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# THE OUTSIDERS

**Not all the Jewish settlers in the West Bank are there to stay: Some would trade their home for a house in Israel sooner rather than later.**



When Benni Raz goes to the supermarket in his hometown of Qarne Shomron, people refuse to talk to him. When he walks down the streets, they look the other way. “Sometimes they even call me on my phone and tell me that they hate me”, says the 55-year-old. All of this, because Benni Raz is willing to leave the settlement of Qarne Shomron. When he moved to the town in the north of the West Bank 15 years ago, it seemed like the perfect place to raise his four kids. “The Israeli government helped me with the money, so that I could afford a large house. Qarne Shomron is a beautiful place and the people were very nice.” 15 years later, Raz would like to leave sooner rather than later. The town, with about 6000 inhabitants, is located east of the “Green Line” – according to international agreements, this

is now Palestinian territory. In 2002 a suicide bombing killed three teenagers, who were sitting in an Italian restaurant in the center of the town. “I am tired of this war and I don’t want to wait until there is any kind of agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians”, says Raz. Deep furrows cut through his forehead. “I want to move to Israel as long as I am still strong enough to carry my suitcase, find another house and another job and build a future for my children.”

But Raz doesn’t have enough money to move, especially after he lost his job as a driver. He decided to take action and founded the movement Bait Ehad (One Home) together with two members of the Knesset; Colette Avital from the Labor-Party and Avshalom Vilan from the left wing Meretz Party. Bait Ehad strives for legislation in

the Knesset, which would reimburse settlers, that want to trade their homes for a house in Israel voluntarily. The movement is funded by donations only and Raz is the single fulltime employee. He sends out letters to settlers living in the West Bank and visits the different settlements to inform the people about the movement. In scuffed folders all around his tiny office in a commercial area in Tel Aviv, Raz keeps hundreds of lists with names and telephone numbers.

They are marked all over with yellow text marker and red lines and dots. “A lot of the people want to leave, but are scared to talk about it openly. They fear their neighbours for example, or that they are going to lose their job. Also many people think that they are not strong, when they leave, but that’s not true. Reality is stronger than us and

if you want to have peace, you have to pay a price.”

Polls, the Bait Ehad has conducted with 1000 settlers living east and west of the Green Line, underline the willingness of many to leave voluntarily. “40 percent of the 80,000 settlers living east of the security fence, would prefer to live in the state of Israel”, explains Knesset-member Vilan, “we are trying to help these settlers by reimbursing them for their houses.” There have been talks in the Knesset about this law, but it has not been passed yet. “For political reasons, Ehud Olmert and Tzipi Livni did not want to discuss this in the cabinet meetings, so we could not get a majority for the law”, Vilan believes. Now that the way has been cleared for new elections, the law is on hold, but Vilan remains optimistic. “I view this law as a good sign from the Israeli point of view to show that we are ready to move step by step out of the West Bank. That is why I don’t see an alternative to it.”

About 20 kilometers east of the Knesset in Jerusalem, in Ma’ale Adumim, the crooks to the plan become quite obvious. More than 30,000 people live in this settlement, which is located east of the Green Line, surrounded by walls, fences and barb wire. Some of them are orthodox Jews, but most of them are secular. “I don’t understand, that people call us settlers”, says the 63-year-old Adina, who is drinking coffee in the central mall, “that offends me. We are normal citizens.” Her friend Batya agrees. “Ma’ale Adumim

is not a settlement. It is a normal city in Israel, like every other.” Most of the inhabitants moved here in the late 70s and early 80s, because the Israeli government supported them in buying a house. “In Jerusalem, I could only afford a small apartment, but here I have a large house”, says the 40-year-old Neta, who owns a toy store. She would be willing to leave, if a law to that effect was passed in the Knesset, but sees prerequisites: “I have a large house and a business, so I would need to get an equal compensation for that.” Some people are not as open as Neta. “I would never leave Ma’ale Adumim”, says the 22-year-old Adva, who works in a clothing store, “I would not agree with that law.” The 48-year-old Avi, who owns an electric shop in the mall, considers it irrelevant to even discuss a compensation-law. “Take a look around this huge city: You can never evacuate Ma’ale Adumim.”

Others go beyond the practical argumentation. “This is our homeland”, says Tamar Yonah, a radio show host of the national-religious channel Arutz 7, who lives in a different settlement in the West Bank. “The Arabs have 22 countries they can go to and we have only one. I get along very well with the Arabs and I would welcome it, if they wanted to live in peace with us, but if they don’t want to, they can leave.” Yonah has received two letters from Bait Ehad, asking her to support the movement. “To me, that is just laughable and all the people I

know ignored it as well.” But not everybody talks as openly as Yonah. Dani Dayan, chairman of the organization of municipal councils in the West Bank, known as Yesha Council, refused to speak to the media about this issue.

Something will have to happen with the settlements, that is for sure. “They violate the international laws of occupation. The occupying party is not allowed to transfer people into the occupied territory”, says Sarit Michaeli, speaker of the Israeli Human Rights Organization B’Tselem. “Therefore Israel is



Wants to leave his settlement and take others with him: Benni Raz

responsible for evacuating the settlements, regardless of any political process.”

A lot of work is still ahead of Benni Raz, who nevertheless stays optimistic. “I know that things will change. They always have – look at the Berlin Wall for example. If we want peace, this is the time.”



**Christina Horsten** (25) realized, that in this region there is no need for telephone books. “Just go to Ramallah. Everyone knows him.”

# The State of the Art

During his time in prison, Israel built the separation wall through Mohaned Azza's hometown Bethlehem. Now the artist is trapped in his predicament: Being tempted by the largest canvas in the world – without tainting its ugliness.

It is the question, that bothers him most. It is not about working at nighttime, not about hiding from the soldiers, but it is about the constant queries by the citizens living along the wall. They can't understand why a young man's hand clings to brushes instead of stones. And probably they don't want to understand when he replies, that there are already too many stones around them. Stones, that rise up to twelve meters into the sky, cutting through the ancient city of Bethlehem on a total length of 25 kilometres and making it the largest canvas in the world for Mohaned Azza. A canvas that threatens him, because he could use the wall for colourful paintings and therewith arouse interest in his art, like some foreigners did.

Yet he refuses to paint on the separation wall itself, Azza says. Not only because of the soldiers, that chase the youngsters who like to spray their slogans and emblems against the occupation on the wall. "We have to keep it ugly", he says. "It is an ugly wall, so why make it look nice?" Only sometimes, when foreign artists come and ask him for help he assists them, hoping that the world will look on Palestine through their paintings. It is tangled like the whole conflict.

When he was released from prison seven months ago, it seemed that he was just stepping into the next one when he returned to Bethlehem, this quiet town with art on every facade. Two and a half years he spent in some of the ugliest jails in Israel for "work with political parties", as he says. During his absence Israel built the segregation fence: For him a barrier as well as a chance. He, the art student of Palestinian Al-Quds University, was asked by the National Nakba Committee to paint the story of his people on a wall near the separation wall.

It took Azza and a friend two days and nights of non-stop painting. They had to make sure they don't have too many viewers watching them. Not only because of the questions of Bethlehem's citizens, but also since Israeli soldiers get furious when there is an assembly of Palestinians. Especially in the West Bank "Area C", which is totally under Israeli military control. Azza is standing between the lines. One of his big, black boots is leaning against the wall-painting which shows the landscape of a biblical land. On the left side refugees seem to burn



like flames.

It is hard to look beyond Mo-haned's serious eyes that don't match the shy smile and the gaunted shoulders. It's his latest work: a portrait of the Nakba, the "catastrophe", when Palestinians were forced to leave their homes in 1948. A four-part painting on a headhigh wall in the streets of Bethlehem, just a stone's throw away from the segregation wall and checkpoint Gilo 300, where soldiers secure the border to Jerusalem.

"I believe, that art can change the people's mind", Azza says and nervously takes a drag of his cigarette. "Everyone is so sad, but we have to deal with the situation and continue with our lives." A life, that is depicted directly behind Azza in acryl colours: Early farmers cropping the harvest, tents in the background.

On the next picture sickle and scythe are dangling from the branch of a dead tree. It seems like a rushed walk through time. Most of the wall is painted in bright green. "When I give art lessons to children", Azza says, "most of the kids use 'hot' colours: red, yellow, orange." In Azza's painting the only weapon is a stone, held by a child's hand, a kufiya, the famous scarf of the Palestinians, around his neck. The mother covering his head with her hand. His two siblings

equipped with symbols of the Palestinians. A leaf from an olive tree, a book, a stone. No father. "Everyone in the camps is missing someone", Azza says and his face frowns.

Palestinian people are proud of their homes. Azza says he comes from Beit Jibrin; a town near Hebron that was destroyed in 1948. Azza is only 26 years old. Now he lives in Al-Azza, a refugee camp with 1.700 inhabitants in the centre of Bethlehem. On his drawings he puts his signature on the lower left side: a small key, the symbol of the refugees. Even Azza's grandmother still carries the key to her old house with her every day, though she knows her home has been destroyed. Hope seems to be the only absolute term in the Middle East conflict. Even the Palestinian president Abu Mazen came to see Azza's painting last May on the 60th commemoration day of the Nakba. A little attention for a moment.

Nowadays everybody is rushing by without having a closer look to what he has painted. His art is overshadowed by the separation wall, where every life, every sound is absorbed by the concrete. Gray and massive - and still a small chance. "Walls are a public canvas", Azza says. "Everyone can see my paintings." When he walks through the



Mohaned Azza: "Too many stones around us."

streets of Bethlehem nearly every citizen greets him. And everybody doubts his work. "They think I am wasting four years of my life studying arts", he says. The unemployment rate of the West Bank is at 19 per cent.

Still Azza believes in the moment, that's his message. Yet as everything in Bethlehem even this seems to be blocked and vanishes like the last part of the Nakba-painting around the corner: A refugee camp, grey like the wall, refugees burning in bright orange flames, smashed stones at their feet. It is in the shadow now, at four o'clock when the sun is already hiding behind the wall. The art is only on the surface.



Simon Kremer (23), unavailingly searched for sleaze tents in Al-Azza refugee camp in Bethlehem, but instead found the most delicious tea of his life.

# Graffiti

## A Form of Resistance

### Palestinian symbols on walls undergo change

On the side of a building close to the entrance of Bethlehem, there is a poignant graffiti: "It shows the 'peace' dove carrying an olive branch in its beak - being outfitted with a bullet-proof vest while a sniper aims at the bird's chest. Its creator, Britain's most illusive graffiti artist Banksy, is known for his significant social and political commentary. In 2007, he tagged his messages in Bethlehem. He drew more than a dozen satirical images painted, plastered and sprayed on the concrete separation wall and on the sides of buildings around. The artist, 33, has rarely been seen and does not give interviews. Some say his real name is Robert Banks. He has announced through his PR spokeswoman that he hoped his art would "attract tourists to Bethlehem." And "it would be

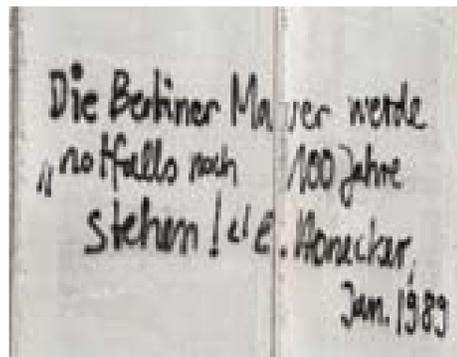
good if more people came to see the situation here for themselves. If it is safe enough for a bunch of sissy artists then it's safe enough for anyone."

Ironic jabs at life in the West Bank via artwork - this is not a new phenomenon: Graffiti in the Palestinian Territories dates back to the First Intifada in 1987. Since then, "graffiti has become an integral part of Palestinian nationalism," states a survey prepared by Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) written back in 1990.

Jamal Juma, project director of the "Stop the Wall" campaign, a Palestinian initiative that aims towards the cessation of the building of the wall and its ultimate dismantling, states that during the First Intifada, graffiti served to transmit news,

announcements of strikes and all other forms of projecting information and ideas. "Young men would typically spray paint on the most visible and public surfaces with the aim of reaching the largest number of people possible." This was a dangerous activity. "The Israeli military forbade it and would often shoot, arrest or imprison anyone caught doing it", Juma explains. "And so the act itself became symbolic of resistance." Juma who was an activist himself during the First Intifada, says that young men would generally send someone to scout the area before going to write their messages.

