Palestine Perspectives

Number 43 *The Magazine of Contemporary Palestinian Affairs* Sept./Oct. 1989

PALESTINE VOTES

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$2.50

Washington's Coming Rude Awakening

The foreign policy establishment in Washington would be wise to brace itself for a jarring experience. Israel will frustrate even its most timid expectations, and the warning signs are already abundant. Of course Washington would be even wiser, and the future of the Middle East would be more peaceful, if it were to anticipate events and shorten Israel's leash a little.

American Middle East policy makers —for years blinded by their pathetic infatuation with Israel —have come to accept uncritically the myth that Israel wanted nothing more than peace with its Arab neighbors, whose "rejectionism" has frustrated peace making time after time. They are in for a rude awakening.

Of course they have known for twenty-two years that Israel was expropriating the West Bank and Gaza piece by piece; that it annexed Jerusalem and its surroundings and the Syrian Golans; that it has been transplanting its population and establishing a second Israel by installments. They knew all that, but they were quick to accept Israel's excuses and explanations. Israel, they were told and readily accepted, was worried about its safety and was only surrounding itself with a "security zone." The settlements, they were told and readily accepted, were an early warning system, a "trip wire" to give Israel advance warning of an Arab attack.

After the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the consequent Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, they found a seemingly rational explanation for their gullibility. Israel dismantled its settlements and withdrew from Sinai, they said, and there is no reason not to believe that it would not do the same in the West Bank and Gaza...only if the Arabs were smart enough to "utter the magic words." No Israeli government, they said, would be able to withstand the public clamor for peace if the Arabs "utter the magic words."

During the last twelve years, since Likud came to power in 1977, Israel became more open about its intentions. We are not in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel's rulers began to explain, just for security reasons; the place is ours. "What is mine is mine, and what is yours is also mine" became an overt Israeli policy and not just a saying.

But the policy makers in Washington pretended that it was not the voice of Israel that they were hearing. After all, they said, Begin and Shamir are right wingers. They conveniently forgot their other favorite myth —that Israel is a model democracy— and pretended that the right wingers just slipped into the seat of Israeli power. They preferred not to understand that —when it comes to dealing with the Palestinians— the entire Zionist movement is a right wing ideology with maximalist expectations.

So the peace makers is Washington —still blinded by infatuation with Israel— stubbornly believe that it is no more troublesome than an impetuous lover. Its greed is excused as concern, and its intransigence is forgiven as hard-nosed realism. When it clubs people to death it is lauded as a democracy inexperienced in methods of riot control, and when it is gripped by political paralysis it is praised as a humane society searching for its soul.

As I said at the beginning, American Middle East policy makers are in for a rude awakening. Sooner or later, they will have to swallow their pride and admit that they had been taken for a ride. That will be the day when America will have its own Middle East policy and peace will finally have a chance. □

M. Hallaj

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Palestine Perspectives is a bimonthly magazine on Palestinian affairs. *Address:* 9522A Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031. *Telephone:* (703) 352-4168. *Facsimile:* (703) 352-4169.

Editor: Dr. Muhammad Hallaj
Production Manager: Foster K. Tucker

Subscription rates: $15/year in the United States and Canada ($10 for students); and $25 elsewhere. Add $10 to checks drawn on banks outside the U.S. Subscribers receive their copies by airmail.

Signed articles express the views of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ***Palestine Perspectives*** *or its staff.*

Ben-Gurion University professor attributes Israeli intransigence to the erosion of Labor Party influence, leaving the rightist Likud in virtually unchallenged control of Israeli policy.

"For a Pot of Lentil Soup"

By Haim Gordon

A few weeks ago both my sons spent a long weekend in an Israeli jail with 25 other Jewish peace activists. I was proud: but I was also soberly sad.

They had been arrested while demonstrating in Qalqilia, a moderately large Arab city on the West Bank, against the blowing up of houses of Arabs suspected of aiding in the Palestinian uprising by the Israel Defense Force. I was proud because they, as Jews, and as reserve soldiers in the IDF, were demonstrating against injustice.

For instance, not one of the suspects whose houses were blown up was convicted, even by a military court. Nor were the members of the family who suffered from the blown houses suspected of anything. I was soberly sad, because the demonstration and their jailing had very little impact. It merely drove home a point all Israelis now recognize. The Labor party, with its principles of peace and justice, with its proclamations of trading off land for peace, is slowly vanishing as a political force.

Consider the polls. For the past three consecutive months all the polls conducted reveal that the Labor Party has lost approximately a third of its constituency. This point was also evident in the municipal elections held in February where Labor lost the mayor's office in more than a score of important city halls. Despite calls from within Labor for an examination why the party did so poorly in the elections to the Knesset in November and to municipalities in February, the two party chiefs, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, are complacent. They refuse to see the writing on the wall.

No less important is the fact that Labor is playing second fiddle to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's right wing government. What is more, Labor leaders' activities in ministerial roles anger many Israelis.

Mr. Peres, who is currently finance minister, is being blamed for a recession so bad that one has to go back more than two decades to find comparable figures. Unemployment, inflation, together with very little economic growth have plagued Israel since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising: now economists are saying that the situation has begun to snowball, and that Mr. Peres doesn't know how to deal with its exigencies. (The truth is that he has little economic experience.)

Defense Minister Rabin is being blamed by the right-wingers for his inability to put down the Palestinian uprising, and by the left wingers for his brutalization of the Israel Defense Force. Among the left wingers who speak out against Mr. Rabin are some political doves in his own party.

But perhaps the most important reason that the Labor Party has been losing political power is that it has no vital message to convey to the Israelis. It has no clear-cut principles that the voter will respect.

Everyone knows that Mr. Peres agreed to become finance minister so that he could find lawful ways to siphon off government funds to one of the Labor Party's major constituencies, the kibbutzim and moshavim, which are on the verge of bankruptcy, and to the industries of Israel's Labor Federation. Indeed, upon assuming office Mr. Peres promptly passed the necessary bills to assist these constituents.

"Mr. Shamir knows that despite the fact that most Israelis would like to work out a peaceful solution, and are willing to talk with the PLO, the internal impotence of the Labor Party allows him to continue his adamant policy toward the Palestinians."

To attain these goals Mr. Peres has been willing to go along with Mr. Shamir's unwillingness to trade land for peace, with his rejecting of the overtures of Yasser Arafat. In short, with his slowly eroding all the principles that Labor promised the voters to fight for in the November elections.

I suspect that this gross abandoning of proclaimed Labor policies is what has driven away many former labor supporters. Or, to use a Biblical locution often repeated in Israeli: Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin have sold their birthright for a pot of lentil soup.

Internationally, all this means that President George Bush will have a much harder time convincing Prime Minister Shamir to go along with the policy of trading land for peace. Mr. Shamir knows that despite the fact that most Israelis would like to work out a peaceful solution, and are willing to talk with the PLO, the internal impotence of the Labor Party allows him to continue his adamant policy toward the Palestinians. Hence, it seems that those Israelis, like the 25 people who were arrested together with my sons, must now work much harder—if the voices in Israel who speak and struggle for a reasonable peace are not to fade slowly away. □

Haim Gordon teaches education at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. *Reprinted from* ***The Baltimore Sun,*** *18 July 1989, "Israel's Drifting Labor Party."*

From the Hebrew Press

The Israeli press is usually more candid in its view of Israeli policy and Israel's treatment of the Palestinians than the U.S. media tends to be. Fear of charges of anti-Semitism —used to stifle free expression in the United States—and the rise of Likudist right wing tendencies among American Jews (reflecting similar trends in Israel) inhibit free debate in this country. On this page, we publish samples of Israeli press commentaries.

