

Here is a complete account of my trip to the Near East last summer. It consists of a compilation of revised copies of all the updates I had posted earlier from my travels in addition to writings from an additional three weeks of traveling after last update from the summer.

Dear everyone,

I've made it half way across the globe, safely to Tel Aviv. Along the way I've learned some valuable lessons. One particularly stands out: never get a seat in the last possible row in a Lufthansa flight from Portland to Frankfurt. They may run out of meals before they get to serving you. It's been an interesting first day in Israel attempting to navigate the Tel Aviv public bus system. It's become apparent if you ask someone for help with directions they will surely attempt to help you, but that doesn't mean they have any idea of how to get you to where you want. This was discovered when Zack and I nearly took a bus to Jerusalem yesterday evening instead of to Old Jaffa, where we had made arrangements to stay for the night.

Arriving in Ben Gurion Airport outside Tel Aviv was a surprisingly easy experience. After getting off the plane I followed the crowd along elevated corridors from the terminal leading to a massive circular plaza which the corridors encircled before leading down to passport control. There I entered into one of the many lines for foreign citizen leading to a small booth staffed by a government agent. When I finally got my turn, I was amazed by the ease and brevity. A young woman simply asked if this was my first time, how long I planned to stay in Israel, and where I was planning on staying. While answering that I planned to stay in Jaffa that evening before heading to Jerusalem she handed me my passport back while in mid sentence and waved me along to the luggage claims. There was no sense of being interrogated or being treated ill of any sort luckily. I did however watch a Jordanian Family, all American citizens, from Salem go through an hour of questioning prior to being allowed to pass. After picking up my bag I waited for Zack for about half an hour and changed some dollars to Shekels. From there we attempted to take on the public bus system, only to feel like ignorant American tourist for our total lack of Modern Hebrew skills. A nice young lady from Ukraine tried to help us but between her and the bus driver's lack of skills with English we ended up getting passes to Jerusalem instead of Tel Aviv. When the bus stopped at airport city we got off before it head on to Jerusalem and caught the next bus heading towards the Tel Aviv Central Station.

Getting on the bus my attention was suddenly drawn to the proliferation of young people in fatigues and assault rifles by their sides. They were all conscripts of the mandatory Israeli military service commuting back and forth from their homes and stations. They lackadaisically brandished guns, over-sized aviators hiding their features chatting back and forth in their tan and olive garb. On their shoulders' hung leather flaps printed with insignia symbolizing their positions in the Israeli Defense Force, or Israeli Occupation Force Depending on your interpretation.

The bus wound through the Mediterranean orchards and nurseries into the suburbs dropping off people headed to their homes. Entering Tel Aviv it was quickly apparent that I had entered a soccer rather than football dominated culture. Littered about were little shops and stands hanging soccer jerseys of the major European clubs and national teams, and children enjoying the beautiful game abounded. I had not been to a city with such a proliferation of street stalls and shops prior. They seemed to never cease along the roads. One particularly stood out to me-The Pork Palace. The Pork Palace was situated at the intersection of a few major streets with glaring red and yellow signs with black print in every language imaginable

except Hebrew. The shop was packed with hanging pig carcasses, cuts, and other pork product one could desire for the non-Jewish community and the famously secular Tel Aviv Jews. Arriving at the Tel Aviv bus station I was overwhelmed by its size. This was no mere meeting place to change buses but a business hub towering six stories high with three underground garage stories and a bomb shelter. Departing from the bus we encountered our first security check where a young woman with a metal detector checked everyone's bags, scanned and patted them down. Zack and I waited to be checked last with our massive backpacks, only to have her simply open the top of Zack's bag before signaling us to come through quickly while she turned the other way. It's amazing how insecure purportedly secure facilities are here as this was not the last time we were ushered through security. Inside the building was a giant mall filled with stores and food vendors along with the Egg'ed bus station for traveling around Israel and the local Tel Aviv station.

After navigating our way through Tel Aviv into Old Jaffa and scouring to find our hostel we finally discovered it to learn the front desk had closed forty-five minutes earlier at 7pm and they filled all their normal rooms for the evening as we had not arrived on time. Luckily we were able to get the TV room for the evening with two beds in it and collapse after our exhausting flights.

