Israel’s separation Wall, which continues to snake its way through Palestinian towns and villages, is isolating whole communities and making life intolerable for the citizens trapped in the newly-erected enclaves. Children have a hard time getting to their schools; men to their jobs (the lucky few who still have one); women going about their routine errands; farmers to their lands. This is especially felt now that the olive-picking season is in full swing. Some farmers can do no more than watch their olives rot on the trees, unable to get to the other side of the ‘fence.’ Bethlehem is another Palestinian city that is starting to feel the brunt of the Wall, now that most of it in the area has been completed. Unable to bear the closure forcibly imposed on their city, a group of Bethlehemites decided to launch a campaign named “Open Bethlehem.” Their initiative will be launched this November in London at the World Travel Market, one of the biggest tourism fairs in the world, and in Washington. Mainly targeting physical barriers, their campaign also refers to opening people’s minds and attitudes towards the closure. Read the many articles that deal with Bethlehem, its attractions and future prospects.

October 2005 was a special month for This Week in Palestine. Our publication was awarded the "Outstanding Work in Culture" prize, a newly-instituted award that was bestowed on us by the A.M. Qattan Foundation in the course of the ceremony marking the close of their 2005 Culture and Science Programme. We are truly honoured to be recognised by such a prestigious institution.

The holy month of Ramadan is almost over and Eid El-Fitr is upon us. Soon so will be Christmas, followed by Eid Al-Adha. The confluence of these religious events warrants a look at the religious denominations that call Palestine home. We plan to shed light on most of them in our December issue. The contribution of informative articles on the subject is welcome.

Happy Eid.

Tony A. Khoury
Editor

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A word from the Mayor of Bethlehem

It is an honour to be the mayor of one of the most famous cities on earth. Bethlehem is a name that lives in the hearts of millions of people. It signifies love and hope for mankind and when you look back at its history you understand why. Even before the birth of Jesus, when Bethlehem was truly a little town, it always provided a welcome for those who needed shelter.

Today Bethlehem embraces the same ideals of openness and diversity. It has been endowed with natural wealth, emerging as a fertile corner from the heart of a desert. It also has a wealth of culture, standing at the crossroads of the ancient world as one of the most visited places on earth. The great tradition of Christianity that began in our town has at its heart a message of love. This message has shaped Bethlehem: from the days when we opened our homes to pilgrims to this day, a time of air travel and grand hotels, Bethlehem has welcomed travellers from every corner of the globe.

Our history is full of inspirational stories but also of bad times. The bad times have led to many Bethlehemites and their descendents to be scattered around the world. In some countries of Latin America there are whole communities that can trace their family tree back to our town. Many Bethlehemites have gone out and come back again to populate the streets of our homeland because they could not stay away. Others have kept Bethlehem in their hearts despite the distance. I would like to say to all of Bethlehem’s children around the world and to all people who care about our values that Bethlehem, today, needs you more than ever before.

The Wall which is encircling Bethlehem’s urban areas and grabbing the city’s hills and farmlands is an extremely dangerous development. Illegal settlements around the city are fast expanding at great cost to the life and livelihood of the original Bethlehemites. These settlements have no respect for the environment or the ancient history of the place or the lives of the people whose culture has shaped the taste and texture of biblical times.

For more than 3000 years our city has survived some of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind and has remained a light to the world. In the year 2005, as Mayor of Bethlehem, I hope that the city of Christ can overcome our most recent and gravest crisis. I believe it can, if the positive energy of those whose love for the city can be translated into a vision for the future.

This is why I am so proud to announce the creation of Open Bethlehem, and the inauguration of the Bethlehem Passport. Open Bethlehem is an international initiative that builds upon the positive story of Bethlehem, reminding the world that we all face a poorer future without the hope and promise of our little town. Open Bethlehem will launch its programme in November in London and Washington in the week that Israel completes its Wall. In that same week, sixteen years ago, we saw the fall of the wall that cut through the heart of Berlin. One day, the Wall around our town will also fall. We will strive to bring that day closer. But until then, we can refuse to live in its shadow. We can declare Bethlehem open because our town stands for the values of openness: an open democracy built on the open hearts of its citizens. As long as the Wall stands, the Bethlehem passport will be a badge of honour we can offer to anyone who loves our city and contributes to its life. Wherever they may come from, they will be welcome.

Yours in friendship.

Dr. Victor Batarseh
Mayor of Bethlehem
Open Bethlehem

The offices of Open Bethlehem lie inside the tallest building of Bethlehem University, at the highest point in the city. The view from the roof terrace is spectacular, both in the good and the bad sense of the word. Beit Jala looks pretty, basking on its hill to the west. But to the north, the Israeli Segregation Wall can be seen cutting through the city by the Aida Refugee Camp. And right in the centre of the main Jerusalem-Hebron road is the fortress of Rachel’s Tomb, draped with netting and surrounded by military towers. Bethlehem is a compact and hilly town, and each of the hills has its own Israeli settlement. The very beauty of the town has led to it feeling far more claustrophobic and enclosed than most other Palestinian cities. Soon, of course, Bethlehem will be entirely enclosed. When the Wall is completed in November, the city will become a prison town. The message of Open Bethlehem, a new city project designed to promote Bethlehem worldwide, is that the imprisonment of Bethlehem is not only a nightmare for its citizens, but a loss to the entire world. Bethlehem is not only a world heritage treasure; it is also a living city: a reminder of an open and diverse Middle East.

The international scope of Open Bethlehem is underlined by the simultaneous launch of the project in the UK and the United States. Leila Sansour, the Chief Executive, explains the focus of the campaign: “The Wall is a man-made disaster, and we intend to counter it with a positive advocacy campaign.” The detailed programme focuses on regeneration through investment and tourism, but the campaign is rooted in a clear universal message: that Bethlehem embodies the ideal of an open city. “We have to remind the world of the values that it owes to Bethlehem. Through this, we can use Bethlehem as a window through which the world sees the whole of Palestine.”

The offices of Open Bethlehem are buzzing with activity. There are minute-by-minute updates with the offices in London and Washington as the launch date draws near. The twin launches incorporate briefings to business leaders, lawmakers and journalists in a series of high-profile events, culminating in the launch of the Bethlehem Passport (see box, below). A key focus is the launch of a new Palestinian travel product at the World Travel Market, called Open Bethlehem tours, alongside the re-launch of the new guidebook from the Alternative Tourism Group, ‘Palestine and the Palestinians.’ Carol Dabdoub, the Director of Open Bethlehem in Palestine, takes a series of urgent calls from Open Bethlehem’s tourist advisor in the UK, who is bringing broadcasters and travel writers to Bethlehem. The fine details of the itinerary are discussed, as well as the image they hope to project of Bethlehem as a town with energy and ideas.

Bethlehem has seen tourism plunge by ninety per cent over the past five years. This year has brought a slight increase, but too many tourists are bussed in and out of the city for a short visit to the Church of the Nativity. Open Bethlehem tours are designed to encourage extended stays in the city. The tours include both the physical heritage sites, the churches and the archaeological sites, but also the cultural heritage and the Bethlehem of today. The city still has its roots in a traditional Canaanite way of life. Local dishes such as a frikeh are thousands of years old, dating from the time of the first cultivation of wild wheat. Bethlehem retains a real sense of the seasons: the year is marked by the arrival of almonds, apricots, figs, olives and citrus fruits, each at their proper time. The sense of being close to Biblical times is reflected in the urban space, where people live on top of each other and all take part in the communal life through harvests and feasts, today sharing Ramadan and Christmas. The closeness to the surrounding desert affects the light and temperature, creating a profound sense of peace just beyond the city where first monastic life appeared and where spectacular monasteries still greet the site of biblical sunsets. In Bethlehem you can still hear mass celebrated in the language of Christ on Sunday morning and have a business lunch.
in the afternoon. Bethlehem is a place of many contrasts. This is what the Open Bethlehem tours want to show the world.

As Dabdoub takes another call, Sansour leaves to greet a new visitor to the Open Bethlehem offices at the University, H.E. Msgr. Pietro Sambi, the Apostolic Delegate to Palestine. Sansour decides to take him up to the University’s roof terrace to brief him on the project. Sambi reminds her of the Christian message of Bethlehem: a message of love and rebirth. He is concerned that this message will be lost if, as a result of the Wall, Bethlehemites become submerged in negativity and divisions. Leila recasts his thoughts in the terms of Open Bethlehem, “That’s true. We might be surrounded by a wall, but we don’t need to live in its shadow. There are so many examples of a new energy emerging from the city, the new guidebook being a good example. This is still an open city, of open-minded, creative people.”

These virtues are embodied by the board members of Open Bethlehem. Members are drawn from a wide range of successful Bethlehem institutions including the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, the Bethlehem

Paris has the Legion d’Honneur, Britain has its Knighthoods, and the US has the Congressional Medal of Honour. With the creation of the Bethlehem Passport, Bethlehem has its own high honour to recognise those who make an important contribution to the city. The passport has been deliberately crafted as a beautiful object, with leather covers and deep watermarked pages, and a design that features both the star of Bethlehem and the figure of St George – Al-Khadir – the patron saint of Bethlehem and a figure sacred to Bethlehem’s Muslims and Christians alike. There are several routes to winning a passport, whether as a benefactor prepared to underwrite a specific initiative or an entrepreneur bringing wealth-creating opportunities to the city. The passport is also open to people of imagination and experience who can bring major events to a city that lives through its visitors: imagine an international conference, a festival of sacred music, even a marathon across the mountains of Bethlehem’s wilderness. But the passport will also be offered to anyone willing to make an extended stay in the city – sharing our journey as we work to overcome the Wall.

Dabdoub explains that the passport represents a strategic initiative to regenerate the city, build goodwill and, more importantly, an emotional investment with Bethlehem. “The passport is for friends of Bethlehem worldwide, who will stand by us for as long as the Wall stands. We should not under-estimate what the passport means for the Palestinian Diaspora abroad, some of whom are in the third or fourth generation and know Bethlehem only as a memory of their grandparents or from an old photograph in an album. The passport is a way for them to reconnect with their watan, their homeland.”

The Bethlehem Passport

Bethlehem University

Recognising its part in the social landscape of the district, Bethlehem University has placed particular emphasis on its relationship with Bethlehem communities. In recent months the university took yet another step in this direction by supporting the Open Bethlehem project and hosting their offices at the Millennium Building.

Peace Centre, and the Medical Relief Committee, as well as the University itself. There are also figures from the business world, such as the director of Ilam Tam, the Palestinian media and PR company, reflecting Open Bethlehem’s brief to encourage investment. Open Bethlehem is putting a special emphasis on international conferences and festivals – events that provide a perfect fit with the city’s tourist facilities and its beautiful venues. The board also includes communicators, including the media consultant for the Central Electoral Committee, and an adviser to the Negotiations Support Unit. Sansour and Dabdoub both have media backgrounds. Sansour is a film director, while Dabdoub was a popular radio and television host and the former Head of Media at the International Centre of Bethlehem.

Sansour takes up the theme of communication by way of a reflection on the peculiarly dry sense of humour of the Palestinians. “If you live in Bethlehem, you see the world in all its faces. People come in a religious fervour, they come in armies or as missionaries, everyone is full of plans for our future or for the future of the world, and our jokes reflect this. In the end, we have seen and heard it all.” But she ends with a stark warning: “If Bethlehem is to have a future, then we cannot continue to sit passively waiting for the world to come to us. We need to take charge of the message we send out: that Bethlehem is surrounded by a Wall but Bethlehem can transcend the Wall. We are an open city and if citizens of the world choose to treat us this way by keeping on coming, by investing in this place and by bringing bold creative projects to Bethlehem, our city will live on. We intend to send this message widely in November, announcing the launch of the Bethlehem Passport – an honorary citizenship promised to all those who bring their energy to share our journey.”

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The 5th Annual Olive Harvest Festival

In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bethlehem Municipality, a number of Palestinian organizations including the Bethlehem Peace Center, the Environmental Education Center, the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Cooperative Society for Pressing Olives and the Joint Advocacy Initiative of the East Jerusalem YMCA and YWCA of Palestine will organize the 5th annual Olive Harvest Festival on Saturday November 12th to celebrate the olive picking season. The Festival will take place on Manger Square across from the Nativity Church and Mosque of Omar. It will feature olives and olive related items for sale, food products, embroidery, and many other products introduced by participating organizations and vendors. Folkloric shows will be presented as well. Come and join in this cultural experience.
The Bethlehem Case

By Christiane Dabdoub-Nasser

As Bethlehemites, some of us feel that everything that can be said about Bethlehem has been said and anything beyond implies repetitious chatter. And there are still others who believe that it can never be enough and that Bethlehem deserves better and more. Both views are argued passionately, and both come up with a reasonable line of defence. In some cases the first argument tends to lean on a rather misplaced sense of modesty and self-importance and the other tends to emerge from a traditional and all too often crippling culture of dependence that contradicts the popular saying that “Bethlehemites carry a feather on their hats.”

Having always adhered to the adage that less is more, I make exception in this case and take the view that there is still much to be told. I say it without any trace of discomfiture about coming across as too much of a dotard or fear of being too much of a whiner but from the position of someone who works in the field of urban renewal and tourism development and is therefore aware of the achievements and disappointments and the potential Bethlehem has.

My first point of argument has to do with Bethlehem’s prospects to develop into an appealing and competitive tourism destination for a wider range of tourists. We cannot assume that the “classic pilgrimages” we continue to promote in international tourism fairs and in the numerous publications and websites promoting the Holy Land will survive the tough competition coming from all corners of the globe, and if we want to attain any ranking in this vertiginous race towards the most eligible destination and secure a sound and balanced tourism for all concerned, we cannot sit on our laurels and keep on clamouring about the Nativity Church. Fortunately, indications that we might get on track are promising and there are achievements to vouch for. Many organisations, including some public and private bodies, are rethinking past strategies and putting forward guidelines for a new kind of tourism according to a sophisticated vision marked by cultural awareness, sound community-based appreciation and more equitable opportunities, and aiming towards sustainability. So what we need henceforth are enlightened sector policies securing good management, healthy investments, and a judicious balance between the public and private sectors of the economy.

The second has to do with our image in the international media. What is reported is either a Palestine succumbing to the scourge of terrorism or a Palestine wallowing in misery. Aping the pursuit of sensationalist reporting, our own media has indulged contemporary predilections for garishness at the cost of obscuring good happenings. Those who are aware that modern-day news cannot be taken for granted as information are few but to address them requires a great deal of savvy planning and professional finesse and we cannot admit that we have scored in that department. I will not indulge in sterile self-flagellation as to our failures because many of them have been the result of political machinations serving Israeli interests in the Middle East, but if accomplishments are astutely reported, and there are many distributed among various sectors, we just might be able to create a dent in people’s perceptions of us. Keeping in mind that the political deadlock is not likely to lift soon and peace has been converted into an over-inflated commodity, a media campaign that reflects what is good in Palestinian culture and society can turn much of the negative things happening to us, the Wall included, into political assets.

My third point goes back to Bethlehem proper and comes in the form of an appeal for people to come and visit because there are many reasons why one should, beyond the attraction of the Nativity Church. We are already implementing quite a few: walking itineraries within the urban centres; experience of ethnic and cultural diversity; ecotourism in the hills and villages; participation in local festivals. This list can be expanded creatively, and here I have to presume on our tourism promoters’ ingenuity to articulate the ideas they have been juggling and render them into viable programmes: conflict tourism to further awareness of the justice of our cause; youth education and Arabic language training; gastronomic adventures and the promotion of local produce; an initiation into rural mores and practices; a tour of the monasteries and the promotion of desert spirituality. By advancing such programmes we will be drawing away from the mono crop of mass pilgrimage and entering a more sophisticated market where quality supersedes quantity and intangible heritage claims a fair share, and Palestinians acquire a face and identity.

Much groundwork has been accomplished in this direction because there is widespread awareness among tourism engineers that the hit-and-run approach of the past should be supplanted by healthy competition and community-based circuits benefiting a larger portion of the population whose livelihood is linked to tourism. Their vision however needs to be supported by major decisions and new legislation, and the hype over nominating Bethlehem in UNESCO’s World Heritage List, at least among specialists if not within the general public, will be legitimised when and if our decision makers become aware that this nomination implies sound preservation procedures, curbed commercial investments, and healthy management of the sites. And only then will Bethlehem accede to the title it deserves as Gateway to Palestine.

Christiane Dabdoub-Nasser is Head of Public Awareness and International Relations at the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem www.bethlehem2000.org/cchp. She can be reached at info@bethlehem2000.org
The International Center of Bethlehem (ICB) is committed to global encounters in order to create dynamic relationships between Palestinians and peoples from all over the world. These relationships strengthen our understanding of each other and create networks committed to justice and peace around the world. ICB has organized an important international conference the first week of November as one way of building such global partnerships.

Lines of conflict and exclusion are being drawn along ethnic, religious, cultural and geographical boundaries. The increasing tensions between differing groups of people are creating communities shaped primarily by a fear of ‘others’ and the desire for impermeable boundaries to ‘keep others out.’ The arrogant use of military might and economic power is contributing to the dehumanization of peoples and the degradation of the earth everywhere. In Palestine, the Wall currently being constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories leaves no options open for real coexistence or for reconciliation between the two peoples that share the land of Palestine/Israel.

Similarly, such contemporary contextual conflicts often mirror dominant readings of religious texts. In recent years, several new methodologies have questioned such classical approaches and have brought an enormous wealth on new insights. The conference will give participants an opportunity to engage this new research and to consider ways of responding to our world differently.

Drawing together over 100 theologians, biblical scholars, sociologists, pastors, artists, journalists and philosophers from over 16 countries, participants will wrestle with the topics of land, peoples and identities from local and global perspectives, creating a unique environment for engaging these issues. ICB’s conference will create an intercultural as well as interdisciplinary space for participants to engage these narratives, seeking to construct relevant, justice-oriented, hope-building responses to the crises facing us today.

The conference will include a candle light solidarity march through the old city of Bethlehem; sessions on theological, biblical and historical realities; an exposure to land today; input by Palestinian and Israeli panels, as well as from indigenous peoples of the Americas and the former Yugoslavia; cultural explorations of the conference themes through art, music and dance; and tree planting at the Nature Reserve at Dar Al-Kalima School in Bethlehem.

ICB intends to put out a major publication that not only will feature the different papers but also document the dialogue, conversation and exchanges taking place. Importantly, a moment of truth has come to speak a word of justice, so the conference will also be directed toward determining concrete actions in which participants can engage beyond the conference.
SOLOMON POOLS PROJECTS – Bethlehem

Projects Location:
The Solomon Pools Projects are located in a historical distinguished area of special natural attractiveness, serving vast varieties of functions. Located 4 Kilometers south of the Church of Nativity and 12 Kilometers southeast of Jerusalem, and only few meters from the main road between Bethlehem and Hebron, the project is located at the road to Artas village. The area is about 800m above sea level.

The surrounding area consists of natural and cultural heritage containing many historical and archaeological themes, mainly these are the Solomon Pools, Murad Citadel which is an Ottoman Citadel, built in 1617, and the Artas Valley, where the fascinating Church and Convent of Artas was built in 1901. This church is known as the “Church of Closed Paradise”. This Church with its surroundings is attractive to tourists and Pilgrims.

Historical Background:
The three Solomon Pools were built in different historical eras. They were constructed to impound the collected water steaming from the surrounding mountains. This water was used to serve the area in the vicinity, Bethlehem City and to Provide Jerusalem with water through water canals.

Projects Concept:
The Solomon Pools Projects were initiated to improve the Palestinian income from tourism. The nature of Bethlehem City as a special historical area of great attraction to tourists will support this project and enhance maintaining the historical, architectural and folklore heritage of Palestine. The philosophy was based on producing eminent architectural monuments which are in harmony with the existing natural and archeological special location. Improving and protecting the environment and the ruins in the vicinity was one of the main goals of the conceptual design of the project in such a way to sustain integrity between the new buildings and the surroundings.

Projects Constituents:
The main idea was to create new buildings with various functions and renovate the existing Solomon Pools and the existing Citadel to form a full and integrated cultural and archeological region of special type and attractive nature.