The Moral Imperative

Nearly 500 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the Intifada. About 10,000 have been injured. About 7,000 are in detention.

In view of the contention of the extreme right, that no real attempt has been made to suppress the Intifada, we must ask: how many Palestinians have to be killed, injured and detained for a real attempt?

If, God forbid, the Palestinians had killed 500 Jews and injured 10,000 would we still say that it wasn't much?

There are those among us who argue that the international news media persecute us. The truth is that we got off easy. If the British army had killed 500 Irish, or if the Spanish army had killed 500 Basques, or if the Yugoslav army had killed 500 Albanians, or if the South African army had killed 500 Blacks would they have received more sympathetic coverage?

Yosef Lapid, *Ma'ariv*
2 June 1989

Taking The Cue From South Africa

A new custom is coming into practice in Israel and in the territories: mayors of cities and local councils are competing with one another to institutionalize the treatment of Arabs as inferior beings.

The initiative came from the past military attache to South Africa, Giora Lev, a retired brigadier-general elected mayor of Petah Tikva. The sights of Johannesburg and Soweto made a big impression on him. Under his leadership, Petah Tikva has a chance of resembling a South African city. If he took the trouble to study the history of the Boer war, perhaps he also heard that it was then that the first concentration camps were set (by the British), for the rebellious local populace. About forty years later the Nazis gave the term new content. Lev is content with setting up terminals for Arabs who make their living by cleaning and servicing Petah Tikva.

Editorial, *Davar*
1 June 1989

Historians Will Force Us to Take Stock

During the last year and a half, we detained hundreds of thousands of people in arrests and prolonged detentions; we imprisoned tens of thousands in detention camps; we killed about 400 men, women, elders and children. We destroyed or blocked more than 150 houses, most of them without legal process, some of them by mistake; we broke bones and fired plastic bullets to deter and increase the number of injuries; we disconnected telephone and electric lines, shut down newspapers, censored articles, deported agitators, imprisoned journalists, closed down the entire educational system.

Only an abnormal person would view such times as normal. If you are indifferent to this killing, trampling of human rights and loss of humanity, perhaps Israeli historians and writers will force you to take stock. All of them are good patriots, and all of them point to the resemblance between us and the worst of 20th century regimes.

Dr. Nimrod Aloni, *Ha'ir*
19 May 1989

Yeshayahu Leibowitz:
"Our problem is that since 1967 the State has become the instrument of violent domination over another people. Everything that has happened since derives from that."

This Is A Mad Plan

Not just Sharon, but others on the right, including the settlers, are pushing for the imposition of absolute order in the territories. To translate their declarations into practical language, they mean sending the army in much greater force and using much harsher measures, including mass killing and deporting "agitators," i.e., every Palestinian who doesn't accept the occupation.

Sharon also figures that after "order" is restored, he will manage to find a Palestinian Bashir Jamayel with whom he can sign a "peace agreement" that will ensure Palestinian acceptance of the Israeli occupation for eternity. This is a mad plan. Not only because Sharon failed to do the same in Lebanon, but because his intent is to bring an entire nation to its knees with draconian force. Hard-liners never learn. The Americans barely managed to get out of Vietnam, without having subdued the Vietnamese. The Soviets are glad they got out of Afghanistan, where they had no better success suppressing a national uprising. There is no dearth of examples. You can occupy territories and even suppress peoples, but you can't put down an uprising against foreign rule.

Mark Gefen, *Al Hamishmar*
12 May 1989

Israeli Government Minister Calls for Arafat's Assassination

Palestinian Representative Calls It Incitement to Terrorism

Israel's Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon, known to the Palestinians as the butcher of Sabra and Shatila, called for the assassination of Palestine President Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders. In a 17 July statement explaining his vote for additional funds to suppress the Palestinian uprising, Sharon said that he approved the money on condition that Israel assassinate the Palestinian political leader.

The Israeli government did not disassociate itself from Sharon's statement. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin criticized Sharon, not for calling for Arafat's assassination but because he failed to do it himself when he was defense minister during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The last time Arafat was within reach of the Israeli army, Rabin said, Sharon was in control.

The day after Shamir's threat, on 18 July, the director of the Palestine Affairs Center in Washington, Hasan Abdul Rahman, called on the U.S. government to treat Sharon's statement as encouragement of state support terrorism. Following is the text of the Center's press release:

PAC Statement

Hasan Abdel Rahman, Director of the Palestine Affairs Center in Washington, DC, issued a statement today concerning the July 17th Israeli press reports that Ariel Sharon, Israel's Minister of Trade and Industry, had called for the "elimination" of the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of Yasser Arafat in particular.

"Such a statement is clearly an incitement to political assassination and terrorism," said Mr. Rahman, "and the fact that an Israeli Cabinet minister, a leader in the ruling Likud Party, made the statement should alarm the US Congress and Bush Administration. But we have yet to hear any condemnation of this call for terrorism from any US official, except a State Department spokesman's comment that a remark of this sort 'would obviously not help' the peace process.

"Sharon's statement, which was confirmed by various international and U.S. news media, is more than unhelpful, it is dangerous. Not only does it conflict with international norms of civilized behavior, but it also directly contravenes U.S. Mideast policy and laws, specifically U.S. laws proscribing aid to terrorists or terrorist states. While it appears that the U.S. Administration does not deem Israeli state terrorism against unarmed Palestinian civilians in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank sufficiently violent to warrant a suspension of military or economic aid to Israel, we expect that a terrorist threat issued by an Israeli Cabinet minister will elicit from the U.S. at least a crystal-clear public rebuke."

Mr. Rahman continued: "It is time for the Bush Administration and U.S. Congress to send a clear, firm message to Israeli leaders that they must cease their attempts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by military means and terrorism against civilians and must begin talks with the sole, legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, the PLO, which has been pursuing a vigorous and constructive peace initiative based on mutual recognition between Israel and Palestine and a negotiated settlement in the context of an international peace conference. By now it should be abundantly clear to the U.S. administration and Members of Congress which party is ready for peace talks and which party is using all means to undermine them.

"Additionally, in view of Sharon's long and bloody history of brutality against civilians, including the 1982 bombardment of Beirut and Sabra-Shatila massacres, the U.S. should make it clear to Sharon that terrorists are not welcome in this country and it should bar his entry to the U.S.

"U.S. failure to condemn Sharon's statement would send a very negative message to both Palestinians and Israelis who are sick of bloodshed and insecurity and who seek negotiated settlement to their national conflict. It would also cast doubt on the U.S.' commitment to fight international terrorism, if the U.S. should appear to tolerate such an incitement to terrorism by a close ally which receives billions of U.S. tax dollars and enjoys the U.S.' generous political support in international fora. Thus, we call upon the Bush Administration and Members of Congress to express their condemnation of Sharon's statement and act in a manner consistent with their words.

Arab League Protests

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Shadli Qulaibi, protested the Israeli threat and called it state-supported terrorism. "At a time when the international community affirms the need to bring about peace in the Middle East," he said in a statement from Tunis, "such a call for bloodshed must be considered unacceptable."

He said that "the Arab states have a right to expect from the world community, particularly from states which have on other occasions condemned terrorism, a clear and decisive response." □

Where Else . . . ?