Jerusalem has been amazing so far. I'm staying at the Victoria Hotel in East Jerusalem just a 2 minute walk from the Old City. So far here I've toured around the old city seeing the various quarters such as holy sites the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Al Asqa Mosque (from the outside), and the Western Wall. Yesterday we had planned on going on a guided tour of Hebron but it was called off because of escalating tensions there because the settlers had apparently set their dogs' on a young man there. Letting them mangle his body. I don't know whether he was dead or alive when this occurred there, but it's an atrocious act none the less. Instead of Hebron we toured the city outskirts, "The Wall," some refugee camps, and Ramallah including Arafat's compound and tomb. It was an amazing and breathtaking experience. I had the best tea ever in a refugee camp with one of the families living there, and discovered Rukabs in Ramallah really does have the best ice cream in the world.

I was amazed how active Ramallah was there were people out and about everywhere buying selling goods and going about their normal lives. Luckily the day before civil servants had finally been paid after a year and half of Israel with holding their wages. I've been really surprised just how close everything is over here. It only took about a twenty-minute drive from Jerusalem to be in the heart of Ramallah. Last night I went over to the dark side as Alice likes to call it: Western Jerusalem. I hung out with Andrew, whose dad used to be the Irish Ambassador over here, and met up with some of his old friends from high school here. I believe today we're off to the Mount of Olives and then over to the Cinematque to see a film about Ezra a man who tries to help the cave dwelling shepherds around Hebron.

Yesterday I was finally able to tour Hebron, perhaps one of if not the most contentious part of the West Bank aside from the Jenin Refugee Camp. Hebron is the only city in the West Bank where Zionist Settlers have colonized the center of a Palestinian city, closing off the old city and market from the native residents. There are approximately 400 settlers in the center of Hebron with about 4 soldiers for every settler and the ability to have about 3000 soldiers at a moments notice in the city. The settlers were supposed to have been relocated under the Oslo Agreement, but this has yet to occur like much of the previous treaties. It was in Hebron at the

Tomb of the Patriarchs (Where the tombs of Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Sara, Jacob and Leah are believed to lay) also known as the Ibrahimi Mosque that the Zionist Baruch Goldstein, of Brooklyn, committed what may have been the first suicide attack in Israel/Palestine killing 39 and wounding over 150 during Friday prayers before being stopped. The building was then closed for a few months only to be reopened to have been divided in half with a concrete wall and half converted to a Synagogue.

Hebron has an interesting market. It's covered with wire and mesh fencing to protect those underneath from debris, stones, and feces being tossed down by the Settlers occupying the upper stories of the buildings above. The closer you get to the Tomb of the Patriarchs the fewer and fewer businesses are open as many have had their doors welded shut by the IDF, and people are too afraid to wander that close to the settlement. I was amazed that the settlers went as far as building an apartment on top of the roof of the mosque. I could only imagine how people in America would react if someone did that to a church. Recently things have improved for the residents in the market district with international organizations having taken an interest here. Doctors without Borders (MSF) have recently taken office in the district acting as international monitors and treating the wounded. Other organizations run economic development programs, helping locals produce and sell products as well as provide psychological counseling for the traumatized children. I saw a number of summer camps and schools being run for the children.

As you approach the Tomb of the Patriarchs you have to go through a small tunnel where the first of three security checkpoints is located. The checkpoints are manned by armed soldiers and include a metal detector, questioning, and searches. After going through this checkpoint people are sorted out according nationality and sex. You then wait to be called to go through the next checkpoint 5 yards later granting you permission to approach the mosque. Here ID's of any one Arab looking are taken and the young men are told to go away most of time as the Israeli's do not permit Muslim men without a wife and children and if under 40 from entering the Mosque. After this checkpoint, where I was repeatedly asked if I possessed anything sharp, you go up a flight of stairs into the mosque to go through the final checkpoint.

This had been my first time inside a mosque and a pleasant one at that. The mosque had been beautifully decorated during the Mamulk period in intricate patterns and vibrant shades of gold, green, and fuchsia. Sprawling rugs covered the floor only broken by the massive tombs rising out of the floors for the Patriarchs of all Abrahamic faiths. From behind a section of opaque bullet proof glass next to the Muslim and Christian side of Abraham's Tomb I could see the outline of a settler praying with his M16 swinging by his side. After leaving the mosque we left the city center to the workshop of the Hebron glassblowers. On the drive back we went into a settlement outside Bethlehem where a Palestinian had refused to leave his home and olive grove to have it all destroyed and built over into a settlement. He's been left to live in an old abandoned bus he got with help from the Franciscan Monks living next to his property, and is now dependent on their charity to live without his orchard.