Convention Center Project:
The Convention Center is expected to be completed by end of March 2006. It constitutes a state-of-the-art monument featuring:
- 1600-Seat Auditorium
- 500-Seat Multi-purpose Hall
- 300-Seat Seminar Rooms (2 Rooms)

The new buildings are:
1. The Convention Center Project
2. The Crafts Center
3. The Hotel

The old spots are:
1. Murad Citadel, and
2. The Solomon Pools

Contact Numbers:
Offices: +970 (2) 2768250/1
        +970 (2) 2770376

Websites:
www.solomonpools.com
www.ccc.gr

Convention Center Company

Solomon Pools Resort Company
Education in Bethlehem

By Dr. Jacqueline Sfeir

Education must provide the opportunities for self-fulfilment; it can at best provide a rich and challenging environment for the individual to explore, in his own way.

Noam Chomsky

There are 103 schools in the Bethlehem district, 79% of which are private and are mostly concentrated in the cities. Just like all over Palestine, the schools in the Bethlehem district are operated by the government, private organizations and UNRWA. Formal schooling starts at the age of 6 to 18; “basic education” includes the first ten grades, and the secondary level includes grades eleven and twelve. Schools are mostly gender segregated and a few elementary schools are co-educational. There are 49 preschools in the Bethlehem district that are run by private organizations and charitable societies, and these are mostly co-educational and are supervised by the Ministry of Education.

The mosaic of schools in the Bethlehem district represents the diversity of its population: rural, urban and refugee communities. The rural schools serve the farming communities of the eastern and western countryside. In the small stretch of land constituting the district of Bethlehem you find in the eastern countryside what is reminiscent of the shepherds’ field: a semi-arid landscape where shepherd boys (and some girls) roam the hills with their sheep. These children are educated both by the experience of herding as well as through formal schooling. On the other end of the district you find the western countryside green with vegetable coves and rocky hills full of adventure for those daring boys and not so many daring girls to explore. Most of the children in rural communities receive their education in the government schools and benefit from a range of curricular and extra curricular activities that are organized by the numerous national and international educational organizations working in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

The urban communities are concentrated in the cities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour and the most recent city of Al-Doha. The children in the cities are mostly exposed to the pilgrim and tourist industry associated with the Holy Land. The children around the holy sites encounter the groups of tourists who pass through their cities to visit the sites and bring to the children a glimpse of the world out there. As they try to communicate with the “visitors” those children learn how important it is to learn languages; they learn about commerce and tourism; they also learn to value their heritage. In addition to the formal schooling the children living in the urban areas of the district benefit from a multitude of opportunities provided by local NGOs offering a variety of educational, cultural, psychosocial and recreational activities and sports. Many of these organizations are associated with church organizations, others are secular and nationally based, and a few are affiliated with international organizations.

The children living in the refugee camps on the other hand find themselves living in overcrowded quarters, with some planted pots on the windowsills of houses that are growing haphazardly to accommodate the ever-growing population in small and restricted areas. Most of the refugee children today are second and third generation camp dwellers whose tradition is full of nostalgia and the hope of return. There are a number of initiatives from the camp communities, namely in Dheisheh and Aida camps, to establish educational, cultural and recreational activities to enrich the lives of the children living in the camp, such as the Ibd’ Centre in Dheisheh camp (www.dheisheh-ibdaa.net) and Al-Rwad Centre in Aida Camp (www.alrowwad.virtualactivism.net). Through the activities of such centres and others the children in the refugee camps in Bethlehem are provided with opportunities to experience music, drama and sports activities throughout the year. These centres also host international guests and have exchange programmes that allow the children (namely the youth) to develop an understanding of their unique reality and share it with the world. More needs to be done, however, on the level of breaking the psychological barrier between the refugee children and the children living in the cities around them.

In the city of Bethlehem a number of special education schools serve the entire district as well as children from other districts, namely Hebron. These include schools for the deaf, blind, the physically handicapped and mentally and educationally challenged children. Some schools have started to mainstream children with special needs. However, the existing services do not correspond to the degree of need that has increased drastically as a result of the political violence experienced by the children in the district in the past five years.

The educational activities organized by the local NGOs outside the formal system of education, like the aforementioned centres in Dheisheh and Aida camps, play a significant role in enriching the children’s lives and in providing them with opportunities to experience their creative potential and expand their horizon. Of course the provision of non-formal education is not as extensive as the formal education system; however, it contributes to the overall development of the educational scene in the district. The following are more examples of non-formal education programmes available in the Bethlehem district:
The Palestine Wildlife Society (www.wildlife-pal.org) is a specialized organization established in 1999 in Beit Sahour. Its mission is the conservation and enhancement of Palestine’s biodiversity and wildlife. Some of its work includes eco tourism, bird watching and environmental education through which it advocates the concepts of children’s environmental rights.

The Holy Land Trust, a Palestinian organization established in 1998, runs a number of projects to promote peace and reconciliation. The Peace and Reconciliation programme works to support the Palestinian society in facing and addressing the political, social and physical hardships currently confronting our families and communities (www.holylandtrust.org).

The International Centre of Bethlehem’s Art Installation: Advocacy Tool for Youth Concerns Project is another example of non-formal programmes that are linked to national initiatives and supported by external funding. The project was started on May 1, 2004 and was completed on June 30, 2005, funded by Tamkeen. The project empowers young people to identify their concerns and prioritize their issues, to develop creative means of expressing and communicating them with other youth as well as a wider group of stakeholders, and to proactively present issues of concern of this biggest segment of the Palestinian society in the public discourse and agenda. This educational process is crucial for any attempt at democratization and governance. By working with the youth, especially the youth of the rural areas and refugee camps, the project targets an important yet neglected segment of the Palestinian society and at the same time potential future leaders (www.annadwa.org/cave/installation).

These are but a few examples of a wide range of non-formal educational activities that are available to a varying degree to school-aged children across the Bethlehem district. It is also important to mention in this context that there is a visible increase in the percentage of children who have Internet access and who have computers either at home, in the school or in the community through commercial Internet centres or through cultural centres and libraries.

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1 UNRWA stands for United Nations Relief and Works Agency; it runs schools for the Palestinian refugees. There are three refugee camps in the Bethlehem district, 19 in the West Bank. There are almost 600,000 refugees in the West Bank, 27% of whom live in the camps, comprising 30% of the West Bank’s population.

2 The Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening project known as Tamkeen — ‘empowerment’ in Arabic — is a five-year activity aimed at preserving the “political space” occupied by Palestinian civil society organizations and promoting their crucial role in public discourse. Through grants, capacity building, and technical assistance, Tamkeen supports 103 civil society organizations, giving voice to Palestinian aspirations for human rights and the rule of law in a future democratic state (www.tamkeen.org).
Bethlehem University
Inspiring Innovation and Creating the Future

Bethlehem University of the Holy Land is the first university established in the West Bank, a founding member of the Palestinian Council for Higher Education, a member of the Association of Arab Universities, International Association of Universities, International Federation of Catholic Universities, and the International Association of Lasallian Universities. The University traces its roots to 1893 with the De La Salle Christian Brothers (Frères) opening schools in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nazareth, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt. Community leaders and heads of schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, sought the support of the Vatican and the Frères to establish Bethlehem University in order to meet the needs of the Palestinian society. The University officially opened its doors on 3 October 1973.

Bethlehem is a Catholic Christian university open to people of all faith traditions and currently has some 2,500 students enrolled in academic degree programs and an additional 1,000 enrolled in continuing education programs. We are located on 17,000 square meters on Frères Street in Bethlehem and have continued expanding our facilities to meet the needs of the growing student body: Library in 1978; Mar Andrea Women’s Hostel in 1979; Science Wing in 1980; Social and Cultural Center in 1990; the Institute for Community Partnership in 1991; Bethlehem Hall for Nursing and Education faculty in 1995; Turathuna-Palestinian Cultural Heritage Center in 2000; Millennium Hall for the Arts and Business Administration faculty in 2002, Digital Media Center in 2003, and the Institute for Community Partnership expansion in 2005.

Historically, the Education Faculty and the Institute of Hotel Management and Tourism were among the University’s first distinctive programs. The Faculties of Arts, Science, Nursing and Business Administration grew in response to the needs of the community as did the Institute for Community Partnership to provide continuing education and professional development programs. This semester the University launched a new Master degree in International Cooperation and Development (MICAD), promoted by the University of Pavia, Italy, in cooperation with University College Dublin, Ireland, and Radboud University of Nijmegen, Holland, and in conjunction with London Metropolitan University and the University of Joensuu, a Master in Pilgrimage, Tourism and Cultural Heritage. With more than 9,000 graduates located throughout the Holy Land and internationally, we continue to develop human resources and to upgrade the capacities of professionals, preparing people to assume leading positions of ethical responsibility in society.

Bethlehem University has been forced by the Israeli military to close twelve times, the longest period being for three years from October 1987 until October 1990. Despite the curfews, travel restrictions, military checkpoint harassment, the illegal Israeli segregation wall in around Bethlehem, and the other negative impacts of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, we have continually offered classes on- and off-campus. Our University’s story, as is the case for all Palestinian universities, is one of dedicated people committed to pursuing their higher education and working together in hope with an ever widening international circle of colleagues and friends committed to building a better future.

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But Still, They Continue to Live
Bethlehem and the Segregation Wall

By Suhail Khalilya, ARIJ

It is not easy to talk about the Segregation Wall, as its implications during the relatively short existence are far more damaging than the continued 35 years of Israeli occupation that preceded the time when the Segregation Wall [henceforth referred to as the Wall] plan was launched in June 2002. The Wall stands today as the climax of the Israeli occupation, the final chapter that wraps Israel’s colonization activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the ultimate violation of international and humanitarian law for that matter. Bethlehem was no different from any other district or town that suffered the consequences and certainly had its share of repercussions on the various aspects of life including isolation, separation and devastation. Bethlehem ranks amongst the poorest districts in the West Bank because the majority of its population is dependent on tourism for its income, and for a very long time life stood still for many of them.

Bethlehem Between the Past, the Present and the Wall
Following the 1967 war, Israel systematically worked to discord Bethlehem’s spiritual correlation with Jerusalem that stands just 8 km to the north, ultimately severing the social, cultural and economic ties between the two cities. Furthermore, over the past 38 years of occupation, Israel has managed to confiscate 18,700 dunums (3% of the district’s total area) and built 21 illegal Israeli settlements that accommodate today some 74,000 Israeli settlers, in addition to 6,000 dunums (1,500 acres) to construct a network of bypass roads for Israeli settlers. The Israeli settlements’ cluster located southwest of Bethlehem is identified as the Gush Etzion bloc, a cornerstone of the Israeli settlement programme in the occupied Palestinian territory and one of the controversial six settlement blocs Israel plans to hold on to under any peace agreement with the Palestinians. Of course, Israel had a semi-endorsement for such a scheme that became later on sanctioned bluntly in the US President’s letter of commitment to Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon during a joint press conference held in George Bush’s ranch in Texas on April 14, 2004.

The Wall Around Bethlehem
Contrary to any belief that Bethlehem enjoys special privileges over other Palestinian areas, the district has its share of the Wall, which runs around 70 km, starting east of Beit Sahour where it clenches the nearby Al-Khas and Nu’man villages between the route of the Wall and the auxiliary bypass roads (which were built to facilitate the movement of Israeli settlers living southeast of Beit Sahour and those living in the Hebron district) before it continues towards the west where it excludes vast areas northeast of Beit Sahour and includes the Abu Ghneim settlement and two other sites designated for more settlements, according to the Jerusalem Municipality’s master plan of 2000.

The Wall then continues to the northern entrance of Bethlehem to encircle and isolate the Rachel Tomb area along with 3,000 dunums of Palestinian agricultural lands before it thuds its way to the northern and western lands of Beit Jala, then to Al-Walajah village where it heads south to enclave the western rural villages from Bethlehem city. The Wall is set to isolate some 80 km² (13%) of the district’s fertile lands, access to which will be exclusive to those with authenticated proof of land ownership issued by the Israeli civil administration. So far, 15 km of the 70 km set to encircle Bethlehem are complete while the rest is projected for completion by the end of 2006. The Wall will be built on Bethlehem’s fruit basket lands and on lands set for future expansion. The present generation already feels the shrinking areas closing on them day by day due to the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements and now by the wrenching Wall.

Furthermore, the Wall around Bethlehem has caused disruption to the historic and traditional religious route between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, as religious events will no longer be the same as they were traditionally for the past 2000 years. The Christians of Bethlehem and the surrounding areas have no access to Jerusalem during their religious feasts (Christmas, Easter, etc.) unless they obtain a special permit from the Israeli civil administration, a procedure that takes days and necessitates a security clearance. Likewise, Muslims are not able to reach Al-Aqsa Mosque during their traditional holidays of Ramadan and Al-Adha for prayers there. Nevertheless, the Israeli government should know that the spirit of Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims, will not be defeated or compromised as they will not concede to this mutated reality of the Wall, nor will they surrender their rights for religious freedom.

But Still, They Continue to Live
The Israeli colonization activities and the Wall did affect the various living aspects (economy, agriculture) of Bethlehem, but not the will of the people who did not cave in to their coerced new reality, as they continue to endure and prosper in the various fields even though they were severely hit. Houses demolished are now rebuilt, lands scrunched are now blooming with fruits and hotels shattered are now renovated, all with the hope of life finding its way back to the city and the district. Since tourism has always been a source of income to a considerable segment of the Palestinian population, particularly to Bethlehem’s residents, the potential flourish

When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible but in the end, they always fall – think of it, ALWAYS.

Gandhi
The Gaza pullout is one of the signs for a brighter future despite the fact that Israel did not coordinate the withdrawal with the Palestinian Authority until the last few weeks, which made the withdrawal from Gaza incomplete in its essence, with many issues still hanging (the border crossings, the seaport, the airport, the link to the West Bank, etc.). Still, the very concept of evacuating and surrendering occupied lands is there, even if the methodology of the withdrawal lacked concession by a major part of the equation.

It is also the responsibility of the world to support the Palestinians to rebuild and revive Gaza and press Israel to fulfil its long and overdue obligations toward the peace process. As for now, the Palestinians are happy with the Gaza liberation, even though it is not exactly what they aspired for. Still, the potential for a better future is enormous and the Israeli settlements in the West Bank are in the process of being evacuated and eventually the Wall will fall. It is just a question of time.

The Future Outlook
The signs of a brighter future are there, even if they are overlapped with general feelings of pessimism. There is also a general consensus that without a genuine intention to see the peace process through, including unconditional compliances with international law and the signed peace accords between the two conflicting parties and a complete and unconditional release of all prisoners, peace will have a harsh environment in which to prevail.
Bethlehem and Tourism

Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce

The upward trend in tourism to the Holy Land that began in the second quarter of 2003 has continued this year as well. The return of tourists to Palestine was reflected immediately in the increase in the number of people employed in the tourism industry and in the contribution of this important industry to the country’s GDP. The development of this positive trend must be viewed against the context of the past four years, during which Palestine’s tourism industry had to cope with the most difficult crisis in its history.

As part of an overall tourism plan, investments are needed to upgrade and renovate existing tourism infrastructures, with priority given to those linked to incoming tourism. Another necessary condition that must serve as a basis for a tourism plan designed to increase the number of foreign visitors is the implementation of a competitive civil aviation policy that relates to the issue of transporting passengers to and from Palestine. There is no doubt that the present aviation policy is one of the major barriers to the promotion of incoming tourism in the country.

Palestine is blessed with an enormous tourism potential. Therefore, tourism could – and should – serve as a major pillar of our national economy. In recent months the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, in cooperation with the private sector and the international community, has sought to develop the tourism industry by increasing awareness of Palestine’s cultural heritage at the local community level, rehabilitating and developing human resources and capacities, and developing the Palestinian product and promoting it in international markets, in order to be ready to welcome tourists and pilgrims once again.

Statistics shows that during the first quarter of 2005, some 45,000 visitors came to Bethlehem, compared to 15,000 for the same period in 2004, indicating a growth of 200 percent. It is estimated that the number of tourist arrivals will reach about 300,000 by the end of this year.

Believing that tourism is not only of economic benefit for both the Palestinians and Israelis but also a tool for building bridges of confidence and better understanding, all parties are promoting tourism to the area and showing commitment to ensure easy and secure passage of tourists and pilgrims. In fact, at present tourist buses are arriving and departing freely to the Bethlehem and Jericho areas without any obstacles or delays.

The relative stability in the region and the joint cooperation have encouraged many foreign tour operators to start organizing tours to the area again and to put it back in their catalogues. The big cruise companies that used to work with this region have started to return to our shores, bringing in good numbers of tourists. Tourism in the area is on its way to normalization.
Scotland in Solidarity

Stirling University (SU) students recently voted in a referendum to support the Palestinians’ struggle for their right to education. The votes were 347 for and 88 against, a margin of almost 4:1, which reflects the growing commitment to solidarity with Palestine among Scottish students. The Stirling University Students’ Association (SUSA) will now twin with the students’ council at Birzeit University and pressure the university to twin. It also publicly condemns the occupation, the Wall and settlers.

Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) members who recently returned from a visit to Palestine to witness Israel’s illegal occupation spearheaded the campaign. One of them said, “Our visit to Palestine this summer with the Scottish PSC Solidarity delegation made us realise that the lies told by our media about the conflict must be challenged, the Israeli troops must leave, the settlers must depart, and the Wall must come down. Our victory today has led SU to condemn all of these illegal obstacles that hinder Palestinians’ right to education. From your friends at SU we send a warm message of solidarity to every Palestinian student in their struggle for the right to education against the gross injustice of the Israeli occupation.”

The Stirling University vote is the second electoral mandate in a year from Scottish students to oppose Israel’s illegal occupation. Glasgow University students’ election of Mordechai Vanunu last December as Rector (students’ representative) was also an explicit repudiation of the British government’s complicity in the ongoing violation of Palestinian national and human rights.

These two votes taken together support our view at the Scottish PSC that although elite opinion remains bitterly opposed to Palestinian rights, majority popular opinion everywhere is with us and against the crimes of Israel. Israel is already a pariah state in the eyes of the great majority. Wherever we are, it is now possible to win institutional support for the Palestinians’ struggle: student unions, trade unions, community associations, churches, and mosques. We in the Palestine Solidarity Movement need to be more audacious in our commitment to Palestinian rights, and to act in the knowledge that our opponents at ground level are not as strong as we might imagine. Nothing will fall into our lap – we need to campaign in an organised way.

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Palestine: the Prize Benefactor of Empire

By Dr. Mary Geday

Some weeks ago two journalists from The Guardian visited my family’s house in Jaffa. They came to research and write about the idea of home and what home means to people, intending to include a segment on the 1948 Palestinian and his consequential displacement. Since my family still lives in Jaffa, we were asked to describe our life there as ‘Arabs’ living in a Jewish state. Actually, we weren’t really asked the question in so many words, which is probably the most troubling aspect of the whole interview and occasion. My father, who had survived most of the events of the last century, was asked about Jaffa’s history through the twenties, thirties and so on. Mostly, he was asked to verify the existence of Tel Aviv prior to 1948 in the Palestinian consciousness, and to confirm or refute what these journalists had heard about the relationship between the Jews and the Palestinians in Jaffa during the early part of the 1900s.

Disappointingly, the reporters had little admitted knowledge of Jaffa today. More disappointingly, they had little investigatory interest in discovering the existence of Tel Aviv in Jaffa’s Palestinian community’s consciousness today, and the nature of the relationship between Jews and Palestinians in Jaffa today. After all, what is home to a pre-1948 and post-1948 Palestinian of Jaffa if not his relationship to the Jewish population that has annexed Jaffa to Tel Aviv and expropriated the majority of Palestinian homes and land for prime Israeli seashore real estate? After all, what is the city of Jaffa if not a side-note to Tel Aviv on the municipality’s letterhead? After all, what is Jaffa if not his relationship to the Jewish community’s consciousness today, the idea of home and what home means to people, intended to match the Peace Centre at Jaffa, courtesy of commissioners Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat, Nobel Peace Prize winners, designed by Massimiliano Fuksas, director of the architecture section of the Venice Biennale titled, “Less Aesthetics, More Ethics,” and erected on the interior rim of the largest and oldest Muslim burial ground in Jaffa.

