A Report on the Librarians and Archivists to Palestine Delegation
June 23-July 4, 2013
By Blair Kuntz

From June 23 to July 4, 2013, I was privileged to be a part of a 16 member delegation of librarians and archivists from the United States, Canada, Sweden, Palestine, and Trinidad and Tobago. Calling ourselves “Librarians and Archivists to Palestine”, our goal was to connect with colleagues in Palestine in order to investigate access to information in Palestine so that we could understand how Palestine voices reach us and how they are suppressed and do not reach us. Our purpose was to develop mutual aid and solidarity with the understanding that this was to be the beginning of a longer-term process of solidarity work. During our two-week tour, we had meetings with representatives of dozens of organizations, and we participated in a walking tours, discussions, and lectures which provided us with a more wide-ranging understanding of the realities of Palestinian life both inside 1948 Palestine (what has come to be known as Israel) and inside 1967 Palestine (the occupied territories of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip). Unfortunately, due to the delegation’s limited scope, we were not able to visit Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

The Legacy of the Nakbah and the “Great Book Robbery”

Any discussion of the fate of libraries and documents in current-day Palestine must begin with a remembrance of the theft of books and archival

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materials during the Nakbah, or the “catastrophe” which resulted in the Zionist expulsion of over 800,000 Palestinian refugees in 1948. During the Nakbah, the Hagana militia, the pre-cursor to the modern day Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), was followed by teams of librarians from the National Hebrew Library at Hebrew University who collected books, manuscripts, and newspapers from private family homes whose inhabitants had fled to escape fighting and massacres perpetrated by the Hagana and other Zionist extra-judicial militias. It is estimated that 30,000 books were stolen in Jerusalem, which was populated by many wealthy and educated Palestinians, alone. Today, there are only five or six private libraries left in East Jerusalem. Another 40,000 books were stolen from Haifa, Yaffa, and Nazareth. The looted books included those from well-known Palestinian intellectuals and writers such as Khalil Sakakini, an early Palestinian educator, whose library was confiscated and the whereabouts of which remain unknown today. The library also visited the library of the Nashashibi family whose library has been re-constructed based on new donations. These stolen books were then incorporated into the general collection of Hebrew University. About 6,000 of the 70,000 stolen books were marked AP (Abandoned Property). The Israeli government maintains that these books were not looted, but rather “collected”. However, today, over sixty years after the looting, no books have been returned to their original owners. Thus, the books remain an important part of historical cultural heritage that is not accessible to Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza or in the refugee Diaspora. Nor are these materials under the control of the 1.5 million Palestinians who are the descendants of those who remained in 1948 Palestine. A documentary film entitled The Great Book Robbery recounts this theft of books during the Nakbah.

Many archival materials such as personal papers, manuscripts, and newspapers were also stolen during the Nakbah; for instance, a pillaged British-mandate era newspaper collection that is one of the most complete in the world is likewise now located at Hebrew University. During our visit, we met with the Israeli non-governmental organization Zochrot whose name means “remembrance” in Hebrew. Zochrot champions the Palestinian refugee right of return and works to educate the Israeli population about the reality of the Nakbah including conducting tours of destroyed villages with Nakbah survivors. The group also produces maps of destroyed villages in Hebrew and Arabic. Zochrot researchers told us that many significant collections of documents pertaining to the Ottoman era and British mandate are now also located in the Israeli state archives. These materials include administrative records, population censuses, and documents from religious and social organizations. Furthermore, information at the Israeli Military Archives concerning the Israeli Army and the pre-state militia are restricted, censored, and closed. These materials are supposed to be opened fifty years after the time of creation, but if deemed harmful to the state—a familiar excuse—they can be restricted indefinitely. During the Nakbah of
1948, archival items stolen from Palestinian homes were deemed “controlled confiscation” indicating that articles from Palestinian homes could be seized by the Israeli forces for military purposes. In reality, this meant that Israeli soldiers could take whatever they wished from Palestinian homes. It is estimated that in 1948 there were approximately 100,000 manuscripts in Jerusalem; today, only 10,000 remain. There is much looted materials in Israeli archives, most of which is filed under the term “Arab” rather than “Palestinian”; for instance, “Arab files in the land of Israel, pre-1948.” It is also worth mentioning that the Hagana simply destroyed much Palestinian archival material which was lost and never recovered.