Today I toured the Mount of Olives and the Temple Mount. I saw the tomb of The Virgin Mary and attended mass in the grotto of Gethsemane next door in Italian, before heading up the hill to the church of Dominus Flevit. The church sports a breathtaking view from the altar of the Dome of the Rock juxtaposed next to cross of the altar, characteristic of the multi-faith nature of Jerusalem. The sides of the hill are covered in a Jewish cemetery with over

50K buried there in the belief that when judgment comes it shall start here. The top of the mount offered great views of all the Jerusalem area along with shocking views of "The Wall" twisting and winding back and forth across scenery even here. I had the privilege of entering the Haram ash-Sharif/Temple Mount for an hour before being kicked out by Israeli soldiers who allow it open for about an hour and a half today. The mount offered a calming serenity from the hustle and bustle of the Old City with vast stone court yards and a sprawling olive grove and garden in addition to the Dome of the Rock and Al Asqa Mosques, the 3rd holiest site in Islam. The area seemed like an area where families escaped to rest with picnics in the olive grove with children running around kicking soccer balls around and everyone happy and content.

Wednesday I went to the Dead Sea Area. I left Jerusalem at 4am to watch the sunrise from the top of the Masada ruins. When we got to Masada it was already thirty-degrees Celsius, which is around 80, before the sun had started to rise. We only had 40 minutes to get up the roughly 300-meters vertical climb on the winding "snake path" to the top before sunrise. I ran up it as fast as I could with my camera in my bag to get to the top 5-minutes before the sun rose above the mountains in Jordan to the East. As the sun appeared over the mountains a wave of heat swept forth as the Dead Sea below glistened like gold. Masada had been the site of a Judean Fortress set high on a butte looking over the Dead Sea on one side and the Judean Desert on the other. The fortress possessed only one path leading up the steep slopes. It was here it is believed that a group of Judeans were believed to have endured a six month Roman siege until the men drew lots to determine who would execute the killing of everyone before committing suicide themselves rather than surrendering. It was an amazing view up there out over the desert mountains to the west and Dead Sea to the east. Ruins of the fortress lied about, but it was hard to determine what was original and what wasn't because the Israelis had started to attempt to reconstruct much of the fortress. After Masada we headed over to the Dead Sea for a swim.

Entering the sea seems like a dangerous task at first with all the sharp salt formations on the rocks until you realize you should just float on top of the water instead of trying to wade in. The water was even more salty than I was expecting; any little cut or scrape I had burned profusely. I was so buoyant I could literally sit up in the water and read a paper or book while swimming. The sea is so salty it literally pulls the water out of your body according to the osmotic pressure, making so you shouldn't spend a tremendous amount of time in the water for risk of dehydration. After taking a dip in the Dead Sea we headed over to the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve to hike up to this desert oasis filled with water falls and pools of water before heading back to Jerusalem.

Thursday I went out by myself to Bethlehem. I mastered the Arab Bus system taking the bus into the West Bank getting off in Beit Jala then walking about a mile up a hill on Pope John Paul II Street to Manger Square. I took this route instead of the direct bus to Bethlehem in order to avoid the hassle of daunting checkpoint blocking entrance on this route. Bethlehem was a truly depressing sight, left to be little more than a ghost town surrounded by the imposing wall. The exception was Rachel's Tomb, which was cleverly annexed into the Israeli side of the wall separated from the rest of the town. Bethlehem had been luckily blessed with much help to renovate the city's buildings with help from Europe. But this had done little to improve the conditions of residents, choked off from the pilgrims and trade by checkpoints.

The buildings still showed the signs of siege of city and church of nativity by Israeli soldiers a few years ago.

From the city square the Bethlehem Peace Center lay on one side flanked on left side by the Church of the Nativity and the Mosque of Omar on the other. The peace center possesses various exhibits of art and culture. Some pieces were lost in the siege with signs laying where they were destroyed. The mosque lays there because when Islamists captured the city centuries ago their leader Omar was offered by the monks running the church to pray in the church which he declined. He said he wanted preserve the church for Christians sighting that his followers would have turned it into a mosque. The main door into the Church of the Nativity is only about three and half feet tall, believed to have been designed to prevent soldiers on horseback from entering. The church is in much better condition than the Church of the Holy Sepulcher with its beaming pillars of white and red marble from the local quarries. It has only recently been discovered the church possess an elevated floor on top of an ancient mosaic. Beneath the altar lays the Grotto of the Nativity where a star lays where the manger where Christ was born is believed to have been.