What is the old city of Jaffa if not a monument to the British bombing of Jaffa in 1936 and the creation of the first containment prison in Palestine before the Naqbeh? But all that is history. Today, the old city of Jaffa is a symbol of Israeli democratic principles, on which Mario Vargas Llosa, interviewed on his recent trip to Tel Aviv, bases his unclenching and reportedly objective support for Israel. After all, where else can real-estate only be eligible for Jewish bidders? And motor vehicle passage after 5 p.m. only eligible for Jewish residents? (and the privilege to pose for wedding pictures on the fake green hills between statues of Napoleon, a freedom generously provided for all colours and creeds provided you pay for your wedding coach’s entry fee after 5 p.m. ... if you’re not a Jewish resident). Apparently, coexistence is no longer a term needed for excavation. Apparently, The Guardian does not find the need to question the relation between existence and coexistence in a plot of land that has been under explicit Israeli occupation for sixty years and under covert plans for Zionist occupation since the mid-19th century, and in fact, just to put the matter of “homeland” in perspective, since the American Civil War.

Apparently, history is to remain in the past so we can accommodate our newest benefactor: the future. Yes, let’s all welcome her with bushels of parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme. Pile before her wreathes of laurel and wave the olive stem. Let’s create a new infrastructure of memory. Let’s paint, renovate, and call our new home home. Let’s take on the new road map. Let’s all believe in it and believe that love conquers all. After all, if Bell Hooks, a distinguished African American critical thinker and academic, can suggest it to the demised African American population in the United States, even before Bill Clinton decided to make Harlem his second home and despite all that has been true of American society since and before Malcolm X, and receive acclamation upon acclamation from both the white and black communities, then why not suggest it to the Palestinians and every other second, third and fourth class citizen of this highly progressive and liberal international civil society that an activist like Jeff Halper has such faith in when he, verbalizing the criminality of the State of Israel even from its formation until the present day, demands of it to rise against the injustices of the State of Israel and its accomplices.

Let’s build a new Israel. Let’s build a new Palestine. Let’s build the new peace-engulfing Israeli-Palestinian geographic, topographic and demographic infrastructure with the hands, income and brainstem of one of the largest (US owned) military think tanks in the world: Rand Corporation. Let’s build a Palestinian subway, tramway, and cross-state highway so that all roads lead to an IDF camp and the GPS system in the sky. Let’s take out Rand’s representative architect to Darna restaurant in Ramallah and treat him to the most expensive bottle of wine and say, yes, please, help us reconstruct Palestine, the envisioned land of plenty, in the words of Shakespeare, “This Royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,/ This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,/ This other Eden, demi-paradise,/ This fortress built by Nature for herself/ Against infection and the hand of war,/ This happy breed of men, this little world,/ This precious stone set in the silver sea/ Which serves it in the office of a wall/ Or as a moat defensive to a house,/ Against the envy of less happier lands,/ This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this [Palestine].” Let’s envision wider roads for those new Lucky Strike billboards courtesy of Palestine’s embrace of Israel’s disengagement from Gaza; let’s envision every Palestinian using American Express by 2015. Let’s envision the US steel industry making its way back to the top of the stock market for the first time in six decades, and let’s envision international gratitude for Israel for making all this happen.

Let’s envision Israel part of the European Union in 2016, as Angela Merkel was coaxed to imply last month in an interview by Ha’aretz, while Turkey waits for humanitarian and democratic approval after having retrieved the body of Nazim Hikmet, having sworn never to return to the Arabic script, and having agreed to sell its pistachios at NIS 15/kg to Israel while Italy sells its pistachios at 7 Euro/kg to Turkey; let’s imagine all this while Germany continues to be the largest exporter of military equipment to Israel. In the meantime, the State of Qatar will no longer be the only sponsor/client of the Rand Corporation from the Arab states, nor the only Arab Gulf state to hold overt relations with Israel and Rand’s three-page cover in the New York Times titled, “The Day After Peace: Designing Palestine” will be a reality.

And why not? Don’t you believe that a man can change? That history can change? Don’t you believe that kindness prevails? Members of my own extended family are thrilled these days that Israel’s Ministry of Interior has decided to promote the ultimate gesture of democratic inclination to the ‘Arab-Israeli’ population and remove the ‘nationality’ clause from their blue ID cards so that the direct identifier ‘Arab’ no longer indicts the ‘Arab’ to direct discrimination, while the indirect identifier, the date of birth, remains typed numerically (as opposed to a Jewish citizen, whose date of birth is typed in Hebrew letters in accordance with the Jewish calendar). And why shouldn’t they be thrilled? After all, this is yet another step towards assimilation; one day they will forget that they are Palestinians under occupation, if they haven’t already; they, who had no word in the signing off on their land, heritage and history to the State of Israel during the Oslo Agreement except for their silence, can thereby hope to change the law that prevents them, the non-Jewish, Palestinian citizens of the democratic State of Israel, from owning (as tenants of the land of the Jewish people) any piece of land within the State of Israel for longer than 49 years, after they had reached the Israeli Supreme Court to rent the land in the first place.
They are thrilled like the Palestinian Authority is thrilled, and Hamas is thrilled, and everyone is thrilled by Israel’s unrelenting gestures of kindness towards the Palestinians, so much so that Ariel Sharon received a New Year’s greeting from Mahmoud Abbas on the eve of Rosh Hashana while several tons of 10-day-roadblocked rotten produce awaited entry into Gaza on the eve of Ramadan, produce that is farmed by the State of Israel and sold to the unemployed agricultural community of Gaza. And what gratitude we Palestinians show our occupiers. In the words of a Muslim Indian to his British occupier in Forster’s A Passage to India, about 20 years before the end of direct British occupation: “Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope.”

Indeed, kindness is our only hope, and for that we thank the ever-accommodating progressive and liberal international civil society represented by every international governmental and non-governmental aid and development agency working in Palestine. We thank the USAID-funded Rule of Law Programme “to increase confidence in the Palestinian formal justice sector,” the EU’s 250 million Euro a year “to help [Palestinians] build a credible government and develop trade with Israel and other neighbours,” the UN, whose more than two dozen different advertisements for new development aid projects in the West Bank and Gaza all of a sudden appeared in one day’s newspaper the day after Israel and the Palestinian Authority confirmed the fulfilment of the disengagement, and CIDA and its ever willing budget for the development of Palestinian civil society. Yes, the development of Palestinian civil society and its notions of justice, rule of law and self-government are all to be shaped and misshaped by those who believe we are incapable of shaping our own, or more precisely, capable of shaping our own against their criteria of a credible government and a credible nation. After all, Palestinians are still waiting to be considered a nation by the UN, since the onslaught of the war on terror has changed the rules of warfare and the criteria for legitimate national resistance. Is that not the basis for the International Law and International Humanitarian Law squabble in Guantanamo? Who is a “freedom-fighter,” in the words of George W. Bush, and who is a terrorist? And who is this Palestinian civil society? Is it not the one congregating at the Best Eastern Hotel in Ramallah from month to month courtesy of NG and NGO budgets aiming to rehabilitate itself? Again, in the words of Forster’s outpost British Club in 1924 India: “What you’ve got to stamp on is these educated classes.”

So yes, let’s build, let’s shape, and let’s reconstruct a new Palestine. Let’s co-exist. Indeed, as the Hollywood industry foretold almost four decades ago, “The future is plastic.” Delusion is the supreme occupation: excellent salary, comprehensive benefits, and transportation, free.

Mary Geday is a Palestinian, born and raised in Jaffa, now living in Jerusalem.
Another nightmare ... sometimes it looks weird: Tsunami, Katrina, Mad Cow, south Asia earthquakes and many other natural catastrophes which have been occurring recently in many parts of the world. Some of those are causing lethal consequences on both humans and animals, in addition to bringing fear and challenges for the world’s nations to face another tragedy while trying to overcome previous ones. And now what? Avian influenza!

Not new, the Avian influenza, or more commonly known as the bird flu, is only now being tackled more by the media after its recent spread across Asia and Eastern Europe. This has been followed by an outbreak in a poultry farm in western Turkey, with the fear of it spreading to Romania and Greece. As such, challenges are posed for those concerned with the health of domestic poultry and conservation of wild birds, in addition to the consequent risks on humans and the economy related to this sector.

Bird flu is known to be caused by a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (including the H5N1 strain) which can cause great mortality in domestic poultry flocks. However, it is still known to be rare in wild birds. Researchers predict that the origin of the H5N1 virus is likely to be from domestic poultry through the mutation of low pathogenic sub-types subsequently passed from poultry to wild birds. Moreover, it has been revealed that the H5N1 strain of bird flu has swept through poultry populations in many parts of Asia since 2003 and even transmitted to humans, killing 60 people from four countries, mostly through direct contact with infected birds. Nevertheless, the risk to human health from wild birds, as some scientists stated, is extremely low and can be minimised by avoiding contact with infected or dead birds. Still, there is no evidence that H5N1 infections in humans have been acquired from wild birds. However, in a recent joint report by the World Wetland Trust (WWT), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and BirdLife International, they stated that there is a possibility for this virus to develop into one that might be transmitted from one human to another.

This creates many doubts about the impact this influenza has and how it is transmitted. The most usual route for the spread of infection is the movement of infected domestic birds or objects contaminated with their faeces. The most recent outbreaks in Turkey and Romania suggest that migratory birds may have transmitted the disease between countries or regions, although this link has not been proven. It is not yet entirely clear how the disease is spreading and what the consequences are, but clearly there is a possibility that migrating water birds may be involved. Whilst some scientists believe any bird can in theory become infected, wildfowl (water birds) are the primary carrier since many species fly south from Siberia and the northern areas seeking warmer climates.

The existence of known migration flyways of several bird species connecting South East Asia, Siberia and Europe shows the possibility of introducing the H5N1 virus to both Eastern and Western Europe and the Middle East.

Ducks, geese and swans – water birds of the Anatidae group – are birds that are ecologically dependant on wetlands for at least some aspects of their life cycle. These species use a wide range of wetlands that vary from rivers, swamps, salty and fresh water lakes and ponds to mudflats, bays and open seas. They might also utilize man-made wetlands and agricultural fields where there is a high probability for coming into contact with humans and other domestic birds.

Being on a main migratory route, Palestine and neighbouring countries run the risk of catching the virus through migratory water birds, especially around 500 million birds travel over Palestine annually during their spring and autumn migrations.

Most of the birds from affected areas will use the central Asia flyway and will spend winter primarily in the Middle East, South Europe and North Africa, increasing the likelihood to catch the virus in our region. In Palestine, there have been several calls from governmental and non-governmental organizations to create a special committee for a multidisciplinary approach to face any potential risks of the Avian influenza outbreak and the preparation of precautionary plan. In addition, there have been strong recommendations against shooting and eating migratory birds for fear they might be infected.

Sami Backleh is a freelance wildlife researcher.
Of Olive Trees and Family Trees

Badd Jaqaman

By Leyla Zuaiter

A casual tourist passing the sign for the Badd Jaqaman Museum on Bethlehem’s narrow NajAjra Street may vaguely wonder what evil deeds were done by an Italian outlaw in America’s Wild West to merit a museum named after him—and why it is found in Bethlehem, of all places. If he is curious enough to descend the few steps of the irregular complex to find out, he is guaranteed to emerge, both literally and metaphorically, from a different place than that he entered, with a newfound appreciation for all things Palestinian. This may seem like an unlikely claim, even after the discovery that badd is not a misspelling of an English adjective, but an Arabic noun meaning “olive press.” However, those seeking a better understanding of Palestinian culture and society could do worse than start with this museum dedicated to the olive tree—so inextricably linked to the Palestinian economy, health, nutrition, crafts, social life and religion that it is the very symbol of Palestinian identity.

Once a home belonging to a widow from the Jaqaman family, this Ottoman building had been bequeathed to the Greek Orthodox Society. It was only on the eve of the Bethlehem 2000 celebrations that, with the help of the UNDP and Japanese funding, it was renovated and turned into a museum by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. In addition to comprehensive information on the olive tree, it not only offers a glimpse into the family life that lies at the heart of Palestinian society, but also into the rich, fascinating history of the families of Bethlehem in particular. The olive tree is quite literally the embodiment of any Palestinian’s personal family tree, bringing to mind the thoughtful ancestors who chose to plant it knowing that not they, but their descendants would live to enjoy its fruits. How could I not include the museum in the series of planned field-trips for a workshop on family history and identity I was about to conduct for the women’s group of the nearby Arab Educational Institute (AEI)?

Setting out by foot on a balmy June morning from the AEI in Bethlehem’s Anatra quarter just east of the Nativity Church, our first stop at one of the cemeteries next door reveals an alarmingly long list of extinct Bethlehem families, but the Giacaman family, as the name is more frequently transliterated, is not one of them. Their births, baptisms, marriages and deaths continue to be added to those of several hundred years of their ancestors found on the pages of an enormous square tome in one of the seldom-seen recesses of the Nativity complex. Several Giacamans are among those on the trip today, including AEI’s director, Fuad Giacaman. In one volume of his monumental series on Palestinian history culled from scattered, little-known sources, Hanna Abdullah Giacaman, another scion of this large extended family, has devoted a chapter to the origins of Bethlehem’s eight quarters. Each quarter traditionally consisted of a group of extended families living in their own hosh—a tightly-packed fortress-like cluster of houses opening onto a courtyard, where formerly much of the household work was done, news was exchanged and, above all, stories were told.

Consider our destination, located in the NajAjra quarter, which lies in a straight line, as the crow flies, from our starting point on the other side of the Nativity Church. One of the oldest quarters of Bethlehem, it was originally settled by an Arab Christian tribe which arrived from Najran, Yemen, before or with the Arab Muslims in the seventh century, as well as the Ghathabra family group which had come earlier from Greece. This is only one example of the trunk of a Palestinian family tree, illustrating the many rings of the succeeding civilizations which have fused with the original inhabitants to make this people.

Excited by the secrets of the cemetery—for women in Palestinian society, whether Christian or Muslim do not normally frequent cemeteries—the ladies lag behind a bit and we are late in arriving at the nearby badd. But the curator, Iyad Hamdan, takes our tardy arrival in stride. As he accompanies us around the museum, shimmery mirages of the Bethlehem area and its inhabitants from different moments in history emerge like genies from the collection of olive oil lamps, or siraj as they are called.

Take this man of the Ottoman period with the worried expression on his face as he makes his way from his village to the badd, his donkey laden with the olives he hopes to press. Will there be a long line at the press this time? Is it worth leaving the olives at the badd, going home and returning to pick up the pressed oil, braving the trek in the dangerous countryside twice—or should he and his beast put up in one of the rooms provided on the premises and wait until the olives are pressed in the massive stone mill upstairs? After having his oil measured in one of the purpose-made pottery, tin or brass vessels, such as those displayed in that pleasing still-life against the wall, he might try taking some of his oil home in one of those new glass containers over there, in which the Turks transported chemicals. Following his neighbour’s advice, he has acquired one and cleaned it out. Still, he is not sure. When did anyone get anything good out of the Turks, after all?

In this corner, the simple sticks leaning against the wall and the baskets made of olive twigs, each named according to size, shape or function, seem to rise of their own accord, dancing their way, as if in a Palestinian
which will give them the strength to resume their work. Later at home, they can wash off the dust and ravages of the day with a bar which once formed part of the intriguing ziggurat-like stacks of olive oil soap in Nablus, or apply olive oil to their work-roughened skin, dry hair or aching muscles.

When it comes time to distributing the olives or olive oil, they won’t forget the relatives in their extended families, who for one reason or another were not present at the harvest. For hard times are indeed come when a Palestinian has to buy olive oil or olives, which are almost a birthright. With slight modifications, this scene might be witnessed right up to the present.

Mesmerized by the spell woven by the warp of Iyad’s words and the objects around them on the one hand, and the weft of the stories of their grandparents and their own memories on the other, the ladies hardly know how they have arrived upstairs. Fuad Giacaman prolongs the spell a few more minutes as he recounts some of his memories of growing up in the quarter, evoking memories of past generations when olives might be pickled in the courtyard by day and the olive oil lamp would cast its shadows around the tiny vaulted rooms at night. Then, following the light, we are surprised to find ourselves on the second-floor landing of an external staircase. The women vow to come again, bringing their children and out-of-town guests.

If these women, who have lived their whole life in the area, come out feeling that they had discovered a great deal about their heritage, what about the foreign visitor? By the time you leave the museum, you will know more about the olive tree, Bethlehem and Palestine in general, than you ever thought to ask. You will understand that the Palestinian presence on, and attachment to, their land is as deeply rooted as their national tree. Yet even then, you will only have uncovered the tiniest fraction of what there is to know about this warm, resilient people and the place of the olive tree in the incredible richness and diversity of their history, culture, folklore and traditions—a heritage, like their olive groves, under growing threat, as portrayed in the video entitled, Blessed Are the Olives produced by AEI’s women’s group, which they presented to Iyad as they left.

If you hurry, you might just make it before the end of the olive harvest, which started a couple of weeks ago. But why not plan ahead for next year and join one of the tours such as that offered by the ‘YWCA of Jerusalem’ and participate in the olive harvest yourself?

**Badd Giacaman**

Hours: 8-2:30 daily except Sunday  
Location: Najarra Street, Bethlehem  
Mobile of Curator Iyad Hamdan: 0599-358919  
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities/Bethlehem: (972) (2) 274 1581/2/3  
*Article photos by UNDP/PAPP archive - Steve Sabella*

1 Various theories are put forward to explain the family name. For example, some think that this family is a descendent of an Italian Crusader, while others counter that in that case they would live in the Tarajmeh quarter established during that era, attributing the name to a deviation of ‘Loqman’ an Arab name instead.  
2 Giacaman, Hanna Abdullah; Beit Lahem munthu Aqdam Azmina Hatta 1800  
3 For more about the Arab Educational Institute, see “Windows to Palestine, Windows to Peace” in the July 2005 issue of *This Week in Palestine*.  
4 The YWCA, tel. 02-6282593, also has an olive planting campaign to replace destroyed trees.

**O COME YE TO BETHLEHEM**

By Delia Khano

 Everyone all over the world knows of the ‘little town’ of Bethlehem, but not everyone is lucky enough to have been there. There is much to see.

The Church of the Nativity is the usual mecca of tourists. Its revered stones were erected by the Emperor Justinian over the floor of the earlier church built by Constantine; and beneath it is the cave where we believe Jesus was born. Three denominations have rights in this church and the status quo, established during the Crimean War, is rigidly observed: if by any chance a priest of one denomination cleans a window considered to be the territory of another denomination, a little war breaks out. This shows both the volatility of the Middle Eastern peoples, and also how precious the holy places are to them. Luckily priests usually know their place, and peace reigns.

In front of the Church is Manger Square where crowds – local and international – gather on Christmas Eve to listen to visiting choirs singing carols and to see the filming of the midnight mass from nearby St Catherine’s Church. There is also a Peace Centre in the square, where there is an exhibition of Nativity scenes made in the different countries of the Anglican Communion. If we leave the square to the north by Star Street, we may turn off to the right to find the little museum created by the Women’s Union – showing Bethlehem as it was about a hundred years ago. The ladies also sell some of the lovely embroideries for which Bethlehem and Beit Jala are particularly known. (In the Women’s Union building near Bethlehem University one may buy delicious Arabic food, home-made jams and jellies, and lemonade.) If we return to Star Street and proceed up towards the Madbasseh or old Bethlehem, we pass on the left the site where once Khalil Kando lived, the legendary Syriac shoemaker who had the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Bedouins used to barter the products of their sheep – milk, yogurt, cheese, skins and wool – and in return he made them shoes. Until the day in 1946 when they brought him some ancient sheepskins with writing on them …

Kando’s church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, is up the steps on the right of the street. The building itself is not old but the church goes back to the earliest times of Christianity: the liturgy is in Syriac, a form of Aramaic,
and the hymns are by the third century saint Ephram. William Dalrymple in his book ‘From the Holy Mountain’ says his hymns may well have influenced Western church music. The priest, Fr. Jacob, is the same one who married us in 1960: his superiors several times tried to retire him – but he could not be uprooted: a vital and much loved part of the community. The Syriac community now numbers about two hundred families and some of them still converse in Aramaic.

Their grandparents or great grandparents left Turkey in forced migrations trailing the Turks on their horses at the time of the First World War. Armenians were better known victims of the pogrom on Turkish Christians; Syriacs and Greeks less known.

