

When will you return home? Can you bring your rifle for me? And if you can, a huge plane and chocolates..»

«Come along, the line might be cut,» Khaled whispered to him.

Yusef was confused for a moment and started fingering the receiver which seemed very big in his small hand.

«Speak, speak!» his mother encouraged him.

«I...I have to ring off now. Bye, bye now, I love you,» he finished sadly.

«There, you talked,» his mother tried to support him, containing her emotions. Then she thanked Khaled, hiding her tears, and took the child's hand, leading him toward the door. Yusef was still puzzled, but was smiling broadly, saying goodbye to Khaled. When he reached the door, he turned towards him, asking, «Can I come tomorrow?»

«Oh yes, do... If you know how to come alone,» Khaled accepted.

«Of course I know. My house is near the office,» Yusef answered happily.

«Then, ahlan wa sahlan... But you cannot stay long. This is an office. And if I am busy, you have to go home. Okay?» He conveyed to him the rules of the game.

«Yes, sure,» the child agreed. Then his mother thanked Khaled again and they left.

Yusef visited Khaled every morning afterwards. He would speak for a while on the telephone and then spend some time with Khaled in talk, play and joy. They became very good friends.

One morning Khaled was preparing for the usual visits of people. He tidied his table and placed the list of martyrs in front of himself. His eyes were glancing instinctively over the names. Suddenly he got pale, fastening his glance on one

name. At that moment Yusef entered running. Immediately he sat on Khaled's knee, playing with the things on his table. «I want to talk to my father,» he said as usual.

Drops of sweat came to Khaled's forehead. He couldn't speak, but just passed the receiver to the child silently.

«Papa, it's me,» Yusef started to shout. «How are you?... I have good news.» Then he lowered his voice to a confidential tone: «Yesterday, we boys from the camp decided to go to Beirut. You know we are not children anymore. We play war every day, and we have a plan to kill all the Israeli soldiers. Today we will plan how to reach there without informing our mothers. I will tell you details tomorrow... Bye, bye, I love you.» He hung up with visible proudness and importance. «Today I talked longer than usual,» he said to Khaled apologetically.

«It doesn't matter, never mind, don't worry, it's okay,» replied Khaled, rather confused. He took the boy's hand, leading him towards the door. «Look, today I'm very busy.»

«Oh, never mind, I'll come tomorrow,» the child cut him off.

Khaled had lost his lead with this interruption, but continued heavily, «You know, it's okay, but the telephone won't work... It happens, it's normal...»

«Oh, you mean the lines to Beirut will be cut?» the child prompted him.

«Yes, yes, exactly... That's right...» Khaled accepted immediately. Then with tears in his eyes, he hugged the boy, passing his hand over his silky hair, and said almost in a whisper: «Your mother will tell you everything. I mean... when we get the line to Beirut, we will let her know... Okay?... Now run along home.»

«Yes, yes, I'll tell her. Bye, Uncle Khaled,» the child was satisfied with this promise and happily ran out of the room. ●

Texas

Solidarity with Arab Women

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Palestine-Arab Women Committee in Austin, Texas, participated in a week of activities from the 5th to the 10th of March. This week was sponsored by many different local organizations and women's groups, and included the Palestine and Arab Women's Day.

A lecture on «Change and Revolution» was given by a professor in Middle Eastern Studies, Elizabeth Feinea. Three films produced by Elizabeth

Feinea were shown: «A Veiled Revolution» about the situation of Moslem Women in the Middle East; «Women under Siege» dealing with the situation of Palestinian women; and «The Price of Change» dealing with Egyptian women. The day was very successful and about 150 people attended.

We thank our friends for sending us materials from solidarity events in different parts of the world.