"Most Palestinian graffiti at the time consisted of phrases and slogans," Juma explains, "but there are a number of images that appear repeatedly and



can be seen as key symbols: the clenched fist, the V-sign, the rifle, the Palestinian flag, the key, and the map of mandatory Palestine. Each faction used different color spray paint. Hamas used the traditional color of Islam, green, while Fatah used black. The leftist PFLP, DFLP and the Communist Party most often used red.”

During the Second Intifada which erupted in 2000, graffiti did not reappear neither as a form of resistance nor as a way of self-expression. “This method was regarded as being no longer necessary or effective - especially in rise of print and electronic media.”

But since 2002, when Israel began the construction of the 1.55 billion dollar project of separating the West Bank and often cutting through Palestinian cities and villages, the separation wall has given rise to multiple graffiti efforts.

In an attempt to create hope, Holy Land Trust (HLT) hosted an all-day activity of painting the wall. HLT is a Palestinian non-profit organization based in Bethlehem which seeks to empower the community through mobilizing its strengths and resources in order to address the challenges of the present and the future of Palestinians. “A group of 50-60 locals, interna-

tionals and children from the Aida refugee camp, we went to the main entrance of Bethlehem and we spent the whole day painting Handala looking at the Mediterranean Sea,” says 29-year-old Ahmad Azza, a refugee from the village of Jibrin west of Hebron. He now lives in Azza or Beit Jibrin refugee camp, the smallest in the West Bank that is home to over 2,000 people.

Handala is the pseudonym of Naji Al-Ali, the most famous Palestinian political cartoonist. Born in 1936, he was originally from the village of Ash-Shajara. In 1948, Ash-Shajara was one of the 480 Palestinian villages destroyed in what Palestinians refer to as “Al-Nakba” (the Catastrophe). Naji Al-Ali was ten years old when he and his family were expelled from Palestine to Ein Al-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon. From 1975-1987 he created cartoons that depict the complexities of the plight of Palestinian refugees. These cartoons are still relevant today and Handala, the refugee child who is present in every cartoon and Al-Ali’s signature, remains a potent symbol of the struggle of the Palestinian people for justice and self-determination.

“But people criticized us,” explains Azza. “People accused us of attempting to beautify the

wall and excusing its existence. After much talking and discussing, I began to see the logic of what they were saying.” Azza now agrees that artists should not draw on the wall: “It is true that graffiti draws attention to the wall, especially by foreigners and tourists, but when they come and see it, instead of saying ‘Look at this ugly wall’, they say ‘Look at this beautiful graffiti!’”

He now believes that the wall should be left alone, ugly as it is. “We should do nothing to beautify it.”

**“It is true that graffiti draws attention to the wall, especially by foreigners and tourists, but when they come and see it, instead of saying ‘Look at this ugly wall’, they say ‘Look at this beautiful graffiti!’”**

**Ahmad Azza**



**Jihan Abdalla** (22), while interviewing, has discovered that Palestinian artists have a lot to fight for.



# Broadcasting *for Peace*

A group of committed journalists from both sides is running a joint radio station in Jerusalem

The voice of peace resounds from a hidden backyard somewhere in the north of Jerusalem. The floor of the small radio station is nearly empty, except for one big poster on which the slogan “All for Peace” is printed – in English, Hebrew and Arabic. “All for Peace” is the name of one of Israel’s most daring peace projects: A radio station in which Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims and Christians are broadcasting together. “24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year,” emphasizes Mossi Raz, the station’s manager.

“All for Peace” was launched in 2004 as a project of the Israeli organization Givat Haviva (Hill of Haviva) and its Palestinian partner Biladi (Home Country). Today, about 90 percent of the money to finance the project comes from foreign countries like the USA, Belgium or Norway, mostly from private foundations. Seven Israeli and seven Palestinian journalists, technicians and producers run the station. They all agree on one great aim: “We want to give our audience the chance to listen to the other side.” Mr. Raz hopes to achieve this change of perspective by translating Arabic articles into Hebrew, reporting about other peace initiatives or by inviting guests that represent a moderate political position. Mr. Raz is convinced that “All for Peace” helps promoting peace: “People may have lost hope, but they can regain it if they see that cooperation is possible.”

Despite all the enthusiasm, “All

for Peace” is currently facing problems in realizing its vision. As most listeners do not understand the language of the other one, the team has planned to split its channel into one for Hebrew-speakers and one for Arabic-speakers. According to Mr. Raz, this does not mean the project is dead: “We are going to continue exchanging our ideas and discussing the topics of our shows in the joint editorial meetings.”

“Since the beginning of the Second Intifada it has become more difficult to bring Israelis and Palestinians together,” confirms Melody Sucharewicz, from the Peres Center for Peace, the problems of peace work. “On the other hand, many people think that, the more the situation escalates, the more urgent it becomes to work together”. Ms. Sucharewicz even states that the number of participants in their projects is increasing. Each year, several thousand people are enrolled in the about 50 joint activities offered by the Peres Center for Peace, Israel’s most renowned Non-Governmental Organization in the field of peace work.

Still, the attitudes on how peace can be reached vary strongly. Bernhard Sabella, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), does not believe that any further peace education is necessary. “The overwhelming majority on both sides already wants peace.” In his eyes, it is not the people who change something: “Take North and South Korea, for example. Even if the



Radio also for “the other side”: It’s “All for Peace”.

people there want peace, as long as the leaders don’t want it, they will be going nowhere. If there is no political solution, all these projects will stay wishful thinking.”

“Peace cannot be only a document between leaders, but it must be achieved between people,” argues Gershon Baskin, founder of I.P.C.R.I., the Israeli-Palestinian Center for Research and Information. “When the Good-Friday-Agreement in Northern-Ireland was reached in 1998, 40 percent of the Irish were participating in organized joint activities.” The situation in the Holy Land, however, is very different from this. “Less than five percent of the Israelis and Palestinians are participating in organized joint activities. When they do not meet, they cannot reach out to each other and create new realities.”

*Nadine Grzeszick*





# PASSING WITH Problems

**Palestinians would like to avoid traveling through the West Bank because of the checkpoints – but sometimes they cannot.**

Mohammad is nervous and cannot hide it. He climbs into the minibus at Bethlehem's bus station, but soon afterwards jumps out again to run to a shop. He is just about to enter the bus again, but then decides to wait outside. Just when he lights a cigarette, he calms down a little. Mohammad is traveling to Nablus and there he will be seeing his friend Shadi. They have not met for seven years. Since it is a special day, Mohammad has dressed up a little; his short curly hair is neatly styled with

hair gel, and his blue jeans and black cotton jacket suit him just fine. On his way to the bus station, he stopped every friend he saw, just to tell him where he is going today. Nablus is not more than 70 kilometres away, but still, this is news. For there are at least four checkpoints on the way up North. You can hardly estimate how much time you will be spending there. But Mohammad hopes to find out.

24-year-old Mohammad has only been in Nablus once; that was on a class trip, many years ago, when there were no walls and fences and checkpoints and police controls. But nowadays there are a lot of them, and the number is increasing. Mohammad scarcely travels around in

his country; the last time he visited Jerusalem, which is no more than 15 minutes away by car, was more than seven years ago. Today he - like all Palestinians in the West Bank - cannot enter the city without special permission. This is also what makes our trip more complicated: There is a way going straight from Bethlehem via Jerusalem to Nablus. But we have to drive around Jerusalem on impassable, bumpy roads. Jewish settlers do not know such problems because the Israeli government has built new fast roads for them. Just for them.

The minibus is now full of people and the driver has started the engine. Mohammad hastily gets in and takes a seat. A big

grin appears on his face. Then he prods me, saying: "10.43 o'clock. Write it down!"

A small curvy road leads through the immense masses of sandstones in Wadi Nar. Coming out of the Wadi, the bus slows down. A checkpoint. Just a few cars are in front of us. Soon we

Though we are not entering any Jewish settlement, but driving from one Palestinian city to the next, the checkpoints are everywhere. The streets are filled with cabs, while there are hardly any private cars around.

We arrive in Ramallah around 11.48 a.m. Here we have to

to the metal gate there are a couple of market stands. Fruits, cosmetics, bread, candies – everything is offered here. If it were not for these barbed wire fences around, Huwwarah checkpoint could have the appeal of something in between the forecourt of a train station and a market place.

Two minibuses later Mohammad is sitting impatiently in a tiny bakery in Nablus. It is about 1.22 pm and we have reached our destination. But Mohammad is not satisfied; he has been looking for Shadi and Shadi was not at home. If Shadi is sick, as someone told him, why come to Nablus? Then, quietly and unnoticed, a small man enters the room. When he stands before two - head - taller Mohammad, they fall into each other's arms. They start talking quickly in Arabic. At times Shadi reaches out to his friend, clasps on his arm and his big soft eyes radiate. Mohammad also translates something. He tells me that the Palestinian Authority has lost control over Nablus. Nearly every day someone is shot here. He tells me that Shadi does not feel safe here anymore and that he is thinking about emigrating. And he tells me that Shadi's brother is in Sweden and his mother is in his eyes "a martyr".

We have decided not to go back the same way as we came but drive through Jericho, which lies in the very East. There used to be a lot of roads leading to Jericho. But today, some of them are partially prohibited for Palestinians. We also cannot get out through another checkpoint. Only Huwwarah is open today. At 3.20 pm we are back there.

are waiting next to the soldiers. The bus driver is now face to face with a young Israeli, who leans against a thin grey wall. The soldier waits a moment. Frozen in his position, he finally asks: "Why did you drive up to here?" The driver, who has not waited for him to make a sign, quietly admits he did not pay attention. The soldier does not move nor does he raise his voice. His eyes are fixed on his counterpart. His look is expressionless. "Where are you going?" "To Ramallah." A heavy smell of bittersweet incense lies in the car. "Go on," says the soldier then, showing no interest.

We do not lose much time at the next two checkpoints, where soldiers just glimpse at us.

change vehicles since the buses do not go the whole way. Then our trip continues. The Attara checkpoint after Birzeit can be easily overlooked. Four soldiers are stumbling through the grass some hundred metres away and are making jokes. Mohammad's brown eyes stick at them: "It is crazy", he says. "Sometimes you have to wait for hours!"

It is neither the watchtower nor the fences that announce Huwwarah checkpoint, but the sea of yellow cabs and minibuses in front of it. No one without a special permission is allowed to enter Nablus by car. So everyone has to get out of the bus, walk through a metal gate and climb into one of the dozens of cars waiting on the other side. Close

While coming in was easy, coming out is not. Or, just for some. As a foreigner, I have no problems and join the short queue on the right side. Here, mostly women with their children and elderly people are passing through. People who do not arouse much suspicion. I show my passport to a blond soldier and then have to go to a white car covered with a tarpaulin that is standing a little aloof.



a long line of cars. An army trunk is blocking the way. Mohammad speaks of a curfew. Somewhere in the dark the silhouette of an Israeli soldier appears. He is barely recognizable. We have to make a detour which leads us through the mountains. But the way being extremely steep, all of a sudden the car stands still. No one in the minibus says a word. The cars whose way we are blocking do

There are no soldiers here to give instructions, no one even watches if the people really put their bags on the conveyer, so that they will be scanned. I take my rucksack back and leave the checkpoint.

But Mohammad is not there yet. He had to wait in the second queue, along with some hundred other people. When he finally comes out, 15 minutes later, Mohammad looks exhausted. He rushes to me fastening his belt. Then he nervously lights another cigarette. "I told the people in the front of the row that my sister is waiting for me and I have to hurry. So I could overtake them. Otherwise I would have waited for hours!" he says.

As we drive towards Jericho, the sun sets. Mohammad hardly says a word, but only stares out of the window. When we were leaving the checkpoint, there was some kind of fear in his eyes. Later he explained it: The soldier did not ask many questions, but she checked upon his ID-number. Mohammad was afraid she would find out that

he had participated in political demonstrations. She did not. But the fear has settled in him and has not left. And then, a few kilometres before Jericho, Mohammad has to show his ID once again, and only him. This time, however, it is a Palestinian policeman who asks for it. "They are just looking for someone. They got his ID or his name and are now trying to get him," Mohammad explains. The policeman looks at a note scribbled on a slip of paper and then hands the ID back.