Continuing our way uphill into the Madbasseh, we may turn down some steps on the right to find the Salesian Monastery. Here there is another exhibition of Nativity scenes from Italy and other countries. They are well staged and some are very inventive and imaginative. Well worth a visit. Returning to what is now Paul V1 Street, we find on the left a craft shop which is under Lutheran patronage. Among other arts and crafts are paintings by local artists. Under the shop is a big cave where they have artefacts such as could be from biblical times but which are made locally today. Several of the old Bethlehem households had the ground level of their house or a cave under the house which they used as a stable for their animals – sheep, goats, a donkey, chickens, doves – and the manger was always of stone. Knowing this, it is natural to believe that the Nativity site was in part of the house – not in a separate building as many Old Masters have it. The ‘stone house’ in Taibeh is a good example of this.

Further up Paul VI Street we come to buildings of the International Centre of Bethlehem, brainchild of the Lutheran minister, Rev. Mitri Raheb, which has been of such great benefit to Palestinians in general. His projects include a school, an academy for higher education, music courses in cooperation with the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, and vocational training courses, a communications centre and a health centre; a guesthouse, restaurant and café; and Addar Hall with three hundred and twenty seats, equipped for concerts, plays, films, exhibitions and conferences.

Hotels are of a good standard of comfort, ranging from the decorative little Palace Hotel, which is good for a snack as you come out of the Nativity Church, to the dazzlingly beautiful Intercontinental or Dar Jacir near Rachel’s Tomb, once home of a very old Bethlehem family. For cheaper accommodation there is the Lutheran Guesthouse, the Star Hotel near Bethlehem University or the Russian Hospice newly made in Milk Grotto Street.

Also near the Intercontinental and opposite Rachel’s Tomb, the Kandos have a large and beautiful store. The tiny cobbler’s shop in Star Street is long gone; Khalil Kando died a rich man and a man of many antiquities, and his six sons and several grandsons have incorporated some of the ancient coins in the jewellery they sell; with many fine icons, and handmade olive-wood and mother-of-pearl artefacts, the shop is a veritable treasure trove. They also have an antiquities shop near St George’s Hotel in Jerusalem. The sons have built houses all together on the west side of Bethlehem and live harmoniously as neighbours in what I call Kandoland.

Because the people of what might be called Greater Bethlehem – that is Bethlehem, to the west and up the hill Beit Jala, and to the east and down the hill Beit Sahour – are famously good with their hands, you may find almost everything you need there, from furniture made to order to a good plumber, from a pork butcher to a maternity hospital.

We may end with a visit to Beit Jala and another to Beit Sahour. First let us wind up and up the road through Beit Jala, passing the historic church of Saint Nicholas (the original Santa Claus), standing out on the hillside with its tower and silver dome; then many other more recent churches. Until we almost reach the top of the hill, where we turn off to the right to Cremisan. This is where the Salesian monks have their winery. They also have many olive-trees: Beit Jala is famous for its olives and olive oil, and it has a little olive-press where the people press the fruit of their trees with much chatter and joking. After the Salesian olive-groves comes the winery; the entrance is the salesroom, and here red and white wines, Vermouth, Marsala and – for those who do not drink alcohol – grape juice are for sale. The monk in charge told us the grapes they use come mainly from local producers: they do not have many vines themselves. He opened a door and showed us the impressive machines they have for making the wine, for bottling it and corking it.

Lastly we went down to the busy centre of Bethlehem, and took the road – again downhill and again passing many churches – to Beit Sahour. The name – like many in Palestine – tells a story: it means ‘the house of the watchers’ and sahour in particular means ‘watchers before the dawn’. It is difficult not to believe that this name is from time immemorial and it refers to the Shepherds who heard the ‘glad tidings’ of the Nativity. Though built up now, this would have been where shepherds grazed their flocks and sheltered in the chilly nights; and, too, hereabouts Boaz, the rich Bethlehemite, would have had his fields of corn, and Ruth the Moabitess gleaned the ears that had fallen.

We made for the Latin Shepherds’ fields, where there is a little Barluzzi church with some attractive mosaics on the walls. Some of the land in the compound has been excavated and the remains of a Byzantine monastery have been found. But the main feature is a very big cave, its ceiling blackened by the shepherds’ fires. Seating has been provided in the cave for services, and it even has some model sheep in the corners to add a note of authenticity!

Bethlehem is a rewarding place to visit, both for local people and for tourists; all are warmly received and well-treated; the little town preserves an age-old reputation for friendliness and hospitality.

Delia Khano is a long-time British resident of Palestine. She arrived in 1960 and married Gabriel Khano from Bethlehem. Together they started a tour company – Guiding Star Ltd. (www.GuidingStarLtd.com).
Revisiting the Interaction Between the Citizen and Heritage: Bethlehem Story

By Dr. Norma Masriyyeh

It is almost impossible to view the current tourism scene away from, or in isolation of, the political and social realities of the Palestinian people as well as from the state of affairs of the citizens of Bethlehem themselves, whose life and destiny are tied to tourism. On the fringes of the scene and around it, a lot of pinching questions loom over our heads. To what extent has the tourism reality in Bethlehem been able to uphold the requirements or needs of this mission on the cultural and social levels, meeting the demands of this sector with its various dimensions and being suitable for the Palestinians, who are facing the repercussions of the status quo and its duties? To what extent do the family, school, university and institution carry out their expected role in preserving an old/new heritage, which runs the risk of being obliterated, and in helping the new, educated generation to love this heritage and appreciate and discover its secrets and beauties? To what extent can the Bethlehemite in particular and the innovative Palestinian in general boost the city of Bethlehem through collective work, overcoming the gaps in the way?

These questions and many others show that our historical consciousness of the situation is real and serious and that the desire to bypass the current scene, in all its negative aspects, is deep and true. This historical consciousness uncovers two proximal levels of interaction in the state of affairs of tourism at present. One is heritage, with its diverse milestones of churches, architecture and quarters, etc. The other is the interaction of Bethlehemites with this heritage, manifested in their unending quest for the potentials of acclimatizing to a new and variable reality, through different worries, demands and aspirations imposed by the evolution of man and time. It is also reflected in their engagement in the life struggle and existence as well as their upholding of the features of cultural identity.

Many have become used to viewing the relationship between Bethlehemites and the tourism heritage with a quizzical rather than positive eye, through engaging in some practices that contravene civilized practices, at the levels of community and culture. Those who focus their attention on the negative aspects of performance are right, but they are interested in the empty half of the glass and do not come close to the half that is full. We are now getting closer to the half that is full, the other side of the picture, which includes several positive effects of the state of affairs of tourism in Bethlehem. This reality reveals the concerted efforts of a Bethlehem community that interacts with the event at the appropriate time and that is capable of portraying events, thus increasing the space of consciousness and the ability to participate and belong.

However, in the midst of criticisms, we do not pay attention to what is more serious and significant, namely the nature of our relation as a community with our historical heritage. Nor do we focus on the necessity of planning at a national level that investigates the phenomenon in all its three dimensions: the nature of our heritage and its relation with the pulse of the modern age; its quality, its distinctive characteristics and its difference from other heritages. Moreover, it takes into account our ability to enhance heritage and Bethlehem at the tourism and cultural levels, through the activation of the community circle, the media of culture, other governmental institutions as well as institutions of civil society, all of which are responsible for the current situation in Bethlehem.

A lot of the crises that we are going through at the tourism and cultural levels are attributable to the absence of a modern objective outlook, a fair, flexible vision and an open mind that has its foundations in the consciousness of heritage. A modern outlook that is based on the consciousness and understanding of heritage signifies the capacity to assimilate and embody what is new and immersion into the culture and spirit of the modern age, with our participation, contribution and ability to find solutions for the numerous difficulties. This is done out of the belief that this heritage is the deep-rooted historical record that underscores our cultural identity as Palestinians. The beauty of this heritage is reflected in a functional conception, differing semantic fields and the infusion of thousands of rich life experiences that teem with knowledge and human experiences acquired through the ages.

The initiation of active work that has been adopted by the Open Bethlehem Project for realizing the communal spirit of the goal of boosting the city of Bethlehem on the levels of heritage and human beings is our sole path towards the future. We are armed with modern aids capable of making a breakthrough into this future and contributing creatively towards its modernization in words and deeds, through fulfilling our responsibilities and meeting the needs of the city. It is our sole path towards achieving a modernized heritage and modernizing the human being. A modernized heritage becomes a firm tie for our identity and culture in the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. Here, the beauty of our heritage in all its modern functional manifestations becomes a defence of our cultural heritage, which we do not wish to see dissipate or disappear in the midst of this colossal inundation of information and symbols of civilization in the varied branches of culture and heritage, espoused by the superpowers.

As our Bethlehem heritage approaches a new millennium, we should take a national stand on the current and future state of affairs in Bethlehem and on reopening the door for belonging in the study and activation of our heritage, which is, in essence, belonging and identity since it is an issue for the entire society. It is the responsibility of all citizens, out of our conviction as Palestinians and out of what we have always learnt from experience, that there is a “fulfillable impossibility.” All this depends on the consciousness of human beings and their stamina for struggle for the sake of transcending their reality by transcending their identities. Henceforth, there has been
a circular tie between the renewal of the individual and that of society. Both renew each other. And when the starting point is oneself, this is true nationalism.

The pressing questions that present themselves here are: What is to be done? What is the way out or solution for establishing a Bethlehem community that possesses the real will to revive and revise? The politicization of culture at the expense of community development due to our struggle to achieve independence and making resistance against the occupation a priority have led to dwarfing the role of community development as one of the most essential scaffolds of resistance. The outcome has been recession in a lot of life’s aspects, communally and culturally, from which all are suffering, including the citizens of Bethlehem.

The tone of complaint about the state of affairs in Bethlehem has been reflected by the results of a field study of “The Popular Participation in the Process of Planning and Preserving Heritage,” which I carried out for The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem (the sample consisted of 1,500 female and male citizens). The findings reveal real social, political and cultural ramifications that reflect themselves in the popular cultural practices of the citizens of the city, which transcend the barriers in some of their aspects. However, the distinctive historical horizon of Bethlehem still holds a space for optimism, hope and linkage with the series of cultural accumulation possessed by those citizens, who positively believe in the power of communal innovation and joint creativity, bringing into being an amalgamation between deep-rootedness and realism that has formed part of the communal unconsciousness engraved into the collective memory of our people.

and cultural innovation and creativity, which is latent in the treasures of our heritage. It is high time we worked on reviving and renewing this heritage so that the existing and future generations may witness its bright face, together with all its deep-rooted popular originality/genuineness.

In this critical discussion we do not set off from a standpoint of rejection of or absolute doubt in the transgressions happening in Bethlehem. We rather should view this state of affairs with a critical eye that befits the history and sanctity of the city. This takes into account the essential role which should be played by each citizen in Bethlehem for the sake of searching for connectedness between his/her existence and the development of the city. The goal aims at the adoption of the concept “heritage for development” out of the belief in the communal spirit of the goal and for the sake of establishing the connectedness of heritage with the past, present and future on one hand and meeting the real interests and needs of the social and communal life of the city and its citizens, creating a melting pot of interaction, activity and energetic participation on the other hand.

Furthermore, and within the objective context, the temporal span and historical route of the city of Bethlehem remain connected with the international tourism industry due to the sanctity of the place and its distinctive history, which requires that each Bethlehem citizen shoulder his/her responsibility and role, whether out of national conscience or duty. The question that is eminent here: To what extent can we infer or figure out the relation between the human being and the place?

To conclude, I think it is important to pose a question for ourselves, one that I hope we can all join in: Are we not entitled to ask about our position in world innovation, to innovate and think about who should receive our innovation?

Dr. Norma Masriyyeh is an Associate Professor of Political Sociology at Bethlehem University. She can be reached at normah@bethlehem.edu.
Eid Al-Fitr

By Mike Odetalla

With the approach of Eid Al-Fitr, the end of the holy month of Ramadan and its fasting, I am reminded of the holidays and celebrations of my childhood in Palestine; of how eagerly we awaited the Eid, its festivities and rituals. The nights of Ramadan leading up to the Eid were spent at the mosque in prayer and reading from the Quran. Our small village of Beit Hanina, a suburb of Jerusalem was still without electricity and people carried lanterns to light their way in the darkness as they went first to the mosque and from there to visit friends and family; a special part of Ramadan. Beit Hanina had a drummer, charged with the pre-dawn task of awakening the village to shoo, the light meal whose end marked the beginning of each day’s fast. Closing my eyes and thinking real hard still brings back the sound of Beit Hanina’s drummer banging away, and the delightful memories of joining the other children, carrying our decorated fanciosa lanterns with candles burning brightly inside them, as we ran along behind the drummer, singing, laughing and shouting to help awaken the sleeping adults and start them on shoo and their new day. How I admired the drummer; how I wanted his job and to share his fun.

In Ramadan 1979, my first visit back to Palestine since the ’67 expulsion, my cousin and I, both 18 and living in the US, finally became the Ramadan drummers of Beit Hanina. The Israeli invasion of 1967 and the subsequent occupation made the drummers’ job very high risk and today they are scarce: Ramadan drummers were often stopped, even beaten. By 1979, the village had not enjoyed a drummer in five years, so my cousin and I delighted in our job of walking through the village each morning banging away on large tin cans. It must have been a very humorous sight: the elderly were happy to hear us; the younger people thought we were a great joke and made fun of the “bored Americans.” But everyone agreed that we had renewed some “life” that had been lost as we broke through the dark still nights of Ramadan. For me, however briefly, I was transported back to a happy childhood whose memories had never left me for a moment.

Beit Hanina’s mosque was located squarely in the centre of the village, its majestic minaret dominating the landscape. Our muezzin, Sheikh Yameen, called people to prayer from the lofty heights of the minaret. The Sheikh was blind and long past 50; still, he made his way from his home on the outskirts of the village to the mosque independently. Climbing the snaking, narrow stairs to the top of the minaret and with the strength only of his voice, he sang the call to prayer five times a day. The Sheikh’s voice was elegant and soothing: it made the call reassuring and comforting: wherever I was, that distinctive, rich voice echoed out into my ears five times a day: it still anchors me to the heart and soul of Beit Hanina.

Just before Ramadan 1968, the villagers collected the funds from former residents now in the Diaspora and purchased a diesel generator to light the mosque and ease the Sheikh’s job with loud speakers. Sheikh Yameen’s voice boomed louder and more beautiful than ever, but he no longer had to climb the minaret’s stairs. The blind Sheikh loved to joke that the new lights made it easier for him to “see.” The first night the generator was used, the village was electric with excitement at the beauty of the glowing minaret that compensated for the offensive noise of the generator, which soon taught us to know that prayer time was approaching by the roar of it kicking into action. The minaret became a beacon of light seen from afar and lighting the area: watching us approach by the roar of it kicking into action. Soon taught us to know that prayer time was approaching by the roar of it kicking into action. The minaret became a beacon of light seen from afar and lighting the area: watching us approach by the roar of it kicking into action. The minaret became a beacon of light seen from afar and lighting the area: watching us approach by the roar of it kicking into action.

One of the first things I did in 1979 was climb to the top of the minaret and walk around its circular balcony, taking in the awesome sight of my home, my village and the surrounding orchards and hills. I easily travelled back to my childhood mind, realizing a long held dream of getting a bird’s eye view of my world, now marred by the eyesore of the Israeli settlements built on the land stolen from our village in 1977. Now, in spite of the pleas and angry protests of Beit Hanina’s residents, those settlements encircle and nearly strangle my ancestral home.

As little children, we were filled with excitement at the approach of our holiday. The night before Eid al-Fitr was spent in the mosque at prayer. The morning of the Eid is a time for dressing in our holiday best and returning to the mosque for the special Eid prayers. After the prayers were over, kisses, hugs, and handshakes peppered the joyful greetings of “kul sana wa intum bekheir” (may every year find you well) and “Eid mubarak.” The women had spent the night making all kinds of special Eid sweets and these they now brought to the mosque to share with the community. After prayers, everyone headed to the village cemetery walking together, visiting the graves of departed relatives. The women handed out their wonderful sweets as we recited Al-Fatihah, the opening verse from the Quran. At once, remembering our departed loved ones and enjoying the sweets from our relatives, neighbours, and friends still very much with us. This ritual is still practised today, in the overcrowded cemeteries that are filled with Palestinian men, women, and children who have died at the hands of the brutal Israeli occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people. The pain and sorrow-filled faces of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters are beyond description. Israel’s occupation has claimed the lives of more than 3,800 Palestinians, including more than 700 children, in the last four years.

After the visit to the cemetery, the men go to visit the homes of their female relatives, bringing gifts of money and lingering there to drink coffee or tea and eat more sweets before moving on to the next house. The first time I was allowed to tag along with my older brothers as they made the rounds with the other men, I was overjoyed to be one of the “men.” The village comes alive with people going from one house to the next, sharing warm greetings and camaraderie as they pass one another in the streets and on the hills. Every house extended an invitation to come in and have something to eat and drink. So it was in the small villages of Palestine.

For the children, the best part was the presents and small coins we received as gifts. We’d take our money and run to the centre of the village where the butcher shop (usually bustling with people buying fresh meat for the Eid), a couple of coffeehouses, a barber shop (busiest just before the Eid), and a couple of small grocery stores were huddled together. We rushed to buy balloons, candy and sparklers, helping to fill the village square with laughing, noisy children playing and bragging about what they had received for the Eid: marbles and spinning tops were the preferred gifts; at night sparklers helped us find our way through dark streets. We were children enjoying the simple pleasures of the holidays as only children can. My most memorable present was the bicycle that I received on the Eid of 1968. That red shiny new bike was the envy of every boy who gathered behind the mosque, and that first day, I refused to ride it because I didn’t want to get it dirty!

My last Eid at home was in 1969. Today as I see the painful images of my people caged in their homes by the brutal curfews, living in tents after their homes are demolished (over 1,000 demolitions in Palestine this year alone, leaving many thousands homeless), mourning the loss of loved ones, and unable to partake in even the simplest part of the Eid. The joy has been sucked from the lives of my people and worse, the hope and joy has been stolen from our children. The highpoint of the Eid, a visit to Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque is now forbidden to most Palestinians who have not been allowed to enter Jerusalem for six years or more. The people of Palestine are foremost in my thoughts and prayers, together with all those who suffer injustice.

Mike Odetalla is a Palestinian/American businessman and a father of three who was born in 1960 in the Palestinian village of Beit Hanina, a suburb of Jerusalem. He lived through the 1967 war and moved to the US in 1969. He can be reached at www.Hanini.org
Polish music is coming to Palestine on November 17th. The Bromberga Quartet is a special ensemble that is different in many ways from regular quartets. It includes piano and clarinet in addition to violin and violoncello. It specializes in the music of XVIII, XIX and XX centuries. The diverse repertoire allows Bromberga to satisfy even the most demanding music lovers, with two concerts to be held in Bethlehem and Nablus. The concerts are organized through the Polish Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority, the Bethlehem Academy of Music and the Palestinian Society of Frederic Chopin, in cooperation with the Bethlehem Peace Centre and An-Rajah National University in Nablus.

In the past couple of years there has been an increasing number of concerts, especially in Bethlehem, with music and musicians from Poland. The music of the great Frederic Chopin, which embeds the love of the fatherland, has been introduced to Palestinian classical music lovers through lectures and recorded performances of his music. A book in Arabic was published several years ago on “Composers from Poland” (a complimentary copy can be obtained by contacting the Bethlehem Academy of Music). In the spirit of the twined cities of Bethlehem and Chestahova, the rich Polish culture and music can play a major role in promoting tourism between Poland and Palestine.

Dr. Saleem Zougbi
Bethlehem Academy of Music
Happy Eid

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By Fred H. Danfoura

It is not uncommon to overhear employees of various international and local NGOs furtively express their reservations about the direction of development in Palestine, about the flawed structure of aid transferral and implementation, for reasons which I am only partially aware of, and thus dare not venture to mention. While I grant individuals who work in the field the validity born out of experience, since they know better than I the frequently inharmonious collusion of power and aid distribution, I know that they, like many of us, can identify a number of respectable international organizations and individuals driven in trust by complete altruism and by a genuine care for the livelihood of Palestinians. These entities are commendable beyond question, their sense of servitude and commitment beyond reproach.