During the meeting with Zochrot, we learned that the Military Archives also contains photographs gathered by Jewish military scouts before 1948. The military scouts’ mission was to gather files about and photograph Palestinian villages, structures, roads and drinking wells. The Hagana and other Zionist militias would then search for, for instance, the wells based on the photographs when they invaded the village. The Zionist militias also conducted textual surveys of Palestinian towns and villages seeking demographic information, such as educational facilities, and geographic information such as information on water resources and buildings. While conducting their surveillance missions, these Jewish photographers would often describe themselves as Arab, and this information was sent to the Jewish intelligence forces. A third survey took aerial photographs of the villages which were important for gauging geographical information for the occupation forces. After the war ended, these same Jewish photographers proceeded to take individual photographs of the Palestinians who remained inside 1948 Palestine for purposes of surveillance and control. According to researchers at Zochrot, archival material used to expose Zionist strategy and participation in war crimes is often restricted. For instance, original materials used in research can subsequently only be seen via computer, while access to other historical materials are simply closed after the research is published—sometimes this happens even during the research—when the government archivists understand the parameters of the research project. It must be remembered that this restriction of access is being done by seasoned Israeli government archivists who control the image context and deny freedom of information and access.

Another factor which must be mentioned is the lack of access to Palestinian researchers to their own historical materials. For example, the Israeli State Archives, located in Jerusalem, are not accessible to Palestinians from the West Bank who may not be allowed to cross checkpoints, and certainly not to those in the Gaza Strip to whom the border is closed entirely. Needless to say, Palestinian refugees in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan are also denied access while even refugees with Western passports can also be denied access to Israel (and will certainly be subjected to lengthy interrogation upon arrival)
based on their Arabic surname. The travesty of Israeli Archives holding stolen Palestinian archival material and then asking Palestinian researchers for money for copyright must also be mentioned.

The second event shadowing the delegation was the targeting, looting, and destruction of libraries, archives and media centers throughout Palestine during the Second Intifada, especially in the spring of 2002 when the Israeli Army damaged Palestinian libraries, archives, files and computer systems. A Palestinian Task Force Initiative indicated that in the majority of cases the libraries, archives and Palestinian ministries were invaded long after the fighting had ceased and it concluded that the destruction was purely deliberate. The library delegation visited the library building of the Orient House which the IDF targeted in 2001. Orient House was the headquarters of the PLO in East Jerusalem in the 1980s and 1990s and it housed a significant library and archive collection. Part of the collection was ironically materials that had been recovered from the looting of the PLO archive in Beirut during the brutal Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The confiscation of materials and the closure of the building occurred despite Israeli assurances during the Oslo Peace process that Israeli officials would not interfere with the daily operations of the library. Betraying its promise, the library was closed in 2001 using an Ottoman era law which is renewed every six months and posted on the front door of the building. A significant portion of the building’s archival collection was confiscated including materials related to the Jerusalem negotiations and a photo collection representing a unique body or materials relating to Jerusalem’s nineteenth and twentieth century history. A significant newspaper collection was also confiscated.

Orient House in East Jerusalem has been closed by Israeli authorities since 2001
Inside 1948: “As If We Were Still Under Occupation”

Inside 1948, the delegation witnessed a similar Israeli government denigration of its Palestinian population, who are officially designated as “Israeli Arabs”. In turn, in a move clearly motivated by the old colonial tool of “divide and conquer”, the “Israeli Arabs” are further split into Druze (who serve in the Israeli Defense Forces and are chosen to act as policemen over other Arabs), Christians, and Muslims. At a meeting of school librarians at the Mada al-Karmal foundation in Haifa, we learned that there is no official Palestinian archive inside 1948; instead, there are only private papers and files. In Israel, the most important papers related to Palestinian life inside 1948 are held in the National Archives in Jerusalem. In Haifa, such documents are located inside the municipal archives in Haifa. The Mada al-Karmal was the first Arab research center established after 1948.

There are seventy Arab public libraries inside 1948, but strangely, in Haifa, which the Israeli government trumpets as a model of co-existence between Jews and Arabs, there is no Arab public library although there are 21 Jewish libraries. The one Arabic-language public library is funded by a non-governmental organization, not by the Israeli government. The librarians informed us that the Israeli system has also worked to decrease and hide Palestinian archival materials. During our meeting with Arabic-language school librarians, we learned too how kibbutz archives, which contain much material on life in Palestine prior to 1948, use the familiar excuse of “security laws” to dissuade those perceived as “security risks” (especially Arab Muslims) from using them. Every kibbutz has an archive containing very rich information about the surrounding Arab villages.