For the two following weeks I was a participant in the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) annual summer rebuilding camp. The camp seeks to bring together internationals along with Israelis and Palestinians to help rebuild a family's home that has been destroyed as part of the occupation, along with inform them about the situation of those afflicted by the occupation, both Israeli and Palestinian. It was a truly amazing two week period staying in Anata next to the Shuffat Refugee Camp. Anata is a Palestinian town divided between the municipality of Jerusalem and West Bank, while Shuffat is the interconnected refugee camp, being the only one located within the city of Jerusalem.

On the second day of building the IDF approached with a crew to demolish a house. At first we were frightened that they were coming to halt our progress and destroy our work, but they went to a house down the hillside from us. The family that lived there was away at a wedding at the time. They were unable to see to their possessions as workers sifted amongst their belongings looking for valuables before tossing them out, or watch their home of nine come collapsing down. It was a harrowing experience followed by a tense period as the soldiers fired tear gas canisters while departing and skirmishing with the local stone throwing children. I was luckily upwind of the gas, but some of the volunteers weren't so lucky. After this incident we vowed to rebuild the newly destroyed house in addition to the one we were already working on.

Over the next week and a half we were able to build the original condominium, along with the house down the hill. The rebuilding of the house down the hill was the fastest rebuilding after a demolition that ICAHD had done, being just over a week. During the rebuilding process I ended up being "the mud man," meaning I was in charge of making the concrete, cement, mortar and all similar products. I ended up picking up the strangest Arabic vocabulary working alongside the Palestinian workers, learning words for hammer, bucket, wood, shovel etc.

During the evenings films concerning Israel and Palestine were screened or guest speakers came in. Usually when films were screened the director or someone else involved with the film came and talked about the film and answered questions. The speakers were extremely informative, coming from a variety of backgrounds. We had Israeli and Palestinian

scholars, economists, rabbis, Machsom Watch representatives, (an organization of Israeli women who monitor checkpoints) and many others.

On days we didn't spend building we usually went on tours around Israel and the occupied territories. On one tour we went down to the Negev and looked at Bedouin issues. During this period Bedouin rights was on the forefront of the Israeli news with a conglomeration of them having a sit-in and living in parks in front of the Knesset, Israel's parliament. The Bedouin are left in an interesting position being Israeli citizens but most of their towns are not recognized by the government, and located in areas zoned for the military. The day before the Knesset had passed a moratorium on house demolitions in the Negev, but unfortunately it hadn't come into effect yet. That day we went around and saw the rampage of Bedouin house demolitions the Israeli government was inflicting before they wouldn't be able to for the foreseeable future. It was tragically similar to Israel's actions after the ceasefire in Lebanon last summer, when most explosives and all the droppings of cluster bombs (in violation of US weapon pacts and international law) occurred before it went into effect. Beyond seeing the house demolitions and those left behind, we met with Bedouin cultural representatives and a women's group.

Other trips included: Jerusalem and the matrix of control, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron, and central Israel/Palestine. On the trip around Jerusalem we looked at zoning practices, prevention of building in East Jerusalem, resident of Jerusalem rights and disparities of services, settlement expansion and annexation into Jerusalem, the demographic war, and the route of the wall through the city. In Ramallah we went to the governmental offices at what used to be Arafat's compound, explored the city, and had dinner with American Palestinian businessman. It was at dinner that we discussed how Israel doesn't recognize American and other country citizenships of people of Palestinian descent, deface their passports, and prevent them from traveling in Israeli areas. This came about when I inquired about a classmate of mine that lives in this situation. He was born in Los Angeles but his American citizenship is meaningless when he is home in Ramallah, and is left unable to visit his family in Jerusalem where his mother is from. In Hebron we toured the settlement in the city with Break the Silence, a group of former Israeli soldiers who served in the city (and other occupied territories) and spoke out about what they had witnessed. During the tour we were prevented by the military commander in charge of city from progressing on our tour, before crossing over the Palestinian side and touring with Christian Peace Makers. In central Israel we first visited K'far Saba an Israeli city across from Qalqilya. In K'far Saba we met with a political official of the town and discussed the two cities' dynamics and living conditions. Afterwards we went to a settlement and met an interesting fellow to say the least. He was a settler from New York and wore a large Stetson hat, cowboy boots and a quick draw holster with a large pistol. He proceeded to describe his view on the settlements and Israel and international law, to say it didn't really matter anyways. Afterwards went into the West Bank to some of the neighboring villages. It was interesting seeing how dramatically different people lived only a few miles apart, especially after the meeting with the public official in K'far Saba who said they expected their counterparts to have the same services and lifestyles and they hadn't visited there in years. The contrast was amazing suddenly the luscious lawns and gardens with fountains disappeared to be replaced with dry orchards and half constructed buildings. One town we visited had only one faucet for water a kilometer outside town, that the mayor had put in

