

## JERUSALEM

# Bookshop raid was a disgrace

ALTHOUGH I shouldn't have been surprised, it was with shock that I read (M Star February 11) of the police raid on East Jerusalem's Educational Bookshop, and the arrest of owners Ahmed and Mahmoud Muna.

Despite its small size, this is one of the great bookshops of the world, being an oasis of intellectual integrity in a hostile world of ignorance and prejudice. It contains a small cafe where intellectuals across the spectrum could meet and freely exchange ideas.

I conducted some of my best interviews with historians and archaeologists there over coffee as I researched my biography of Charles Warren, pioneering archaeologist of Palestine in the 1860s. And it was there that I first came across the work of Ilan Pappé, whose great work on the Nakba introduced me to the realities of Palestine under Zionist diktat.

The shop is (or was) packed with the work of Palestinian authors, not widely available elsewhere. Consequently, Israeli plain-clothed police have wrecked it, scattering books across the floor and seizing any that looked as though they might be about the Palestinian reality, even removing a child's colouring book that had a Palestinian flag to be coloured in.

KEVIN SHILLINGTON  
North Dorset