The school librarians informed us that books on topics the Israeli government deems sensitive in the education of the Arab population, for instance, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), are censored and not permitted in classrooms. There is a separate Arab education system, but Palestinian Israelis are not in charge of their own education. Indeed, since 1948, teachers in Arab schools are vetted and monitored by the Israeli government and are dismissed if they discuss issues of Palestinian self-determination inside the classrooms. This system is enforced by a structure of collaboration in which the head teacher spies on fellow teachers. Any subject dealing with Palestinian culture and history is not allowed to be taught in the school system. Thus, even answering a question such as “What is the PLO?” can result in the teacher’s dismissal. In order to avoid discussing Arab nationalism in Arabic literature classrooms, the literature which is taught is that written before the advent of Islam. In essence then, this is a system of anti-education.

Moreover, the Arab education system is underfunded with Jewish schools receiving twelve per cent more money than their Arab counterparts. Indeed,
while the first school libraries for Jewish schools were established in 1927, the first school libraries for Palestinian Israelis were established only in 1992. Arab school libraries are in turn underfunded; for instance, one school librarian told us that her library’s annual budget was $250. Furthermore, Arabic-language children’s books in Israel are not imported from Arab countries; instead, most are translations of Hebrew-language children’s books. Books on sensitive subjects—for example, those dealing with the PLO—are censored or not permitted at all. At the post-secondary level, there are no Arabic-language universities. In practice, this means that even if there is only one Hebrew-speaking student in an Arabic literature class, the class is taught in Hebrew. In essence, the Arabic language school system is still run as if it were under occupation; moreover, there is a real problem of the “Israelization” of Palestinian Arab children who sometimes prefer speaking Hebrew and English rather than Arabic.

### Inside the West Bank

The situation for libraries and archives in post-secondary institutions in the West Bank (and also Gaza which the delegation did not visit) is also fraught with difficulties as a result of the Israeli occupation. Since 1967, the Israeli occupation forces and officials have harassed, censored and denied access to post-secondary institutions. Indeed, in December 2008 the Israeli Air Force bombed in six separate air strikes the Islamic University of Gaza destroying 74 scientific laboratories.

Birzeit University near Ramallah, which the delegation visited, has, like other post-secondary institutions in the West Bank, been the target of Israeli harassment, closure, and bureaucratic entropy. The Israeli occupation regime has closed the university, which has approximately 8500 students (6,000 of them undergraduate), seventeen times since 1967 for a total period equaling seven years. Like other libraries in the West Bank, libraries and schools are not able to order books and other materials directly from Lebanon, where many high-quality Arabic language titles are published, because Israel considers the country a hostile entity. Moreover, when Arabic books are ordered, they tend to be of lower quality while Israeli censorship dictates that even a poetry or fiction book with a prohibited word in its title can be prohibited. Such practices naturally raise disturbing questions about academic freedom. When Arabic-language books are ordered, they are held in quarantine at the border, a process which can take up to a year. Adding insult to injury, the institution which has ordered the books must pay a storage fee to the Israeli government for the period the books have been quarantined. In practice then, Palestinian libraries end up paying triple the price for books. Even importing equipment can be a process lasting up to six months and then, once again, the university must
pay for the equipment’s sequester. In typical fashion, a simple procedure thus becomes a “security clearance.” Together with the cost of shipping the books, it is therefore more difficult for librarians to develop their collections.

The situation is much the same for al-Quds University in Abu Dis whose boundaries are separated by the illegal wall which Palestinians popularly frame as the Apartheid Wall. Librarians at both Birzeit University and al-Quds remarked on the difficulty of establishing librarianship as a profession in the West Bank. For example, there are no post-undergraduate library schools in the West Bank; therefore, it is difficult to find professional librarians and archivists. Furthermore, there is no unified Palestinian union library catalog because it is too expensive. Thus, each university must pay to maintain its own catalog. A further problem of the lack of a union catalog is that there is no interlibrary loan. Inevitably, the Palestinian Librarian Association is not so active because Israeli checkpoints make it difficult to cross checkpoints and attend meetings. In turn, this situation leads to a lack of training courses.

At an international level, support for alleviating the problems faced by libraries and archives is tepid. For instance, a recent report issued by the International Federation of Libraries and Archives (IFLA) compares Israeli and Palestinian libraries and archives as if they existed on an equal footing without acknowledging Israeli destruction and ongoing harassment of Palestinian libraries and archives. IFLA’s stance is that it must wait until problems are “resolved” and it even states that Israel has legitimate “security fears.”