However, critics of the direction of development in Palestine raise some interesting questions. Shouldn’t we, Palestinians, think more carefully about the amount of assistance we accept? Shouldn’t we be considering more seriously about the future of Palestine than Palestinians? Who should be more interested in the success of Palestine than a Palestinian?

The UNDP/TOKTEN programme makes a very valiant attempt to gather Palestinians from abroad, the ones motivated enough by nationalistic and cultural concerns to forfeit comfy positions in their field, come to Palestine, and apply their expertise to the social strengthening of various ailing institutions. The main problem, however, lies in the attraction and retention of these sources, as the slightest discouragement from either Israeli or Palestinian deterrents could prove fatal to this initiative. From the minute they enter the country, Israel makes sure to communicate an unambiguous message of hostility, as the clear and identifiable figure of resistance and difficulty. Any Palestinian on this soil is a plant they are determined not to see grow. Palestinian deterrence also plays a significant part to the posterity of this strategy. The Palestinian Authority has not been able to fully meet the needs of this target group, partly from Israeli hindrances, but also from deeply rooted internal inadequacies. Another problem lies in the sheer lack of Palestinians with a sense of duty chiselled upon their character, with a willingness to return to Palestine (or visit for the first time) and give back what has been provided for them from fortune’s plate.

Clearly, the best strategy is a proper mixture of all the resources available, with particular emphasis, of course, on what Palestinians can provide for themselves. Global cooperation is vital to the successful growth of our nation, as is the full participation of Palestinians living abroad. However, with the amount of money international aid organizations direct into development projects in this country and with the constant outsourcing, we must be careful not to create a Palestinian subculture of dependency, but instead use home-grown resources to establish self-sustaining programmes in which the final and lasting beneficiary is the Palestinian on the street.

Fred H. Danfoura is in Palestine on the UNDP/TOKTEN Programme.

Leila Sansour

The Driving Force to Open Bethlehem

Leila Sansour is an unmistakable figure in Bethlehem. Dressed in Parisian chic and driving perhaps the most run-down car in town, she leaps out of her battered red Renault in Manger Square and flags down the Polish ambassador, asking for a lift as though it were the most natural request in the world. Whether he is charmed or surprised, the ambassador finds himself agreeing and, together, they travel to one of the villages in Bethlehem that will be cut in half by the Israeli Segregation Wall. When it is finished, the Wall will encircle the entire urban district of Bethlehem, turning the city into a prison town. Leila uses the ride to brief the ambassador on a new city project for Bethlehem: Open Bethlehem.

Open Bethlehem is Leila’s brainchild. She has worked tirelessly on the project for the past nine months so that the launch will coincide with the completion of the Wall. When one stands face-to-face with this expanse of soulless concrete, the reasons for the name are all too apparent. The speed with which Open Bethlehem has been put together reflects the urgency of the situation, “a state of emergency,” as she says. It has proved an enormous turning point in Leila’s life.

For the past twelve years, she pursued a successful television career in London. Through her own independent production company, she produced the series ‘Mawed Fi Al-Mahjar’ for Al-Jazeera, and directed many of the episodes. With the failure of the peace process, she made the decision to branch into documentaries; a short film on Bethlehem won her the Columbine Award at America’s Moondance Film Festival. Then, in 2002, Leila invited the English comedian Jeremy Hardy to visit her hometown, just as the Israeli army invaded the city. The resulting film, “Jeremy Hardy versus the Israeli Army,” was a great success in Britain’s cinemas, earning four- and five-star reviews in the national newspapers and featuring as a highlight of the year in the annual round-ups. She has not given up her film-work, despite the punishing pace of Open Bethlehem. A new documentary charting a year in the life of Bethlehem, from Christmas 2004 to Christmas 2005, is now in the final months of filming. Inevitably, the creation of Open Bethlehem plays a part in the film and Leila approaches her many meetings in Palestine, Britain and America with a film crew in tow.

The daughter of one of the pioneers of Bethlehem University, her father, Anton, studied and taught mathematics at Moscow State University and returned to Bethlehem in 1973 to help establish an educational institution to enable Palestinians to continue their higher education. If the construction of a wall spurred Leila to follow in her father’s footsteps and attempt to do something as important for the town, she was also conscious of her father’s absence. She admits that, as a child, she was very much “Daddy’s little girl;” she would do math puzzles to please him, while he would take her to his meetings and show her off to his friends. Her father was keen that she should study mathematics, and was overjoyed when she won a scholarship to the Sorbonne in Paris. But despite her loyalty to him, she had her own ideas. She insisted on studying philosophy and secured a scholarship to Moscow State University, her father’s alma mater. In that instance, she proved too stubborn for her father; perhaps a quality he would appreciate today if he were to see the determination with which she drives the Open Bethlehem project forward, with headquarters at Bethlehem University – the institution he gave his life to build.
Hanna Musleh

A passionate Palestinian filmmaker and educator, one would think that a man like Hanna W. Musleh, who has accomplished so much, would not be so humble. But Musleh is one who embodies this modesty: his tone of voice is low, his demeanour serene, his shyness dignified and his friendliness noble.

Musleh was born in 1954 in Beit Jala to Wahbe and Nijmeh Musleh. During his youth he attended the Mennonite School in Beit Jala, and later went to study in Leningrad State University in Russia for a degree in anthropology, finally obtaining his M.A. from the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at Manchester University in England. Musleh then returned to Palestine and has worked as a professor at Bethlehem University since 1980 where he has taught cultural studies, history, anthropology and currently teaches film appreciation, anthropology classes.

For as long as he can remember, his dream was to make films. Although he went on to first study anthropology, his opportunity to make a documentary came about as part of the final project for his degree in visual anthropology. His first short film was called Sahar’s Wedding (1991), which chronicled a wedding in Al-Khader, a small village outside of Bethlehem under Israeli occupation during the first Intifada. Musleh went on to make several documentaries, each film dealing with different issues affecting Palestinian society. He likes his films to focus on Palestinian culture in particular, as there was a lack of films focusing on issues such as the role of women, physical disabilities in Palestine, and history. He wanted to give diverse people in Palestine a voice because they all play such an important role in the society and feels their voices should be heard as well. Those voices often go unnoticed because they belong to a society that is struggling for self-determination and self-rule. He likes his short segments of first-person accounts to touch people, to provoke his audience, to evoke different emotions and for the viewer to feel the Palestinian pain. Most importantly, Musleh wants to show the human side of the Palestinian people, including the real suffering of the ordinary people of the region.

This past year Musleh helped develop a series of debate shows at the International Centre of Bethlehem (ICB). He was the director of eleven debate shows that were broadcast live by eleven local television channels throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Each debate show depicted important and crucial topics in Palestinian society such as women and elections, disability, health issues and water.

His films have been shown at many festivals locally and internationally, including the Cairo International Festival for Children’s Cinema, which awarded him the Golden Award for a Short Film. The film depicts the life of Palestinian children who suffered permanent disabilities in the on-going violence in the Holy Land. His other films include We are God’s Soldiers, Palestinian Sign Language, I Am a Little Angel, In the Spider’s Web, and Walling In Walling Out: A Bethlehem Story.

Musleh admits that his films are his greatest undertaking. They have been shown in the Middle East, Europe and at leading American universities such as Harvard and Georgetown, and they have been highly appraised. His short films are also used as part of the syllabus of different universities for film and visual anthropology classes.

Musleh is considered by many to be a compassionate person, a continuous learner, and an avid dreamer. In the future, he hopes to continue to produce films that make a difference. He feels that by documenting culture today it will be of great value tomorrow. He has already achieved this promise of educating others about the plight of the Palestinians and has contributed immensely to his country and community.

Musleh lives in Beit Jala with his Russian wife Lilia and their son Alexander.

ANATREH QUARTER
An Urban and Architectural Study of a Bethlehem Quarter
Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, Bethlehem, 2005, 144 pages.

The publication of ANATREH QUARTER An Urban and Architectural Study of a Bethlehem Quarter is long overdue and should therefore be considered an important event among architects and urban planners as well as the general public. The interest of the book does not lie in the fame of Anatreh Quarter, which is probably unknown to most Palestinians, but in the process of what it has become: a rehabilitated urban envelope reflecting the cumulative typologies of the architecture of Bethlehem throughout the centuries to the present and bringing out the distinctive character of the many large scale buildings that straddle the slopes of the newer part.

The first book of its kind written on Bethlehem, it is the result of the joint efforts of a team of researchers and architects at the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation (CCHP) and presents the rehabilitation of the Quarter as a case study in rehabilitation and urban development. Divided into four chapters illustrated with attractive maps, diagrams and photos, it discusses the history of the Quarter; the history of the clan, the Anatrehs who originally inhabited the Quarter, and their socio-economic situation; the rehabilitation works it underwent and their significance in terms of conservation and development of the built heritage and their future impact for the Quarter and for the city; its urban development throughout the centuries, with special emphasis on key periods and demographic markers; the typology of its urban fabric and structures going all the way to the present. It relies on documentation and research, on socio-economic and architectural surveys, and on interviews with the residents and members of the clan. One of the main features of this book is that it has integrated oral history within the narrative of the Quarter and the history of the families.

There are other benefits to the book. It embodies ten years of experience in conservation and urban rehabilitation, which started with the Bethlehem 2000 Project and is continuing with the CCHP. As such, it presents a model for other future projects. It should be a powerful tool with which to raise awareness and renew perceptions of cultural heritage among policy makers and specialists as well as students in the field of conservation and urban development and by doing so hopefully lead to higher standards of implementation, more strategic planning for the sector and its integration within national economic planning. It also makes for interesting reading for non-specialists interested in Bethlehem.

The preparation and publication of the book was funded through the generous support of the Ford Foundation. To get a copy of the book, contact the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation (www.bethlehem2000.org/cchp), email: info@bethlehem2000.org.

Reviewed by Christiane Dabdoub Nasser
Note: Please make sure to contact the venue to check if the programme is still running.

**EAST JERUSALEM**

Al-Kasaba Theatre, tel. 02 - 6264052; Al-Ma’mal Contemporary Art Foundation, tel. 02 - 6283457; Ascension Church, Auguste Victoria, tel. 02 - 6287704; Austrian Hospice, tel. 02 - 6265800; British Council, tel. 02 - 6267111; Centre Culturel Français (CCF), tel. 02 - 6282451; Centre for Jerusalem Studies, Al-Quds University, tel. 02 - 6569058/9; Church of the Redeemer, tel. 02 - 6278111; Gallery Anadiel, tel. 02 - 6282811; Issaf Nashashibi Centre for Culture and Literature, tel. 02 - 5813233; Jerusalem Centre for Near Eastern Studies (Mormon University), tel. 02 - 6265666; The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM), tel. 02 - 6271711; Palestinian National Theatre (PNT), tel. 02 - 6280957; St. George’s Cathedral, tel. 02 - 6281557; Tantur Ecumenical Institute, tel. 02 - 6760911; Turkish Cultural Centre, tel. 02 - 5400592; Yabous Productions, tel. 02 - 6261045; YWCA, tel. 02 - 6282593

**ART**

Monday 14
19:00 Inauguration of the exhibition “Artistas Por Palestina” (Artists for Palestine). A series of Spanish paintings, an initiative of the Consulate General of Spain in Jerusalem, the Spanish Cooperation Office and the Spanish NGO Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz (through Nov. 21st), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Wednesday 16
19:00 Opening of the exhibition (Retrospective), CCF

Sunday 20
Fourth annual art auction of paintings by Palestinian artists mainly from Gaza, organised by the United Nations Development Programme (call for details)

**CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES**

Friday 11
14:00 The Snipe of Viking Treasure (French), CCF

Tuesday 15
18:00 Opening ceremony of the International Puppets Festival, PNT

Wednesday 16
11:00 International Puppets Festival, PNT
16.00 International Puppets Festival, PNT

Thursday 17
11:00 International Puppets Festival, PNT
16.00 International Puppets Festival, PNT

Friday 18
Opening of the Norwegian Youth Film Festival (through Nov. 20th, call for time), PNT
11:00 International Puppets Festival, PNT
16:00 International Puppets Festival, PNT

**CONCERTS**

Saturday 19
11:00 International Puppets Festival, PNT
16.00 International Puppets Festival, PNT

**FILMS**

Sunday 6
18:00 Suburb 13 (French), PNT

Monday 7
19:00 Paradise Now (Arabic) by Hani Abu Assad, PNT

Tuesday 8
18:00 Son of the Wind (French) PNT

Thursday 10
18:00 Suburb 13 (French), PNT

Friday 11
19:00 DVD movie about the late President Yasser Arafat, PNT

Saturday 12
18:00 Fil du Vent (French), PNT
18:30 Kisses from Damascus: The Pilgrims of Sayda Zeynab (French), CCF

Thursday 17
18:00 The Bicycle (French), CCF

**LECTURES**

Wednesday 9
18:00 Aude Signoles presents his book “The Palestinians,” CCF

Monday 14
17:00 History of the Bible in Christianity, Ecole Biblique
SPECIAL EVENTS

Tuesday 15
15:00 Street theatre performances, PNT
Friday 25
15:00 Street theatre performances, PNT

TOURS

The tours “Jerusalem, A Palestinian Perspective” are organised by the Centre for Jerusalem Studies of Al-Quds University. The dates of the tours are to be confirmed. For further information please call the Centre for Jerusalem Studies, tel. 02 - 656 9058

Sunday 13
Al-Haram Al-Sharif, Al-Quds University
Saturday 19
Arab Neighbourhoods in West Jerusalem, Al-Quds University
Saturday 26
Old City Quarters, Al-Quds University

BETHLEHEM, BEIT JALA and BEIT SAHOUR

Al-Hara Theatre, tel. 02 - 2767758; Alternative Information Centre (AIC), tel. 02 - 2775444; Bethlehem Peace Centre, tel. 02 - 2768877; Bethlehem University, tel. 02 - 2741241; The Cardinal House, tel. 02 - 2764778; The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM), tel. 02 - 2745989; Inad Theatre, tel. 02 - 2766263; International Centre of Bethlehem (Dar Anadwa), tel. 02 - 2770047

ART

Monday 7
16:30 Opening of the group exhibition “Land, Peoples and Identities” by several local and international artists, followed by a public candle light march (through Nov. 28th), International Centre of Bethlehem
17:00 Inauguration of an exhibit entitled “Bulls, Roosters, Song and Tequila” by the Mexican artist Emiliano Gironella Parra, under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Francisco Alonso on the occasion of the opening of the Representative Office of Mexico in Ramallah (through Nov. 20th daily from 10:00 - 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Centre

Wednesday 9
16:30 Art performance “A Question of Distance” by British artist Susan Trangmar followed by a gallery talk with the artist, International Centre of Bethlehem
16:30 Gallery talk with the German artist Prof. Manfred Dinnies, International Centre of Bethlehem

Thursday 10
16:30 Art performance “A Question of Distance” by British artist Susan Trangmar followed by a gallery talk with the artist, International Centre of Bethlehem
16:30 Gallery talk with the native American artist Prof. Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, International Centre of Bethlehem

Friday 11
16:30 Gallery talk with the Palestinian artist Steve Sabella, International Centre of Bethlehem

Saturday 12
Inauguration of a scientific exhibit entitled “Eau Douce – Eau Rare,” in cooperation with the Alliance Française de Bethléem (through Nov. 21st daily from 10:00 - 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Centre
16:30 Inauguration of an art exhibit entitled “Natural Formations (2)” by Palestinian Artist Adnan Zubaidy (through Nov. 27th daily from 10:00 - 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Centre
17:00 Inauguration of an exhibit entitled “Artistas Por Palestina” (Artists for Palestine). A series of Spanish paintings, an initiative of the Consulate General of Spain in Jerusalem, the Spanish Cooperation Office and the Spanish NGO Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz (through Nov. 28th daily from 10:00 - 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Centre
16:30 Inauguration of an exhibit entitled “Artistas Por Palestina”. A series of Spanish paintings, an initiative of the Consulate General of Spain in Jerusalem, the Spanish Cooperation Office and the Spanish NGO Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz (through Nov. 28th daily from 10:00 - 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Centre
17:00 Inauguration of an exhibit entitled “Artistas Por Palestina”. A series of Spanish paintings, an initiative of the Consulate General of Spain in Jerusalem, the Spanish Cooperation Office and the Spanish NGO Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz (through Nov. 28th daily from 10:00 - 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Centre

CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

Clown show by the Swedish Clowns without Borders at the Bethlehem Peace Centre. Date and time to be announced.

Friday 4
09:30 – 13:00 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Centre
14:30 – 16:30 Bright stars club for kids 8 - 14 years old, International Centre of Bethlehem

CONCERTS

Saturday 5
18:30 Cultural evening with the American group “Cross Cultures,” International Centre of Bethlehem

Friday 11
09:30 – 13:00 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Centre
14:30 – 16:30 Bright stars club for kids 8 - 14 years old, International Centre of Bethlehem

Friday 18
09:30 – 13:00 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Centre
14:30 – 16:30 Bright stars club for kids 8 - 14 years old, International Centre of Bethlehem

Friday 25
09:30 – 13:00 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Centre
14:30 – 16:30 Bright stars club for kids 8 - 14 years old, International Centre of Bethlehem

Thursday 17
19:30 A gala concert by The Bromberga Quartet from Poland. The concert includes works by composers such as Chopin, Mozart and Brahms as well as by the late Palestinian/Jordanian composer Yousef Khaso, sponsored by the Polish Representative Office in cooperation with the Bethlehem Academy of Music, Bethlehem Peace Centre
Saturday 19
18:00 Swedish folk music by a group from Halsingland, Organised in cooperation with the Swedish Christian Study Centre – Bilda, Bethlehem Peace Centre

Tuesday 22
17:30 Live music concert performed by "Musiqà," a group from Palestine, Bethlehem Peace Centre

Sunday 27
19:00 Tango music and dance show by the Italian group "Sestetto Francesco Venerucci," in cooperation with the Consulate General of Italy in Jerusalem, International Centre of Bethlehem

**FILMS**

**THURSDAY 3**
18:00 The Longest Yard, Bethlehem Peace Centre
18:00 Kingdom of Heaven, Bethlehem Peace Centre

**THURSDAY 10**
18:00 My Home, a short film collection by five Palestinian directors, in cooperation with Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Bethlehem Peace Centre

**SATURDAY 12**
18:00 My Home, a short film collection by five Palestinian directors, in cooperation with Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Bethlehem Peace Centre

**Wednesday 23**
11:00 Theatre show entitled “The Story of Mona” by Ashtar for Theatre Production, International Centre of Bethlehem

**PLAYS**

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Sunday 6
Intercultural Conference “Shaping Communities in Times of Crisis - Narratives of Land, People and Identities,” (through Nov. 12th), International Centre of Bethlehem

Saturday 12
10:00 Fifth annual Olive Harvest Festival on Manger Square organized by the Bethlehem Peace Centre, the Environmental Education Centre, the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry, JAI and the Cooperative Society for Pressing Olives, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bethlehem Municipality. The festival will feature olives, olive oil, olive trees, olive wood carving, soap, traditional food, tile making, embroidery and Palestinian folkloric shows.

