



Discovering the Magic of TWiP


As a Child and as an Adult



By Hasheemah Afaneh

My tenth birthday was four days before we took a one-way flight to Palestine. If the boxes around our apartment in New Orleans didn't clue me in, a one-way ticket should have been the crystal clear sign that we were going to be away for a long time. Ten-year-old me wished she would have taken more pictures with her friends, but she also wished she'd packed more books. Alas, other things took priority when we packed for the journey across the Atlantic Ocean. The one and only book that was in my backpack was a copy of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* that my mother had bought at a bookstore at the mall months prior.

My first language was Arabic. But put a child into an American elementary school for a few months, and the answer to the question "What's your first language?" gets complicated. During the first couple of years in Palestine, I searched for English books because my Arabic was still not strong enough to read a full story from start to finish with good comprehension of what was going on. The school library had yet to develop what later became a relatively



Moving from country to country was already difficult, but as a 13-year-old bookworm who knew how to read better in English than in Arabic, Hasheemah embarked on a quest for English texts and came across *TWiP*. As she now approaches her 30th birthday, she describes how she grew up with *TWiP*.

robust library for the child to young adolescent age group. Upon learning of my quest for English books, my *'ami* Raed took me on a visit to Al-Bireh Public Library, which to my dismay, also lacked a robust selection geared to my reading level *and* to my liking. I came back from my searches empty-handed.

And then, two years after our move, when I was in the seventh grade, my family and I walked into Angelo's Restaurant in Ramallah. This was by no means the first time I had walked into the restaurant, being greeted by the same man at the counter and seeing some

Testimonies

You keep proving me wrong. After each edition, I say, "This is the best edition."
Well done.

*Rami Meo
Sydney Australia*



TWiP Celebrates **300** Issues

friendly, familiar faces in the kitchen. It was, however, the first time I had noticed a stack of rectangular-shaped magazines on the stand next to the entrance. I don't recall what the issue was about, but I do remember the words *This Week in Palestine* printed on the cover. I grabbed a copy and quickly flipped through it, pleased to find something I could read outside of the required school readings. That day, I made a mental note to convince my mother to take my siblings and me to Angelo's at the beginning of every month, with the hidden agenda of grabbing the latest copy.

As my collection of *TWiP* magazines expanded, I remembered thinking how I wanted to befriend these writers. I wondered things like, *Who is Sani Meo? How do they put this magazine together? How can I get involved?* As a matter of fact, I tried to get my high school to contact *TWiP* for a potential shadowing

experience in my senior year to get to know *TWiP* behind the scenes.

Over the years, I encountered déjà vu moments – at Zeit o Za'atar, at Zabaneh, at Angelo's – whenever I walked into these places and saw the stack of *TWiP* magazines at their entrances. My mind seemed to always conjure up the same surprise and excitement as when I had first discovered *TWiP*. When the 232nd issue came out, I was in Zeit o Za'atar with my mother, skimming through the issue, quizzing my mother on what she knew and didn't know about Palestinian traditional dresses (part of what the issue covered).

TWiP exposed me to parts of Palestine that I thought I knew all there was to know about, parts I have yet to see, and parts I didn't even know to look for. When I was applying to colleges during my senior year in high school, I looked

through all the copies I owned and read the bios of the writers I grew up reading to see what they did for a living so that I could get ideas about what I could do. Six years later, in my last semester at Birzeit University, I once again found myself sifting through the magazines as part of my search for ideas for a seminar topic.

And now, *TWiP* celebrates its 300th issue. Years ago, when I first started to find my voice as an aspiring writer, I received a specific comment with a negative undertone a number of times: "You write about Palestine a lot." But what *TWiP* tells me is that our stories as Palestinians have not ended. We have so much more to tell, plenty of storytellers to discover, more history to create, and that is a beautiful vision.

Thirteen years after my tenth birthday, I boarded a flight back to New Orleans to pursue graduate

studies in public health. This time, in my backpack I packed an Arabic novel titled *Al-Tantooryeh*, my maternal grandfather's copy of the Holy Qur'an that I had received at his funeral, and several issues of *TWiP*. I couldn't bring them all back with me, but every time I am in Palestine, I know where to go to find the next print issue that will lead me to experience the magic all over again.

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TO SHARE



Testimonies

Our heartiest congratulations on your remarkable issue [January 2023]. You truly make it so hard for us to decide which one of the issues outshines the others. The themes and presentations you choose are not only great but very enlightening about Palestinian culture, history, and, most important of all, the love of the land. The hard work of you and your team produces not only a nice-to-read publication but also a valuable archive of the Palestinian mode of life and history, for which you are to be commended and thanked.

*Antoine D. Nesnas
Al-Quds, Palestine*

This Week in Palestine is a treasure trove of information on Palestine. A national treasure.

*Kenza Ma
Morocco/USA*

Testimonies

You do have an awesome publication worthy of maintaining and propagating. We are too much in the news for the wrong and/or bad things. *TWiP* manages to cover the wealth of Palestinian cultural richness and the strong and resilient Palestinian human spirit under the toughest of conditions and makes positive human contributions to Palestinian cultural, social, and economic developmental issues.

*Hani Abu Dayyeh
Palestine and Italy*

This is an issue to keep in the house library.
Very well done.

*Rania Filfil
Abu Qash, Palestine*