illegally, and a generator that ran from 7pm to 1am for the town of a few thousand. The French government had built the town a modern water and sewage system to utilize the natural springs there and a power station and electrical infrastructure for the town, but unfortunately the Israeli government would not allow them to connect and use any of it. We saw this same story in the villages visited including one plagued by amoebic dysentery because their water and sewage lines were the same, and the Israeli government would not let them use their new systems in place.

The conclusion of the camp was an amazing festival to celebrate the completion of the houses. It started with a presentation of the houses to the families and speeches from Jeff Halper and others involved. While this was going there was unfortunately a flair-up along the fence behind us; as Palestinians jumped over it to work in Jerusalem and the military fired tear gas and entered into the camp. After the speeches there was demonstration of a traditional dance with everyone joining in. The dancing was followed by a feast of a rice stuffed lamb roasted whole, a variety of salads and fresh vegetables and some traditional deserts. For more information on the camp go to the ICAHD website (ICAHD.org I believe) and read the updates written everyday by one of the volunteers. I cannot be responsible for the content however because some of participants had some pretty radical views and responses to the events.

Some of my most interesting adventures occurred the week after the ICAHD camp. Immediately after the camp I traveled with three guys from Bend, Oregon (of all places) up to Nazareth. There we had the extreme luck of being taken in by a British woman, Lameese and her husband. Her father had emigrated from Nazareth to the UK, and she had gone back to live there for a while and ended up getting married there after a year. It was interesting talking to her learning about life in a traditionally Arab town in Israel and the dynamics between the historically Christian and Muslim populations and the new Jewish immigrants. The policies of judeafying the town were surprising with properties of residents living abroad being seized and Jewish families moved in to the surprise of returning owners, and the renaming of villages, and use of international funds to rehabilitate the old town disappearing to improve the Jewish community above the town and the attempted bombing of the Church of the Annunciation a few months back by a Jewish couple. After Nazareth I went back to Jerusalem to meet up with some people and go up to the Jenin Refugee camp and see the freedom theatre there. It was ridiculous that I had to all the way back to Jerusalem to get to Jenin since it's only about 20km from Nazareth, but because it's in the West Bank I couldn't go direct and had to spend about 6 hours in travel that day.

Jenin is the northernmost camp in the West Bank and also the economically worst off, often considered being in an as bad or worse condition than Gaza. A large portion of the camp was leveled by the Israeli military during the second intifada. We had come here because the previous Friday we had the movie "Arna's Children" screened with the director Juliano. The movie depicted the story of his mother Arna, and her struggle in creating the Freedom Theatre in the camp and the lives of children who participated in the theatre. The movie depicted how the children were affected by the occupation and the success of the theatre juxtaposed with how many of them became fighters and died in the second intifada. It was very interesting and moving film that I would highly recommend.

At the theatre we saw the opening night of the reopening of the theatre since the destruction of the original by the Israeli military in second intifada. A troupe of French actors

and a director had collaborated with the theatre presenting a play written by young man from the camp, along with two actors from the camp. The play consisted of a series of interconnected skits flirting back and forth between Arabic, English and French. It was a humorous satire of many of the situations presented in everyday life of Israelis and Palestinians, full of many easily recognizable caricatures. Though I could not understand the dialogue at times, it was a highly entertaining event.

