this land was declared green areas, which means, in fact, a reserve area for settlements and their expansion.

The third stage is under completion; to close up all the gates of the city and to convert East Jerusalem into a slum. The features of this stage are two rings of settlements:

• **The Outer Ring:** In the South this plan began by isolating the Bethlehem area

from its southern regions with a series of settlements in the Etzion Bloc. In the East, the ring consists of the group of settlements of the Adumim Bloc. These settlements have been linked together and will be connected to the Eastern Ring Road. The tunnel connecting this bloc of settlements with Route No.1, which separates/connects East and West Jerusalem and passes under Al-Masharif Mountain (Mount Scopus), has been completed. In the North the eastern settlement bloc (Ma'aleh Adumim) is connected to the Binyamin Settlement Bloc (northeast of Jerusalem) and is part of the northern ring. However, it is not possible for Israel to complete the circle between these two blocs because of the Arab areas that lie between Jerusalem and Ramallah. That is why these two settlement blocs were constructed. The eastern bypass road links these settlements to each other. This road is currently being connected with the eastern ring road and the northern ring road. These settlements were successful in preventing the development of El-Bireh City eastwards. Hizma, too, has been strangled between the outer and inner rings. The Binyamin Bloc is being connected with the 'Atarot Industrial Area by the highway separating al-Ram and Qalandia. 'Atarot is now connected to the Tel Aviv highway and the Western Ring Road that passes west of Beit Hanina and Shu'fat. It is also connected to the Givon Bloc (the settlements north-west of Jerusalem). This project will be able to expand quickly because of its link to West Jerusalem through the western ring road and the growing city of Modi'in. Work is already underway to expand the settlements in this area westwards along the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv Northern Highway.

• **The Inner Ring:** Most of the settlements in this ring are located within the municipal borders and are largely aimed at preventing the expansion of Arab Jerusalem, ensuring that it will not develop, and imposing a de facto demographic situation that guarantees a greater number of Israelis not only in

“unified Jerusalem,” but also in Arab Jerusalem. In the South the inner ring consists of the settlements of Gilo, Giv’at Hamtus, Har Homa and Eastern Talpiot. These settlements isolate Jerusalem from the Bethlehem area. This separation is being completed through the expansion of Har Homa settlement and consolidated by its linkage with the ring road. This settlement has contributed to encircling the Bethlehem area between the outer and inner rings. The remaining gap in south-east Jerusalem is being separated by the ring road and prepared for settlement so as to be connected eastwards with the Qedar and Ma’aleh Adumim settlements by a bridge linked to Har Homa. In the North the geographical continuity between the Old City and the Arab quarters north of Jerusalem has been disrupted by the settlements of French Hill and Ramat Eshkol. This separation has been consolidated by the settlements of Rekhesh Shu’fat, Pisgat Zeev and Neve Ya’cov.

• **Areas surrounding the Old City:** Since the completion of the outer rings, focus is now on several locations surrounding the Old City. The Ras Al-’Amoud settlement is completed, and preparations are under way to annex the neighboring police station which will be moved to Ma’aleh Adumim. At the same time, and very rapidly, preparations are underway to expand the settlement in Sheikh Jarrah. A total of 200 housing units will be constructed in this settlement project.

The last location we know of is the Moscovitch settlement in the foothills of Abu Dis. Prospects for this settlement’s

construction will be enhanced when the eastern ring road project is completed. The settlement will be directly located on the road’s edge, which will directly connect it to West Jerusalem and Ma’aleh Adumim. As such, it will constitute a bridge closing the remaining opening southeast of the city.

“ It will take two to three years to complete this project, after which it will be too late to discuss not only Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, but it will also be impossible to talk about a Palestinian state. ”

Among the visible results of the Israeli policy after the completion of the Wall is that Arab Jerusalem will lose all possibilities for development and its residents will not have enough housing. This will lead to impoverishment, a decline in the standard of living, and the confinement of its population in narrow, closed areas. Furthermore, isolating Jerusalem from its vital economic surroundings will aggravate the social crisis and spur an increased crime rate. All this will take place alongside the escalated development of services and standard of living in West Jerusalem and surrounding settlements. The final result of this policy will be the transformation of Arab Jerusalem into a ghetto and slum area. It is very easy to envision the Israeli plans to stymie the peace process and eliminate the possibility for a solution to the Jerusalem problem, as has been demonstrated. It will take two to three years to complete this project, after which it will be too late to discuss not only Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, but it will also be impossible to talk about a Palestinian state.

Nazmi Al-Ju’beh, an historian and archeologist, co-directs the Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation.