Many books in the West Bank are charitable donations; a phenomenon the delegation learned can be problematic. At al-Quds University, for example, a donor has contributed money for a brand new library building; however, there is no money in the budget for furniture. The library had recently received a shipment of 30,000 donated titles, but the books were primarily general textbooks which were not currently even used at the university. The donation also included many duplicate titles. After librarians had sorted through the titles and weeded the collection, only 300 or 400 of the titles were chosen for the collection. Obviously, this charity model of collection development is an example of how aid can be unhelpful if it does not allow librarians to direct their own destinies.

A visit to the El-Bireh Public Library also demonstrated the high cost and the arbitrary nature of Israeli occupation. The El Bireh Public Library was in fact built just before the Israeli occupation began in 1967. The library soon discovered that books from the wider Arab world were banned from the West Bank. By 1993, the Israelis had banned 5,000 books including those by Agatha Christie and the poet Samih al-Qasim (who is from inside 1948 Palestine and who holds Israeli citizenship but whose career has been marked by harassment and imprisonment inside Israeli jails). Nonetheless, in 1973 El-Bireh Public Library opened the first children’s library in all of the Middle East. In 1982, however,
when the Israeli government assumed the governance of municipalities, Israeli government officials shut down the library and dismissed library employees. After the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1996, the library moved to a new building and today the library employs six employees. Many leaders in the current Palestinian legislative assembly were graduates of the El Bireh reading program. However, it is clear that Israeli claims of “security” used to harass and intimidate librarians are laughable. For instance, librarians told us of one instance in which Israeli occupation forces became concerned because children from the library would hang their drawings in the public square. As parents and other adults would attend the events, the Israelis would become concerned that it was a popular gathering and would prohibit the gatherings. Another surrealistic episode witnessed the Israeli occupation forces raiding the library because a Palestinian historian was giving a reading program on Zionism to the children.

Prisoners’ Libraries

During a presentation by the Addameer (“Conscience”) Prisoners’ Rights Association, the delegation learned of the truly desperate situation of prisoners detained by the Israeli occupation forces. For example, since 1967, Israel has detained 800,000 Palestinians, a statistic which includes twenty per cent of the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and forty per cent of the male population. Palestinian prisoners are subject to torture (both physical and psychological), administrative detention (i.e. detention without charge), and isolation. There are four interrogation centers and three detention centers, all of them inside Israel, a condition contravening international law which states prisoners must be held in close connection. The prisoners also include women and children. It is also important to mention that 320 Palestinian prisoners have died in Israeli prisons since 1967.

It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that special collections in Palestinian libraries are devoted to Palestinian prisoners. The Nablus Public Library, for example, holds a book section of approximately 8000 books and 870 handwritten notebooks from two now-closed prisons which operated from 1967 to 1996 and were closed after the Oslo Accords. When the prisons were closed, the Palestinian Authority collected the books and notebooks and donated them to the Nablus Public Library. A prisoner’s family was allowed to buy two books every month for detained family members; however, these books needed to be approved by the prison authorities first. The books remained in the prison when the detainee was released or transferred to another prison. Sometimes books would be smuggled inside another book, for instance, a cookbook. The library collections were also helped along by Red Cross volunteers who would bring in books about Marxism, Communist theory, and socialist thought as well as
religious books. These books helped to organize the three intellectual trends that emerged and spread among the detainees: a patriotic and nationalist movement; a communist and socialist movement; and a religious and Salafi movement. Detainees also copied books and sent them to other prisons. The books are filled with personal and political annotations in the margins. The books help to reveal gain rich insights into the development of pre-Oslo Palestinian intellectual trends that encompassed the various events occurring from 1967-1996.

Another important prison collection is contained in the Abu Jihad Museum of Prisoner Movement Affairs which was established in 2007 at al-Quds University. The Museum archive holds 55,000 court cases (about 10,000 of which have been digitized), almost all in Hebrew. The museum is now working to digitize the entire collection. Indeed, because the museum is located in what is known as “Area C”, the Israeli Army could enter at any time and confiscate the entire collection. The museum therefore ensures that there is also a computer backup for every document in Jerusalem, Ramallah and abroad. The museum exhibit details the lives of Palestinian prisoners and it also contains both books from a former prison library as well as other archival materials related to Palestinian prisoners.

The library has a network of employees who travel throughout the West Bank to various towns and villages and meet with ex-detainees who have been
recently released from prison. The ex-detainees can donate the original copy of their journal to the library or they can keep the original. The digitized notebooks are not accessible on the Internet but can be viewed at the library.

