



Building PEACE through Personal Experience

MAKING CONNECTIONS,
CROSSING GENERATIONS

African Heritage Delegation Draws on History of Struggle

While still 'controversial' in some quarters, it is not uncommon in North America today to see Israel's domination of Palestinian political, social and geographical space characterized as *Apartheid*.

Recent years have witnessed discussion and debate about the applicability of this term, but it may be more important, here in North America, and because of our own history, to explore **the analogy to the racist system of Jim Crow segregation practiced in the United States**. A much less common comparison, this analogy to Jim Crow segregation (and to the powerful Civil Rights Movement which challenged it) nonetheless may relate more effectively to many communities our movement seeks to engage.

That is why IFPB's first **African Heritage Delegation** proves so powerful. Each of the 14 members of the delegation brought their own experiences as activists and organizers to the trip. Some had worked in Anti-Apartheid movements, others in education reform, labor organizing, interfaith work, and more. But among the voices that rose loudly from the group were those of individuals who lived under Jim Crow segregation and who had struggled mightily to make the US a country more inclusive of its entire people.

The stories of those who grew up in the segregated south were those that most inspired Palestinian and Israeli activists the delegation met on the ground. **These stories led Palestinian organizers from the Holy Land Trust to term the African Heritage Delegation "the most important international group we have met."**

It is also the experience of segregation and the Civil Rights Movement which has come to the fore in the work of African Heritage delegates upon their return home. As the important statement the delegation drafted explains: **"Because of our experience of fighting racism and exploitation in the United States, we are united in our support for civil and human rights of all peoples of the world."**

In highlighting these voices and experiences, Interfaith Peace-Builders has taken an important step forward. **We will continue to work with, and support, the members of the African Heritage Delegation as they turn to the task of engaging locally, in their own communities.** If you are interested in hosting a member of the delegation for a speaking event or meeting, please let us know and we will connect you with someone in your area.



Photos from the African Heritage Delegation, clockwise from top-left: African Heritage delegates meet with members of the Popular Committee of Bil'in and their families; Paula Watts at the Haram Al-Sharif (Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem; Mahmoud Jidah, an organizer with Jerusalem's Afro-Palestinian community holds his Israeli-issued ID card; Suheir Owdah of Deheisheh Refugee Camp's Phoenix Center with the women of the delegation; and Carolyn Boyd and Michael Nettles show solidarity with Rueven Aberjil, a founder of the Israeli Black Panther Party.

Read the African Heritage Delegation's Powerful Statement:
ifpb.org/africanheritage

**Help New Generations of
Peace-Builders Succeed!**

\$12,000 to go to reach our goal. . .

See back page for details





Kazim Ali enjoys Rukab's famous ice cream in Ramallah (photo: Ferdaouis Bagga)

“The Emperor of Ice Cream”

Reflections from one member of the *Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders* Delegation on a Visit to Ramallah

*The following is an excerpt from a trip report filed by IFPB delegate **Kazim Ali**, a poet and a professor of Creative Writing at Oberlin College. The “Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders Delegation” traveled in Israel/Palestine from July 16 – July 29 and was co-sponsored by Interfaith Peace-Builders and the American Friends Service Committee. This piece also appeared on the Huffington Post. To read the full report, and others from our summer delegations, visit ifpb.org/delegations/recent_reports.html*

It's not hard to guess why, when we went to Ramallah, I kept reciting under my breath the poem “The Emperor of Ice Cream” by American poet Wallace Stevens. Stevens' short poem describes ice cream being made in the house of mourning. Though there is ever-present sadness the poet still wishes to “whip in kitchen cups concupiscent curds.”

The Palestinian people, in addition to their other hardships, have been cut off from East Jerusalem by a gigantic concrete wall and a series of checkpoints which prevent easy passage between Israel and the territory of the West Bank; occupied in violation of international law since 1967. East Jerusalem is a city of over 300,000 Palestinians, which - though it has never been their political capital - has been their cultural, economic and artistic capital for countless generations.

A short fourteen miles away, in the hills to the north of Jerusalem, lies the acting political capital of Palestine: Ramallah. When we visited Birzeit University in the morning one of the students told one of the Muslims in our delegation who had been praying at the Al-Aqsa Mosque how she too longed to go to East Jerusalem one day. Later that evening one of the Israeli students from Hebrew University told me that he had heard many wonderful things about Ramallah.

