

LETTER TO THE READERS

Dear Reader,

Make no mistake about it : this book doesn't aim to be neutral. Our position is clear : once for all we have chosen to be on the side of the respect of the rights of Man and of the Peoples. We are lucky enough to enjoy them on this side of the planet. Some of us consider them as taken for granted but doing so, they forget the long fight preceding generations had to carry out to have these fundamental rights recognised and recorded in the Articles of the same name. In writing this book, we have taken up the cause of the men and women who are being denied these rights, who are dominated and humiliated by an abusing system, in this case a State : Israel... A rather left-wing position some people pointed out, and they advised us to grow up a bit.

Three years ago, none of us knew what was really going on in Palestine. We were all too tied up with our busy lives and only half heard what the media choose to tell us about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Moreover, as we had all been brought up to be made aware of the holocaust we tended instinctively to side with Israel whatever happened over there. Some of us entered the project of encounter and exchange with young Palestinians in the West Bank determined to remain external observers. Yet, all who have been to Palestine make the same comment : once on the spot, it is impossible not to take a stand and to become aware of the constant human rights violations. Once on the spot, you cannot help being appalled at the treatment handed out to the Palestinians by the Israeli occupiers.

We are not a political group. We don't belong to any organization. We are individuals with name, men and women, each speaking for themselves only. It is as such that we built our project. In the same way, we didn't have any contact with officials, spokesmen or officers of any kind there. The people we lived with for a fortnight in Jerusalem and in the West Bank are ordinary people like you and us, and we met them in private : man to man, woman to woman, and even child to child.

Nothing in the world would have made us miss this experience. We are really happy to have been there even though the trip was at times gruelling. We have come back so much richer than when we left, inhabited by the faces and words of all the beautiful people¹ we got to know over there. Indeed, they were great. Not so much because they were to the manner born but because they have chosen to be and behave as dignified human beings and because they keep at it everyday of their life.

Allow us now to introduce them and their world to you.

¹ In reference to the « beautiful resistance » of the Palestinians, see chapter 5