It is early in the evening, but the air in Jericho is still sticky. Tourists have left the ancient city by now. We had better done so too: At 5.10 p.m. Jericho is practically locked. No minibus drives the 45-kilometer way to Bethlehem. Mohammad gets impatient; he talks to a group of bus drivers. Finally, he has found someone who brings us to Azarya, the biblical Bethany, about three kilometers away from Jerusalem. From there, we have to change buses at least two more times.

In Azarya we are greeted by

not honk. There is nothing but silence. The driver waits a moment. Then he starts the engine. It breaks down. The dark sky hangs above us, the mountains enclose us, and there is something very peaceful about this moment. Then the driver tries it again, he kicks down the gas pedal with all his power. The engine gasps and moans, but finally the minibus starts moving.

7.47 p.m. says the watch upon our arrival in Bethlehem. After 170 kilometers, 6.30 hours on the road and nine minibuses, Mohammad and I have reached the last checkpoint. No one is here except three taxi drivers waiting for customers. "Call, when you have passed it." I promise to and start walking along the dark narrow path surrounded by fences. Mohammad stays behind. Exhaling the smoke of his cigarette, he watches me going back to the other side.

**Nadine Grzeszick (21)**, as a young European citizen, is used to borders being torn down. It is strange for her seeing them being erected somewhere else.



# NEW GUARDS AT THE CHECKPOINTS

Private security personnel is replacing Israeli soldiers

Officially, they are there "to provide better service" to the Palestinians, as a spokesperson of the Israeli Defense Ministry says. For more than two years now private security guards have been replacing Israeli soldiers at checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza.

diers, security guards are better paid and return home daily. Better conditions for the guards, Spiegel believes, will enhance relations at the checkpoints. But that is only one side of the coin. The Palestinians for their part claim that the treatment they get from the private securi-

them if they hear any complaints.

Sohill, also from East Jerusalem and studying at Bethlehem University, was once detained at the checkpoint for an extra hour, just because a guard from "Ari" security company, responsible for a checkpoint in Bethlehem,



According to Shlomo Dror, the Defense Ministry spokesman, the government wants to reduce contact between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians, because Palestinians complain that the presence of men and women in army uniform at checkpoints creates distress. Moreover, Baruch Spiegel, an advisor to the Defense Minister, expects private security guards to be less demoralized and embittered than soldiers. Compared to sol-

ty guards is much worse than the treatment they used to get from the soldiers. Tareq, a student at Bethlehem University, says that the guards from private security companies overstep the boundaries of their duty. The young man has to cross the checkpoint nearly every day, since he lives in Jerusalem. As an example for the bad treatment Tareq cites, that the Arabic-speaking Druze guards eavesdrop on their conversations, harass and hinder

thought she was laughing at him. One of the "innovations" of private security is a very detailed search. Palestinians are asked to leave the bus, each of them is checked intensively and the bus is searched with dogs, whereas the soldiers tended to carry out the search quicker, according to their impression of each individual Palestinian.

The job of a private security guard offers the opportunity to make good money. The pay for



Weapon of an Israeli soldier.

one hour is between 30 to 60 Shekels (six to twelve Euros), while minimum wage in Israel is 21 Shekels an hour (4,15 Euros). The majority of the applicants have only a high school education. Mizrahi Jews, Druze, Russian and Ethiopian immigrants apply for the job mainly due to their inability to find a better one. They must have served in the army undergoing at least a five-month-training course. Before they start their new job they take part in a three-week training, where they are taught the principles of interpersonal relations, including basic Arabic. The cost of such a course for the Ministry of Defense varies between 60,000 to 70,000 Shekels (11,800-13,900 Euros) for each guard.

The dismissive attitude of security guards towards the Palestinians is not the only cause of complaint. The private companies also introduced “professionalism” and “efficiency” into the checkpoint system. Some checkpoints nowadays are equipped with non-X-Ray scanners that produce a hologram of the checked person, so that the checking process only takes 20 seconds. During

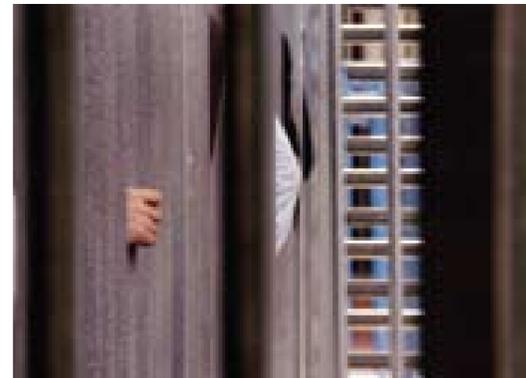
2006, the Defense Ministry invested 45 million Israeli Shekels in the “Erez” checkpoint between Israel and Gaza. The new system is planned to allow 60,000 crossings a day. At other checkpoints, the searching process has been automatized - the searched person enters a room with a one-sided mirror. The Palestinian is required to take out all his belongings, which are examined while he continues the checking process. All directions are given through a loudspeaker, implementing a strict vocabulary code.

The lack of personal contact bothers Palestinians. “Before the system, you had someone to address and not that frightening mechanical voice,” complains Mustafah, a Ramallah resident who has a permission to work in Israel.

Meirav Amir from the human rights organisation “Machsom Watch” says, the fact that the guards refuse to present themselves creates an unclear hierarchy at the checkpoints. “You are just thrown around from one authority to another in a never ending circle.” Previously, the army had an obligation to cooperate with human rights or-



Palestinians waiting at a checkpoint in the West Bank.



ganizations, which the private companies don't have. Neither do they have any mechanisms which can prevent them from using their power unethically. In this respect, the privatization of security at checkpoints is an attempt to outsource responsibility.



While writing this bio, **Lily Veselov (23)** translated the words in her head from her mother-tongue Russian to Hebrew, and then to English. That isn't easy.

# Southern Strangle in the North

## 2800 former members of the South Lebanese Army are trying to bear their lives in Israel

Leaving the train station in the northern Israeli-Jewish city of Nahariya and in the mood for a snack, you'll probably purchase your pita with za'atar and labneh from Marwan Kalil.

Marwan's Lebanese pita, identifiable by the Lebanese and Israeli flags posted on the walls of his business, is not randomly located. Rather, Kalil was compelled to make a new home here following the Israeli pullout from South Lebanon back in 2000. He was a former member of the South Lebanese security services, which worked in conjunction with the South Lebanese Army (SLA).

The SLA was founded in the 1970s, during that country's civil war, as the Free Lebanon Army. Set up by an army battalion commander, the SLA fought a number of other groups in the South but primarily against the PLO. This common enemy set the stage for an alliance between it and the Israel Defense Forces. Following the first Lebanon War in 1982, the two warring parties continued to collaborate in fighting their newly emerged enemy, the Hezbollah. Consequently, its members were branded as traitors by the Lebanese government and its citizens – not to mention the Hezbollah – put-



Well taken care of in his adopted home country: SLA veteran Kalil.

ting them in great danger once the IDF would no longer be around to patronize them. The IDF spokespersons' unit did not return phone calls regarding this matter.

In light of the hasty Israeli withdrawal, approximately 6000 members of the SLA, its security services and their families were relocated to Israel. Now, almost a decade later, around 2800 of them are still living here. About 1000 of them remain in Nahariya, comprising the single largest community.

As such, Kalil, a former colonel in the SLA security services, is well looked after by Israel's Ministry of Defense. He says that he is well taken care of in his adopted home country. For almost a decade, Kalil has been provided with a salary, apartment and pension. The veteran, who served his cause for 15 years, asserts: “I'm satisfied.”

It seems though, that he's more than just satisfied. Kalil, points to his forearm, with a smile forming just beyond his pursed lips, “I have the blood of an Israeli.” This is not too surprising considering that he is one of the few members of this group still in receipt of such benefits – if any. Kalil exists in stark contrast to his lesser-ranking comrades, the responsibility over whom were transferred to Israel's Ministry of Immigrant Absorption just a year after their arrival.

Such is the case for Kalil's friend, a former SLA soldier who now hangs out at his pita stand. One of the many who were transferred from the Ministry of Defense's care, this



"Here we have nothing", Hala Said says.

unnamed man, who refused to speak openly, was nervous that anything he offered would be traced back to him and his cousin in Germany putting both of them in grave danger, Kalil explained. But, he did provide a constant point of reference for Kalil as an example of the SLA members who have all been all-but-forgotten by both the Israeli government and the country's populace-at-large.

Kalil is the exception. In Israel, he is a well-received outsider. His perpetual smirk, the success of his business (hungry travelers who seemed to know him well were constantly stopping by) and that his stand is the central point for many of the station's workers (regardless of their religious identity – Jewish, Druze or Christian), all indicate that his life is a happy one.

But, in Israel, Kalil has no fear. Were he to return to Lebanon, his life would be in danger. To illustrate his point, he wraps his hands around his neck, saying this is the fate that awaits him in his homeland.

Not far away, Hala Said is living a decidedly difficult existence. Her hair salon, which she has run and managed for the past two years, is closing its doors the coming weekend. "Here we have nothing, and we struggle," she says. Said came to Israel with her husband, a former SLA member, though she refuses to divulge any further information about him. Her family arrived with their two daughters. Since their relocation she has since born a third daughter.

She has always been a hair-dresser but is finding it difficult to make a go of it in Israel. She

explains that her regular clientele are Lebanese. Israeli-Jews have come to her shop but she notes, they are not repeat customers, preferring to patronize the salons of their own kind.

Her complications are further exacerbated since her husband has been unemployed for the past four years. He applied to work as a guard at a local old-age home, but when asked about his military service (a standard question at Israeli job interviews), he informed them of his experience in the SLA – and was not hired.

"What can I tell you," she says, in a constant, nervous refrain. "We haven't progressed in our lives but regressed eight years," she says of her family's time since its relocation.

Like Kalil's friend, Said and her family were transferred to the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption. "But we're not Russians," she exerts. "We're a different story." A reference to her Arab-Christian roots, a distinct departure from the average Jewish immigrant that this ministry cares for.

Originally, she had hoped to take advantage of the German decision to absorb 250 SLA families back in 2000. But, she says, her husband wanted to move to America. "So, we missed the opportunity. Germany would have been good," she says. Now, she awaits help from wherever it comes.

Her situation is not just the result of her economic situation but also her religious-social one. Israel is also a difficult place to exist, not just as an Arab (SLA members were granted citizenship, but, Said says, "We've got



Hala Said owns a hair salon.

citizenship, sort of.") but also as a Christian.

Said worships at the SLA church in Acre. It was established there because the church already existed and was available for rent. Establishing such an institution in Nahariya seems a moot point, her face overtaken with skepticism at the suggestion that a church be established in an Israeli-Jewish city. A church, she explains, is anathema to any conceivable development within the boundaries of their local community.

Here, Said is subject to majority rule, as is Kalil. Members of the church are compelled to worship on Saturday. Taking Sunday off from the Israeli workweek is simply not an option. The cultural pressure to congregate on the dominant Sabbath prevails.

To demonstrate the current foreboding situation of her family in Israel, Said wraps her hands around her neck.

**Ari Miller** (32), discovered that the North of Israel is as beautiful as it is tragic. Not unlike Jerusalem, it's a lovely place to visit but not to live. For that, it seems, Tel Aviv continues to provide adequate parameters for his current existence.



## The Poor Life of Abu Faiz

Abu Faiz has been living here for ages. "Here" would be a deserted landstrip next to Wadi Qelt filled with bricks, stones and plastic cans. Within eyeshot there is a Jewish settlement, nicely built up houses, security fences holding them together. Abu Faiz is a Bedouin. He lives together with his four brothers, their wives and children in a couple of tents located in the Wadi.

"Dealing with the settlers is not easy", Abu Faiz says. Often they come down from the settlement and start beating him and his family. Calling the police does not help: The responsible policeman is just another settler. "Why should he help me?", asks Abu Faiz. So instead of resisting, he usually stays mum. "I do have the responsibility for a big family", he says. "They don't need me to be in jail".

Abu Faiz's most important income is tourism. Groups of sightseers come every ten minutes to a viewpoint nearby. His kids then ride out with their donkeys and the camel to earn some Shekels by giving the tourists a ride. What they are not going to see are the tents and poverty Abu Faiz's family live in.

"We won't get any help from the government authorities", he says. Sure there are international aid shipments, but the Bedouins in Palestine don't see any of them. Abu Faiz shrugs his shoulders: "Palestinians, they hate us even more than the Jewish." Some months ago there had been an election campaign in the nearby village of Taybeh. One candidate competed with the promise to get rid of all Bedouins. "Luckily", says Abu Faiz, "he didn't win."