They are all true. Ramallah is a wonderful, vibrant town, bustling with energy and verve. Where else in the world is a city in which one of the main streets running through the center of town is named after an ice cream parlor? And on Rukab Street, down a shadowy staircase, is an English language bookstore where shone up at me from a book table the face of Suheir Hammad, Palestinian-Brooklynite poet. And later on the street, hanging in a store window: a charcoal drawing of Mahmoud Darwish, the Palestinian poet who made Ramallah his home when in 1997 he was at last permitted to return to Palestine after a lifetime abroad.

One thing that has haunted me on this trip through an unsettling region with two names is how complicated the situation is, how many views there are toward solving the seeming myriad of issues that face the Palestinian and Israeli people. One issue seems basic: there can never be a functioning and vibrant Palestinian polity until there is freedom of movement for the Palestinian people. The wall must come down, the blockade of Gaza must end, the checkpoints in the Occupied West Bank must be removed, and transit between Gaza and the West Bank restored.

But in Ramallah somehow I felt free. In Ramallah I felt like there was a free Palestine. The people around me behaved like free people - they were angry, funny, passionate, disturbed. They were vocally critical of their own government, introspective and thoughtful about the future, distracted by the wedding dress in the shop window. They make brilliant art and literature and music. They dream - as their Israeli sisters and brothers did once - of returning to Jerusalem.

When the Berlin Wall ringed that German city one side of it - the East German side, the side of the closed and undemocratic regime - was bare and imposing. But the other side - the West German side, the side that longed for a free and open society - was littered and licked and lavishly covered with the brilliant graffiti of freedom.

As we drove past the bare Israeli wall, past the checkpoint, and past the now-closed airport that used to serve the Arab towns in that area, we saw the other side of the wall, the Palestinian side: first the brilliantly painted portraits of Palestinian leaders, then slogans, poems, and then the touching silhouette of a little girl with braided hair clutching a bunch of balloons being borne skyward, up over the wall, toward the blue sky, toward a space beyond the boundaries and checkpoints and separations.

In Ramallah the only emperor is the emperor of ice cream.

- by *Kazim Ali*

There are two places to read this piece in full! Check out www.ifpb.org/del37/report4.html or read it on Kazim's Huffington Post page at www.huffingtonpost.com/kazim-ali

Expanded IFPB Board Strengthens Community Connections and Extends Interfaith Peace-Builders Family!

Welcome the three newest members of the IFPB Board of Directors

When Interfaith Peace-Builders became an independent organization in 2006, we began to slowly build a Board of Directors. Starting from six individuals who knew and understood the program well, we increased to 8, then 10 and 12 board members. This summer three more have joined the Board, bringing it to a full 15 board positions!

Each member of the IFPB Board of Directors brings unique talents and experiences to our work. From the beginning, we set out to build an activist board, made up of people who know how to do the hard work on the ground and who intimately understand the importance of peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

That is why we are thrilled to introduce the three people who started their terms on the IFPB Board this summer: **Hanan Idilbi**, **Darryl Jordan**, and **Cathy Sultan**. None of them are new to the organization, but each look forward to deepening their involvement and strengthening IFPB:

Hanan Idilbi is a Palestinian-American attorney. Currently living in Washington, DC, Hanan resided in her parents' hometown of Akka (in Palestine/Israel) for five years and spent a year in Egypt at the American University in Cairo where she studied Arabic literature. She is currently a federal employment law attorney and was previously a litigator with a civil rights firm in DC. Hanan served on the coordinating committee of the *US Palestine Community Network (USPCN)* from 2007-2009 and was a member of the *DC Dabkeh Troupe*, which promoted Palestinian culture through traditional folkloric dance. She graduated *summa cum laude* from the American University Washington College of Law where she was a Public Interest/Public Service Scholar, participated in the *International Human Rights Law Clinic*, and co-chaired the *Immigrants' Rights Coalition*.



Darryl Jordan has been an organizer for more than 30 years, working on issues of hunger and food security, neighborhood security, voter education, peace, justice, apartheid, immigration, union/labor, health and political empowerment. Darryl lives and works in Philadelphia where he is employed with the *American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition*, focusing on issues of concern for people and communities of color in the US and internationally. During his organizing life, Darryl has had the benefit of learning from many activists, community leaders and organizers, and tries to incorporate all that he has learned in his work. Prior to joining the Board of Directors, Darryl co-led the people of color delegation IFPB co-sponsored with the *Third World Coalition* in 2008 and served on the ad-hoc organizing committee for the *African Heritage Delegation* in 2011.