THE WALLS

by Clarence Musgrave

As a child, I can remember singing with great gusto in Sunday School a song about someone called Joshua who fought a battle at Jericho, as a result of which some walls came tumbling down. I had little real idea what the story was about, but it was a good story, not least because of the way in which the walls did not stop Joshua and his people.

Now that I have been living in Jerusalem for a few years, I have had time to think again about walls. In particular there are those walls which can be seen from St Andrew’s Scots Church, where I work. Close by there are the famous walls built by the Sultan Suliman the Magnificent. In the distance, to the south-east, there is the infamous wall being built by Prime Minister Sharon. However, they are but two of the many walls that have been built to protect Jerusalem. What sort of a job did they do?

In the City of David, down by the side of the Kidron Valley, there are the remains of what is called the Jebusite Wall dating back to C18 BC. Modified and strengthened 1,000 years later, it provided protection for the city for another 200 years - and then came the Babylonians. Old as it was, strong as it had been built, it was unable to provide protection for the City, and in 586 B.C. Jerusalem was captured. That Wall failed its test. For the Jewish people, the Babylonian Exile was the result.

Around the city of Jerusalem that Jesus knew walls were also built. The threat that time came from the West, in the Occupying Forces of the Roman Empire. In the final battles for Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the Third Wall was breached, the Second Wall was unable to withstand the Roman

OF JERUSALEM

attacks, and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus took place. The Walls designed to protect Jerusalem proved inadequate, and a new Diaspora was the result.

The most recent conflict in Jerusalem was in 1967. Behind the Walls, familiar to people all over the world, the defenders prepared. Outside the Walls, the attackers got ready. The result is known, and many readers of Cornerstone will have been personally affected by it. The Gates were breached and the City captured. A new wave of displacement took place, different from previous ones in that it was caused by Jewish forces and affected others, rather than being caused by Palestinians and affecting Jewish people.

And now we have another wall. Designed, according to its supporters, to protect the people of Israel from attacks by Palestinians, it snakes its way across the land, colorless and lifeless, joining a long list of other walls designed to offer protection to those inside them.

No doubt, many of you will have seen the Iron Curtain, possibly the most recent example of a Wall built to divide peoples and to perpetuate the power of the builders. By 1990, it had joined the list of those Walls that had ultimately been futile.

So what do I dare to say about the current Wall that is dividing Jerusalem, that is depriving people of their lands and their livelihood, and that is disfiguring the city and country through which it passes?

There is the Bad News. From their own history, the Jewish people have ample examples of the failures of Walls to protect them. Will this Wall prove any different from those of the past? It is doubtful that it will. So the leaders of the Jewish people

are offering to them a Recipe for Safety which has failed in the past, and will turn inevitably into a Recipe for Disaster. The Wall offers little hope for the future to those who see it as their Salvation.

There is the Good News. Walls have always fallen. Will this Wall prove any different from those of the past? It is unlikely that it will. So, what is denied to people now by the Wall, will in the future become available to them once again. The big problem is that there is no way of knowing when this will happen. So the Good News is tempered with caution. Expect the Wall to come down, but do not expect it to come down tomorrow.

So what can be done, what needs to be done?

• The Wall is the product of fear. We must

address the fears of its builders and help them to overcome them.

• The Wall creates hopelessness. We must confront the hopelessness, of the peoples on both sides of the Wall, and help them to find ways of having hope.

• The Wall leads to poverty, of body, mind and spirit. We must offer the resources to people to enable them not only to feed themselves and stay alive, but also to stimulate their minds and imaginations, so that ways can be found to enable people to think new thoughts and dream new dreams.

• The Wall is a blight on humanity, and represents a failure for the whole of the human family. We must help the world community to recognise its failure, and work with it to achieve solutions to the questions of Israel and Palestine.

• We must remember those strange words in the Gospel, that it was when Jesus died that the Curtain of the Temple was torn, a barrier was broken and Reconciliation was achieved.

The Rev. Clarence Musgrave is the minister of Scots Memorial Church.





THE IMPACT OF THE WALL ON EDUCATION IN EAST JERUSALEM

by Agnes Hanania

As I pass through the checkpoints and see the Wall that is surrounding Jerusalem growing every day, I wonder, “Are we living in the twenty first century?” Whether walking in the street or in a public transport, or waiting at a checkpoint for one’s turn, any person cannot avoid hearing about the hardships of those whose land was confiscated so that the Wall could be built, or the miseries of families who had to be separated, some within and some outside the Wall. One cannot avoid seeing the bewildered, concerned and anxious faces of schoolchildren, teachers, doctors and other medical staff, as well as, other employees, businesspersons and ordinary citizens who are crossing the checkpoints as they look at the growing Wall. They do not know what their life is going to be like once the Wall is completed, which is expected to be within the coming months. They do not know to whom to complain (more than they have) about the gigantic Wall that is eating more and more of their properties and affecting their family ties and the normality of their daily lives.