Mother Arrested for Baby's "Sin"

A Palestinian-American mother was arrested and detained for four days because her 3-year-old daughter flashed the victory "V" sign at Israeli soldiers in occupied Palestine.

Najwa Salem, 27-year-old mother of four, was walking in the West Bank village of Beitin with her daughter and infant son when the girl flashed the "V" sign at a passing Israeli army patrol. The mother was arrested for "incitement."

Al-Fajr newspaper (24 July 1989) said that Mrs. Salem was the 20th American citizen arrested "for intifada-related activities," and that three of them are still under detention. □

The Peace Process Staggers Under Israeli Blows

During the past few months, the Israeli government moved rapidly to plug all openings in the Arab-Israeli stalemate and to deflect growing criticism, at home and abroad, of its inflexible stand on the peace process.

First, Israel and its extensions in the United States —the Zionist lobby and its chorus in Congress and the media— worked tirelessly to disrupt the American-Palestinian dialogue. The dialogue has been anathema to Israel and its friends because it exposes the familiar Israeli allegation that "there is no one on the other side to talk to."

Then came Shamir's "election" proposal (called by retired Israeli General Mattityahu Peled "colored bubbles") to create the illusion that Israel is interested in a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians even as it refuses to talk to their chosen leadership and as it rejects recognizing them as a people with national rights.

To make it clear that its aim was to pacify the Palestinian intifada without ending the occupation, the ruling Likud Party placed conditions on Israel's proposal which rendered it lifeless. Elections are not to be held until after the intifada is subdued; Jerusalem's 150,000 Palestinians are to be disfranchised; the establishment of Jewish settlements is to continue; and self-determination is excluded from the options open to the Palestinians. Israel also continued to rule out all arrangements needed to ensure free elections —such as international supervision and troop pull-out.

Then came Israel's latest hostage-taking expedition in Lebanon, creating a distraction from the peace process, creating a new crisis for the U.S. government, and threatening a new wave of blood-letting in the Middle East. By rekindling the hostage crisis —dramatically reflected by the death of Lt. Col. William Higgins and the deployment of U.S. military forces— Israel's aim of changing the Arab-Israeli conflict to an Arab-American conflict moved a step forward.

PLO Disappointed

In the meantime, disillusionment among the Palestinians grows. After the Palestine National Council last November committed the PLO to a peace policy recognized by the entire world community as a substantial contribution to the search for peace in the Middle East, great expectations of a breakthrough were quickly disappointed by Israeli inflexibility and U.S. timidity. The dialogue with the PLO, initiated by the U.S. government last December, failed to develop into a viable negotiating process. Pressed by Israel and its friends, the Bush administration kept it at the level of mere survival, and it used it essentially to sell Israeli schemes to the Palestinians.

Palestinian disillusionment with the possibility of the U.S. government becoming a true peace broker grew, and their belief that their concessions were bound to move Israel was proven erroneous. Although demands for discontinuing the dialogue with the U.S. came from a widening circle of Palestinian opinion, the PLO leadership continued to give peace a chance even though Israel seemed to be determined to close openings as quickly as they appeared. The PLO relaxed its conditions for dealing with Israel's election proposal and it authorized local leaders in occupied Palestine to discuss the matter with Israeli and U.S. officials. Israel's hope to split the Palestinian leadership and the people in occupied Palestine failed, and the Palestinians continued to press for a meaningful peace process.

Israel's Problem

Israel fears serious negotiations with the Palestinians. It knows that Palestinian self-determination and ending the Israeli occupation —universally supported— top the Palestinian agenda. Yet they are issues which Israel's ambitions preclude. Israel's only chance of evading the need to compromise is best assured if negotiations never start. It knows that the Palestinians cannot continue to make unreciprocated concessions and that they cannot afford to wait indefinitely for a positive response from Israel. It hopes —by remaining inflexible— to provoke the PLO in order to resurrect the old myth of beleaguered Israel.

Israel, which has mastered the art of coping with "Palestinian radicalism," finds itself threatened by Palestinian moderation. □

Analysis. . .

Decolonization. . . Not Pacification

The Palestinian uprising is generally thought of as a series of clashes and confrontations with the Israeli occupation forces, but that is only its surface layer, its more visible expression. The intifada, in a more profound sense, is a Palestinian effort at state building, and Israel's repression of the intifada is an attempt to frustrate it.

The Palestinians struggle to diminish their dependence on Israel and its control system in the West Bank and Gaza and to loosen its grip on their lives. They struggle to dismantle the relationship of dependence and coercion which the Israeli military authorities have laboriously created over a period of two decades. They are doing so by creating greater self-sufficiency and alternate institutions to minister to their needs.

Israel, on the other hand, is trying to abort Palestinian independence by paralyzing Palestinian institutions and by means of economic and financial pressure intended to keep them dependent on Israel for all of their living needs. That is why it outlawed the popular committees and deported or imprisoned many of their leaders and activists; that is why it closed down many Palestinian institutions; that is why it imposed a variety of administrative restrictions on movement, on the importation of funds from abroad, on obtaining all sorts of permits and licenses; and that is why it is trying to break the back of the Palestinian commercial and industrial classes with arbitrary taxes and tax collection methods.

The intifada is not a street riot; it is an innovative approach to struggle for self-government and freedom. That is the reason why calls for "lowering the level of tension" and demands for the use of greater force against the intifada have not worked and cannot work. It is the kind of situation that is resolved by decolonization, not pacification. □

Kelly Meets Palestinians

In early August 1989, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, John Kelly, met with local Palestinian leaders in Jerusalem. The Palestinians handed Kelly a memorandum stating the Palestinian view on the peace process. It stressed that the local Palestinian leadership views itself an integral part of the Palestinian national movement and does not see itself as an alternative to the PLO; it urged the U.S. government to give the Palestinian peace initiative more serious consideration and to elicit more positive response from Israel. After an introductory affirmation that "We view our meeting...as part of the ongoing dialogue between the U.S. administration and the PLO," the memorandum continued to state the Palestinian position.

The Palestinian Memorandum

As Palestinians from occupied Palestine, we seek to convey to you in this meeting the message of the Intifada —a message that is at once the rejection of and resistance to the Israeli occupation of our lands and oppression of our people, and at the same time an expression of the endeavors at social transformation and statebuilding as the alternative, appropriate, authentic and legitimate response to the illegitimate and destructive Israeli occupation. In essence, the Intifada is a genuine commitment to peace and the affirmation of human, moral and democratic values.

This commitment was responsibly articulated by the Palestine National Council in its 19th session on November 15, 1988. The Palestinian peace initiative embodies within it the principles and mechanisms essential to the achievement of a comprehensive and permanent solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Unfortunately, the maturity, foresight, courage and sense of historic responsibility that characterize the Palestinian commitment to peace have not met with a response of equal magnitude and daring.

It is ironic that the Palestinian peace stance which presents a unique opportunity for reconciliation and for breaking the endless cycle of violence and pain that has hitherto engulfed our region has been met with blind intransigence and entrenchment on the part of the Israeli authorities as expressed in their escalation of a brutal and punitive policy of repression and violence. Palestinian rights and lives are being blatantly violated on a daily basis as a matter of deliberate, declared and premeditated state policy against a captive civilian population in flagrant defiance of international public opinion and all norms governing civilized behavior.