**GAZA**

Arts & Crafts Village, tel. 08 - 2846405; International Union of Francophone Press - Palestinian Section, tel. 08 - 2828705; Theatre Day Productions (TDP), tel. 08 - 2836766

**ART**

Wednesday 30
18:00 Inauguration of an exhibit entitled “Artistas Por Palestina” (Artists for Palestine). A series of Spanish paintings, an initiative of the Consulate General of Spain in Jerusalem, the Spanish Cooperation Office and the Spanish NGO Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz. (through Dec. 6th), Palestine Red Crescent Society – Al-Amal City Centre, Khan Younis

**PLAYS**

Im El-Abed & Her Family (Arabic), written by Jackie Lubeck & Yusef Tartouri and directed by Rafat Al-Aydeh, for families and kids from 12 up (call for dates and times), TDP

Houses of People (Arabic), written by Jackie Lubeck and directed by Jan Willems for kids 12 and up (call for dates and times), TDP

The Utopians (Arabic), written by Jackie Lubeck, directed by Amer Khalil and Raed Shiuhi, for families and kids from 12 up (call for dates and times), TDP

**HEBRON**

Theatre Day Production (TDP), tel. 02 - 2291559

**PLAYS**

Majnoon (Arabic), written by Jackie Lubeck and Jan Willems (call for dates and times), TDP

**NABLUS**

Al-Najah University, tel. 09 - 2340204; Centre Culturel Français (CCF), tel. 09 - 2385914

**ART**

Wednesday 23
18:30 Visages d'Orient, pictures of the photographical fond of the EBAF in Jerusalem, CCF

**CONCERTS**

Friday 18
18:30 A gala concert by The Bromberga Quartet from Poland. The concert includes works by composers such as Chopin, Mozart, and Brahms as well as by the late Palestinian/Jordanian composer Yousef Khaso, sponsored by the Polish Representative Office in cooperation with the Bethlehem Academy of Music, Al-Najah University

**RAMALLAH & AL BIREH**

A.M. Qattan Foundation, tel. 02 - 2960544; Al-Kasaba Theatre & Cinematheque, tel. 02 - 2965292; Ashtar Theatre, tel. 02 - 2980037; Baladna Cultural Centre, tel. 02 - 2958436; British Council, tel. 02 - 2963295; Centre Culturel Français (CCF), tel. 02 - 2987727; the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM), tel. 02 - 2959070; Franco-German Cultural Centre Ramallah, tel. 02 - 2981922; Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, tel. 02 - 2987374; Popular Art Centre, tel. 02 - 2403891; Cultural Palace, tel. 02 - 2984704

**ART**

Tuesday 1
Continuation of the exhibition entitled “Dhajar/ Dullness” by the Palestinian artist Ayman Issa from Gaza (through Nov. 14th, daily from 10:00 - 16:00 except Sundays and Fridays and Eid Al-Fitr holiday), A.M. Qattan Foundation.

**PLAYS**

Monday 7
Poster-exhibit on the occasion of the Einstein Year 2005, Franco-German Cultural Centre (call for time)
18:00 “Artistas Por Palestina” (Artists for Palestine). A series of Spanish paintings, an initiative of the Consulate General of Spain in Jerusalem, the Spanish Cooperation Office and
the Spanish NGO Asamblea de Cooperación Por la Paz (through Nov. 13th) Khalil Sakakini Centre

Saturday 19
18:00 Inauguration of the photography exhibition entitled “The Creation of the Palestinian Youth Orchestra” by the German photographer Peter Dammann (through Nov. 26th, daily from 10:00-17:00 except Sundays and Fridays), A.M. Qattan Foundation

CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

Monday 21
17:00 Norwegian Youth Film Festival: Gurin with Fox Tail, Al-Kasaba Theatre

Tuesday 22
17:00 Norwegian Youth Film Festival: Only Clouds Move the Stars, Al-Kasaba Theatre

Wednesday 23
17:00 Norwegian Youth Film Festival: Maya StoneFace, Al-Kasaba Theatre

Thursday 24
17:00 Norwegian Youth Film Festival: Captain Sabertooth, Al-Kasaba Theatre

Friday 25
16:00 Norwegian Youth Film Festival: The Hedge of Thorns, Al-Kasaba Theatre
16:30 Finding Friends, Al-Kasaba Theatre

CONCERTS

Tuesday 1
19:30 Turab, Ramallah Cultural Palace

Tuesday 8
Concert by the German Hip Hop/Rap group “Blumentopf,” (time and venue to be announced in the local press)

Monday 28
19:00 Tango music and dance show by the Italian group “Sestetto Francesco Venerucci,” in cooperation with the Consulate General of Italy in Jerusalem, Al-Kasaba Theatre

FILMS

The Popular Art Centre will screen films from its library for groups of five persons and above by prior reservation only.

Tuesday 1
18:00 Ya Ana Ya Khalti (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:30 Boha (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Wednesday 2
14:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
15:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
16:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
17:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
19:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
21:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Saturday 5
14:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
15:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
16:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
17:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
18:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
19:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
21:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Sunday 6
14:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
15:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
16:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
17:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
19:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
21:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Monday 7
18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
19:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:30 Kingdom of Heave, Al-Kasaba Theatre

Tuesday 8
18:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
18:30 Taxi nach Leibzig (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre
18:30 Thanners neuer Job (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre
19:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:30 Kingdom of Heave, Al-Kasaba Theatre

Wednesday 9
18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
18:30 Massaker (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre
20:30 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Thursday 10
18:00 Sayyed Al-A’atifi (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
18:30 Kuscheltiere (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre
19:00 Al Bu’d Amtar (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:30 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Friday 11
18:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
19:00 Kingdom of Heave, Al-Kasaba Theatre
20:30 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre

Saturday 12
18:30 Ausgeklinkt (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre
18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 13</td>
<td>19:00 Jay fil Saree' (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Sayyed Al-At'ifi (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
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<td>Thursday 17</td>
<td>18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 18:30 Manila (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 19</td>
<td>18:00 Jay fil Saree' (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 18:30 Der Feinkosthaendler(German), Franco-German Cultural Centre 19:00 Yasmine’s Song, Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 20</td>
<td>18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 18:30 Ein Moerderiches Maedchen(German), Franco-German Cultural Centre 19:00 Kingdom of Heaven, Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 21</td>
<td>18:00 13th District, Al-Kasaba Theatre 19:00 Boha (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 22</td>
<td>18:00 Boha (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 18:30 Das Duell (German), Franco-German Cultural Centre 19:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 23</td>
<td>18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 18:30 Mischka (French), Franco-German Cultural Centre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 24</td>
<td>19:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 The Great Challenge, Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 25</td>
<td>18:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 19:00 Boha (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 26</td>
<td>18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 19:00 The Great Challenge, Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Kingdom of Heaven, Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 27</td>
<td>18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 19:00 Kingdom of Heaven, Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 28</td>
<td>18:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 13th District, Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 29</td>
<td>18:00 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 19:00 Kingdom of Heaven, Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 30</td>
<td>18:00 Ya Ana Ya Khalti (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 18:30 Mischka (French), Franco-German Cultural Centre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 31</td>
<td>19:00 Harb Italia (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre 20:30 Jay fil Saree’ (Arabic), Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
<td>Al-Kasaba Theatre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLAYS**

- **Saturday 12**  
  17:00 Cinderella, Al-Kasaba Theatre

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

- **Monday 7**  
  20:00 Quiz Night, Grand Park Hotel

- **Tuesday 8**  
  18:30 “Adversary Images, Geniuses & Significance for Communication,” a lecture in Arabic by Dr. Gehad Mazarweh, University of Freiburg, Franco-German Cultural Centre

- **Saturday 12**  
  08:30 – 17:00 International conference: “Cross Overlook on Women’s position in Arab Societies around the Mediterranean Basin,” Franco-German Cultural Centre

- **Monday 14**  
  20:00 Quiz Night, Grand Park Hotel

- **Monday 21**  
  20:00 Quiz Night, Grand Park Hotel

- **Saturday 26**  
  18:30 Lecture & recital of “Pau Celan” by Prof. Dr. Thomas Boening, University of Freiburg (with Arabic translation), Franco-German Cultural Centre

- **Thursday 28**  
  20:00 Quiz Night (final game), Grand Park Hotel
Herbal Medicine

Self-Heal (Prunella Vulgaris)

Self-Heal is a popular plant in Europe due to its wound-healing properties. It is widely used to stop bleeding. According to the theory that says that plants heal the part of the body that they resemble, its feather-like flowers, which resemble the throat, were used for inflammations of the mouth and throat.

The upper parts of the plant are used in several ways. The tincture is used for almost all kinds of bleeding, including excessive menstruation and blood in the urine. The infusion is also indicated for similar ailments, in addition to treating diarrhoea (due to its bitter taste) and its properties as a fortifier for the body, to be taken in spring. The fresh leaves of the plant are used to make compresses to be applied to clean wounds. The ointment made from Self-Heal is indicated for bleeding associated with haemorrhoids. The eyewash, which should be strained very well, can be used once a week to treat tired and puffed eyes. Self-Heal can also be used to prepare a gargoyle and mouthwash to treat bleeding gums and inflammations of the mouth and throat.

The feather-like flowers are widely used in China to prepare a liquid to treat cases of extreme agitation and anger, high blood pressure, and hyperactivity in children.

It is always advisable to refer to a doctor before using Self-Heal to treat vaginal bleeding and blood in the urine.

Restaurant Review

Café Bonjour
John Paul II Street
Bethlehem
Tel. 02-2740406
Open Monday – Saturday from 8 a.m. to midnight, Sunday from 1 p.m.

Stylish decor aside, Bonjour offers a little taste of everything, but tradition. A cozy student café near Bethlehem University, it has a crowd of young regulars creating a pleasantly seductive atmosphere. The food, the music, the drinks and the people make it unique. Deceivingly, the only hint from the outside that Bonjour is a coffee shop is the enormous electric Bonjour sign. Once you step through the door and into that wonderful café du coin, you feel that this place is going to live up to its billboard sign. The interior looks like something Bethlehem needed: peach walls, earth tones, wood trim and nice bar counters all wrapped in a subdued cozy living room light. That special style, mixed with a pseudo intellectual atmosphere creates a courtyard for dining inside, while blocking the clamour of the street outside.

What makes Bonjour different is the extremely clever use of furnishings. The inner part of the café is predominately arranged in groupings of big, fat, plush comfortable couches. Low tables are centred in private booth arrangements, leaving enough open space for large gatherings and for mingling. The floor plan, with wide comfortable aisles between seating areas, makes it perfect for singles to meet, families to entertain or people to do business.

Bonjour serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The breakfast specials include eggs done in a variety of ways, accompanied by bread freshly baked on the premises. Bonjour’s bakery also turns out pastries, including croissants and cinnamon rolls. The eclectic menu features Southern-style fired chicken, steaks, and quesadillas, a Mexican/Spanish turnover filled with cheese. Bonjour’s Greek salad on a warm evening is extremely refreshing.

Just hanging out there with a book while sipping a warm cappuccino followed by some delicious pastries is totally feasible. The owners had visited European cafés, loved them and henceforth created the theme in their own café. The staff is professional, graceful and cool. Prices are extremely affordable.

Website Review

www.bethlehem2000.org/cchp

This month’s review is about the management of cultural heritage in Bethlehem, and the website of the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, which was an outcome of the Bethlehem 2000 Project started in 1998 to prepare for the year 2000 celebrations in Bethlehem.

The website boasts a simple layout in the form of a two column format: navigation on the left and the detail on the right, which results in a website conceived to be easily managed and updated. The background teal colour has a soothing effect on the viewer, with the detail area in white making for a good contrast and good readability for the general public. The site is informational by nature and hence tends to illustrate the headings in the left navigation, with lots of material. That is the primary concern for sites of this nature, and it similarly is very easy to lose the viewer in the detail. The E-Cards section serves to liven up the site with some well-designed, themed e-cards which one can send to friends and family.

The recognition of donor organizations is evident in the sections, and the Contact Us, Links and Search Our Site are a welcome gesture to keep the viewers abreast with what is happening in the field and in Bethlehem in particular. Some minor shortcomings are that the Picture Gallery is very limited, which can easily be rectified with more material, and the New Heritage Law is all in Arabic. For the English text one has to look elsewhere. A link or an English translation of the main aspects of the law would have been a welcome addition. The Inventory page is under construction, with no date indicating when it will be ready. This does not bode well for people to revisit, unless they are avid heritage lovers.

Overall, the efforts of the designers are well noted and this site has a good beginning and will surely develop in the future with continued support. But until that time, the site remains frail and will definitely need a lot of attention in order to become a rich and viable one.

Gabriel Batato, IT Specialist
East Jerusalem (02)

Al-Jawal Theatre Group
Telefax: 628 0655

Al-Kasaba Theatre
Tel: 628 4052, Fax: 627 6310
hanna@alkasaba.org

Al-Ma’mal Foundation for Contemporary Art
Tel: 628 3457, Fax: 627 2312
info@almalmanfoundation.org
www.almalmanfoundation.org

Al-Ruwah Theatre Group
Tel: 052 227 9607
alruwahtheatre2000@yahoo.com
Tel: 052 227 9607
Fax: 052 227 9606

British Council
Tel: 626 7111, Fax: 628 3021
britishcouncil@ps.britishcouncil.org
www.britishcouncil.org/ps

Community Action Centre (CAC)
Tel: 627 3352
www.cac.alquds.edu

French Cultural Centre
Tel: 628 2451 / 626 2236, Fax: 628 4324
British Council Asia Pacific
Tel: 627 3352
helpdesk@britishcouncil.org

Gallery Anadiel
Tel: 628 2859, Fax: 581 7853
www.alanadiel.org

Goethe Institute
Tel: 586 0627, Fax: 561 8431

Hakawati Theatre Company
Tel: 628 6098; Fax: 628 6099
cooperac@netvision.net.il

Jerusalem Centre for Arabic Music
Tel: 627 4774, Fax: 656 2469
mkurd@yahoo.com

Jerusalem Centre for Islamic Heritage
Tel: 627 7141, Fax: 627 7142

Jerusalem Centre for Palestinian Heritage
Tel: 628 6098; Fax: 628 6099
cooperac@netvision.net.il

Jerusalem Centre for Palestinian Heritage
Tel: 627 1711, Fax: 627 1710
info@ncm.birzeit.edu, www.birzeit.edu/music

The Palestinian Art Court - Al Hoash
Tel: 627 6686 / 9
Fax: 628 4687
paitartco@yahoo.com
www.alhoash.org

Theatre Day Productions
Tel: 585 4513; Fax: 583 4233
tdp@theatreday.org, www.theatreday.org

Turkish Cultural Centre
Tel: 540 0592; Fax: 532 3310
kudustur@netvision.net.il

Yabous Productions
Tel: 626 1045; Fax: 626 1372
info@yabous.org, www.yabous.org

Bethlehem (02)

Al-Harah Theatre
Tel: 276 7758
alharahtheater@maktoob.com

Al-Liga’ Centre for Religious & Heritage Studies in the Holy Land
Tel: 274 1639

Alliance Française de Bethléem
Tel: 276 0777
albetheh@p-ol.com

Artas Folklore Center
Tel: 276 0533
artas_heritage@yahoo.com

Bethlehem Academy of Music/ Bethlehem Music Society
Tel: 277 7141, Fax: 277 7142

Bethlehem Peace Center
Tel: 276 6677, Fax: 274 1057
info@peacecenter.org, www.peacenter.org

Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation
Tel: 276 6244, Fax: 276 6241
info@bethlehem2000.org
www.bethlehem2000.org/cchp

Inad Centre for Theatre & Arts
Tel: 276 6263; Fax: 276 7746
inad38@yahoo.com

Jericho (02)

Jericho Community Centre
Tel: 232 5007

Jericho Culture & Art Center
Tel: 232 1047, Fax: 232 1047

Municipality Theatre
Tel: 232 2417, Fax: 232 2604

International Centre of Bethlehem-Dar Annadwa
Tel: 277 0047, Fax: 277 0048
addar@annadwa.org, www.annadwa.org

ITIP Center “Italian Tourist Information Point”
Tel: 276 0411
itipcenter@yahoo.com

Palestinian Heritage Center
Tel: 274 2381; 274 2642
mahasaca@palestinianheritagecenter.com
www.palestinianheritagecenter.com

Palestinian Group for the Revival of Popular Heritage
Tel: 274 7945, Fax: 274 7945

Sabreen Association for Artistic Development
Tel: 275 0091, Fax: 275 0092
info-bidayat@sabreen.com

Tent of Nations
Tel: 274 3071, Fax: 276 7446
tnations@p-ol.com
www.tentofnations.org

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
Tel: 274 5989, Fax: 274 5989

The Higher Institute of Music
Tel: 275 2492
highiom@hotmail.com, www.thehigherinstituteofmusic.ps

Turathuna - Centre for Palestinian Heritage (B. Uni.)
Tel: 274 1241, Fax: 274 4440
pdaoud@bethlehem.edu, www.bethlehem.edu

Hebron (02)

Association d’Echanges Cultures Hebron-France (AECHF)
Tel: 222 4811

Beit Et Tifl Compound
Tel: 229 1559
tdphebron@alqudsnet.com

Beit Illa Cultural Center
Tel: 221 1019, Fax:02-628 8448
info-bidayat@sabreen.com

British Council - Hebron Contact Point
(Palestine Polytechnic University)
Tel: 229 1922 - 229 1243
info@p-ol.com

Palestinian Children’s Art Center (PCAC)
Tel: 229 1922
info@p-ol.com

Palestinian Child Arts Center (PCAC)
Tel: 229 1922
info@p-ol.com

Palatal Institut (ITIP)
Tel: 229 1922
info@p-ol.com

Palestinian Group for the Revival of Popular Heritage
Tel: 275 0091, Fax: 275 0092

Palestinian Heritage Center
Tel: 274 2381; 274 2642
mahasaca@palestinianheritagecenter.com
www.palestinianheritagecenter.com

Palestinian Group for the Revival of Popular Heritage
Tel: 274 7945, Fax: 274 7945

Sabreen Association for Artistic Development
Tel: 275 0091, Fax: 275 0092
info-bidayat@sabreen.com

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Tel: 274 3071, Fax: 276 7446
tnations@p-ol.com
www.tentofnations.org

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
Tel: 274 5989, Fax: 274 5989

The Higher Institute of Music
Tel: 275 2492
highiom@hotmail.com, www.thehigherinstituteofmusic.ps

Turathuna - Centre for Palestinian Heritage (B. Uni.)
Tel: 274 1241, Fax: 274 4440
pdaoud@bethlehem.edu, www.bethlehem.edu

Nablus (09)

British Council Info-Point (An-Najjah University)
Tel: 237 5950

Cultural Centre for Child Development
Tel: 238 6890; Fax: 239 7518
nutaleb@hotmail.com, www.nutaleb.cjb.net

French Cultural Centre
Tel: 238 5914, Fax: 238 7593
ccfnaplouse@consulfrance-jerusalem.org

Ramallah & Al-Bireh (02)

A. M. Qattan Foundation
Tel: 296 0544, Fax: 298 4886
info@qattanfoundation.org, www.qattanfoundation.org

Al-Kamandjâti Association
Tel: 297 3101
info@alkamandjati.com, www.alkamandjati.com

Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque
Tel: 296 5292/3, Fax: 296 5294
info@alkasaba.org, www.alkasaba.org

Al-Rahhalah Theatre
Tel: 298 8091
alrahhalah@hotmail.com

Amideast
Tel: 240 8023, Fax: 240 8017
westbank-gaza@amideast.org, www.amideast.org

Ashtar for Theatre Production
Tel: 298 0037, Fax: 296 0326
info@ashtar-theatre.org, www.ashtar-theatre.org

Baladna Cultural Center
Tel: 295 8435, Fax: 295 8435

British Council
Tel: 296 3293-6, Fax: 296 3297
britishcouncil@ps.britishcouncil.org,
www.britishcouncil.org/ps

Carmel Cultural Foundation
Tel: 298 7375, Fax: 298 7374

Cinema Production Center
Tel: 298 6842
ccp@p-ol.com

El-Funoun Dance Troupe
Tel: 240 2853, Fax: 240 2851
el-funoun.org

First Ramallah Group, Sareyyet Ramallah
Tel: 295 2706 - 295 26 90, Fax: 298 0583
sireyeh@p-ol.com, www.sireyeh.org

Franco-German Cultural Centre Ramallah
Tel: 298 1922 / 7727, Fax: 298 0583
info@ccf-berlin.de

Greek Cultural Centre - ”Macedonia”
Tel: 298 1736/ 298 0546
makdonia@p-ol.com

In’ash Al-Urs Society- Center For Heritage & Folklore Studies
Tel: 240 1123 / 2402876, Fax: 2401544
Usra@p-ol.com, www.inash.org
Gaza Strip (08)

Al-Qattan Centre for the Child
Tel: 283 9929, Fax: 283 9949
reem@ccc.qattanfoundation.org
www.qattanfoundation.org/ccc

Ashtar for Culture & Arts
Telefax: 283 3569
atlas9@palnet.com

British Council
Tel: 282 5394, Fax: 282 0512
britishcouncil@ps.britishcouncil.org, www.britishcouncil.org/pac

Culture & Free Thought Association
Telefax: 285 1299

Culture & Light Centre
Telefax: 286 8569
ifar@palnet.com

French Cultural Centre
Tel: 286 7883, Fax: 282 8811
ccfgaza@palnet.net

Gaza Theatre
Tel: 282 4860, Fax: 282 4870

Holst Cultural Centre
Tel: 281 0476, Fax: 280 8966
mncrg@palnet.com

Rashad Shawwa Cultural Centre
Tel: 286 4599, Fax: 286 8965
shawacentre@hotmail.com