The Israelis are building the Wall all through the West Bank, including the envelope around Jerusalem. The number of Palestinians affected is large. The Ministry of State for Jerusalem Affairs has highlighted the impact of the Wall on the social structure of East Jerusalemites (Al Quds, October 7, 2005). During the past year, there have been several articles written on the subject, general in nature or specific, focusing on either the economic, social, religious, educational or health aspects of the impact of the Wall on Palestinian life. This article will focus on the impact of the Wall that is surrounding Jerusalem from an educational perspective. The topics presented will deal with the impact of the wall surrounding Jerusalem on education, and specifically on schools and Palestinian children and their right to education.

The Wall is affecting students, teachers and other educational staff in the education sector that is governed by four supervising authorities, namely, Government (run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education), Private, United Nations

Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and Municipality (run by the Israeli Ministry of Education and the Municipality of Jerusalem). According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (press release September 15, 2005), “3403 students and 33 schools are currently affected by the barrier because their teachers are not able to reach their schools, and many of the students are also unable to reach their own schools that happen to be on the other side of the Wall. The Wall that encircles the city of Jerusalem deprives over 2000 students and 260 teachers from reaching their schools in the al-Ram and Dahia neighborhoods alone, in addition to 6000 Jerusalem students living outside who find themselves cut off from their schools in the City”. The press release indicated that 2180 out of 5000 students of the towns of Abu-Dis and Azariyeh, east of Jerusalem, who attend schools in the city will not have access to their schools in Jerusalem. It stated further that from that side of the city, “320 teachers (50%) in Palestinian run schools, and 170 teachers (20%) in private Palestinian schools in Jerusalem will be prevented from reaching their schools

in the city since they reside outside the infamous separation Wall". With respect to college and university students, the press release indicated also that those affected by the Wall include, "1500 students in Al-Quds University, 1000 students in Bethlehem University and 700 Birzeit University students".

It should be noted that schools in East Jerusalem supervised by the Israeli Education Ministry and municipality of Jerusalem have a shortage of classrooms and do not meet the needs of children there. The classrooms that exist are overcrowded, and this has a negative impact on the quality of education. Moreover, families of students holding Jerusalem identity cards, who cannot afford sending their children to private schools, found that they have no alternative but to send their children to schools in the suburbs of the City. With the Wall, these schoolchildren will be outside the boundaries of the City, and therefore are at risk of losing their Jerusalem IDs. This fact would aggravate the situation of the education sector further as the number of East Jerusalem's schoolchildren is growing every year. To face that, the parents' committee of Silwan's schools in East Jerusalem had a strike to protest against the Municipality of Jerusalem for not implementing its commitment to solve the conditions of their schools and the right of their children to education. They stated that the classrooms are overcrowded and they lacked space - their numbers are not adequate for the number of students (Al Quds, September 4, 2005).

The shock was greatest for the students of Anata Secondary School for Boys who returned after their weekend on Saturday to find that the Israeli army had built a grey Wall, eight meters high in the middle of their school that isolated the football playground of the school from its volleyball playground. The soldiers left the school with only a

small area of the playground that can no longer accommodate 800 students. Hisham, a 15 years old student stated, "we feel that we are in a small prison, wherever we go we cannot laugh or speak." He said further that, "the school is not as it used to be. We used to stay after the school day to play football and volleyball, but now we try to avoid the risk of the army. We go to our homes directly after school." Suleiman, also 15 years old, stated, "we do not have an area where we can stand or play, we feel stressed and we are afraid from the army that stand at the school gate daily[...]" (Al Quds, October 5, 2005)

As the Wall around Jerusalem is being completed, the hardships of students and teachers are increasing. When students' basic right to education is being violated, when they see their school property not protected, when they see violence being used with them and when their complaints about their human rights are not heard, educators are finding more and more difficulties in passing on to students concepts such as human rights.

It is sad that a city like Jerusalem, that should be open to religions and cultures of the world, is going to be closed by a wall. It is sad that when the world is talking about greater interaction among cultures, we see families, relatives and friends here separated by a Wall. It is sad that when countries of the world rejoice that a wall was brought down, no country is preventing one from being built around one of the holiest cities in the world. It is sad when the world talks about building bridges among peoples and cultures, the talk here is about a Wall separating peoples and cultures. I wish so much that the effort and funding used to build the Wall would build Bridges instead.