The so-called Israeli "peace initiative" is an attempt to simultaneously negate Palestinian national rights and identity, circumventing legitimate representation and leadership, and sidestepping the central issues of the conflict. As a tactical ploy to distract and deceive public opinion, it has introduced tangential issues and misdirections, thus confusing the means with the end and confusing the procedure with the substance. The principle of free and democratic elections is one that Palestinians values highly and to which they are wholeheartedly committed. However, the Israeli version, as alluded to in the "Israeli initiative," lacks the following indispensable components:

1) The recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

2) The logic of internal coherence in the form of clearly perceived and delineated transitional steps leading to a defined objective.

3) The framework of international legitimacy and guarantees.

Consequently, in its present form, it is a destructive exercise in verbal manipulation that violates the very principles of freedom and democracy and disqualifies itself as a serious and viable step in the peace process.

In view of the asymmetry between the Palestinian and Israeli initiatives, the role of the United States gains an even greater significance. Based on our recognition of this fact, we view with the greatest seriousness the lack of evenhandedness and objectivity in the U.S. response. To redress this imbalance, the U.S. administration is called upon to demonstrate a genuine commitment to a just peace through the following:

1) The recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people as an expression of Palestinian national rights and not just political rights.

2) The implementation of its "land for peace" policy by actively seeking an end to the Israeli occupation of the territories occupied in 1967.

3) The appreciation of the urgency for the convening of the International Conference as a venue for serious negotiations to achieve a guaranteed peace settlement.

4) The adoption of the principle of mutuality and reciprocity in all matters pertaining to the solution of the conflict, including issues of independence, sovereignty, security, recognition, national rights and guarantees.

In attending this meeting today, we would like to stress the crucial and immediate role that the United States can play by actively intervening to put an end to the Israeli violations of Palestinian human and national rights. Such a move logically constitutes the first step towards creating a dynamic for peace. □

Elias Freij, Ziad Abu Zayyad, Radwan Abu Ayyash, Jamil Tarifi, Zahira Kamal, Mahdi Abdul-Hadi, Said Kanaan, Hanna Siniora, F. Abu Rahmeh, Mustafa Natsheh, Dr. Zakaria al-Agha, Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, Faisal Husseini, Ghassan el-Khatib.

Detainee Dies

The family of a Palestinian political prisoner who had recently died in Dahriya prison have reasons to believe that their son died of torture by his Israeli guards. The Ayyad family, residents of Qalandia refugee camp north of Jerusalem, have appealed to the Israeli High Court to order an investigation of their son's death.

Atta Yousef Ayyad, 21, was arrested on 23 June 1988 and died less than two months later, on 14 August. The night after his death, his body was turned over to his father who was ordered to bury it right away, at night, under the watchful eye of Israeli soldiers and without the usual religious ceremony. In a sworn affidavit, the father said that he had been told by other prisoners that Atta had been hit on the head and that he was refused permission to see a doctor.

When Atta was taken to be buried, the father said that the left side of the son's head was stained with blood and that on the naked body he saw a long wound from the throat to the abdomen. The family is petitioning the High Court for an order to exhume the body and for an official investigation of the cause of death. □

Demolishing Palestinian Homes

House demolitions are a form of collective punishment used by the Israeli military authorities against the Palestinians under occupation, whereby whole families are made homeless for the alleged "security offenses" of one member. During the uprising, the Israeli army has demolished more than 900 Palestinian homes, displacing an estimated 8,000 people, turning them into refugees on their own land.

The bare words "house demolition" fail to convey the cruel impact of the practice on its victims. Palestinians in the occupied territories pour more than 80 percent of their disposable income into the building of private homes, in which, due to cultural tradition and economic circumstances, they live with their extended families. The solid stone houses which they favor are painstakingly built by hand over a number of years. Each demolition, then, not only makes an average of 10 people homeless, but constitutes a bitter emotional blow, the destruction of years of hard labor and the loss of a family's entire life savings.

The Israeli army carries out the demolitions as swiftly and brutally as possible so as to exert the greatest intimidatory effect. Hundreds of soldiers, often accompanied by settlers, descend on a town or village, usually between midnight and dawn. The locality is under curfew and the only warning the victims have is when the troops hammer on the door and order them to leave the house.

The inhabitants have at most a few minutes to remove some belongings from the house before the troops set the explosives or the bulldozers begin their work of demolition. But generally all the contents of the house are destroyed and there is never time to remove heavy furniture or large electrical appliance. The massive dynamite charges used by the Israeli army often destroy neighboring houses, trees, vines and farm animals in crowded areas.

A less frequently employed punishment is the "sealing" of a house by welding shut its doors and windows, rendering entry impossible. The grounds on which the military authorities decide to seal rather than completely destroy a house are not known.

Demolitions and sealings are carried out either to punish families of Palestinians held on suspicion of committing intifada acts, such as stone-throwing, or to punish families living in a house built without an Israeli-issued license. The severe Israeli restrictions on Palestinian construction have left many villagers without any option but to build unlicensed homes if they are to have adequate shelter. This "illegal construction" gives the Israeli authorities the pretext to punish individuals and whole villages for acting in support of the uprising.

While most demolitions take place immediately after the detention of a family member for an alleged intifada act, the Israeli military, in its desperate search for ever tougher measures against the uprising, is rapidly relaxing its criteria for destroying a house. Houses have been demolished even when there have been no arrests, or when no one was hurt in the alleged act. The army destroyed the house of a family in Gaza's el-Breij refugee camp because a stone was allegedly thrown at the military governor from the same vicinity.

Since May, 1989, when 76 houses were destroyed and 104 families displaced, the army has stepped up its demolition of houses. A major reason for the escalation was the army's attempt to protect collaborators by destroying the homes of anyone suspected to have attacked them or their property. "The blood of those helping the State of Israel will not be shed with impunity," said Israeli commander, Amram Mitzna. "We will pursue to the end those who allow themselves to attack persons helping Israel." Mitzna's announcement followed the demolition and sealing of 12 West Bank houses for alleged attacks on collaborators. Three houses were demolished in Irtas and one in Dheisheh [refugee camp] for the same reasons.

House demolitions naturally arouse an intense feeling of community injustice among Palestinians, and villagers will often defy curfews to protest against the destruction of their neighbors' homes. The army uses the protests as an opportunity to crack down even harder on the community. On a number of occasions during the uprising, youths have been killed by troops during demolition operations. In one of the bloodiest Israeli attacks during the uprising, troops fired into a crowd of demonstrators after a house demolition in Beit Foureek; 17 people were injured, including a son of the homeowner who later died of his injuries.

The nature and consequences of Israeli army house demolitions are vividly conveyed by the following two case reports from 1988 by the Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights. The first concerns the village of Beita near Nablus:

"The best, or worst, example of the free hand of the Israeli army (and the hysteria of the Israeli government) can be seen in the aftermath of the clash between armed settlers and villagers in Beita, April 6. Within 24 hours after the death of a teenaged settler in Beita (and the shooting

deaths of three Palestinian young men), and before an army investigation into the incident was concluded, military authorities blew up 14 houses, and damaged eight others in the process, on the assumption that the settler had been 'stoned to death' in mob violence. An Israeli army officer justified the demolitions by saying that 'stones had been thrown' from the area. Residents of some of the houses were not even permitted to remove their furniture before the houses were dynamited. Six residents of the destroyed houses, all young men aged 25-32 (two university students, a teacher and three workers), were summarily deported from the country on April 19.