This passion for digitization in order to increase access to the material was very evident in many of the institutions we visited in the West Bank such as the Palestine Archive Project at Birzeit University and the Institute for Palestine Studies. Digitization is important because it allows Palestinians in the West Bank to circumvent Israeli travel restrictions and it also allows access to the Palestinian Diaspora and the wider community of researchers. Furthermore, digitization also ensures protection against Israeli destruction and theft of original materials.

**Creative Responses to Israeli Occupation and Violence**

The delegation was also very fortunate to visit various examples of responses to the detrimental effects of Israeli occupation and daily violence, often in the face of incredible odds and a paucity of financial resources.

In the Balata Refugee Camp, a camp that sits on 2.5 square kilometers of land near the city of Nablus in the northern part of the West Bank, for example, the delegation visited the Yaffa Cultural Centre which was founded in 1966. Today, almost 22,000 people live in this severely overcrowded piece of land. The Balata Refugee Camp has been a central point of resistance to Israeli occupation and both the first and second Palestinian Intifada began here. Israel targets Balata and Nablus and both places have paid a heavy price for their resistance. Indeed, the Israeli Army continues to arrest Palestinians in the camp on an almost daily basis, most often at night. Actually, on the night the delegation stayed at the centre’s guest house, the Israeli Army entered the camp to arrest Palestinians involved in an altercation with Jewish religious fundamentalist settlers making provocative moves against the nearby historic Jacob’s Well complex. Typically, instead of arresting the settlers for their violence and incitement, the Israeli Army targeted the victims of settler violence.

Established in 1950, the camp was initially intended to be a temporary tent city, offering short-term housing for refugees from 65 towns and villages in the Yaffa area (including Al Lyd and Al Ramleh) and members of Bedouin tribes. However, as time passed and the Palestinian refugee problem remained unresolved, Balata’s residents replaced the tents with concrete buildings. Situated very closely together, the apartments in the buildings are small with thin walls, offering little privacy. The crowded conditions also leave little room for demographic expansion, and almost 5,000 refugees now live outside the camp. The Yaffa Cultural Centre offers a range of programs meant to address the needs and wants of camp residents who face a wide range of challenges including domestic violence, drug abuse, unemployment, poverty,
and inadequate healthcare. The camp’s schools suffer from overcrowding and the illiteracy rate is forty-five per cent. The Centre hosts a children’s library to serve 300 children living under the most oppressive conditions of occupation. The centre also hosts a diversity of programming meant to serve local, social, educational, and psychological needs.

Similar conditions exist at the Aida Refugee Camp located in Bethlehem which was named after a woman who owned a coffee shop near the camp and who was a great supporter of the refugees who eventually settled there. As in Balata, the refugees lived in tents because they believed that the internationally-recognized right of return for refugees would allow them to return to their homes. However, eventually when they realized that they were not being allowed to return, they built concrete apartment blocks. Today, the Apartheid Wall (which is built far beyond the so-called 1948 “green line”) prevents the community from accessing nearby olive groves which had been used for relaxation, studying, animal grazing and agriculture. The delegation learned that in 2004 daily demonstrations stopped the building of the wall for two weeks after which the Israelis arrested teenagers who were resisting and tortured them. Eventually, Aida youth discovered how to light fires against the wall in order to soften it, and then hacked it with tools. Eventually, this action lead to breaking holes in the wall and then the complete torching of a “security” tower. Conditions at the Aida Camp are much the same as those at the Balata Camp. For example, the camp has one United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) school but the children are not allowed to use it after class. Moreover, the classes are
so overcrowded that the classes are broken into two shifts. In 2005, the Israeli Army in fact killed teachers inside the school.

As in Balata, Aida now hosts a cultural centre called the “Lajee” (Refugee) Centre which contains a library and very successful media centre. The centre gives the camp children cameras, teaches them photography, video production and how to produce radio programs. The centre is also creating an atlas of the Aida camp (although the Israeli Army has in fact already completed a mapping of each home in the camp so that it can carry out its frequent incursions, arrests, and assassinations of camp residents with greater ease).