Agnes Hanania is an assistant Professor of Education and Psychology at Birzeit University

THE WALL INSIDE BETHLEHEM

By Kenneth Cragg

They reared a wall in Bethlehem
Four times the height of man,
A concrete slabbed apothegm
And many leagues in span.

It bifurcates the promised land
Where truth was meant to dwell,
Well-beloved in whose hand
The arts of peace would spell.

How every man beneath his vine
And fig-tree's kindly shade
Might read Messiah's gentle sign,
None making them afraid.

The folk who came through Manger Square
Nativity to learn
Through much enduring now repair
Another lesson earn.

If shepherds now in fields should kneel
Down yon in Beit Sahour,
Checkpoints must intervene to seal
Their suspect movements more.

And if those Eastern Kings should come,
Their innocence unfurled,
Deep rumours of alarm would hum
As once in Herod's world.

This massive wall good faith decries
And falsifies the scene,
A sane security denies,
Makes holiness obscene.

'Right to exist' no will should flout,
If made the equal theme,
But while the size remains in doubt
All die in disesteem.

The honest heart perceives what needs,
Ensuring each survives
In fee to what the other pleads-
Our land, our State, our lives.

And thus the only worthy art
In one adversity
To heed aright on either part
The Lord's controversy.

Kenneth Cragg (retired), the Diocese of Oxford, England



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IN PERSON...

*Douglas Dicks*

Jilted by Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city with which I have a love-hate relationship. I used to love walking in the Old City of Jerusalem, with all of the scents and smells emanating from the market stalls. I loved walking the old, well-worn stones of its streets. I loved the view of Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives. And I loved the chance encounters that one often had with people in the street, in the shops and in the holy places.

I'm not quite sure just when my love affair with Jerusalem ended, but it is hard to speak of Jerusalem in a positive manner these days. Sadly, Jerusalem has also become a city that I despise. Like many other people, I have grown weary of Jerusalem. Just over ten years ago, I came "back" to Jerusalem to begin work as a mission worker for the Presbyterian Church (USA). I say, "back", because I was no stranger to Jerusalem.

I first set foot in Jerusalem back in the summer of 1982, and following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Jerusalem was a somber place then, and yet to me, it seemed a lively place at the same time! I would return to Jerusalem over a period of three consecutive summers, as a student of Jerusalem's Hebrew University, immersing myself in the studies of archaeology, Arabic, and the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. At that time, Jerusalem was a city that, to

me, seemed very small, yet it was both open and accessible to Palestinians from all over the West Bank. They came to Jerusalem to shop, to visit, to study and to dine. The city was full of Palestinian Arabs, each speaking the unique Arabic dialect of their own village or town.

In those days it was easy to catch a shared taxi from just opposite the Damascus Gate, and travel all the way to Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus, Jericho and to cities beyond. The journeys were usually long, traveling along twisting and winding roads that wound in and out along the hills of the West Bank. There were no "by pass" roads then on which to travel between one city and the next. The landscape then was dramatic and beautiful - rocky hills, terraces of olives trees, fig trees, and pristine vineyards that were well tended. It was nothing like the landscape of today, where Israeli settlements can now be seen sprawling along most hilltops of the West Bank.

Ten years ago, I came back to Jerusalem, sharing in the optimism that many Palestinians, Israelis and internationals felt and that the Oslo Accords, it was hoped, afforded them. Jerusalem had grown dramatically over the years that I had been away.

In 1995, I could catch a bus from Bethlehem, where I made my home, into the heart of Arab East Jerusalem for a shekel and a half - about 50 cents. The journey would take about 20 to 30 minutes, depending on how often the bus stopped to pick up or let off passengers. It's true that there was a checkpoint at the northern entrance to Bethlehem, but in those days, the Israeli soldiers hardly took notice. They would come onto the bus, check everyone's ID cards, and soon we would be on our way. From the bus station in Arab East Jerusalem, it was a short ten-minute walk to my office.

Over the years, however, Israel's policy of "collective punishment" of the Palestinian population was made harsher, especially

following a series of suicide bombings in 1996. Passing through the military checkpoints became more difficult. There were also more roadblocks, and fewer exit points from the West Bank cities into Jerusalem. Many Palestinians also found it strange that, even though talk of a mutual, historic reconciliation between both Israelis and Palestinians was supposedly taking place, the freedom of movement of most Palestinians was being ever more stringently curtailed.