"The mass destructions seemed to be a partial response to calls by settlers and rightwing government officials for Beita to be 'razed to the ground.' In their haste, one house was admittedly blown up by mistake and army officials quickly offered the owner compensation. Although the army investigation later showed that the settler had been killed accidentally by another settler, and Beita's population had acted rather admirably considering the circumstances, there were no apologies for the house destructions."

The second Database report covers an army raid on Beit Ummar village:

A large force of Israeli soldiers moved into the village of Beit Ummar near Hebron at 2:30 a.m. on August 2 and declared a curfew. Similar operations were being carried out simultaneously in two other villages, Deir Ammar and Jamla, and in the Jalazoun refugee camp, all in the Ramallah area. At 5:00 a.m. Eid Musa Abu Ayyash, a 41-year-old farmer, said his iron and glass veranda was blown 100 meters away by the power of the blast that destroyed his neighbor's house. The water tanks on his roof landed 50 meters away, huge cracks appeared in the walls of his house and seven children shrieked in terror. 'We thought the house would fall on top of us,' Abu Ayyash said. 'But because of the curfew, we could not go outside. We were afraid we would be shot.'

"Fifty-two-year-old Kamel Abu Mialeh said that one-and-a-half dunums of his grape arbors were blown apart by the explosion, a $1,000 loss that he could ill-afford. He also feared that his house had been structurally damaged.

"Of the three houses targeted for destruction that morning, one was bulldozed and two were dynamited, resulting in the damage to neighboring houses. Seventeen days before, seven young men from the village, aged 20-22, were arrested and three later charged with throwing petrol bombs. The house destructions left 38 people homeless, and caused a loss of $150,000 to three families."

Similar attacks by the Israeli army during the uprising have to date destroyed more than 900 Palestinian homes and displaced some 8,000 people. These unfortunates, refugees on their own land, have only the small emergency tents provided by international relief organizations for shelter. Families whose houses were destroyed for "security reasons" are not permitted to build again on their land. Those who built "unlicensed" houses will never receive permission to build because of Israel's deliberate policy of restricting Palestinian construction.

To see the scene of a recently destroyed house, with stunned families picking through the rubble hoping to salvage some usable utensils for their coming life in tents, is to be brought fully face to face with the lawlessness and cruelty of Israeli military occupation. □

Reprinted from ***Palestine*** *(Nicosia, Cyprus), Volume 14, No. 91, 1 August 1989.*

Israel Creates New Refugees

"The Israeli army carries out the demolitions as swiftly and brutally as possible so as to exert the greatest intimidatory effect. Hundreds of soldiers, often accompanied by settlers, descend on a town or village, usually between midnight and dawn. The locality is under curfew and the only warning the victims have is when the troops hammer on the door and order them to leave the house."

"It Has Become Grand Larceny"

By George D. Moffett III

[This is an excerpt from a report published in the international edition of ***The Christian Science Monitor*** *of 19 July 1989 about Israel's use of fiscal policy to subdue occupied Palestine]:*

Soldiers and tax officials sweep into Ahmed's tiny West Bank store. Claiming he owes back taxes on his annual income of several hundred dollars, they bill him $250,000. The soldiers search Ahmed's home and confiscate $3,000 in savings.

Ten miles away, near Ramallah, Adnan, a college student, is arrested and told to pay back taxes owed by his father. He protests that he has no money. Soldiers insult and punch him, seize his ID card, and force him to wait in line for seven hours a day for a week to obtain temporary credentials.

> ***"A college student is arrested and told to pay back taxes owed by his father. He protests that he has no money. Soldiers insult and punch him. . . "***

Scenes like this —the first reported in an Israeli newspaper, the second from an affidavit filed with a human rights group— have become commonplace around the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as Israel continues to flex its fiscal as well as its military muscles to bring an end to the 19-month Palestinian uprising.

At one level a matter of taxes and revenue, these incidents epitomize the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians for control of the West Bank and Gaza, which were placed under military occupation by Israel in 1967.

Israeli sources say more aggressive methods of assessing and collecting taxes from Palestinians are needed to compensate for the loss of revenue resulting from a business slowdown caused by the uprising and from the refusal of many Palestinians to pay taxes as a form of civil disobedience.

But Palestinians say a variety of new taxes and sometimes abusive means of collecting them, including nighttime "tax raids," confiscation, and onerous administrative requirements, are punitive measures designed to make life as miserable as possible to break the spirit of the uprising.

At stake for Israel is political control of the West Bank and Gaza and the money needed to pay for the occupation. Both are challenged by the uprising. At stake for the Palestinians are everything from wedding plans to new business permits which are now held hostage to Israel's determination to use taxes as an instrument to combat the uprising

"It's gratuitous and tyrannical," says one Western development official. "The creativity of the authorities in thinking up new things to tax has reached new heights."

"It gets to the heart of the way Palestinians feel they are being treated by Israel," adds the official about a system which is invariably described by Palestinians as arbitrary and humiliating. "Together with the use of brutal force, it jeopardizes the ability of Palestinians ever to live with Israel and to make peace. . . ."

"There's an atmosphere of utter lawlessness about it," says Palestinian attorney Jonathan Kuttab, who specializes in VAT cases. "It has become grand larceny."

At the root of Palestinian discontent are the arbitrary and often intimidating methods by which tax laws are enforced. According to the Palestinian human rights organization Al Haq, these methods include frequent tax raids by Israeli soldiers and tax officials in which curfews are imposed, stiff taxes and fines are levied, and property and ID cards confiscated without due process.

Under a 1988 military order, Israeli tax collectors can use force to break into homes to collect taxes without judicial process.

Tax officials often penalize third parties for the non-payment of taxes by relatives, friends or employers, the rights group contends. Meanwhile, Palestinians complain of being forced to wait in tax lines for dozens of hours, often over the course of several days, to obtain a single permit.

"It's gratuitous humiliation," says the Western development official. "They seem to hope that this will wear down the population and that the intifadah will ease off."

"The most important element in the crackdown is that it is completely arbitrary," says Ghassan Al Khatib, an economist at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank. "There are simply no rules." □

"Quote Unquote"

"The settlers want peace and calm when the occupation is a condition of prolonged war. It goes against the laws of nature. At the end of the 20th century, people are no longer willing to live under colonial conditions."

Professor Ze'ev Sternhel
Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Yediot Aharonot, 22 June 1989

"The uprising of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation since 8 December 1987 is a form of legitimate resistance, an expression of their rejection of occupation."

U.N. Human Rights Commission
Resolution 1988/3
22 February 1988

New Books

Palestine Perspectives recommends the following recent books on the Palestinians and the Arab-Israeli conflict:

- George T. Abed, ed., ***The Palestinian Economy: Studies in Development Under Prolonged Occupation.*** London: Routledge, 1988.
- Swee Chai Ang, ***From Beirut to Jerusalem.*** London: Grafton Books, 1989. [Reviewed in ***Palestine Perspectives,*** No. 42, July/August 1989].
- Camille Mansour, ed., ***Les Palestiniens de L'interieur.*** Washington: Institute For Palestine Studies, 1989.
- Ibrahim Sous, ***Letters to a Jewish Friend.*** London: Quartet Books, 1989.
- ***Punishing a Nation: Human Rights Violations During the Palestinian Uprising, December 1987-1988.*** Prepared and published by Al-Haq [Law in the Service of Man]: Ramallah, Palestine, 1988. [Available in the U.S. from Al-Haq, P.O.Box 27597, Washington DC 20038-7597].