Another community initiative that the delegation visited was in the Wadi Silwan district which has become the main center for Judaization in East Jerusalem. Wadi Silwan currently has 55,000 Palestinian residents. During the first Intifada (1987-1991), 296 houses were stolen using the Absentee Property Law. As the Jerusalem Municipality refuses to grant permission to build homes here, the district is the scene of frequent demolitions of houses the Israeli authorities claim have been built illegally. In fact, residents have little choice but to build illegally considering that only twenty building permits have been issued to Palestinian residents since 1967. Meanwhile, Jewish settlers are allowed to build without difficulty, and more than 3,000 apartments have been built for Jewish settlers who build walls around their colonies. Many observers have commented that the home demolitions and the ongoing harassment are in fact designed to make life so miserable for East Jerusalem residents (who cannot afford to hire expensive lawyers) that they will move to the West Bank and forfeit their Jerusalem identity cards. The main impetus for Judaization is the City of David Archaeological Project which tunnels under the Palestinian residents homes causing damage. Israeli planning authorities are in fact in the process of approving plans to raze homes and turn the area into an archaeological park.

Spearheading the movement to Judaize the Wadi Silwan neighborhood of Wadi Hilweh are 400 Jewish settlers who now control 6,000 Palestinians. The settlers have their own militias and have shot Palestinian residents. There are now also 550 security cameras scrutinizing the movements of Palestinian residents of the neighborhood. Meanwhile, social conditions in Wadi Silwan are much like those in the Balata and Aida Refugee camps of the West Bank. In Wadi Silwan, there are nine elementary schools and only one high school. 11,000 students a year have no place to study. Most of the schools do not have libraries, and children must pay money to use the municipal library in Silwan. There are no clubs, community centres or parks, and while there are 3200 playgrounds and parks in West Jerusalem, there are only twelve in East Jerusalem. As in the Balata and Aida refugee camps, the Wadi Hilweh Creative Centre was established in 2007 to be a safe place, and it now serves 450 children between the ages of 6-12. The centre also contains a musical room consisting
of 150 instruments, a crafts room, and a hip hop room with its own studio. The Israelis tried to stop the opening of the centre, forcing it to hire a lawyer to defend its interests.

Another focus of creative resistance the delegation visited was the Tamimi Press in Nabi Saleh, a village near Ramallah, where residents hold a weekly non-violent demonstration against the takeover of a spring which included the whole side of a hill including their olive groves. Their weekly protest has been met with extreme violence by Israeli authorities who in Orwellian fashion claim that the protestors are threatening the settlers’ lives. Out of a village of a total of 600 people, 400 have been injured, and 140 have been arrested, including children. 180 children have also been injured. Children are likewise taken in for interrogation and some are imprisoned and released only after their parents pay a heavy fine. Israeli forces have used five or six kinds of tear-gas against the protestors including phosphorous, skunk spray, and pepper spray (which have correspondingly been used against children). Two residents have been killed including Mustafa Tamimi, a member of the Tamimi family. The community has responded by using video to document the violence they experience, including posting them on YouTube. The videos are also used to counter false accusations in court. The videographers take great personal risk to document the violence, including experiencing violence themselves, and facing arrest and imprisonment. The use of video to document Israeli military violence has also been used in other communities the delegation visited. Indeed, in the Aida Refugee Camp, the Israeli army recently shot a young videographer in the face and then arrested him after his release from hospital. Video has also been used to document Israeli violence by the Wadi Hilweh Information Centre.

Tear-gas canisters the Israeli Army has used against the residents of Nabi Saleh hanging outside the Tamimi home
In each instance, the video is used by these communities to document and communicate their experiences, and it also has the potential role of lessening military violence.

The delegation also visited many other places and met many other people including a walking tour of the city centre of Hebron where Palestinians are not allowed to walk or drive on Shuhada Street, a once thriving centre of market and social life. Meanwhile, Israeli settlers are allowed to go anywhere.

**Concluding note**

The delegation’s closing statement issued the following conclusions: While the delegation has ended, our work will continue. We will seek out and convene events in our home communities where we can share our knowledge about the effects of occupation and colonialism on libraries, archives, and Palestinian society; we will publish reports, articles, and zines that document the challenges faced—and the amazing work being done—by Palestinian information workers; we will develop an international network of information workers to facilitate skill-sharing, solidarity work, and community workers among librarians and archivists in Palestine and abroad; we will lobby national and international library and archival organizations to take tangible steps against the occupation and in support of Palestinian perspectives in information work; we will join Palestinians, Israelis, and international activists in campaigns for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against Israeli apartheid and colonialism. We will continue to learn and adapt our strategies to changing realities and will engage in critical examinations of our own positions of privilege. Through these activities we will work to support access to information in and about Palestine and Palestinian self-determination.