Science & Culture Centre
Tel: 281 0476, Fax: 280 8966

Theatre Day Productions
Telefax: 283 6766
tdpgaza@palnet.com

East Jerusalem (02)

Addar Hotel (30 suites; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 626 3111, Fax: 626 0791
www.addar-hotel.com

Alcazar Hotel (38 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 1111, Fax: 628 7360
admin@jrscazer.com, www.jrscazar.com

Ambassador Hotel (122 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 541 2222, Fax: 582 8202
amb@netvision.net.il, www.jerusalemambassador.com

American Colony Hotel (84 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 9777, Fax: 627 9779
reserve@amcol.co.il, www.americancolony.com

Austrian Hospice
Tel: 626 5800, Fax: 627 1472
office@austrianhospice.com, www.austrianhospice.com

Azzahra Hotel (15 rooms, res)
Tel: 628 2447, Fax: 628 3960
azzahrahotel@shabaka.net, www.azzahrahotel.com

Capitol Hotel (54 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 2561/2, Fax: 626 4352

Capitolina Hotel (ex. YMCA)
(55 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 6688, Fax: 626 6301
capitol@cast-jerusalem-ymca.org

Christmas Hotel (37 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 2588, Fax: 626 4417

Commodore Hotel (45 rooms; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 1414, Fax: 628 4701

Gloria Hotel (94 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 628 2431, Fax: 628 2401
gloriah@netvision.net.il

Golden Walls Hotel (112 rooms)
Tel: 627 2416, Fax: 626 4658
info@goldenwalls.com, www.goldenwalls.com

Holy Land Hotel (105 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 2888 / 628 4841, Fax: 628 0265

Jerusalem Hotel (14 rooms; bf; mr; res; live music)
Tel: 628 3282, Fax: 628 3282
raed@jrscazar.com, www.jnscazar.com

Jerusalem Claridge Hotel (30 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 234 7137, Fax: 234 7139
claridge@palnet.com

Jerusalem Meridian Hotel (74 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 5212, Fax: 628 5214
www.jerusalem-meridian.com

Jerusalem Panorama Hotel (74 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 2277, Fax: 626 3699
panaroma@trendline.com.il

Knights Palace Guesthouse (50 rooms)
Tel: 628 2537, Fax: 628 2401
kp@actcom.co.il

Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center
Tel: 298 7374, Fax: 298 7375
www.sakakini.org

Manar Cultural Center
Tel: 295 7937, Fax: 298 7598

Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art (PACA)
Tel: 295 1849, Telefax: 296 7013
info@pal-paca.org

Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE)
Tel: 295 1849, Telefax: 296 7013
info@pal-paca.org

Popular Art Center
Tel: 240 3891, Fax: 240 2851
info@popularartcentre.org, www.popularartcentre.org

Ramallah Cultural Palace
Tel: 298 4704 - 295 2105, Fax: 295 2107
events@ramallahculturalpalace.org
info@ramallahculturalpalace.org
www.ramallahculturalpalace.org

RIWAQ: Centre for Architectural Conservation
Tel: 240 6887, Fax: 240 6986
riwaq@palnet.com, www.riwaq.org

Shashat
Tel: 2 297 3336, Fax: 297 3337
www.shashat.org, info@shashat.org

Sharek Youth Forum
Tel: 296 7741, Fax: 296 7742

Tamer Institute for Community Education
Tel: 298 6121 / 2, Fax: 298 8160
tamer@palnet.com, www.tamerinst.org

Tantoura Puppet Theatre
Tel: 281 0476, Fax: 280 8966
tantoura2000@yahoo.com

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
Tel: 295 9070, Fax: 295 9071

The League of Palestinian Artists
Tel: 295 7939

The Palestinian Network of Art Centres
Tel: 240 7939

West Bank (01)

Al-Qattan Centre for the Child
Tel: 283 9929, Fax: 283 9949
reem@ccc.qattanfoundation.org
www.qattanfoundation.org/ccc

Ashtar for Culture & Arts
Telefax: 283 3569
atlas9@palnet.com

British Council
Tel: 282 5394, Fax: 282 0512
britishcouncil@ps.britishcouncil.org, www.britishcouncil.org/pac

Culture & Free Thought Association
Telefax: 285 1299

Culture & Light Centre
Telefax: 286 8569
ifar@palnet.com

French Cultural Centre
Tel: 286 7883, Fax: 282 8811
cctgaza@palnet.net

Gaza Theatre
Tel: 282 4860, Fax: 282 4870

Holst Cultural Centre
Tel: 281 0476, Fax: 280 8966
mncrg@palnet.com

Rashad Shawwa Cultural Centre
Tel: 286 4599, Fax: 286 8965
shawacentre@hotmail.com

Science & Culture Centre
Tel: 281 0476, Fax: 280 8966

Theatre Day Productions
Telefax: 283 6766
tdpgaza@palnet.com
Lawrence Hotel (30 rooms; business facilities; res)
Tel: 626 4208, Fax: 627 1285
karine@actcom.co.il

Metropol Hotel
Tel: 628 2507, Fax: 628 5134

Mount of Olives Hotel (81 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 4877, Fax: 627 1285
info@mtolives.com, www.mtolives.com

Mount Scopus Hotel (65 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 582 8891, Fax: 582 8825
mtscopus@netvision.net.il

New Imperial Hotel (45 rooms)
Tel: 627 2000, Fax: 627 1530

New Metropole Hotel (25 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 628 3846, Fax: 627 7485

New Regent Hotel (24 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 4540, Fax: 626 4023
atictour@palnet.com

New Swedish Hostel
Tel: 627 7855, Fax: 624 4124
swedishhost@yahoo.com, www.geocities.com/swedishhostel

Notre Dame Guesthouse
Tel: 627 9111, Fax: 627 1995

Petra Hostel and Hotel
Tel: 628 6618

Pilgrims Inn Hotel (16 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 2416
info@goldenwalls.com

Paradise Hotel (129 rooms; cf; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 274 4542/3, Fax: 274 4544
paradise@p-ol.com

Saint Antonio Hotel (36 rooms; mr; cf; res)
Tel: 274 4308, Fax: 277 0524

Santa Maria Hotel (83 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 276 7374/5, Fax: 277 0063
smaria@p-ol.com

Shepherd Hotel
Tel: 274 6056, Fax: 274 4888
info@shepherdhotel.com, www.shepherdhotel.com

St. Nicholas Hotel (25 rooms; res)
Tel: 274 3040/1, Fax: 274 3043

St. Andrew’s Scottish Guesthouse
“The Scottie” (17 rooms + 1 hostel)
Tel: 673 2401; Fax: 673 1711
standjer@netvision.net.il, www.scothotels.co.il

St. George Hotel (144 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 7232 / 627 7323, Fax: 628 2575
stgeorge1@bezeqint.net
www.hotelstgeorge-jer.com

St. George’s Pilgrim Guest House (25 rooms; bf; res)
Tel: 628 3302, Fax: 628 2253
sghostel@bezeqint.net

St. Nicholas Hotel (25 rooms; res; mr)
Tel: 274 3043, Fax: 274 3045

St. Vincent Guest House
Tel: 676 0967/8, Fax: 676 0970
svincent@p-ol.com, www.saintvincentguesthouse.net

Talita Kumi Guest House (22 rooms; res; mr; cf)
Tel: 274 1247, Fax: 274 1847

Jericho (02)

Al-Zaytouna Guest House (7 rooms; bf; res; mr)
Telefax: 274 2016

Hisham Palace Hotel
Tel: 232 2414, Fax: 232 3109

Inter-Continental Jericho (181 rooms; su; bf; cf; mr; res; ter; tb)
Tel: 231 1200, Fax: 231 1222

Jericho Resort Village (60 rooms; 46 studios; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 232 1255, Fax: 232 2189
marketing@jericho-resort.com, www.jericho-resort.com

Jerusalem Hotel (22 rooms)
Tel: 232 2444, Fax: 992 3109

Telepherique & Sultan Tourist Center (56 rooms)
Tel: 232 1590, Fax: 232 1598
info@jericho-cablecar.com

Hebron (02)

Al-Zaytouna Guest House (7 rooms; bf; res; mr)
Telefax: 274 2016

Hisham Palace Hotel
Tel: 232 2414, Fax: 232 3109

Jericho (02)

Inter-Continental Jericho (181 rooms; su; bf; cf; mr; res; ter; tb)
Tel: 231 1200, Fax: 231 1222

Jericho Resort Village (60 rooms; 46 studios; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 232 1255, Fax: 232 2189
marketing@jericho-resort.com, www.jericho-resort.com

Jerusalem Hotel (22 rooms)
Tel: 232 2444, Fax: 992 3109

Telepherique & Sultan Tourist Center (56 rooms)
Tel: 232 1590, Fax: 232 1598
info@jericho-cablecar.com

Hebron (02)

Hebron Tourist Hotel
Tel: 222 6760
**Nablus (09)**

**Regency Hotel** (76 rooms; su; res; tb; cf; bf)
Tel: 225 7389/98, Fax: 225 7388
regency@palnet.com, www.hebron-regency.com

**Al-Qaser Hotel** (38 rooms; bf; cr; mr; res)
Tel: 238 5444, Fax: 238 5944
alqasr@netvision.net.il

**Al-Yasmeen Hotel & Souq** (30 rooms; cr; mr; res)
Tel: 233 3555 Fax: 233 3666
yasmeen@palnet.com, www.alyasmeen.com

**Asia Hotel** (28 rooms, res)
Telefax: 238 6220

**Chrystal Motel** (12 rooms)
Telefax: 233 3281

**Al-Quds International Hotel** (44 rooms; 2 suites; bf; mr; res)
Telefax: 2825181, 2826223, 2863481, 2822269

**Commodore Gaza Hotel** (120 rooms; su; bf)
Tel: 283 4400, Fax: 282 2623
hotel@commodorgaza.com

**Gaza International Hotel** (30 rooms; bf; cr; res; sp)
Tel: 283 0001/2/3/4, Fax: 283 0005

**Grand Palace Hotel** (20 rooms; cr; mr; cf; res; internet)
Tel: 284 9498 / 6468, Fax: 284 9497
grand_palace@p-i-s.com

**Jifna village**

**Al-Muroj Pension** (8 rooms; res)
Tel: 295 7858

**Al-Qaser Hotel & Souq** (30 rooms; cr; mr; res)
Tel: 233 3555 Fax: 233 3666
yasmeen@palnet.com, www.alyasmeen.com

**Asia Hotel** (28 rooms, res)
Telefax: 238 6220

**Chrystal Motel** (12 rooms)
Telefax: 233 3281

**Gemzo Suites** (90 executive suites; cs; mr; pf; gm; res)
Tel: 240 9729, Fax: 240 8532
gemzo@palnet.com, www.gemzosuites.net

**Manarh Hotel**
Tel: 295 2122, Telefax: 295 3274
fyaraj@hotmail.com, www.manarahhotel.com.ps

**Merryland Hotel** (25 rooms)
Tel: 298 7176, Telefax: 298 7074

**Pension Miami** (12 rooms)
Telefax: 295 6808

**Plaza Hotel**
Telefax: 298 2020

**Ramallah Hotel** (22 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 295 3544, Fax: 295 5029

**Retno Hotel** (15 rooms & su; res; mr; gm; sp)
Telefax: 295 0022
retnohotel@yahoo.com

**Royal Court Suite Hotel** (24 suites; res)
Telefax: 296 4040, Fax: 296 4047

**Al-A’in Hotel** (24 rooms and suites; mr; cf)
Tel: 240 5925, 240 4353 Fax: 240 4332
alainhotel@hotmail.com

**Al-Bireh Tourist Hotel** (50 rooms; cf; res)
Telefax: 240 0803

**Al-Hajal Hotel** (22 rooms; bf)
Telefax: 298 7858

**Al-Murouj Pension** (Jifna village) (8 rooms; res)
Tel: 295 7858

**Al-Wihdah Hotel**
Telefax: 298 0412

**Ankars Suites** (22 suites; cf; res; bf)
Tel: 295 2602, Fax: 295 2603
info@ankarssuites.com

**Best Eastern Hotel** (91 rooms; cf; res)
Tel: 296 0450, Fax: 295 8452
besteastern@jrol.com

**City Inn Palace Hotel** (47 rooms; bf; cr; res)
Tel: 240 8080, Fax: 240 8091

**Cliff Hotel** (24 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 282 3450 Fax: 282 0742

**La Emir Hotel** (22 rooms; su; res)
Tel: 212 2345

**Marna House** (17 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 282 2624, Fax: 282 3322

**Royal Court Suite Hotel** (24 suites; res)
Tel: 296 4040, Fax: 296 4047

**Retno Hotel** (15 rooms & su; res; mr; gm; sp)
Telefax: 295 0022
retnohotel@yahoo.com

**Richardson Hotel** (22 rooms; cr; mr; res)
Telefax: 298 1234

**Rocky Hotel** (22 rooms; cf; res; ter)
Tel: 296 4470 Telefax: 296 1871

**Summerland Tourist Village** (casino; cf; res)
Tel: 284 7171, Fax: 286 4008

**Zahrat Al-Madain**
Tel: 282 6801

**Key:** su = suites; bf = business facilities; mr = meeting rooms; cr = conference facilities; res = restaurant; ter = terrace bar; tb = turkish bath; cf = coffee shop; gm = gym; pf = parking facilities; sp = swimming pool

---

**Ramallah & Al-Bireh (02)**

**Al-A’in Hotel** (24 rooms and suites; mr; cf)
Tel: 240 5925, 240 4353 Fax: 240 4332
alainhotel@hotmail.com

**Al-Bireh Tourist Hotel** (50 rooms; cf; res)
Telefax: 240 0803

**Al-Hajal Hotel** (22 rooms; bf)
Telefax: 298 7858

**Al-Murouj Pension** (Jifna village) (8 rooms; res)
Tel: 295 7858

**Al-Wihdah Hotel**
Telefax: 298 0412

**Ankars Suites** (22 suites; cf; res; bf)
Tel: 295 2602, Fax: 295 2603
info@ankarssuites.com

**Best Eastern Hotel** (91 rooms; cf; res)
Tel: 296 0450, Fax: 295 8452
besteastern@jrol.com

**City Inn Palace Hotel** (47 rooms; bf; cr; res)
Tel: 240 8080, Fax: 240 8091

**Cliff Hotel** (24 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 282 3450 Fax: 282 0742

**Commodore Gaza Hotel** (120 rooms; su; bf)
Tel: 283 4400, Fax: 282 2623
hotel@commodorgaza.com

**Gaza International Hotel** (30 rooms; bf; cr; res; sp)
Tel: 283 0001/2/3/4, Fax: 283 0005

**Grand Palace Hotel** (20 rooms; cr; mr; cf; res; internet)
Tel: 284 9498 / 6468, Fax: 284 9497
grand_palace@p-i-s.com

**Hotel Sea Breeze**
Tel: 283 0277, 284 2654, Fax: 282 4231

**Marna House** (17 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 282 2624, Fax: 282 3322

**Palestine Hotel** (54 rooms; bf; cr; mr; res)
Tel: 282 3355, Fax: 286 0056

**Summerland Tourist Village** (casino; cf; res)
Tel: 284 7171, Fax: 286 4008

**Zahrat Al-Madain**
Tel: 282 6801
## East Jerusalem (02)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Tel:</th>
<th>Fax:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Dolphin</td>
<td>532 2001, Fax 581 1737</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borderline Restaurant Café</td>
<td>532 8342</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café Imperial</td>
<td>626 0993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Dorada Coffee shop &amp; Internet Café</td>
<td>626 0993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Seasons Restaurants &amp; Coffee Shop</td>
<td>628 6061, Fax: 628 6097</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodies</td>
<td>585 3223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan Zaman (Jerusalem Hotel)</td>
<td>627 1356</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lotus and Olive Garden (Jerusalem Meridian Hotel)</td>
<td>628 5212</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mocca Café (Beit Hanina)</td>
<td>583 6821</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon Light Pizza</td>
<td>627 5277</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nafoura</td>
<td>626 0034</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame - La Rotisserie</td>
<td>627 9114; Fax: 627 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panorama Restaurant</td>
<td>628 3344</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papa Andreas</td>
<td>628 4433</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasha’s</td>
<td>582 5162; 532 8342</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patisserie Suisse</td>
<td>628 4377</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>628 9770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza House</td>
<td>627 3970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Arab</td>
<td>583 3226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Lunch</td>
<td>628 4228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gate Café</td>
<td>627 4282</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Patio (Christmas Hotel)</td>
<td>628 2588</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Restaurant</td>
<td>628 3051</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

## Bethlehem (02)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Tel:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu Eli</td>
<td>274 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Shanab Restaurant</td>
<td>274 2985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-Kuz Café &amp; Bar</td>
<td>277 0047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andalos</td>
<td>274 3519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Makan Bar - Jacir Palce Inter-Continental Bethlehem</td>
<td>276 6777, Fax: 276 6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balloons</td>
<td>275 0221, Fax : 277 7115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baidar - Jacir Palace Inter-Continental Bethlehem</td>
<td>276 6777, Fax: 276 6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>274 1378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigar Bar - Jacir Palace Inter-Continental Bethlehem</td>
<td>276 6777, Fax: 276 6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dar Joudnah Coffee Shop</td>
<td>274 3212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Roof</td>
<td>274 3224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il’iyyeh Restaurant</td>
<td>277 0047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Terrasse</td>
<td>275 678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariachi (Grand Hotel)</td>
<td>274 1440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riwaq Courtyard - Jacir Palace Inter-Continental</td>
<td>276 6777, Fax: 276 6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherds Valley Village</td>
<td>277 3875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tachi Chinese</td>
<td>274 4382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaitouneh - Jacir Palace Inter-Continental Bethlehem</td>
<td>276 6777, Fax: 276 6754</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Jericho (02)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Tel:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Amara</td>
<td>232 3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Nafoura Restaurant</td>
<td>232 1255, Fax: 232 2189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>232 1255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigar Bar - Jacir Palace Inter-Continental Bethlehem</td>
<td>276 6777, Fax: 276 6754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dar Joudnah Coffee Shop</td>
<td>274 3212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Roof</td>
<td>274 3224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il’iyyeh Restaurant</td>
<td>277 0047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jericho Tent</td>
<td>232 3820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Jericho Tent</td>
<td>232 3820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papaya Park</td>
<td>050-286 067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samhouri</td>
<td>232 3252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Park</td>
<td>050-515 518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Trees</td>
<td>232 2781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallal</td>
<td>050-520 932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultan Restaurant - Jericho Cable Car</td>
<td>232 4025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tahan</td>
<td>232 2600</td>
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</table>

## Nablus (09)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Tel:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mankal</td>
<td>267 5362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rozana</td>
<td>238 5676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salim Afandi</td>
<td>237 1332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeit Ou Zaater (Al-Yasmeen Hotel)</td>
<td>238 3164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ramallah & Al-Bireh (02)**