Marc Röhlig

Sold in grocery stores for ridiculous high prices: Donations meant for refugees.

## Business as Usual?

**Not all donations meant for Palestinian refugees actually reach them: A few are sold in a grocery store in Ramallah – for ridiculous high prices.**

A small grocery store close to a crowded market in the center of Ramallah: Couscous is being sold here, chick peas and spicy roasted sunflower seeds. But somewhere on the shelves a few silver packs stick out: "Not for sale" it says on them in large blue letters. It is whole milk, donated by the French government as part of the aid given to Palestinians by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Six packages stand on the shelf, a few more are packed in boxes behind the counter. They are sold for 25 Israeli Shekels (about five Euros) each.

"Some women came to me and gave these to me in exchange for goods from my store", claims the owner, a slim man with a white mustache. Behind him on the wall, Saddam Hussein smiles down from a poster. "It is all about exchange, that's how it goes." Chris Guinness, speaker of the UNRWA, calls this "a matter of regret". "But these things happen. We give things like the milk powder to the most needy, but of course we don't go to their houses, mix the powder with water and feed it to the children. We cannot fully control, where our donations go."

Christina Horsten



# Between Truth and Death

## Targeting the messenger – journalists put their lives in danger to show the reality

Many journalists have lost their lives over the past 60 years during the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. “Reporters without borders”, a Non-Governmental Organisation with its main of-

to keep on raising awareness about the special status held by journalists.”

Reality shows that this is often not more than wishful thinking. “Palestinian and foreign jour-

tinian factions that do not hesitate to target media that criticises them,” says Smouni.

BBC journalist Alan Johnston was kidnapped in March 2007 by a group of Palestinian



Cameraman Fadel Shanaa (23) was killed by a tank shell in the Gaza Strip.

rice in Paris, is working steadily to improve the safety of journalists. “Journalists are neutral witnesses,” says Hajar Smouni of the North Africa and Middle East desk, “they are to be considered civilians, in accordance with international law. We have

journalists working in the Palestinian Territories are exposed to two different kinds of threats: one from the Israeli army, which has been responsible for many acts of violence against the press since 2000, and more recently from the various Pales-

militants. Israeli freelancer Israel Puterman says that he was physically injured four times in the last two years. “I was shot in the leg with a rubber-coated bullet and a couple of months ago I was beaten up by a group of border policemen.” Reuters

cameraman Fadel Shanaa was killed by an Israeli tank in the Gaza Strip in April 2008. Also four other journalists have been killed by soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in the past ten years. “This figure may be derisory compared to the number of civilians killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it is nonetheless worrying in terms of the impunity enjoyed by Israeli soldiers who are responsible for these deaths”, says Hajar Smouni.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor says the Israeli army tries hard not to harm journalists because that would be against its ethics and would weaken the army’s real mission of fighting enemy combatants as well as causing huge damage to the army’s image. According to him, every effort is made to distinguish combatants from non-combatants. “However, in a situation of battle, or during live fire engagements, mistakes can happen due to terrain conditions, atmospheric conditions and technical failures in judgment under high stress.” Every such incident, Palmor states, is investigated and soldiers can be put to court if wrongdoing is discovered. “The immediate example that comes to mind is that of James Miller, a British photographer killed in Gaza in 2003. Israel paid 1.5 million pounds to the family.”

There are very strict military operating procedures that ensure the safety of identifiable journalists, Palmor says. But “the instructions are not made public not to allow possible manipulations by armed elements who

would pass for journalists.” No system is foolproof, he admits. “There were no cases of intentional targeting of journalists. In fact, when you consider the number of journalists wounded or killed over the years in the West Bank and Gaza, you will find out that this number is extraordinarily low in comparison with other zones of conflict and war around the world.”

In Gaza, threats to Palestinian journalists to censor themselves are mounting since Hamas seized power, says Smouni. Palestinian journalists from rival camps Fatah and Hamas often clash with each other while covering violence in the Gaza Strip. Hamas security forces have ransacked offices of the Wafa news agency after Hamas accused the organisation of being pro-Fatah.

About 100 Hamas security officers stormed the office of the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation in the southern Gaza Strip in June 2007, destroying equipment and attacking people. In addition to that, according to Reporters Without Borders, at least ten foreign journalists were kidnapped and harassed in Gaza in the last two years. In most cases of kidnapping, however, the motive was probably not political but an attempt by individuals or isolated groups to gain publicity, money or sometimes jobs.

But no matter how many legal measures are taken to protect them, reporters covering conflict areas must be prepared for danger and must make special preparations. Fadi Aroui, 26, a Palestinian journalist working with Reuters, was hit by two



Dangerous work: A journalist doing his job in the West Bank.

rubber bullets during an Israeli army operation in Ramallah. “Usually I do as much as I can to protect myself by taking the protective gear such as helmet and flak jacket, gas mask, reading the field I am working in, taking up a good and safer position in the event.” Veteran CNN correspondent Ben Wedeman, who has been working in conflict areas since the early 1990s, also strongly advises journalists not to neglect caution. “When I prepare to go into a conflict area I read a lot about the conflict, and try to put together many phone numbers of people – journalists, diplomats, NGO staff – who are or were there and then speak to them to get a clear idea of the situation there.” Wedeman has learned from many experiences. “As time went by I am much more cautious.”

**Nidal Bulbul** (23), is a cameraman from Gaza. He lost a leg while covering a funeral of nine Palestinians in December 2007. He is currently residing in Jerusalem and works for Reuters.



# The Enemy Next Door

*Jews and Muslims are arguing about ownership of the Old City. Now Jewish settler organizations are buying more and more houses.*



Mosque next to a house owned by Israeli settlers in the Old City.

“All of the Old City is supposed to be Jewish”, says the voice with a little crackle in it. It is an Intercom speaking, next to a massive door with a painted Star of David on it. The Intercom-voice belongs to 26-year-old Zani, law student at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. And part time security guard in the Old City.

Zani – hiding himself and his real name behind the Intercom – is in charge of security for three flats at a narrow alley right next to famous Via Dolorosa. The families living inside are orthodox Jews, “ideologists”, as Zani calls them. And those ideologists are claiming their rights: To get back the whole Old City of Jerusalem.

As the city centre is divided into four quarters – the Jewish, Muslim, Armenian and Christian one – there just does not seem to be enough space for peaceful coexistence. Jewish settler organizations are constantly buying houses at high prices to gain more living space in the Christian and Muslim quarters. The settling action is now slightly changing the look of the Muslim Quarter: Israeli flags are hanging right next to mosques, heavily secured flats are built up on Palestinian houses and cameras are scanning the area. After Israel got control of the Old City in 1967’s Six-day-war, settlers began to seize more and more room from the Muslims – “stone by stone, house by house” as it is written on Ateret Cohanim’s homepage.

Ateret Cohanim (“Crown of the Priests”), itself situated near Damascus Gate in the Muslim Quarter, is one of the leading

organizations in purchasing houses in the Old City. The first Jewish family has been “returned” by Ateret Cohanim 30 years ago. By now, according to the organization, from the 4000 Jews living in the Old City, nearly a fourth of them resettled in the Muslim and Christian quarters. Or in the “Old Jewish Quarters”, as Dan Louria is calling the area.

He is spokesman for Ateret Cohanim and does not believe in walls: “A neighborhood between Jews and Muslims is not based on perfect love, but sure it can be based on a peaceful coexistence”. Therefore the Old City needed a “Jewish sovereign body” to control not only the Jewish Quarter but all parts of the holy city ground, says Lauria. “Only a moron can believe that a divided solution will lead to peace.”

Till that day, “peace” is made by Zani and other guards in the Old City. Right next to the door Zani is protecting, the Muslim neighbours started dumping their garbage. By the end of the day, there will be a mattress, some bottles and a small heap of smelly left-overs. Zani got used to this. But it takes only seconds for the Intercom-voice to lose patience: “They bomb our buses, they kill our children – but we are still tolerant”.

“They”, that would be Ibrahim Shawish and other Muslims living in the neighbourhood. Ibrahim has a shop right next to the Jewish flats Zani is protecting. When the small lane is crowded on a Friday after the Muslim prayer, you can find Ibrahim sitting at ease on a plastic chair between his goods, baskets and

glasses and looking at the people rushing by. The 57-year-old was born and raised in the Old City, got his shop from his parents and one day will give it to his “over a hundred children”. There is only one thing that makes Ibrahim become furious: Jewish neighbours.

“Living next door to them”, he says, “to me it means jahannam”. And then Ibrahim starts; he is telling stories about Jewish boys with bad manners, noisy parties all night long and tough security guards. “It is fighting and arguing all day”, concludes Ibrahim. Jahannam is the Arabic word for hell.

As the Jews stick to the Old City because of historical issues, the trader has the same answer: the Muslim have their rights to live on the holy ground, they had it since ages. “History never changes”, says Ibrahim, “what belonged to me, belongs to me”. His deep drag from a cigarette is filmed by the security camera above Ibrahim’s shop. A Jewish student just passes by, guarded by two private security men. “One life for two men”, Ibrahim continues, “that will never work.”

The Jewish house next to Ibrahim Shawish had been sold “to a guy from London – and not to our enemy”. But now it’s the “enemy” who entered. When buying houses, Ateret Cohanim and other organizations often proceed the same way: They handle out several contracts with the Muslim vendor, film the deal on tape, then buy the

house via an intermediary. “The protection is necessary”, says Louria from Ateret Cohanim. Often Muslims get beaten up for selling their home to a Jew. Louria remembers a vendor who was shot after the deal – “seven times in the head”.

So when buying a house in the Muslim Quarter, the organization doesn’t just pay for bricks and stones, but also for life protection of both consumer and vendor. By that, a normal flat in the Muslim Quarter costs 3,000 to 4,500 US-Dollar a square meter. Whole houses go into the



Annoyed: Shop owner Ibrahim Shawish.

millions. Ibrahim Shawish, taking another puff of his cigarette, is looking down at the crowded alley. “There is no price for the Old City”, he says, “one can’t buy peace”. Zani, the security man from next door, probably has the same view from his camera right now. “We want peace”, he said before on the Intercom. “And we want our houses back.”



Finding his way through the Old City, **Marc Röhlig** (22), learned above all one thing: Hospitality is not to be found behind every door.

## Rent-a-Cross

Jesus' footsteps are battered into the Via Dolorosa that winds up the hill from Jerusalem's Stephen's Gate to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Millions of pilgrims have walked along the "Way of the Cross". Some of them carrying a cross themselves - borrowed at the Church of Flagellation by Mazin Kanaan. He owns 54 crosses made of olive wood from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which he keeps hidden in a five-by-five-foot room opposite the fifth station of the crossroad. "Some people don't like my business", Kanaan says and refers to himself as a manager of a traditional family business. "Some spit at them when I offered them along the Via Dolorosa before." Groups and singles can ask for a cross at the first station. Crosses vary in length and weight: from 90 cm up to two and a half metres and from 25 to 100 kg. "The German and the Polish Catholics", Kanaan says, "they mostly carry the heavier crosses. Koreans and Italians the lighter ones." But there is less and less business, he complains. He is happy, when he rents three or four crosses a day, some more, most less: at a price between 30 and 40 US-Dollars. Then pilgrims carry the cross along the fourteen stations of the Via Dolorosa up to the site of Jesus' crucifixion where Mazin Kanaan picks them up again, up to five at a time.

Simon Kremer



## The Black Phenomenon

This sweet black beverage is a phenomenon in the Middle East: Israelis can have a sip of Coca-Cola and feel very Israeli. Palestinians can drink the same beverage to support Palestinian economy. There are two privately owned companies marketing the well-known soft-drink in the region. Both received the exclusive license for Coca-Cola products - either in Israel or in the Palestinian Autonomy. The Israeli Central Bottling Company, which was founded 1968 in Bnei Brak, and which is well known for its modern technology, offers kosher Coke: "It is very important to have a kosher Coke. A significant percentage of Israeli consumers only purchase products which have been certified as kosher", says Paul Solomon, spokesman of Coca-Cola Israel. According to the ranking of the Israeli business information company "Dun's 100" the Israelis rank sixth worldwide in coke consumption per capita.