Professor Peled on Israeli Intransigence

Shamir's Elections Proposal Is Colorful Bubbles

Retired Israeli General Mattityahu Peled, now Professor of Arabic Literature at Tel Aviv University, called the Israeli government's proposal for electing Palestinians to negotiate "limited autonomy" with Israel a "muddle headed proposal" which "should cause every self-respecting Israeli citizen shame and embarrassment." Peled was speaking before the Sixth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held at U.N. headquarters in New York 21-23 June 1989.

Peled called the Israeli proposal a "non-starter," and he described its endorsement by the Israeli government as "blowing into the air colorful bubbles such as elections, self-government, peace negotiations, while expecting to prolong the occupation and the oppression or with the goal of avoiding a just solution." The way to resolve the conflict, he said, is to negotiate with the parties involved, including the Palestinians represented by the PLO. The Israeli proposal, he explained, is addressed to Jordan rather than the Palestinians, and the Palestinians Israel wants elected would become part of a Jordanian delegation.

The intifada, Peled said, and the PLO peace initiative have created a new opportunity for a just peace, which the Israeli government seems determined to evade. The following is an excerpt from Peled's presentation:

Peled's Remarks

The steps taken by the PLO since the last session of the PNC have completely altered the relative position of the two adversaries of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the PLO is now seen as endeavoring to bring about the rebirth of the peace process Israel is, regrettably, revealed as the party refusing to re-examine its position of unmitigated hostility to the Palestinian people and its leadership. The ramifications of this dramatic change for both sides are far reaching. Whereas sympathy and support for the legitimate Palestinian aspirations of liberation and independence is spreading in all corners of the world, Israel's intransigence drives even its staunchest supporters to doubt the sincerity of its professed desire to bring about an end to the conflict and allow peace to reign in the Middle East.

It is clear now to one and all that the Intifada is a legitimate form of nonviolent resistance to 22 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and is therefore enjoying moral support and sympathy all over the world. The forms of repression exercised by the Israeli army and police in support of the military government have become sheer crimes against humanity and are subjected to an ever increasing criticism of the international community. Inside Israel too, public opinion is showing an increasing abhorrence for the politics and measures taken by the government to deal with the situation.

> ***"The forms of repression exercised by the Israeli army and police in support of the military government have become sheer crimes against humanity..."***

Increasing numbers of Israelis recognize now that a resolution of the conflict can come only through direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO. And increasing numbers of Israelis are refusing to take part in the repressive measures taken by the military to suppress the Intifada. On top of all this the economic consequences of the policy of occupation and repression are becoming increasingly insupportable and the Israeli economy, after a brief period of some recovery is relapsing again into high inflation and stagnation. There is no doubt that the Intifada has accelerated this process.

Faced with this most unenviable situation the Israeli government has felt obliged to come up with some new ideas. It is rumored that Premier Shamir was specifically advised by the U.S. Administration, on the eve of his recent visit to Washington, to bring with him ideas showing a willingness to deal more constructively with the new situation. This posed for the Israeli government the problem of how to produce a new political formula which would sound like a new approach but at the same time preclude any chance for change. The result was the proposal known as "A Peace Initiative by the Government of Israel" adopted at a formal cabinet meeting on May 14, 1989....

This Israeli proposal is a non starter. If there is any lesson to be learned from it, it is this: The resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be achieved only on the basis of justice and equity. Blowing into the air colorful bubbles such as elections, self-government, peace negotiations while expecting to prolong the occupation and the oppression or with the goal of avoiding a just solution, will fool no one. And a just solution, which can bring an end to war and violence will be reached only by means of negotiations between Israel and the other parties to the conflict, including the Palestinians represented by the PLO, and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, indeed by means of an international peace conference as called for by the U.N. General Assembly.

The complexity of the conflict, the involvement of so many parties in its various aspects, the great danger of another Israeli-Arab war breaking out with unprecedented consequences due to the possession of nuclear and chemical weapons by the adversaries and the realization of the superpowers that having allowed the arms race in the Middle East to reach a most dangerous level they have practically no control over their use —all this makes the convening of the international peace conference a most urgent matter. It should be a major item on the agenda of the superpowers' dialogue, and let us hope that they will reach an agreement on this issue before we all regret the consequences of failing to do so in time. □

DEAR READERS

To ensure that you will continue to receive your copy of ***Palestine Perspectives*** on time, please let us know promptly if you change your address.

■ **Peace Is Sin**—Israel's Chief Rabbinate issued a religious decree declaring it to be a sin to make territorial compromise in "the land of Israel," including the West Bank and Gaza. This makes the exchange of land for peace, considered by the entire world community including the U.S. government as the key to peace in the Middle East, a forbidden act.

Considering the fact that no Israeli government, including the present one, has ever been able to function without the support of the religious parties, this ruling is bound to have serious impact on the chances of Arab-Israeli peace.

The recent decision does not accept peace as justification for withdrawal, and an earlier (1979) ruling on the same issue rejected the saving of lives as a justification for territorial compromise.

■ **Pollard Feels Betrayed**—Convicted spy Jonathan Pollard says Israel betrayed him and that he now doubts if it was wise to risk his liberty for its sake. In a letter from prison Pollard wrote that he was no longer sure that he wanted to go to Israel after finishing his sentence.

■ **Israelis Shoot Each Other**—Not only Palestinians but also Israelis are paying for the trigger happy mood of settler vigilantes and nervous soldiers. On 9 August, a one-year-old Israeli baby was killed by Israeli army gunfire when his settler father fired at the soldier —thinking that they were Arabs— and they returned the fire. It was the second incident of Israelis shooting each other in one week. A few days earlier one Israeli army patrol panicked and fired at another patrol as it rounded a corner in Khan Yunis in the Gaza strip.

■ **The Cost of Repression**—The Bank of Israel reported that the intifada cost Israel $650 million, in 1988, in export losses. In addition, the bank said, "incalculable loss" was caused by the climate of uncertainty which deters investors and consumers, both Israeli and foreign, from putting money in the Israeli economy.

The export losses included $280 million in lost revenues from tourists that the intifada had kept out of the country. Israeli exports of goods and services to the occupied territories fell by about 40 percent, and imports from them decreased by 48 percent in 1988.

In Brief

■ **Rabbi Rebuked**—Rabbi Mordechai Malka, the spiritual leader of Moshav Matzav in northern Israel, has been reprimanded by Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu for having attended a conference in Spain in which the PLO was also represented. The Rabbi defended himself by explaining that he went to defend Israel and not to meet with PLO representatives, and that he had served in the Israeli army for three years.

■ **Soviet Jews**—Israel is trying to enlist the White House in its continuing efforts to force Soviet Jews who leave their country to go to Israel. In a meeting with National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft in early August, Jewish Agency chairman Simha Dinitz asked for money to help make Israel more attractive to Jewish immigrants and for U.S. pressure on the Soviet Union to allow direct flights to Israel. Most Soviet Jews who leave the U.S.S.R. choose not to settle in Israel.

Israel War Crimes

Israel's dealings with the Palestinian people during the past forty years have frequently involved war crimes as understood by international law. This is the thesis of Ohio State University International Law Professor John Quigley, author of the most recent (September-October 1989) issue of *The Link*, publication of Americans for Middle East Understanding in New York.