Addar (Birzeit)
Tel: 281 0274

Almakan
Tel: 295 7766

Almonds
Tel: 295 7028

Al-Aseel
Tel: 298 0456

Al-Bardauni's
Tel: 295 1410

Al-Mattal
Tel: 298 6529

Angelo's
Tel: 295 6408

Baladna Ice Cream
Tel: 295 6721

Benny's
Tel: 296 0937

Caesar's (Grand Park Hotel)
Tel: 298 6194

Café Olé
Tel: 298 4135

Café Mocha Rena
Tel: 298 1460

Casablanca
Tel: 298 7658

Champs
Tel: 298 7188

Chinese House Restaurant
Tel: 296 4081

Cliff House (Rocky Hotel)
Tel: 296 4470

Darna
Tel: 295 0590

Elite Coffee House
Tel: 296 5169

Ein Al-Marj (Birzeit)
Tel: 281 0220/1

Fawanees
Tel: 298 7046

Kings
Tel: 296 4040

KSM - Caterers
Tel: 295 6813

La Strada
Tel: 296 5968

La Terrace
Tel: 298 7701

Mejana Restaurant
Tel: 296 7360

Mr. Pizza
Tel: 240 3016

Muntaza Restaurant & Garden
Tel: 295 6835

Osama's Pizza
Tel: 295 3270

Piano Restaurant
Tel: 298 7995

Pizza Inn
Tel: 298 1181/2

Plaza Restaurant & Park
Tel: 296 6020

Pollo-Loco (Mexican)
Tel: 296 1984

Pronto Resto-Café (Italian)
Tel: 288 7312

Pronto (Lebanese)
Tel: 295 3649

Rukab’s Ice Cream
Tel: 295 3467

Saba Sandwiches
Tel: 296 0116

Samer
Tel: 240 5338

Sangria’s
Tel: 295 6808

Season (Birzeit)
Tel: 2810575

Stones
Tel: 296 6038

Tabash (Jifna village)
Tel: 281 0932

Taboun
Tel: 298 0505

Tal El-Qamar Roof
Tel: 298 7905/6

The Orthodox Club
Tel: 296 6520

Tomasso's
Tel: 240 9991

Uruwan
Tel: 298 7783/4

Urobian Coffee shop
Tel: 295 7031, 296 6505

Vatche's Garden Restaurant
Tel: 296 5966, Fax 296 5988

Zarour Bar BQ
Tel: 295 6767, 296 4480

Zeit ou Zaater
Tel: 295 4455

Ziryab
Tel: 295 9093

Gaza Strip (08)

Abu Nuwas
Tel: 284 5211

Al-Andalus
Tel: 282 1272

Al-Baidar
Tel: 286 1321

Al-Deira
Tel: 283 8100/200

Al-Diwanea Tourist
Tel: 282 5062

Alladin
Tel: 282 3355

Al-Marsa
Tel: 286 3599

Al-Molouke
Tel: 286 8397
**East Jerusalem (02)**

- **Hospitals**
  - Augusta Victoria, Tel: 267 9911
  - Dajani Maternity, Tel: 583 3906
  - Hadassah (Ein Kerem), Tel: 677 7111
  - Hadassah (Mt. Scopus), Tel: 584 4111
  - Maqassed, Tel: 627 0222
  - Red Crescent Maternity, Tel: 628 6984
  - St. John’s Ophthalmic, Tel: 582 8325
  - St. Joseph, Tel: 582 8168
  - Clinics and Centers
  - Arab Health Center, Tel: 628 2725
  - CHS Clinics, Tel: 029 600240
  - Ibn Sina Medical Center, Tel: 540 9839
  - Jerusalem First Aid Clinic, Tel: 628 4105
  - Medical Relief Women’s Health Clinic, Tel: 583 3510
  - Palestinian Counseling Center, Tel: 656 2272
  - Peace Medical Center, Tel: 532 7111
  - Red Crescent Society, Tel: 586 056
  - Spafford Children’s Clinic, Tel: 628 4785
  - The Austrian Arab Community Clinic (AACC), Tel: 627 3246
  - The Jerusalem Princess Basma Center for Disabled Children, Tel: 628 3058

- **Bethlehem (02)**
  - Hospitals
    - Al-Dibs Maternity, Tel: 274 4242
    - Al-Hussein Government, Tel: 274 1181
    - Bethel Arab Society for Rehabilitation, Tel: 274 4049
    - Caritas Baby, Tel: 275 8500
    - Mental Health, Tel: 274 1150
    - Shepherd’s Field Hospital, Tel: 277 5090
    - St. Mary’s Maternity, Tel: 274 2443
    - The Holy Family, Tel: 274 1151
    - Clinics and Centers
      - Beit Shour Medical Center, Tel: 279 4443
      - Bethel Dental Center, Tel: 274 3300

- **Jericho (02)**
  - Hospitals
    - Jericho Government, Tel: 232 1967/80
    - Clinics and Centers
      - UPMRC, Tel: 232 2148

- **Nablus (09)**
  - Hospitals
    - Al-Aqsa Hospital and Medical Center, Tel: 09 294 7666
    - Al-Itthihad, Tel: 237 1491
    - Al-Watani, Tel: 238 0391
    - Al-Zakat Hospital (ToKarem), Tel: 09 268 0680
    - Aqra Maternity Home, Tel: 09 259 9800
    - Rafidia, Tel: 239 0390
    - Safit Emergency Governmental Hospital, Tel: 09 251 5111
    - Specialized Arab Hospital, Tel: 239 0390
    - St. Luke’s, Tel: 238 3818
    - UNRWA Qalqilia Hospital (Qalqilya), Tel: 09 294 0008
    - Clinics and Centers
      - Al-Amal Center, Tel: 238 3778
      - Arab Medical Center, Tel: 237 1515
      - Handicapped Equipment Center, Tel: 239 8687
      - Red Crescent Society, Tel: 238 2153
      - UPMRC, Tel: 283 7178

- **Ramallah & Al-Bireh (02)**
  - Hospitals
    - Arabcare Hospital, Tel: 284 6420
    - Al-Karmel Maternity Home, Tel: 247 1026
    - Al-Mustaqbal Hospital, Tel: 240 4562
    - Al-Nather Maternity Hospital, Tel: 295 2925
    - Ash-Sheikh Zayed Hospital, Tel: 298 8088
    - Birziet Maternity Home, Tel: 281 0616
    - Khaled Surgical Hospital, Tel: 295 5640
    - Ramallah Government Hospitals, Tel: 298 22167
    - Red Crescent Hospital, Tel: 240 6290
    - Clinics and Centers
      - Arab Medical Center, Tel: 295 4334
      - Arabcare Medical Center, Tel: 296 6420
      - Emergency & Trauma Center, Tel: 298 8098
      - Harb Heart Center, Tel: 296 0336
      - Modern Dental Center, Tel: 298 0630
      - Patients’ Friends Society
        - K. Abu Raya Rehabilitation Centre, Tel: 295 7060/1
        - Peace Medical Center, Tel: 295 9276
        - Red Crescent Society, Tel: 240 6260
      - UPMRC, Tel: 298 4423, 296 0686

- **Gaza Strip (08)**
  - Hospitals
    - Al-Ahli Al-Arab, Tel: 286 3014
    - Dar Al-Salam, Tel: 285 4240
    - Nasser, Tel: 205 1244
    - Shifa, Tel: 286 2765
    - Clinics and Centers
      - Arab Medical Center, Tel: 286 2163
    - Beit Hanoun Clinic, Tel: 285 8065
    - Dar Al-Shifa, Tel: 286 5520
    - Hagar (Handicapped Equipment Center), Tel: 284 2636
    - UPMRC, Tel: 282 7837

- **Banks**
  - Arab Bank (Al-Ezzar), Tel: 279 6671, Fax: 279 6677
  - Arab Bank (Al-Ram), Tel: 234 8710, Fax: 234 8717
  - Center for Development Consultancy (CDC), Tel: 583 3183, Fax: 583 3185
  - Commercial Bank of Palestine, Tel: 279 9886, Fax: 279 9258

- **Bethlehem (02)**
  - Arab Bank, Tel: 277 0800, Fax: 277 0888
  - Arab Land Bank, Tel: 274 4971
  - Jordan National Bank, Tel: 277 0351
  - Bank of Palestine Ltd., Tel: 276 5515/6, Fax: 276 5517
  - Palestine Investment Bank, Tel: 277 0888, Fax: 277 0889

- **Hebron (02)**
  - Arab-Bank, Tel: 222 4801/234
  - Bank, Tel: 222 6410, Fax: 222 6418
  - Bank of Palestine Ltd., Tel: 225 0001/2
  - Cairo-Amman Bank, (Welzi Al-Tuffah), Tel: 225 5335/4
  - Cairo-Amman Bank, (Al-Balad), Tel: 222 9803/4
  - Islamic Bank, Tel: 222 5748
  - Jordan Bank, Tel: 222 4351/3
  - Palestine Investment Bank, Tel: 225 2701/2/3/4
  - The Housing Bank, Tel: 225 0055

---

**Emergency Numbers**

**City**

- Jerusalem*
  - Fire 02-6282222
  - Ambulance 011
  - Police 100
- CHS (Old City Jerusalem) 101 / 050-319120
- Bethlehem 02-274 1172
- Gaza 08-2863631
- Hebron 02-232 2658
- Jericho 04-250 1225
- Nablus 09-238 3448
- Ramallah 02-295 6102
- Tulkarem 09-267 2106
- Qalqiliya 09-294 0440

**Border Crossings**

- Allenby Bridge 02-994 2302
- Arava Border 08-630 0555
- Erez Crossing 08-674 1672
- Rafah Border 08-673 4205
- Sheikh Hussen 04-609 3410

**Tourism and Antiquities**

- Bethlehem 02-277 0750/1
- Gaza 08-282 9027
- Hebron 02-232 4011
- Jericho 09-385 244
- Nablus 09-385 244

**Telephone Services**

- Information 144
- Phone Repairs* 166
- Telegrams* 171
- Time* 155
- Wake Up* 174
- International operator* 188
- Weather 03-966 8855

* can only be called from East Jerusalem
Population and Demography (revised - 2005)
Projected Population (15/10/2005)
Palestinian Territory ..........................................................3,798,839
West Bank (all Governorate) ..............................................2,393,292
Gaza Strip ........................................................................1,405,547
Jerusalem Governorate ......................................................400,887
Projected Population by Age (Mid 2005)
0-17 years ........................................................................52.7%
18-64 ..............................................................................44.2%
65+ .................................................................................. 3.1%
Sex Ratio (2005) .................................................................102.7
Fertility rate (2003) ............................................................5.6
Population Natural Increase Rate (2005)............................3.3

Land Use and Agriculture
Palestinian Territory (PT) Area (Km2) ...............................6,020
Area of PT by Type of Use (diferent reference periods)
• Agricultural Land (2003) ..............................................24.7%
• Forest and Wooded Land (2003) .................................1.5%
• Palestinian Built-up Land (2000) .................................9.7%
Area of built-up land in Israeli Settlements of the total area of West Bank (August, 2004) ..................3.3%
Cultivated Area (Km2)-2002/2003 ....................................1,815

Illiteracy rate for persons 15 years and over (2004) ..........7.7%
No. of schools .................................................................2,192
No. of school teachers .....................................................38,805
No. of school students ....................................................1,043,935
Students per class (schools) ............................................35.0
Drop-out rate (schools 2003/2004) ....................................9.9%
Repetition rate (schools 2003/2004) ..............................1.4%

Health (2003-2004)
No. of hospitals (2004) .....................................................74
No. of Primary Health Care centers (2004) ....................731
Doctors per 1000 population (2004) ..............................1.56
Nurse per 1000 population (2004) ...................................1.93
Beds per 1000 population (2004) ...................................1.4
Insured persons (2004) .....................................................76.1%
Infant mortality rate per 1000 live birth (1999-2003) ...24.2
Child mortality rate per 1000 live birth (1999-2003) ...28.3
Stunting among children (under 5 years) (2004) .......9.9%
Wasting among children (under 5 years) (2004) ..........2.8%
Percentage of pregnant women who received antenatal care (2004) ..............................................95.6%
Percentage of smokers (12 years and over ) (2004) ....19.6%

Culture (2004)
No. of mosques (in operation) ..........................................1,900
No. of churches ...............................................................149
No. of newspapers (in operation) ....................................13
No. of museums (in operation) .........................................4
No. of cultural centers (in operation) ...............................62

Information & Communication Technology (2004)
Availability of TV sets ....................................................93.4%
Availability of satellite dish for household having TV set ....69.5%
Availability of computers at home ...................................26.4%

Availability of Internet at home ......................................9.2%
Persons (10 years and over) have acces to the Internet ....11.9%

Living Standards and Humanitarian Aid (April-June, 2004)
Percentage of Households bellow poverty line .............58.1%
Number of Individuals bellow poverty line ..................2,213,000
Percentage of households that lost more than half of their income during Al-Aqsa Intifada .........................62.5%
Percentage of households that indicated their need for assistance ...............................................71.8%

Labour Force (2nd Quarter 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate in Palestinian Territory</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate in West Bank</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate in Gaza Strip</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average net daily wage for employees working in the Palestinian Territory (US$)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of working children (5-17 years) - 2004</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economics

| GDP (2003-million US$)-at constant prices (RWB and GS)*** | 4,165.3 |
| GNI (2003-million US$)-at constant prices (RWB and GS)*** | 4,499.1 |
| CPI and percent change in Palestinian Territory in September 2005 Compare with August 2005 | 146.68 +0.55% |

Number of establishments in operation in the private sector by economic activity (2004)***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Quarrying</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>13,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity and Water supply</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>55,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, storage and communication</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and Restaurants</td>
<td>4,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Intermediation</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities</td>
<td>3,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social work</td>
<td>3,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community, Social and Personal Services</td>
<td>6,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports (2003-million US$) *</td>
<td>2,781.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports (2003-million US$) *</td>
<td>443.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hotels (1st Quarter, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room occupancy rate</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed occupancy rate</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available quantities of water (2004-mcm)</td>
<td>295.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households connected to wastewater network (2004)</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing Conditions (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average number of rooms in housing units</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of persons per room (housing density)***</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(RWB and GS) = Remaining West Bank and Gaza Strip
* It's primary data
*** Revised figures

Prepared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
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Email: diwan@pcbs.gov.ps
URL: www.pcbs.gov.ps
As Palestine continues its struggle for independence, it has already begun to acquire sovereign cyberspace recognition. A difficult three-year international debate resulted in the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" being officially assigned the two-letter suffix, "ps," in the ISO 3166-1 list for the representation of names of countries or territories. The successful struggle to attain country code 970 led the way for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the international corporation that manages the country code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) system on the Internet, on 22 March 2000, to assign Palestine its unique country identifier, "ps," in line with other sovereign nations such as .fr for France and .ca for Canada.


**TOURISM:** Ministry of Tourism [www.visit-palestine.com](http://www.visit-palestine.com), Arab Hotel Association [www.palestinehotels.com](http://www.palestinehotels.com), Arab Travel Association [www.visit-holyland.com](http://www.visit-holyland.com)


**UNIVERSITIES:** Birzeit University [www.birzeit.edu](http://www.birzeit.edu), An-Najjah University [www.najjah.edu](http://www.najjah.edu), Al-Quds University [www.alquds.edu](http://www.alquds.edu), Al-Azhar University (Gaza) [www.alazhar-gaza.org](http://www.alazhar-gaza.org), Arab American University [www.aauj.edu](http://www.aauj.edu), Bethlehem University [www.bethlehem.edu](http://www.bethlehem.edu), Hebron University [www.hebron.edu](http://www.hebron.edu), The Islamic University (Gaza) [www.iugaza.edu](http://www.iugaza.edu), Palestine Polytechnic [www.ppi.edu](http://www.ppi.edu)
Rukab’s Ice Cream

Known for its ice creams that are made with gum arabic since 1940, Rukab’s Ice Cream shop is one of the most famous landmarks in Ramallah, where even Main Street, on the corner of which Rukab is located, is often referred to as Rukab Street. Ask any child anywhere in Palestine what Rukab means, and his immediate reply would be “ice cream.” But ice creams are not the only specialty offered at Rukab’s. In addition to ice creams that come in many flavours – they are famous for their milk ice cream that is studded with pistachio nuts – they offer sundaes, banana split, milk shakes and their famous chocolate mud. The place also has full café service, with a wide selection of teas and coffees to warm the soul on a cold winter day and Sahlab, a hot, thick milky drink with the aroma of gum arabic and extracts of the orchid plant that comes sprinkled with walnuts and cinnamon.

Rukab’s is an ideal place for the young to meet and mingle, for families to pamper their children and for foreigners to experience the traditional winter drinks in Palestine. So if you are cold and want something to warm you up, a cup of Sahlab at Rukab’s is your best bet.
In times of great change and uncertainty, the Qattan Centre for the Child in Gaza is a welcome haven for young curious minds and hungry learners. The Centre’s spacious library provides access to a wealth of information and educational and recreational facilities for children up to the age of fifteen. Prepared by Arab and British experts and designed by Dour Architects in Jerusalem, the library's impressive collection of books, educational resources, multimedia materials (over 80,000 volumes and items) and Internet access will allow children, their carers, and child development professionals the opportunity to educate themselves, as well as help to improve their personal development and skills by providing a free, creative and colourful environment in which they can express themselves and interact socially with others. The Centre also includes several areas for quiet study and for children's activities such as cinema, theatre and art. Located on Al-Wehdah Street in Gaza city, the Qattan Centre for the Child was opened to the public on 29 September 2005. For more visit www.qattanfoundation.org/qcc
Palestinian Heritage Centre

The Palestinian Heritage Centre’s director, Maha Saca, invites you to visit the Centre’s museum and cultural exhibition. The Centre, established in 1991 for the revival, preservation and promotion of Palestinian cultural heritage, consists of a traditional living room, a furnished Bedouin tent, a library, an exhibition of traditional items and a gift shop. The exhibition space is 250 m² and can host up to 100 visitors at a time. The Centre’s staff will take visitors on a free guided tour of the exhibition.

The Centre sells posters, postcards and traditional, handmade embroidered items, such as purses, bags, shawls, pillows and pillow cases and modern embroidered dresses. Palestinian women from various villages and refugee camps around the city of Bethlehem produce these wonderfully embroidered items. You can take photographs wearing traditional Palestinian costumes while drinking coffee in the Bedouin tent.

The Centre is active both on the national and international levels in promoting the preservation of a heritage and a tradition that are slowly disappearing. Located on Manger Street, the Centre opens daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For visits outside regular working hours, call the Centre for an appointment (02-2742642).
For a very long time, sports facilities in the city of Jerusalem were somewhat non-existent, and if they did exist, they were more or less predominantly frequented by men, making it uncomfortable for a lot of women to join. The YWCA in Jerusalem grabbed the opportunity a couple of years ago and transformed the fourth floor of its multi-purpose building into a sports department offering sports activities for women and children.

The department has two halls: the gym, which is equipped with treadmills, stationary bicycles and weight-lifting machines; and a multi-purpose hall tiled with parquet that is used for ballet, folk and modern dancing, aerobics, kick-boxing, karate, yoga, body conditioning, gymnastics, Pilates and the only exercise programme for pregnant women in east Jerusalem. A 15-minute stay in the sauna at the end of a strenuous exercise is a good way to “cool” down. The sports department includes lockers and showers. The gym is open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., except Sundays.
Two thousand copies of this issue of This Week in Palestine will be shipped early this month and will be distributed at one of the most important international tourism fairs, the WTM (World Travel Market), which is held annually in London in November. The request came from the Open Bethlehem Project, which essentially aims at establishing Bethlehem on the international map as a prime destination both for tourists and investors alike. I would like to take this opportunity and personally address each visitor to the Palestinian booth:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you from the land that is supposed to be holy. Unfortunately, the ‘holy’ part of our land has, for a while now, taken a break! As you are visiting the Palestinian section of this exhibition, dare I assume that you’re interested in our part of the world? Could it be possible that you’re interested in seeing that the old status quo be restored? To the time when justice prevailed and compassion ruled? If you are indeed interested and would like to see some kind of positive change in our area, then I urge you not to be complacent about a grave injustice that is currently taking place against my people, the Palestinian people. Allow me, Sir/Madam, to also remind you that since we are both living in a global village, what affects us today ultimately affects you. I am sure that you can at least agree to that.

I would like to challenge you to search your soul and ask yourself whether you can make a difference, even a small one, to make this world a better one. You never know, you just might get the satisfaction to heal a wound or dry a tear; you might also be an instrument in ‘letting my people go.’

Make no mistake, however, we are a proud people and are doing something about our predicament. Flip through the pages of the booklet that you’re holding and you’ll realize that the road to independence of this vibrant people has long started; actually it has reached a point of no return and nothing will stop us now. Our message is clear and has no mincing of words: no wall, no oppression, no assassination and no imprisonment will hold this unreasonably reasonable people from achieving what they aspire to, namely a truly independent and democratic Palestinian state with a vibrant economy.

Yes, we do have our share of problems, but we have a lot to offer too, particularly the warmth and hospitality of our people. It might also encourage you to know that since the beginning of this year, the number of tourists, as compared to last year, has practically doubled, but if you decide to come over, I’ll make sure we’ll find you a nice hotel to stay in! Welcome to Palestine.

Sani P. Méo
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The network of Palestine