The Palestinian National Beverage Company, which got rights to the Coke franchise after the Oslo agreement, "is proud to promote the Name of Palestine and the capacity of the Palestinian people," as is proclaimed on the company's homepage. In addition to offering halal-Coke and two-liter bottles for large families, the Palestinian chapter of Coca-Cola supports "social responsibility projects", such as scholarships for poorer students and sponsorship of cultural events. How convenient for the marketing department: Coca-Cola red goes perfectly with the red of the Palestinian flag.

Judith Kubitscheck

## The Top-Sellers

A day doesn't pass that Muhammad is not here on Salah ad-Din Street, close to Damascus Gate in Jerusalem. Muhammad Salima, a 17-year-old Palestinian, sells sweets at a little stand. Seven days a week, even on Ramadan, he works here from eight in the morning till eight in the evening.

On that day, one month left to Christmas, there is one sweet selling better than the rest: Santa Clauses. "They are really a good gift for the Christians living here", says Muhammad. Big parts of his shelves are filled with chocolate Santa Clauses - and chocolate Easter bunnies, as well, even though Easter is only in a few months. "I take the cheapest stuff from the vender, too", tells Muhammad, "so if bunnies are cheap by now, I go to buy and re-buy them".

People usually grab the biggest bunnies, but Muhammad knows better: The small ones are tastier. "I know every type of flavour", he says. And so, when bringing some chocolate home from work, Muhammad Salima always takes a small golden Easter bunny. He has seven sisters and four brothers waiting for him.

Marc Röhlig



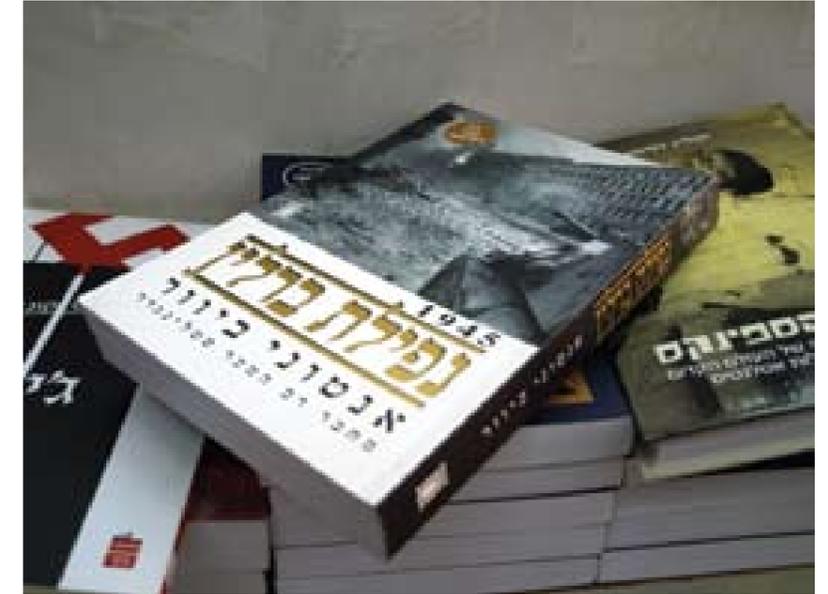
## "History is Enslaved for a Purpose"

"Historia Meshuabedet"; Enslaved History: This is the provocative title of a scientific research that has just been published by the Mofet Institute. For this study, Arie Kizel, a lecturer at Oranim Academic College, analyzed history books and curriculums published in Israel between 1948 and 2004. Carmen Reichert asked Arie Kizel about the results of his research and his ideal for presenting history.

*You present the results of your research on Israeli publications on general history in a book called "Historia Meshuabedet" (Enslaved History). Is the concept of "enslaved history" an issue specific to Israel?*



It is a general problem that history is enslaved for a purpose. It is specific to Israel that the majority of books on general history refer all subjects to the question of whether a historical fact was good for the Jews or not. Especially the Zionist narrative influenced the way to teach history. To give an example: Most Israeli books on German history draw only a bit of attention on



Israeli history book entitled "Fall of Berlin".

Germany after 1945 - and they hardly ever present Germany after the unification. If we would be fair with history, we should also teach what happened after the Holocaust. We should give our students a wider vision on world history. When young Israelis travel to the East or Japan today, the history of that region should not stop in 1945 for them.

*Do you observe any developments in the way history books are written in Israel over the years?*

We can distinguish two to three generations of books. The first generation under the direct influence of the Holocaust tends to point the resistance of the Jews to the German people. The Germans are presented as being cruel and mean, whereas the Russians are the good people. That perspective changes

during the 80s, we find a lot of criticism about Stalin. The last generation of books is more open-minded, also more colorful and didactic. You won't find quotations saying that Germans are cruel and the Jewish resistance to the Holocaust plays a less important role.

*Do you think that the results of your research will help to create a new way of writing history?*

I am not so optimistic. The books are a result of the curriculum taught in school. What we need is a new curriculum that also presents general history, re-examining details and subjects and presenting new areas. I would prefer that students study the history of ideas, such as feminism, and that they learn about encouraging examples. But up to now, history is mainly a political area.

# “Jeckes” at Their Roots



Descendants of German Jews maintain a strong relationship with the country of their origin

“Jeckes”, the term denoting a Jew of German origin, is in Israel a swear word and a decoration at the same time. Israelis of other origin say it with a mocking smile to expose the “Germanness” of one’s behavior – but Jeckes themselves use it with a certain pride in their culture. “Jeckes are seen to be disciplined and not flexible”, explains Carmit Fischer from the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin. “But it also has positive connotations, such as that the person is very organized and knows how to work.” In former days, she says, Israelis used the term more as a negative nickname – whereas nowadays Jeckes call themselves as such.

More than 60 years after their families saw themselves forced to leave Germany, many young

Israelis want to go back to Germany – for vacation, but also for studying. According to numbers of a poll of the German Academic Exchange Association DAAD, more than 1304 Israelis went to study in Germany in 2007. There might be a lot more – those who have a German passport do not appear on the statistics. Whoever has a German parent or is descendent from Jews who lost their citizenship and were expatriated in the 1930s has the right to acquire the German citizenship. For these Israelis, in the second generation as well as in the third, the relation to Germany lives on: a relation full of struggle, pain, and – love.

“I have never stopped being German”, Mira Lapidot says, a 65-year-old daughter of a German mother and an Iraqi father.

She is sitting at the long, elegant table in her living room and drinking tea. Lapidot is turning the golden ring on her finger while she is talking, but her dark eyes are calm and she is smiling. She is searching for words in English to explain that connection to her mother’s culture and language, her own mother-tongue that she still understands, but that she cannot speak anymore. “The children in our Kibbutz made fun of us”, she explains, “because we were different.” One day, she went on the streets, and that sentence slipped out of her mouth: “Onkel, wie spät?” The children laughed at her, and from that day on, she stopped speaking German, although her mother and her new husband only spoke German at home.

It is after her mother’s death



Mira Lapidot, daughter of a German Jew, never felt a conflict about loving Germany



Shirah Perry still feels connected to the country of her grandparents

that she suddenly starts to miss also her German culture and language. That is why she decides not only to join her husband to a work-related trip to Germany in the 1980s, but to stay one week longer on her own. For her husband, an officer in the Israeli army, the fact of being invited by the Canadian Division in Schwarzwald is the only way to come to Germany. When they arrive, Mira is overwhelmed by the beauty of the wood in snowy woods. Her husband cannot look at it without thinking of the death marches.

Years later, when Mira and her husband participate in an international military meeting and present the history of the Israeli army to the other participants, they show one picture of a concentration camp. A German officer’s wife is so shocked

by that photo that she does not sleep during the night – it is the first time that she has seen such a photo. Still, the fact that the Germans of the second generation after the Shoah do not know their history does not make Mira angry. “My mother didn’t teach me any anger or hate. We put our energy to rebuild the country – not to hate.” What she still feels is fear – she cannot imagine that the Jewish nation would persist without the state of Israel.

Is Shirah Perry German? “No, I am not”. She laughs. “Humoristically I say that. But I am not.” For her, the 30-year-old granddaughter of German Jews now living in Tel Aviv, “the only way to handle it is being cynical”. “It” refers to the Shoah. Her grandparents could only survive by leaving their home and the home of their ancestors for a country that had hardly started to built up agriculture. When she went to Berlin three years ago to study abroad a university teacher asked the class what Nazi ideology meant, nobody answered. Shirah raised the hand and said: “Sie sagt, dass ich eine große Nase habe” - it means, that I have a big nose. “Germans become green when you tell jokes about the Holocaust”, she says, laughs, and knots up her blond hair. “And I like to bring it up, when I am with Germans. I need to bring it up”.

Still, she “can’t wait to go to Germany”. She had always been interested in the German culture, language and history – even more, since her father died. He was already born in Tel Aviv in 1936, but his mother-tongue was German. “I don’t think that my father saw himself as a Ger-

man”, she says, “but he was somehow always looking up to Germany. ‘Ach, in Germany that wouldn’t be possible’, he kept saying, when something went wrong. For him, Germany was how a state and society should be.”

As a historian, she is wondering about the fact that especially German Jews kept that strong relationship to their culture of origin. “German Jews were in general descendents from higher classes in society”, she tries to explain, “they were well integrated into a strong culture, and they kept it”. She explains her interest for Germany in two ways: On the one hand, it connected her to her father. On the other hand, it was an intellectual approach as a historian.

For her grandparents’ and parents’ generation, she sees the Shoah as a “trauma”. For her own generation she would call it a “complex”. Whenever she goes to Germany, it is “an emotional rollercoaster” for her: “To stand in a place where people thought that I was not worth living”. At the same time, she felt that “this is where you come from”. There were moments, when she wanted to run away – for example, when she suddenly heard a Hitleresque voice on a radio program. Nevertheless, she could imagine living in Germany – maybe even forever. “I could even marry a guy whose grandparents were Nazis”.



**Carmen Reichert** (23), loves the Israeli airport security and feels loved by them: They made her date honey fly explosion-proof twice in three months.

# Stuck in the Middle

## Two German women have “married” the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Nora Samet and Marlene Sha’wan are both from Germany. One is living in Israel, the other one in a Palestinian town. They married the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, each one on a different side, ten kilometers away from the other. Nora Samet (34) lives with her Israeli husband and three children in the Jewish part of Jerusalem, Marlene Sha’wan (44) with her Palestinian husband and four children in the neighboring Palestinian town of Beit Jala.

Samet doesn’t ride buses in Israel, she is afraid. When she used to ride them she always asked herself, while looking at all the passengers, who will be the next one to blow himself up and take the rest of the bus with him. She doesn’t “enjoy sitting in cafés as I liked to in Berlin”, and adds that in Israel people have a basic existential fear.

Sha’wan for her part would love to take her children to a bus ride in Jerusalem, but she can’t. Her children are not allowed to enter Israel without a special permit. She says that most of all they would like to see a movie and go shopping and adds that her family is tired of the four square Palestinian kilometers they can move freely in. Leaving them requires an Israeli permit which is hard to get.

Both don’t feel that they are part of the society they live in. Even after sixteen years in the Christian town of Beit Jala, “I still feel foreign here”, Sha’wan says. She doesn’t have a normal life by the standards of the society she lives in. She is too busy working in the child center she opened together with her husband. “I don’t live the type of life that the Palestinians are living”, she says and adds that she

doesn’t have the time for social visits in the afternoons, a traditional local habit.

Generally, she says it’s hard for her to explain to people what she is doing all day at work - not because of the language barrier, she is fluent in Arabic. It’s just a different mentality, she says. On her daily life she tries not to think about it too much and focus on her job.

Samet, on the other hand, thinks a lot about her life in Israel, especially on her annual visits to Germany. “How can I live there,” she asks herself only four years after moving to the country permanently. “It’s crazy, it’s racist and it’s violent. Many times I ask myself if I can live here only if I close my eyes and live inside four walls”, she continues. She has a lot of criticism on Israeli society and policy, especially towards the Palestinians, but as a German living in the Jewish state, her personal problems occupy most of her time.

On the last Holocaust Memorial Day her daughters came home to tell her that several kids from their school called them Nazis. “The victimhood of the Holocaust is very strong here”, Nora Samet explains. “I can’t be angry at a child that says something like that”. For her children it’s very difficult to live in peace with their Israeli and German narratives. “Their grandfather is a Holocaust survivor”, she continues, “and

mine was a Wehrmacht soldier. While we were living in Berlin”, she recalls, “an old lady told me to start saving money for their psychological therapy.”

