

Middle East Report Novembre-décembre 1987

Three recent documentaries, one dealing with the Palestinians and two with the War in Lebanon, were among the film screened at the Cinema du Reel, an international festival of ethnographic and sociological films, held in Paris this March. Eyal Sivan's *Aqabat Jaber: Passing Through* provides a bleak glimpse of life in the West Bank refugee camp of Aqabat Jaber. Once the largest camp in the Middle East, with a population of 65,000 people from 116 villages, it was half destroyed in the 1967 war and has been abandoned by all but some 3,000 inhabitants, including a group of Negev Bedouin who have been settled there. The film came about after the director, a 23-year-old Israeli photographer now living in Paris, was sent to the camp on a fashion assignment a few years ago. As he explained after the screening at the festival, he was taking pictures of a model among the ruins when a group of children appeared from what he had been told was an abandoned site. At that point he decided to do something with the story he had stumbled into, and after completing some film courses in Paris and pulling together a production company, he went back with a crew in November. *Aqabat Jaber* is beautifully done from a technical point of view, and Sivan's intentions are unquestionably good, but the aggregate image of hopelessness the film projects is overbearing. At the festival, several people criticized the film for its *misérabilisme* and the failure to show any form of resistance activity, but as Sivan indicated, he presented what his 28 interviewees told him and, he added, he couldn't show any demonstrations because there weren't any. Among the general public at the festival, the film and the circumstances of its making were well received, and it went on to win the Grand prize. (With all due political circumspection, the jury awarded the prize for documentary shorts to Egyptian director Awad Choucry's *El Kashash*.) When *Aqabat Jaber* was shown at the Jerusalem Film Festival this June, it proved far more controversial, although foreign journalists covering the event picked up on the film and found it quite forceful. During his visit, Sivan also showed a videocassette to the residents of Aqabat Jaber, who responded very warmly to his presentation.

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