Since its establishment in 1948, Israel has committed numerous acts considered as "grave breaches" of international laws and conventions and are war crimes, according to professor Quigley. On several occasions, such Israeli acts were explicitly described as war crimes by the United Nations. They include military aggression, the expulsion of civilians, torture of prisoners, apartheid, and the destruction of homes.

International law obligates states to hold Israeli officials responsible for those acts individually liable and requires them to apprehend, prosecute and punish those of them found guilty of war crimes. □

■ **Arab Studies Society Closure Extended**—The Israeli military authorities ordered the Arab Studies Society in Jerusalem closed for a second consecutive year. The Palestinian research organization's president, Faisal Husseini, was placed under administrative detention twice last year. The closure of the Society for a second year until the end of July 1990, was attributed by Husseini to Israel's efforts to cripple Palestinian institutions in general.

■ **More Reasons For Not Making Peace**—Israel, which has always claimed that it refuses to negotiate with the PLO because it is a "terrorist organization," now has new reasons for not dealing with it. We will not talk to the PLO, Israel's war minister Yitzhak Rabin recently explained, "as long as it continues to advocate Palestinian statehood and the return of Arab refugees." Obviously the PLO's real sin is that it speaks for Palestinian rights.

■ **Likudist Mad At BBC**—Israeli cabinet minister Ehud Olmert (Likud) swore never to appear on Britain's BBC Television again. He was furious with Sir Ian Gilmour, a member of the British parliament, who said in the course of a debate with Olmert that "Israel was founded on terrorism. Mr. Shamir was a terrorist. Mr. Begin was a terrorist. Israel has indulged in terrorism throughout its existence."

Sir Ian also said that Israel jeopardized the lives of Western hostages in Lebanon, and that it pictures itself as the policeman of the Middle East when it is in fact a "major criminal" occupying Arab lands and shooting Arab civilians every day.

■ **Higgins Execution Condemned**—Major Arab-American organizations condemned the execution of Lt. Col. William Higgins in apparent retaliation for Israel's kidnaping of Shi'ite leader Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid and two guests from his home in Lebanon, and the murder of a neighbor during the Israeli raid.

The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) issued statements on 31 July calling the execution "deplorable" and "reprehensible." They also condemned Israel's abduction of Sheikh Obeid as a "calculated provocation to violence" and "total disregard of America's interests in the region."

Congress Urged To Look Into Settler Violence

Group Calls Attention to Participation of American Citizens

A number of peace, civil rights and religious activists called on congress to hold hearings on the involvement of U.S. citizens in armed attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians. Leaders of seven Arab-American and other organizations concerned about the Middle East co-signed the letter to congress. The letter was also endorsed by a number of other human and civil rights activists, including Dale Bishop, Middle East Secretary for the United Church of Christ, David Cole of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Ken Giles of New Jewish Agenda, Henry Schwarzschild, Jewish Peace Fellowship, Paul F. Walker of the Institute for Peace and International Security, and Adrien Wing of the National Conference of Black Lawyers.

The group's letter to congress says that the participation of Jewish Americans in armed attacks on Palestinians —sometimes resulting in deaths — constitutes "a degree of complicity on the part of our own country that can no longer be ignored." Many of the settlers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, the letter said, "espouse a virulently anti-Arab and messianic ideology" and deny that the indigenous Palestinians have a right to live in their country. Many such settlers, including their leaders, are American citizens; "what should be of special concern to us here in the United States is that so many of these settlers are American citizens. In fact, it was an American citizen and native of Chicago who was convicted of manslaughter for killing an unarmed Palestinian shepherd last May. Israel Zaviv, a resident of the West Bank settlement of Shiloh, shot and killed Abdalla Juda Abdalla Satri on May 5, 1988. Like Zaviv, Shiloh's mayor, Dov Berkovists, is also an American citizen, as is the leader of Efrat, a settlement south of Jerusalem."

The group asked congress to ensure that U.S. financial aid to Israel is not used for building settlements, which conflicts with U.S. policy; to investigate the involvement of U.S. citizens in paramilitary activities against Palestinians, and to consider the citizenship status of those involved.

James Zogby, executive director of the Washington-based Arab American Institute, which coordinated the letter to congress, said that there is a "contradiction between U.S. policy —that opposes settlement in the West Bank and Gaza strip —and the presence of American citizens in the settlements." U.S. policy will not be taken seriously in Israel, he said, "when our congress continues to appropriate billions of dollars in aid to Israel without knowing where it goes." □

Commentary . . .

American Jews and Settler Vigilantism

The attention of congress has been drawn to the open secret that American citizens have been involved in pogroms and armed vigilante activities against the Palestinians. How do you think it looks to the people of occupied Palestine —to whom the U.S. government introduces itself as an honest peace broker— when they are assaulted by Americans carrying American weapons paid for by American aid? Remember that we are not talking about American Jews who immigrated to Israel and became Israeli citizens; we are here talking about Americans whose zeal takes them to Israel as reinforcements whenever it gets involved in conflict with the Arabs.

There is a long history of American Jews responding to Israel's call to arms. Israel has always enlisted American (and other) Jews in its wars with the Arabs. In his book *Taking Sides,* Stephen Green wrote about extensive Zionist recruitment in America during the war of 1948. Plane loads of American Jews have joined Israeli war efforts in all of its wars with the Arabs, and the event is usually covered by the media as if it were talking about volunteers to some humanitarian mission. In fact, it is quite possible that such open acceptance of American Jewish participation in Israeli fights encouraged Jonathan Pollard to spy on his country and justify it on the grounds that —being a good Zionist— he was a "soldier of Zion."

American politicians have often defended Zionist loyalty to Israel as a legitimate expression of good old political participation. This is nonsense, of course, because the civic duty of American citizens is not supposed to extend to the service of foreign powers.

The point we are making is that freelance participation in foreign armed conflicts is a serious abuse of the rights of citizenship, and can very well implicate this country —against its better judgment— in the misdeeds of special interests with foreign loyalties or connections. The practice is unacceptable.

Lobbying on behalf of Israel —within the constraints of the democratic game— is one thing, but murdering for it is something else altogether. The former must be regulated, but the latter must be prohibited and punished.

There is no legal or moral justification for the silence on the participation of U.S. citizens in violent crimes against Palestinians in the occupied territory. Support for Israel is not an adequate excuse. If it is condoned, America —a nation of immigrants— would find itself at war with itself and with practically every nation on this earth. □

UPA Accepted for CFC

United Palestinian Appeal, Inc., has been approved for participation in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the only charitable solicitation allowed of federal employees. Through CFC, government employees choose a charity to which they contribute through regular and direct deductions from their pay.

UPA is a Washington-based Palestinian charitable organization which assists health care, educational institutions and community service programs in Palestine and refugee camps in Lebanon. □

U.S. Money for Israeli Religious Schools

The Agency for International Development (AID), a federal agency which administers American aid programs abroad, has been caught violating U.S. laws and policy in its Israeli projects. AID had allocated $3.5 million for two religious schools in Israel and a teacher-training program for Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank. Funding religious schools violates the separation of church and state provision of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and assistance to Jewish settlements conflicts with U.S. policy that they are illegal.

Some members of congress protested funding these projects in a letter to AID deputy administrator Mark Edelman. They charged that the program has become "an international pork barrel," and is often used to finance pet projects of key pro-Israeli senators and their Jewish fund-raisers.