Mind you, the journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is only about an eight-mile (13 kilometer) trip. By mid-1996, that short journey could take anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours, or even longer! With more and more restrictions imposed on the Palestinians of the West Bank, fewer and fewer Palestinians had access to Jerusalem. "Security" became the overriding pretext, and permits, issued by the Israeli military were needed, yet unattainable, by the vast majority of those Palestinians living in the West Bank.

Following Israel's re-invasion of the West Bank cities beginning in March of 2002, with a major military assault that Israel termed "Operation Defensive Shield", Jerusalem began to undergo a radical transformation. Perhaps the most dramatic changes that have taken place in and around Jerusalem have occurred over the past three years alone! Israel's erection of the "security barrier" or wall began with a series of ditches and trenches, in April of 2002. These measures began to drastically change the physical landscape, and imposed yet ever-tighter travel restrictions on tens of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, not only from the West Bank itself, but also for those living on the fringes of the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem itself. Today, Jerusalem is being cut off and isolated from other Palestinian cities in the West Bank. Jerusalem is being hemmed in and surrounded by the "security barrier" that Israel is constructing. It is being divided once again, much like it was in 1948, only today's division of the city does not stop at just the physical dissection.

Culturally, politically, economically, spiritually, Jerusalem is fast becoming a city that is gasping for air!

Change is inevitable in the life of any city, I suppose, yet what is happening to Jerusalem is not taking place according to any natural scheme of things. In truth, Jerusalem is being deprived of the people that have made this city so unique. And for those "left behind" by the unnatural events that are shaping Jerusalem's future, the quality of their lives is becoming greatly diminished.

At a social gathering in Bethlehem recently, I overheard a Palestinian Christian gentleman speaking to a friend about leaving Jerusalem, and moving to California. I began my own conversation with him, and soon he shared with me his reasons for wanting to leave. "For thirty-five years I have tried to be a bridge between us and them," he stated. He was referring, of course, to the relationship between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. "But now, I've had it." "Imagine", he said. "For hundreds of years, my family has lived in and been part of this city." "Today, I feel like a stranger in Jerusalem." A prominent Palestinian Muslim also related to me recently that, upon leaving the Haram Al Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) and the Dome of the Rock after Ramadan prayers one evening, his wife had commented to him that, within a matter of a few years, they would not recognize Jerusalem. She was referring to the multitude of young men and women who

turned out for prayers. All were more radically fundamental in their approach to Islam, religion, and perhaps the world, than any fellow-Muslims that they had ever experienced in their lives as citizens of the city of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, in a recent news article of the daily Ha'aretz ("The Land" in Hebrew) newspaper, it was revealed that the number of Israeli Jews leaving the city of Jerusalem was the highest since 1967!

Jerusalem was once a unique city, because of the character and diversity of its people. Sadly, it is fast becoming a city that is being deprived of that uniqueness, diversity and multi-culturalism. Jilted by Jerusalem for one reason or another, many of its inhabitants are choosing -or being forced- to live life elsewhere. With all three of these faith communities experiencing some degree of loss of their citizenry, Jerusalem remains a city whose remnant populations continue to exude a degree of religious haughtiness, cultivating attitudes and attributes that indulge the "self", and leaving little, if any, consideration for the "other". The loss of its citizens would be a death knell for any city! Yet for the vast majority of Jerusalem's residents - Muslims, Christians and Jews - who haven't the ways and means nor perhaps the desire to give up on Jerusalem, the future does not bode well.

Douglas Dicks is the Presbyterian Church (USA) Regional Liaison to Israel, Palestine, and Jordan

Sabeel salutes JEAN ZARU, Sabeel Vice-President and Clerk of the Ramallah Friends Meeting on her receiving of the following two prestigious awards:

- from the joint Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ in recognition of her lifelong commitment to non-violence between Palestinians and Israelis;
- from the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation the Non-violence Award for 2005.

Congratulations, Jean!

Prayer is a necessity. With out it we see only our point of view, our own righteousness, and ignore the perspective of our enemies. Prayer breaks down those distinctions. To do violence to others, you must make them enemies. Prayer, on the other hand, makes enemies into friends. When we have brought our enemies into our hearts in prayer, it becomes most difficult to maintain the hostility necessary for violence. In bringing them close to us, prayer serves to protect our enemies. Thus prayer undermines the propaganda and policies of governments designed to make us hate and fear our enemies. By softening our hearts toward our adversaries, prayer can become treasonous. Fervent prayer for our enemies is a great obstacle to war and the feeling that lead to it.

By Jim Wallis

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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For more information contact conf2006@sabeel.org

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.

For more information on *Friends of Sabeel* groups in your area please contact our International representatives or the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem.



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