“Nora Samet’s neighbours in Berlin, besides the German lady, were a Palestinian-German family. “Their kids looked after our own children”, she says, “but their father refused to talk with my husband. There my husband started to understand what I feel like in Israel.” The feeling of victimhood is strong on both the Israeli and the Palestinian side, she says. “Many times here it feels like it’s either me or you.”

In Beit Jala people are most concerned with what happens today. During the Second Intifada, Sha’wan recalls, “the bullets were flying in front of our windows. Many times the house used to shake.” Besides the problems caused by Israel, she is mostly worried about inner Palestinian problems. Being less than two percent of the Palestinian society, she says that as believing Christians they feel closer to the Jews than to the Muslims. She has fear regarding the future Palestinian state and most of all regarding the way Christians will be treated in it. “As for us”, she says, “if the country will be established it will be harder than today.”

She marks that because there are many Christians in the area of Beit Jala, they have no problems with their Muslim neighbors, “but in other places where Christians are a small minority it’s much harder”, she concludes. Sha’wan also remembers that in the beginning it was also difficult for them, as Palestinians, when they asked the



“How can I live here? It’s crazy, it’s racist and it’s violent”. Nora Samet with her new born baby in their home in the German Colony in Jerusalem.

German churches for financial support for their children center. “Everyone likes and supports only Israel”, she says. Samet, on the other hand, says that in the Israeli society there is a feeling that Germany is supporting the Palestinian side. “When I’m around Germans”, she adds, “I try to present the fear and trauma of the Israeli society.”

The ongoing conflict had made many, from both societies, lose their hope. The recent deterioration of the economical situation that is being felt both in Jerusalem and in Beit Jala only strengthens these feelings. Clinging to her strong Christian belief, Sha’wan says that not even once had she thought about leaving Beit Jala and going back to Germany. She tries not to think too much about the future and to concentrate on

walking in the path of God, as she describes it. “Maybe it’s my secret of living here”, she adds.

Samet says “I can’t lose my hope because you can’t live here without one.” She likes living in Israel and thinks that it’s still a better place for her six-month old son to grow up in; nevertheless, she doesn’t give up the option of going back to Germany one day. “It’s like a back door that we leave open”, she says, “If everything here is going to explode.”

During the research **Sagi Rotfogel** (26) found out that by knowing only German you can get along quite well in Jerusalem.



Marlene Sha’wan - in the photo with her husband and her eldest daughter - still feels foreign in Beit Jala.

# Who Cares About

# Rubbish?

## Getting rid of garbage is a big problem in the Palestinian Territories

Mayor David Khoury drives his old black Mercedes slowly through the little village. He passes gnarly olive trees and rough ancient houses. He keeps the window open so he may easily reply to greetings. On his way to the municipality he has to stop a few times. The people of Taybeh tend to ask him directly when they have something on their minds.

David Khoury is proud of his antique Palestinian village. His slogan as a mayor is “Good life for good people”. Since he was elected in 2005 he took care that streets were repaved and streetlights were installed in the dark alleys. But one concern almost cost David Canaan Khoury his office: Rubbish.

The rubbish of Taybeh’s 1300 inhabitants is burned, like everywhere in the West Bank. The dumpsite is situated right next to the olive trees Taybeh is famous for. Plastic bottles, vegetable peels, metal cans journey from a big dusty garbage truck to the top of a big pile of rubbish. When rubbish is burned in the evening, bitter fume lingers in the air.

In Ramallah, half an hour away, Friedrich Sonderhoff wants to get rid of those local dumpsites. As a technical advisor of the German Development Service (DED) it is his daunting task to turn German tax money into peace. He is sure that solid waste management will improve the quality of living in the Palestinian Territories. Instead of dumpsites, he wants regional sanitary landfills where sand and clay protect the ground water from being polluted and waste is recycled instead of burned.

This sounds like a good proposition to Khoury. When DED arranged a delegation to a model sanitary landfill in Be’er Sheva in Israel, many of his Palestinian colleagues objected but he went. They made compost, had a garden, a zoo and a generation station. “I was impressed”, he admits “I wanted this for Taybeh too.” Khoury expected the sanitary landfill to bring jobs and money.

But not everyone liked this plan. Taybeh’s Doctor Zeyad Zayed didn’t want his village to become the dumpsite of the region. He was afraid the cases of cancer and asthma could increase. Some other inhabitants thought alike. They launched an action group against the new landfill and if David Khoury had not given in, he would have lost his office.

Zayed is skeptical if a system that works in Israel will work out in the West Bank as well. “What if the political situation crashes down again?”, he says. In the 1990s German development worker of DED and the German state-owned Technical Cooperation GTZ built up two

joint waste management authorities in Gaza. Due to shortages of fuel, especially during the Second Intifada, the Palestinian uprising against the occupation between 2000 and 2005, waste covered the streets, attracted rats and spread illnesses. As long as no one can assure him that this would not happen again Zayed doesn’t want a regional landfill in Taybeh.

“No one can guarantee that there won’t be a shortage of oil again”, admits Markus Lücke from GTZ. He was involved in the waste management projects in Gaza. Nevertheless, he sees no alternative to a stable waste management for the Palestinian Territories. In Jenin, a sanitary landfill already processes the waste of the northern West Bank for over a year now. The German government has pledged ten million Euros for the upcoming Palestinian landfill project. The problem is finding a location to accommodate the landfill.

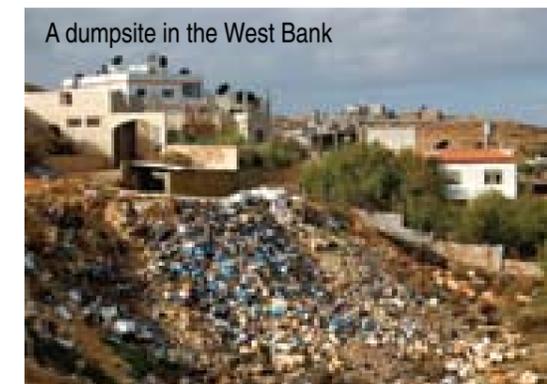
“We have a lack of public awareness” says Malvena Al-Jamal, chief engineer of Ramallah. Although Ramallah is the richest city in the West Bank, only 23 percent of its residents pay a tax towards waste collection. Many don’t even know they are supposed to. “We cannot punish the people”, says Al-Jamal. Ramallah lacks central municipal coordination. The municipality tries to fund waste collection by diverting taxes received from construction permits.

The establishment of functioning institutions and raising public awareness are the two major challenges facing the German development worker Friedrich

Sonderhoff. “This will take at least another 20 years”, he says: “But we can’t introduce a system Palestinian people don’t want”.

Taybeh was the second village where inhabitants refused to host a sanitary landfill. Now officials and development workers plan to build it in Ramun. When David Khoury drives his old black Mercedes through the streets of his village he can look over to Ramun, it’s only three kilometers south of Taybeh. He wonders if the people there care about rubbish.

A dumpsite in the West Bank



Waste collector in Ramallah



**Fanny Weiß (29)**, felt privileged being German, for the first time. It was a strange experience to be allowed to go everywhere just because she had the right passport. Standing in line at the checkpoint made her remember her childhood in GDR and encouraged her not to believe in walls.



# What am I?



Guess what religion and nationality the people in the pictures have



- Answers**
- 1 Cojvera, 37, Romania, Greek Orthodox
  - 2 Wasilisa, 29, Russia, Russian Orthodox with her daughter
  - 3 Father Robert, 34, Czech Republic, Franciscan
  - 4 Muhammad, 61, Jerusalem, Muslim
  - 5 Mizer, 30, Ethiopia, Ethiopian Orthodox
  - 6 Wolfgang, 41, Germany, Roman Catholic
  - 7 Ramadani, 42, Jerusalem, Muslim
  - 8 David, 22, Rishon le Zion, Muslim
  - 9 Prempree Na-Songkla, 56, Thailand, Buddhist
  - 10 Nida, 19, Ramallah, Muslim
  - 11 Tattanna, 30, Sao Paulo, Roman Catholic
  - 12 Roshima, 25, Sri Lanka, Roman Catholic
  - 13 Shlomo, 21, Jerusalem, Jewish
  - 14 Oranit, 26, Rehovot, Jewish



## How I Became a PALESTINIAN

*My family came to Israel 150 years ago, long before Jewish people around the world even considered the idea of establishing a Jewish state. Since they came from Arab countries, I look like a Palestinian. Even though, my identity was always clear to me: I am an Israeli.*



When I decided to write an article about Palestinian football, it was obvious I would have to go to the Palestinian Territories to watch some games. There are three different areas in the West Bank. The C territories are under complete Israeli control. The B territories are under Israeli security control and Palestinian administrative control. The entrance of Israeli citizens to those two areas is allowed. The A territories are under complete Palestinian control – a no-go-area for Israelis.

I went to A-Ram to watch a Palestinian football match. A-Ram is area B, therefore I had to cross a checkpoint. During the entire seminar I spoke English, so when I came to the checkpoint I asked the soldiers out of habit in English if I could go in. “You can, but you can’t go out”, they said rudely. “But this is B area, I am allowed to go there”, I replied. One soldier didn’t even talk with me. The other said without listening: “If you want to go out again, go to Kalandia checkpoint, near Ramallah. From this checkpoint here, you can’t return”.

The football game was about to start, and I didn’t want to miss

the beginning of the match, so I went through the checkpoint. On my way to the stadium I realized Kalandia checkpoint is in A territory. I definitely can’t go there. All of a sudden, I had to face an absurd situation: I was trapped in the West Bank, unable to return to my own country. For a couple of hours, I had no nation or nationality. Very confusing.

In order to return, I had to call a German colleague. She came to A-Ram and picked me up. We drove to a distant checkpoint in C territory, from which we could return to Israel. I felt like a thief, having to sneak my way back into my homeland.

Only later at night, I understood why the soldiers at A-Ram refused to let me return to Israel. It shocked me: The IDF soldiers, who are Israeli just like me, thought I am Palestinian. I spoke in English. I never showed them my ID because I assumed it is crystal clear I am Israeli. For a couple of hours I

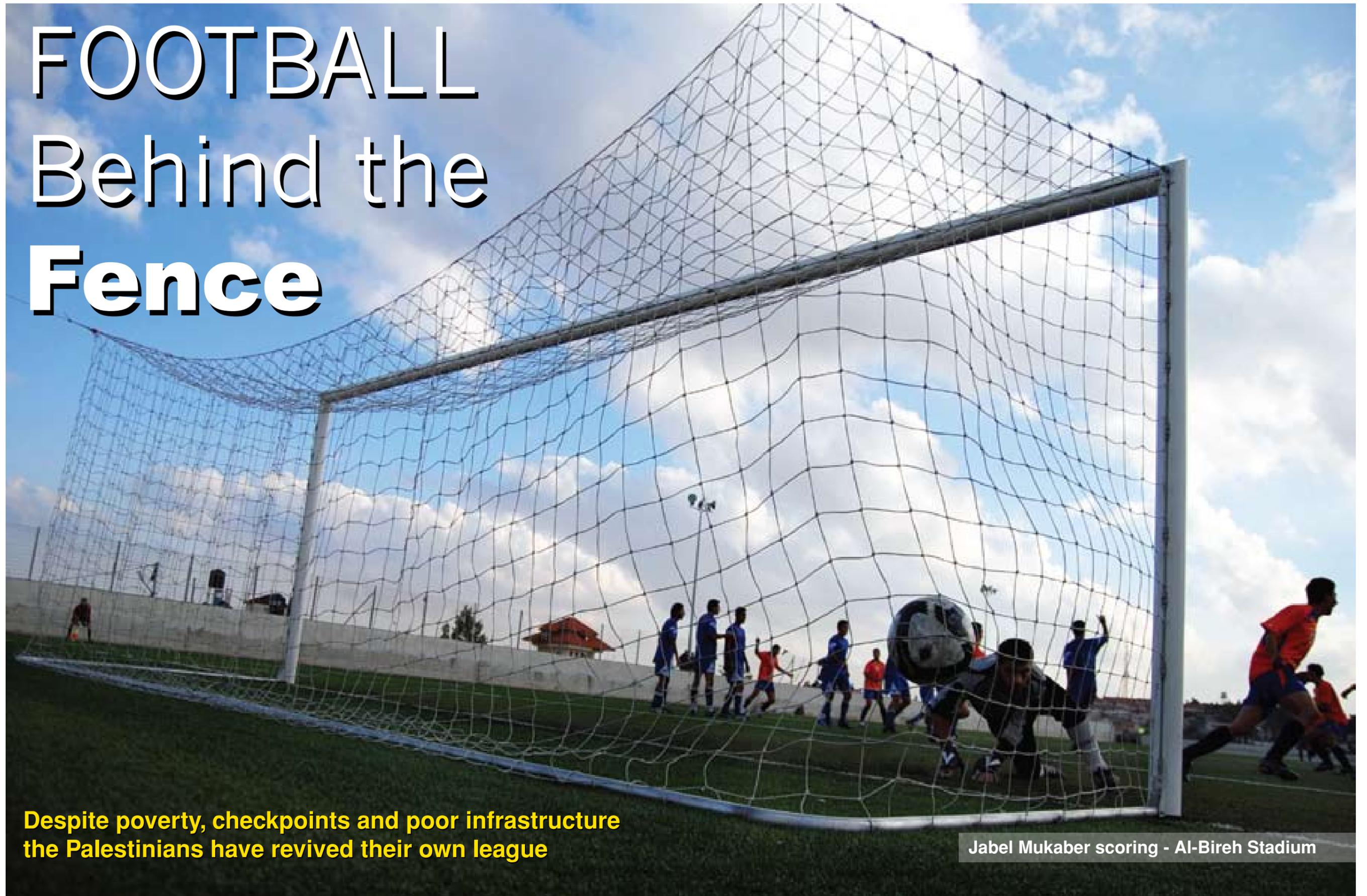
was Palestinian, and didn’t even know about it.

