

We Can: A look at life in the West Bank

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Contributor

Imagine being imprisoned in the city you live in.

Imagine the streets surrounding your city are lined with piles of razor wire. Imagine having to crawl out of your back window and down the fire escape when you leave your house because the street at you front door is off limits to you. Imagine sitting in your living room watching television, when the soldiers burst in and inform you that this apartment is now an observation post, not a home. Imagine being escorted to your school everyday by the Christian Peacemaker Teams, so that you will have some form of protection from the ultra-Zionist settlers

who throw rocks, bricks and bottles of urine at you, merely because you *exist*. Imagine that all of your front-facing windows must be enshrouded by a mesh-wire cage to keep the settler's bricks from s m a s h i n g through them. Imagine your life in the hands of a bored, extremely tired, hungry and hot eighteen-year-old with an M16. Imagine watching your loved ones get blown to pieces when the soldiers are told to shell an area, or launch a grenade, as to enforce the random, collective punishment that the

Israeli Defense Force ironically dubs "deterrence."

You cannot imagine this. You cannot imagine life in Hebron, West Bank. I cannot imagine it, though I saw much of it with my own eyes. I cannot



Kids in Hebron

imagine being one of the 35,000 Palestinians who are imprisoned in the only Palestinian city of the West

compiled by this group, concerning their service in Hebron. The soldiers can speak for themselves:

"I had a friend who carried a weapon equipped with a grenade launcher, and everybody with a launcher got ammunition of dispersing demonstrations...he really like to fire [tear] gas, so he would also steal them from other guys who were equipped with gas launchers, and he would fire them whenever he came on duty and before he went off. He would simply fire on groups of people who were just standing around and talking, to see them running and coughing, he got a kick out of it" (p 27).

And another:

"In one of our conversations with the Border Police, two of them were bragging about how much they liked to take a Palestinian whom they caught throwing stones or just throwing a word ... or looking at them. They'd put him in an armored



The streets of Hebron

jeep and then hit him with the spark mufflers of their weapons in the chest or the stomach or the neck. Then they'd bet how fast they could take a turn in the road where they'd throw him out of the jeep...it bothered me, but what could I do about it?" (p 19)

Can you imagine?

Bank in which Israeli settlements (about 500 settlers) exist *inside* the city. The tour of Hebron was led by a member of the activist group, *Breaking the Silence*, which is made up of ex-soldiers who served there in the Israeli army. Our tour guide gave us a booklet of soldiers' testimonies,

Can you imagine?

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