



JQF: New Focus on Jerusalem

What is happening in Jerusalem?

This bulletin was launched this spring with the objective of interpreting the issues behind the news. It intends to occupy an arena which is located between investigative journalism and academic research. While avoiding a partisan approach to the city's present and future predicament, we do not claim a detached objectivity. The purpose of the quarterly is to provide a source of discussion, information, and analysis on the neglected status of the Palestinian relationship to Jerusalem. JQF intends to de-mystify Israeli claims to the city as the 'eternal and

indivisible capital of the Jewish people,' while maintaining a critical approach to all ideological posturing--whether it comes from Arab, Israeli or Palestinian sources. We are also cognizant of Jerusalem's status as an international city--not only in the abstract sense of being a spiritual domain of humanity--but in a more concrete dimension of being claimed by millions of people who do not live in it, but who visit it, write about it, and dream about it.

Issue no. 1 established a pattern that we intend to build on and expand. Each issue will include a social-ethnographic section highlighting a feature of daily life in the city; a special file focusing in-depth on a current problem; a review of recent books, films, and conferences that deal with urban problems of Jerusalem; and an assessment of research resources which can aid the researcher, the policy maker, and readers at large who are interested in the city.

In this issue Anita Vitullo examines the nature of social services provided by the municipality and their impact on the Palestinian population. Muna Muhaisen discusses the meaning of Jerusalem for thousands of people in its suburbs--in this case the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem--who cannot reach it as a result of the Israeli policy of closure that does not allow Palestinians with West Bank or Gaza identity papers to enter the city. George Hintilian provides a profile of the life of one of the city's historically rooted communities: the Armenians and their patrimony; Ellen Fleischman reconstructs women's lives during the Mandate period; and Martina Rieker reviews two very different takes on the city's history: a new film that invokes the tragic fate of the

displacement of Arab refugees from the Western part of the city; and an interactive CD-ROM that offers a highly selective representation of the city under the guise of a comprehensive historical "pilgrimage." Finally, a new section is introduced here that focuses on classical writings about the city. In this issue Martina Rieker reviews Huda Lutfi's examination of Mamluk Jerusalem (1260-1516) based on the documents of the Haram.

Looking ahead, in the Libraries and Archives section of our next issue, Nazmi al-Jubeh will write about the newly renovated Khaldiyyeh Library--arguably the most important manuscript library in Jerusalem.

By raising issues about the life and the history of Jerusalem, we hope to engage our reader more substantively in a process of re-thinking the current situation in the city. This means not only historical and socio-economic analysis but also cultural critique that scrutinizes the images of the city projected in art, books, films, and the news media. Finally, by shedding light on the memories, histories, and daily lives of those who have no voice in the city today, we aim at enabling them to reclaim their place in the city and its history.