However, pretty soon I got a reminder about my nationality. The next night the participants of the seminar went to a UN party. As we entered the UN building, the Palestinian guard asked me what language I speak. “Hebrew”, I answered. “Then you can’t go in”, he said. Israelis weren’t allowed to join the party. The United Nations are not for all nations, apparently.

Adi Halfon

**Emotionally, I never left A-Ram. I am still stuck in the middle: For the Israelis I am too Palestinian, and for the Palestinians I am too Israeli.**

# FOOTBALL Behind the Fence



**Despite poverty, checkpoints and poor infrastructure  
the Palestinians have revived their own league**

Jabel Mukaber scoring - Al-Bireh Stadium

The two teams, Sur Baher and Tul Karem, are warming up. A little boy is standing next to the fence, watching the players with admiring eyes. One hand is holding the fence, trying to reach the players. With the other hand he is eating the Palestine national snack for football games – peanuts. Here they don't sell hotdogs, and of course no beer, which is not allowed by Islam. The crowd, all men, can buy peanuts and drink hot tea.

The seats and the stairs at the brand new Faysel Hussein stadium in East Jerusalem are all covered with peanut. The stadium is still under construction and on the way to the stand the crowd must pass through gravel and wooden shelves. The fans of the home team are singing “with our blood, with our souls, we are with you Sur Baher”. They are playing the Darbuka, which is an oriental drum. The game is about to begin and the atmosphere is electrifying.

In Al-Bireh another football game is taking place. Jabel Mukaber, one of the championship frontrunners, is hosting Jenin. In this game there is not much of an atmosphere, maybe because there are no stands. The pitch is surrounded by a fence, around which fans gather to watch the game. Some of them are climbing on the roof of a nearby construction site, where they can get a better view.

At Faysel Hussein stadium, Sur Baher is the first team to score. The players are running to the crowd, which goes mad and starts to sing even louder. One man is waving the Palestinian flag, another waving the Israeli flag, since some of the

players are Israeli-Arabs. The teams in the Palestinian league are allowed to have 3 non-Palestinian players. There are few African players in the league, but most of the foreign players are Israeli-Arabs.

Meanwhile, Jabel Mukaber is leading 3-0 and attacking Jenin's goal heavily. The fans are demanding more goals. “Keep on running, or we will make a steak out of you”, shouts one of Mukaber's fans to his midfielder. After 30 minutes of game time, the players are growing tired and fatigued. None of them are professionals and it is difficult to keep a good pace for ninety minutes.



The only stand in Al-Bireh stadium: A half constructed building

Jenin players, for an example, are training only 3 times a week, two hours each time.

Khader Abeid, Jabel Mukaber's manager, explains: “The players play for free, because we don't have any money. If one of the fans is happy with a certain player's performance, he may give the player some money as a gift”. Generally, the Palestinian league is based on donations, because the clubs have almost no income. The team jerseys are donated by some businesses, and in return the businesses can

advertise on the team's shirts.

Sur Baher, which is one of the weakest teams in the league, is no longer leading. Tul Karem players got into action and now have the upper hand with a 2-1 lead. Sur Baher fans get very quiet. None of them wear the team's jersey, since there is no merchandising industry at all. The few Tul Karem fans are dancing on their seats.

Halftime at Al-Bireh. There are no changing rooms, so the players of both teams are sitting on the grass and listening to their manager's tactical instructions. Taking a shower at halftime is not even an option. It is also

halftime in the Faysel Hussein stadium. Many people enter the stadium at the half. The ticket price, 5 NIS (about 1 Euro), is too expensive for them. At halftime they can enter without paying.

Four minutes after the beginning of the second half, Jabel Mukaber is leading 5 to 0. Shaqeeb, the manager of Jenin, looks desperate. Shaqeeb is an Israeli-Arab who lives in the village of Salem. It is very close to Jenin, but on the Israeli side of the border. Before he took the

current job, he was the manager of some minor clubs in Israel. He likes Hapoel Tel Aviv, an Israeli football club, that is known for its left-wing supporters.

Tul Karem is already leading 4-1. Sur Baher's players look like a random bunch of people who happen to wear the same jerseys. Actually, that is not far from reality. There are no scouts in the Palestinian league. The squad is being recruited by advertising, messages at mosques or simply by hearsay.

Corner kick. Jabel Mukaber forward heads the ball, and misses the bar only by a few centimeters. Jenin players just want the game to end. As an Arab, who also holds Israeli citizenship, Shaqeeb feels uncomfortable to criticize the checkpoints or talking about political issues. His team is playing poorly, but he takes full responsibility.

Even though his team is doing very well, Abeid is more decisive about the problems of the Palestinian football clubs. “Some of the players are living on the one side of the wall, and others are living on the other side”, says Jabel Mukaber's manager. “As a result, we can't have regular training, and not all of us are training together”.

Jenin manages to go for a rare counter attack. Their right-winger gets the ball near the box. He fires a good shot, but Jabel Mukaber goalie makes a fabulous save. That goalie can make the difference between taking the championship and finishing in mid-table. Unfortunately, since he doesn't have the right permissions, he is not allowed to pass checkpoints in the West Bank, so he can play only at the home games.

Due to security reasons, the Israeli army is not allowing people from the Gaza strip to enter to West Bank. Because of that, Palestine has two different leagues: The West Bank league and the Gaza Strip league. They are both first divisions. In the end of the season, the champions of the two leagues are supposed to play a single match between them, and the winner of that match should become the national champion. Such a game never happened because of security issues and internal problems.

In the Faysel Hussein stadium the final whistle is heard. Tul Karem won 5-1. Perhaps the fans of Sur Baher got used to lose, because they are not angry as one may have expected. The few Tul Karem supporters can feel lucky, since there are no police or security forces in the stadium to prevent chaos. In A-Ram area, where the stadium is located, there are neither Palestinian nor Israeli policemen.

After most of the fans have left Al-Bireh, the Jenin players are changing clothes outside of the pitch. They go into two big vans, that will take them all the way to Jenin. As soon as they leave the pitch, the local youth team enters. First, they all kneel on the ground and pray. When the praying is over the training begins, in order to build up the next generation of Palestinian football players. “One day”, as Abeid said, “we will become professional”.



During his research, **Adi Halfon (27)**, found out Ramallah looks a little bit like his neighbourhood in Tel Aviv.

## Politically Incorrect

### Israeli fans like to tease Arab players

Football and politics always go together in Israel. The two teams that demonstrate this sentence more than all are Beitar Jerusalem and Hapoel Tel Aviv. The first is known for its rather right-winged supporters, the second for its more secular and left-winged fans.

The Israeli fans don't like to cheer for their own team. They would rather prefer to upset the fans of the other team. That is being reflected by the lyrics in the songs of the supporters.

The most common song of Beitar's fans is “death to all Arabs”. They also like to tease Israeli-Arab players. “Touama (the name of a famous Israeli-Arab player, who played for rival Hapoel) you are a terrorist, we will kill you”, is another popular song among Beitar's fans.

Hapoel Tel Aviv fans have insulting songs as well. After Beitar was disqualified this season from the second round of UEFA champions league, the left-winged supporters of Hapoel sang “Jerusalem is not in Europe anymore, Jerusalem belongs to Jordan”.

# Hummus – thology

**It used to be just food, until Israelis started to glorify it**

Flickering neon light illuminates a greyish paste in the big iron pot on the counter. The unique aroma of lemon, garlic and something close to boiled sand fills the restaurant, while the chef in the kitchen continues cooking his specialty. Entrance there is prohibited, so is asking for the recipe.

On the corner of King George and Ben Jehuda, in the centre of West Jerusalem, you can watch a cult, which has nothing to do with resurrection, sins, heaven or hell: Hummus. “There are people who are junkies for hummus. I don’t know why but I satisfy their desire,” says Moti Cohen. He is giving out the dishes today at “Pinati”, which means “My Corner” in Hebrew.

Pinati is an institution, open for 32 years, the owners meanwhile run restaurants in Ramat Gan, Ashdod, Bet Schemesch and two further places in Jerusalem. What makes it so successful is “the taste of the hummus and the atmosphere”, manager Cohen thinks,

“you can see doctors and street workers sitting at the same table and even though they don’t know each other, they start to talk. We feel more like a family here.”

Hummus mainly consists of chick peas, olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and a sesame paste called “Tchina”. But the exact recipe is the best kept secret of every hummus restaurant.

“Obviously, it’s an Arab food”, says sociologist Nir Avieli, who is lecturing and researching about food and popular culture at Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva. “But 80% of Israelis have hummus in their refrigerators.” That makes hummus, both handmade and industrial, the most popular food product in Israel.

The mother companies of the best-selling supermarket branches “Achla” and “Tsabar” even started exporting the Israeli variant of the paste, one of them cooperating with Danone, the other one with Nestlé. Nir Avieli: “Israel has put hummus in a process of globalization.”

This is one of the major reasons why Lebanon recently tried to have it saved as Lebanese by the European Commission. Hoping that similar to the protection of feta being Greek or champagne being French, this might stop Israel from naming it as national specialty and bring Lebanese companies an advantage on the European market.

But hummus, like falafel and other specialties based on chick peas, is an integral part of the “Greater Syrian Cuisine”, which not only includes Lebanon, but also Syria and Palestine. “They can say that claiming hummus as national food is a colonial act of Israel and maybe they are right”, argues Nir Avieli, who describes himself as “left-wing and pro-Palestinian”, “but I

think this is ridiculous. You can’t take it away from them.” Just like one would never say Pasta Napoli was not Italian because tomatoes are from central America and Pasta from China, he explains. “This country is young and it takes time to develop a national cuisine”, Nir Avieli says.

Customers and owners say, that hummus is healthy. In fact, it is rich with iron and vitamin C but also olive oil, so that it can have up to 200 calories per 100g depending on composition. Hummus always comes with pita, which can be filled with falafel, meat balls, schawarma meat or schnitzel. Cohen: “If you ask me what the real national food is, it’s schnitzel in a pita with hummus and charif.” Charif is a sharp sauce and the schnitzel is of course made with chicken. It reflects the unique mixture of European and oriental culture.

“The People call this place the temple”, says Moti Cohen. While religious Jews celebrate Shabbat at home and in the Synagogue, secular Israelis prefer to go out for a bowl of hummus, preferably to an Arab village nearby, such as Abu Gosh, Jaffa and Akko. At Abu Shukri in the Old City of Jerusalem, at the end of Via Dolorosa, a Palestinian mother explains: “The Jews don’t eat hummus everyday like we do, they go out on Friday or Saturday with friends or family.” She does not want to read her name printed but goes on: “I don’t care if they say it’s their national food. We ate hummus before the Israelis came and we will always eat it.” “There is a trend in Israel to look for the authentic hummus, and that is always Palestinian”, sociologist Avieli explains. “So by going to an Arab place for a bowl of hummus, people admit its origin.” Moti and his family set an exception with Pinati. Many Israelis give their restaurant an Arab name, if they are selling hummus, some

even buy Arab family recipes. “We have lots of Arab people coming here”, says Moti Cohen from Pinati, “and they give us compliments for our hummus. That’s how we know we are good.”