After the play I was presented with an unique and amazing experience. I was with was hanging out at the theatre chatting with cast and locals when I was told that Zachariah Zubeidi was there and would like to talk. Zachariah is the current leader of the Al Aqsa Martyr Brigades in Jenin, a controversial militia group affiliated with the Fatah movement responsible for some attacks in Israel. Zachariah was there because of a longstanding association with the theatre, as his parents' house had hosted the original theatre prior to its destruction. Looking at him he was a man deeply affected by the conflict, scarred externally and internally with a blackened face from an explosion hiding the eyes of one who lives in constant fear. He was nothing of the sort of person we often see depicted as an Islamic extremist terrorist in the American media. He talked of his strong convictions of secularism and how he despised of the abusing of religion of any sort to justify ill-treatment towards other people. On this subject he expressed his frustration of the lack of an equivalent term of religious extremism to the point of violence applying to Judaism like we have for Islamic/Jihadist extremism or the Christian behaviors during the various inquisitions and crusades. He thought it was unfortunate that a group extreme Zionist people use and manipulate the whole of Jewish people and abuse the Jewish cause to justify the actions of the occupation. He said he fights the occupation now not just through military but through culture, media, and politics. Relying on armed resistance is ineffective in the modern world and more harm can be done to the occupation through the expansion the Palestinian culture and spreading of information to the rest of the world through media. He discussed his organizations laying down of arms and pledging to the Palestinian Authority and cessation of retaliatory attacks in Israel. On this he said that though his group shall not commit anymore attacks in Israeli towns, that if the Israeli Military were to come into the camp with hostile intentions they feel obligated to protect the residents of the camp and fight the military in Jenin. We discussed many more things that I hope to convey in an article in the future with the nearly 12 pages front and back I transcribed during the meeting with Zachariah. The ride back was really interesting sitting next to a young woman who had a few days ago gone a trip with a good friend of hers whose job it was to send approximately 150 soldiers into the camp every evening to extract or eliminate Zachariah or anyone else his superiors in the IDF wished. She talked of him being fed-up with the occupation, his position, his superior and the IDF as a whole, and continuing in his position for another few months so that he could get a respectable job in Israel after his service. It was a highly emotional time for her, having just been exposed to two the extremes of both sides involved in Jenin. On the way back we also got stopped at a checkpoint, and all had to get out of the vehicle and had our passports inspected and gave our "story" of being at a wedding when questioned.

After the surprising evening in Jenin I spent the night at a friend's place in Ramallah before spending a day in Jerusalem and heading that evening down to the Egyptian Sinai. I caught the 12am bus to Eliat, where I ended up meeting some other Americans backpacking in the region heading down to Egypt. After nearly twelve hours of traveling I arrived at the oasis

of Dahab. Dahab was an amazing town full of internationals of the backpacking sort located on the Red Sea looking out over to Saudi Arabia. It was great experience to be able to relax and escape all the tension of Israel and Palestine on the breezy verandas of the sunny coast in Dahab. There I was able to meet with a people from a region that Israel had once claimed, to later withdraw and rescind claim to. In addition to interviewing locals I was able snorkel among some of the world's most beautiful coral reefs from right behind my hotel and visit the magnificent Blue Hole. Blue Hole is rated one of the worlds top ten best diving sites, and snorkeling there was amazing. After the two tranquil days in Dahab I had to rush back up to Israel to catch my flight back home.

I was lucky enough to have an amazing six weeks in the Near East this past summer. Over the course of that time I made some amazing friends from across the world, experience some of the most harrowing and uplifting scenes of the human condition, meet with Noble Peace Prize Nominees and men with assassination writs. I would like to thank a number of people whom helped me make this experience and reality and helped my throughout my journeys: First and foremost I must thank Professor Alice Bach, who was an invaluable resource inspiring me to achieve this dream and ensuring my success once I arrived in Jerusalem. Jeff Halper and all those at the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions who went out of their way to help. Felicity, Nigel, Andrew and Claire for helping set me up in Jerusalem and introducing me to so many of their wonderful contacts and experiences. The other volunteers at the ICAHD rebuilding camp who I shared many hours of labor and discussion with. The great staff at the New Victoria Hotel in East Jerusalem who went out of their way to help me in any way, lend helpful insight into their lives, and become my great friends over many hours of talking in the lobby over tea and juice. All those who put me up in their homes and offered a helping hand and became my travel partner at times. Marcia Camino and Stephen Haynesworth from CWRU for their support and providing me with the financial backing for this experience. Zack Kunkel for traveling and working on the project together. And all the family and friends who supported me and followed my travels.