Cathy Sultan lived in Beirut, Lebanon with her Lebanese husband and two children from 1969 to 1983. In March 2002, Cathy traveled to Jerusalem and the West Bank to interview Palestinian refugees, scholars, Israeli soldiers, teenagers, teachers, businessmen and peace activists. Those interviews compose the material for her first book: *Israeli and Palestinian Voices: A Dialogue with Both Sides*. Cathy has also penned two books on Lebanon: *A Beirut Heart: One Woman's War* and *Tragedy in South Lebanon: The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006*. She sits on the Executive Board of the *National Peace Foundation* where she coordinates programs designed to educate members about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Prior to joining the Board of Directors, Cathy led IFPB delegations in 2008, 2009 and 2010.



Please donate and help IFPB and the movement for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine grow today!

ifpb.org/donation

Support *Generations* of Peace and Justice Advocates

Your Special Donation will Help IFPB's *New Generation Fund* Succeed!

Some say it is an ambitious goal, but we have few options. An organization like Interfaith Peace-Builders must change and grow. So, at the behest of retiring Senior Fellow Joe Groves, IFPB pledged this summer to raise \$20,000 to support the next generation of peace and justice advocates!

Joe staffed IFPB for 10 years, and led it from a fledgling program to a fully independent organization. He donated a great deal of his time to the organization and now it is time for us to continue to build on the foundation he leaves. To do so, we need your help.

In less than 3 months we have already raised \$8,000 for the *New Generation Fund*. You can help us reach our goal of \$20,000!

In doing so, you will:

- **Help** maintain a dedicated staff of skilled and experienced organizers and peace educators;
- **Provide** partial scholarships for young people and those needing financial support to join an IFPB delegation; and
- **Increase** outreach efforts to youth and young people so that the next generation will understand and embrace the need for a just peace for the people of the Middle East.

It is so easy to help: make a *new* or *increased* donation to Interfaith Peace-Builders and we will count it towards the goal of \$20,000!

Simply write "New Generation Fund" in the memo line of the check or donate online at www.ifpb.org/donation/newgenerations.html and we will allocate your donation accordingly.

Every little bit counts towards our goal.

Thank you for your support!

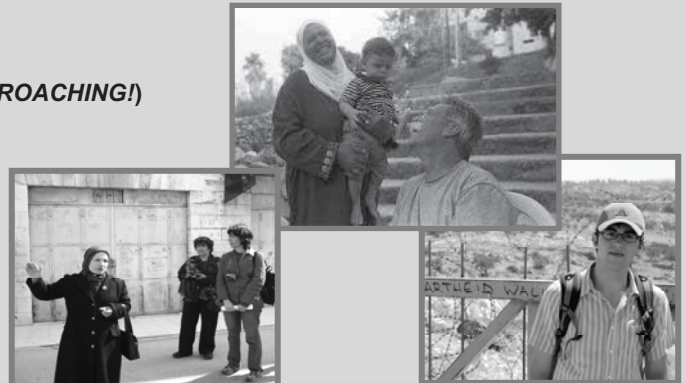


"Make this donation as a special contribution to a special cause. It is all of our responsibility to provide a sturdy footing for exceptional young activists and their incredible work for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine." - Joe Groves (pictured with Delegations Coordinator Emily Siegel-Acar, the newest member of our staff).

TRAVEL TO ISRAEL/PALESTINE WITH INTERFAITH PEACE-BUILDERS

UPCOMING DELEGATIONS

- **October 29 - November 11, 2011** (*DEADLINE APPROACHING!*)
Olive Harvest Delegation
- **May 19 – June 1, 2012**
Voices of the Peace-Builders Delegation
- **July 14 – July 27, 2012**
Ramadan in Palestine! (Delegation theme TBD)
- **October 21 – November 3, 2012**
Olive Harvest Delegation



Now is the time to go! Find out why so many credit an IFPB delegation with changing their life!

Get the latest on upcoming delegations at ifpb.org/delegations/upcoming.html