Among the most famous hummus restaurants is Abu Hassan’s in Jaffa. Here, people are waiting outside on Shabbat for a free place at one of the tables. At Abu Hassan’s you are told where to sit and they shout your order out loud. Hummus here is of course warm, a bit more liquid than usual, with soft chick peas and a note of chilli. During the week, tourists are taken here by their “Lonely Planet”, on the weekend, young people from Tel Aviv and around pilgrim here for lunch. “For me, this is the best place in Tel Aviv, in all of Israel, the whole Middle-East”, praises Amir Atias, who comes here every Friday with his girlfriend Shelly. “It’s just food, it stops hunger,” he says at first. But then he admits: “When we Israelis go abroad, that’s the stuff we miss.” Then he puts his pita into his yellow-grey paste. “We whipe the hummus with the pita, we don’t eat it with a fork like you do,” Moti Cohen would say. “that is part of being Israeli.” Nir Avieli agrees: “The dipping, the sharing is typical for this region and would be difficult for a European, I think.” This is why he sees the popularity of local food in Israeli society not only as a “colonial act”, as quoted above. “You can also argue that hummus is so ‘in’ in Israel, because Israel is becoming more Middle-Eastern.”

During her research, **Veronique Brüggemann** (21), discovered not only that there are dozens of ways to eat hummus, but also that trying them all in a few days is neither healthy nor tasty but makes addicted nevertheless. So, please don’t try this at home!



## Hummus with Meat and Pine Nuts

Offered in many hummus eateries, this meal on one plate is delicious and filling.

### Ingredients (serves 4-6)

600 g (1 1/2 lb) basic hummus dip  
The Meat:  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
450 g (1 lb) beef ground with 100 g (3 1/2 oz) lamb fat  
1 large onion, finely chopped  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
teaspoon baharat spice mix  
Dash of ground chili pepper  
cup parsley, chopped  
2-3 tablespoons pine nuts, lightly toasted

Heat the oil in a large, heavy, hot skillet and fry the onions until they turn golden. Add the meat and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes, breaking it down into small crumbs with a fork. Add garlic, season with salt, pepper and baharat and fry 1-2 minutes. Add half the parsley, mix well and remove from the stove. Keep warm. Spoon the hummus onto plates and spread around the rim, leaving a crater in the center. Heap the meat mixture in the crater, sprinkle with the remaining parsley and top with pine nuts. Drizzle some olive oil and serve at once. Variation: If you don’t like the aroma of lamb or can’t get lamb fat, use only beef. Make sure it has a relatively high fat content or the mixture will be too dry.

*Chef Avi Steinitz*



# Taste the Revolution



**Palestinian Beer and Israeli Pork are changing the eating habits of people on both sides - often to the annoyance of religious authorities.**

In some of his nostalgic moments, Oleg and his friends go to the Restaurant "Little Prague" in Tel Aviv to eat a joint of pork. "I am used to bacon and schnitzel", he says. "In my former home country, in Russia, it was nearly impossible to get meat other than pork". Although he is a Jew and some of his friends refuse to eat pork, Oleg still enjoys a nice piece of schnitzel. 100 kilometers to

the east, in Ramallah, similar things happen: Muad is sitting at the bar. While he is ordering another beer, he alludes, with an abashed tone in his voice: "I am a Muslim. But first of all I am a human being who likes to drink beer." Interestingly enough, both Israel and the Palestinian Territories benefit from the preferences of these individuals: Christian Palestinian villages like Bethlehem get the pork meat from Israel. Restaurants and bars in Tel Aviv are after East-Jerusalem the second largest customer of Taybeh Beer.

In both nations there is an obvious change in mentality: In Israel non-kosher pork is no longer a taboo. Butcheries like "The Kingdom of Pork" in Tel Aviv or restaurants such as "Little Prague" prove the demand for pork in the country. When a wave of immigrants from the former Sovjetunion came

to Israel in 1990 and asked for salamis, shrimps and mussels, the food chain Tiv Taam based in Hadera was founded to carry out the demand for the non-kosher fancy food that people of different identities knew from their home country. Customers who proudly define themselves as Jews are also proud patrons of pork. Although this stands against their religious dietary laws: pigs are non-ruminant and therefore non-kosher.

Palestinians, on the other hand, even produce their own beer, called "Taybeh Beer". A lot of Muslims consume it too, although, according to the opinion of most Islamic scholars, Muslims should not drink any alcoholic beverages.

When Nadeem Khoury started his own micro-brewery in 1995 in the old Palestinian village of Taybeh, he couldn't get credit from any bank. Nobody

believed that in a society with a Muslim majority, someone would drink his beer. But Nadeem Khoury knew that there are people like Muad who drink beer, even though they consider themselves to be Muslims.

Now, 13 years later, his brewery produces about 600 000 liters per year. Every bottle carries the signature of Nadeem Khoury. "Taste the Revolution" - is the slogan used to advertise Taybeh Beer. "For me it is a revolution for two reasons: First we achieved to actually brew our own beer in a Muslim dominated society. And secondly, as Palestinians we can show the world that we produce good products, which we can be very proud of". Because Jordanian law prohibits advertisement for alcohol, Nadeem Khoury tries to do it in an indirect way: For instance, since 2005 he invites people to an Oktoberfest in Taybeh where they also can visit his brewery.

On this occasion, he explains the nature of his beer: "Our beer is liquid bread: It has the same natural ingredients as bread. If you leave some bread sitting on a counter for several days, alcohol will develop. It is the same with beer. We add no alcohol. Everything is just a natural process."

But this is not a valid justification for everyone to consume alcohol. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Mohammad Hussein, insists: "For Muslims, the consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden, and this specifically also includes Taybeh Beer in Palestine." Hence, Hamas closed the six bars in Gaza after the Second Intifada. Israel is also tasting a revolution - but

in a slightly different way.

Everything started during an economical crisis in the Fifties, when it was very difficult to get meat. So some people bought pigs from surrounding Christian Arab neighbourhoods and called them "small cattle", so they would not have to use the term "pig" which has a connotation of impurity and paganism.

The Kibbutz Mizrah in Northern Israel was the first to raise pigs and to offer non-kosher meat. Until today, Maadinei Mizrah is an important chain which produces all different kinds of pork. But the meat is not produced in the Kibbutz anymore, because in 1962 the Knesset under the government of David Ben Gurion passed a law that prohibits the people in Israel to keep pigs. An illegal pig will be killed and the owner has to pay a fine. Since then, only some Christian-Arab-villages like Nazareth or Iblin received the permission to raise pigs. Next to the Arab villages, the Kibbutz Lahav in the Negev Desert is the only place on Jewish land that has the permission to raise pigs - but mainly not for meat production but for research. Israelis tell the story that in some other places pigs are raised on wooden stages so that they won't touch the land of Israel. According to this, they would not be illegal anymore. But not just the raising of pigs is controlled by law, also the places that sell the so-called "white meat".

In 2004, the High Supreme Court decided that the criteria should be, if the majority of the neighbourhood wants to buy pork meat or not. So the local municipality is responsible to

decide, where it is allowed to sell pork and where it is not. For example, in a neighborhood of Russians who like to eat meat, it is allowed to sell pork.

The municipality of Bnei Brak for example did not allow the sale of non-kosher meat, because the majority of inhabitants were against a non-kosher butchery.

Although rules on how to handle the "Pig"-topic exist, Rabbi Izchak Ilowitzky, vice-manager of the Kosher Department in Jerusalem, is fundamentally against raising pigs and consuming pork meat in Eretz Israel:



The "Kingdom of Pork" in Tel Aviv

"Anti-semitic people all over the world use pigs to provoke Jews. And now Jews themselves raise pigs in Israel. While they're doing this, they act against their own people. This is hurting my feelings", he says.

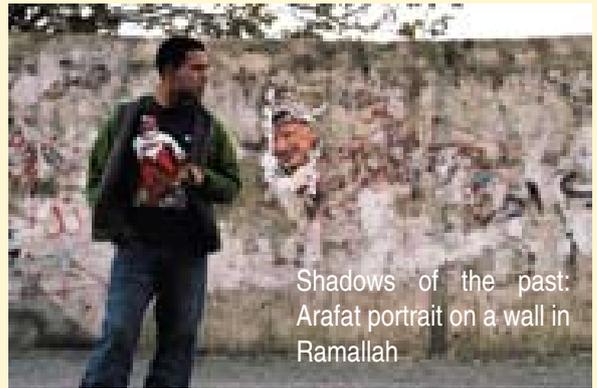
Oleg, who eats a pork dish in a restaurant in Tel Aviv, and Muad, who orders a beer in a bar in Ramallah, have something in common: They want to enjoy their lives - even though they know they act against their religious authorities.



**Judith Kubitschek** (25) enjoyed the nightlife in Ramallah ... and of course, the Taybeh Beer.



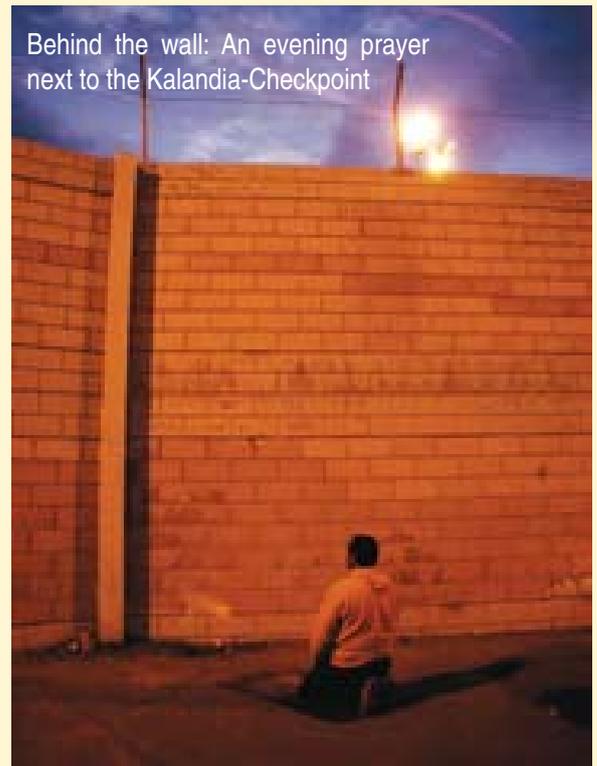
Who's talking? Palestinian man with his cell phone



Shadows of the past:  
Arafat portrait on a wall in  
Ramallah



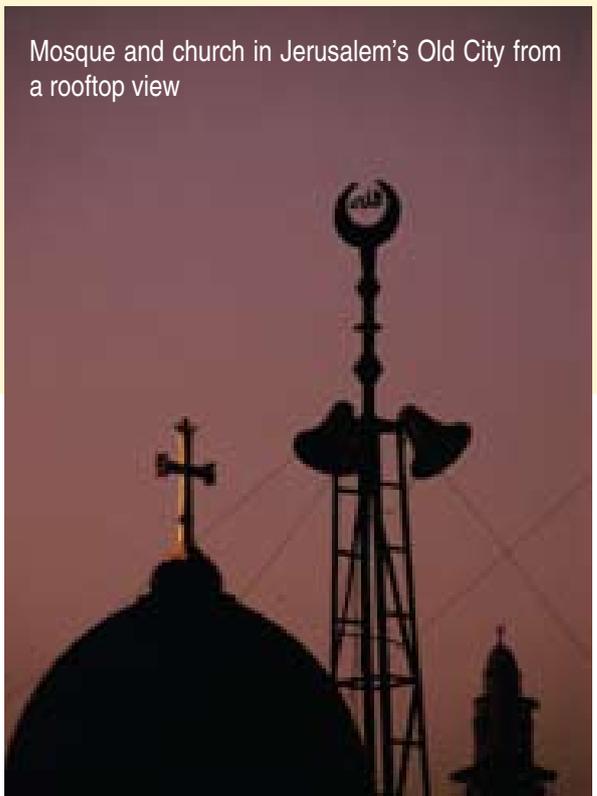
Muslim scarfs at an alley in the  
Old City's Suq



Behind the wall: An evening prayer  
next to the Kalandia-Checkpoint



At the  
Damascus Gate



Mosque and church in Jerusalem's Old City from  
a rooftop view