Last year, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) caused a controversy when he included in the government budget $8 million for building Jewish schools in France to oblige an American Jewish religious group, Ozar Hatorah, run by a campaign contributor.

Senator Inouye and the Settlers

Israeli Editor Suggests Second Look

Last June, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI), one of Israel's staunchest allies in congress, visited Jewish settlements in occupied Palestine. At the time, settler violence against the Palestinians was being described in Israel and world media as a most dangerous phenomenon. There were many reports of pogroms by armed fanatical settlers, and there was rising fear in Israel that the settlers were taking Israel to the edge of civil war. But Senator Inouye saw none of that and had nothing but praise for his hosts.

Adam Keller, Israeli peace activist and editor of *The Other Israel* newsletter, wrote the following letter to Senator Inouye, challenging his complacent attitude on the serious question of settler violence. Following is the text of Keller's letter:

Dear Senator Inouye:

Yesterday night I saw you on the Israeli Television's Evening News broadcast. You were visiting the Israeli settlement Alfey Menashe on the West Bank and being received as a guest of honor by the settlers. On this occasion you stated that the settlement is a nice-looking community, with schools and even a country-club.

I must say I feel very distressed at this intervention of yours in our politics, and your taking sides in Israel's most hotly debated controversy. I believe that your act gave legitimacy to a very illegitimate and very dangerous phenomenon.

Certainly the settlements in the occupied territories have a neat and prosperous look. How else would they look, when the government is investing a large slice of the tax prayers' money in providing the settlers with the most modern amenities? (Nothing of the kind is done for the inhabitants of slum neighborhoods in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem—I advise you to visit one of them, next time you are in Israel.)

I am quite ready to believe you that when you visited the settlers in their own homes they were relaxed, did not carry weapons and —in short— looked very different from the way they look when they are in the midst of a punitive raid on a Palestinian village. This does not change the fact that the settlers maintain an extensive and well-armed vigilante force, which is regularly attacking Arab villages, destroying property, shooting, wounding and sometimes killing, and which is dedicated to preventing any peace agreement involving Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. All of this could be very easily substantiated by a casual glance through the Israeli press and the records of the Israeli police and criminal courts. I may add that the settlers of Alfey Menashe, whom you visited, took an active part in several such raids, and that their mayor, Shlomo Katan —who acted as your host— participated personally in them. I am sure that many of these people are also faithful husbands, loving fathers and charming conversationalists—but this is quite besides the point.

I hope you will take notice of my feelings on this matter, which are shared by a large part of the Israeli public.

Adam Keller
Tel-Aviv
June 27, 1989

Arab Americans Demand Apology

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), addressed a sharply-worded letter to *Washington Times* managing editor Wesley Pruden, protesting an August 2 column described by ADC as "blatantly racist" and "bigoted." The column in question had said that Israel is "adrift in a sea of 400 million murderous fanatics."

In his letter to the *Times*, ADC president Abdeen Jabara called the editorial "inflammatory incitement to racial hatred." It is "a blatantly racist smear of an entire people," he said. "That such bigoted views are propounded by the managing editor of a newspaper in our nation's capital," Jabara wrote, "is totally unacceptable."

ADC's director of public relations, Faris Bouhafa, expressed shock that the *Washington Times* would publish "such racially offensive views as those expressed by Mr. Pruden." An ADC press release, dated 2 August 1989, said that the Arab-American civil rights organization takes this matter very seriously and hopes that the *Times* would take all necessary measures to correct this "outrageous impropriety that has deeply offended many in the Washington community."

ADC offices in Washington have received many telephone calls from Arab-Americans indignant about the *Times* editorial. □

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Prisoners Also Have Human Rights

Israel Ignores New International Guidelines

At the time that the world community establishes humanitarian guidelines for the treatment of prisoners and detainees, Israel took another step away from that trend. In December 1988, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a "Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment." The principles included (Article 10) the requirement that "Anyone who is arrested shall be informed at the time of his arrest of the reason of the arrest and shall be promptly informed of the charges against him."

This principle prohibits "administrative detention," an Israeli practice under which thousands of Palestinians crowd detention camps. Instead of reconsidering administrative detentions, Israel has recently increased the period of detention without charge or trial from six months to one year. The period is renewable indefinitely.

The order extending administrative detention to a year was signed by the military governors of the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 11 August. It came within the context of Israeli war minister Yitzhak Rabin's efforts to use greater pressure on the Palestinians to end their uprising against the Israeli occupation. □

Palestine Peace March

An international peace march in Palestine and Israel is scheduled to be held from 29-31 December 1989. An international conference of peace groups, with more than 1,000 delegates, agreed to hold the march during a recent European Nuclear Disarmament Convention in Spain.

The chairman of the European Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question Palestine and one of the initiators of the march, Mikko Lohikoski, said that the march is intended to draw public attention "to the critical situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which has become unbearable due to the increasing violence of the occupying power and the settlers." Diminished coverage in the mass media, Lohikoski said, due to Israeli censorship and restrictions on the media, "further increases the dangers for the Palestinian population."

The march organizers also hope to call attention to the need to focus on the peace process. "We feel that unless new dynamism can be injected into the peace process," their statement said, "the historic situation created by the bold and realistic Palestinian peace initiative may be lost," which may lead to "a full-fledged war. Now is the time to unite in common action all those who want to end occupation, achieve Palestinian rights and establish peace."

The organizers have called for the broadest participation possible by peace movements, human rights groups, churches, trade unions, political and intellectual personalities, artists, journalists, educators and others. They plan a variety of activities in Israel and occupied Palestine, culminating on new year's eve in a "vigil for peace in 1990" in Jerusalem.

Groups and individuals interested in participating in the peace march can contact the organizers at one of the following addresses:

- Associazione per la Pace
Via Francesco Carrara 24
00196 Roma, Italy
(Tel: 06/3608687-3612539)

- ICCP
Case Postale 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland
(Tel:22/7916480-1)

- Mikko Lohikoski
European Coordinating Committee
c/o Finnish-Arab Friendship Society
Bulevardi 13 A 3
SF-00120 Helsinki, Finland
(Tel: 358-0-6949351)

Palestine Perspectives

The Magazine of Contemporary Palestinian Affairs

"It is not what you don't know that hurts you; it's what you know that ain't so."

The Palestinians have been victimized by disinformation more than any other people. They have been dispossessed and displaced; they have suffered repeated massacres; their human rights have been systematically and ruthlessly violated. Yet, they have risen above their pain and made more conciliatory moves to resolve the conflict with Israel than any other party to that conflict. But they are still portrayed as villains and obstacles to peace.

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Legislation Seen As Threat to the Palestinian Community

New Discriminatory Law Against Israeli Arabs

The Nazareth-based Human Rights Association says "a serious threat is currently hanging over the Palestinian Arab population in Israel." Pending legislation to amend the 1948 "Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance" is described by the human rights group as "the latest addition to a wealth of legislation by which personal and collective freedoms can be cast aside in the name of 'security needs'." Such laws include the British Defense (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, which Israel inherited from the British and continued to use against the Palestinian Arabs to impose censorship, administrative detention, restrictions on the freedom of movement, house demolition, deportation and other forms of individual and collective punishment.

The proposed amendments to the 1948 Ordinance prohibit the receipt of funds from a "terrorist organization" regardless of the use made of such funds, and provides for the confiscation not only of such funds, but all other assets of the receiving organization without safeguards of a judicial due process. Israel's definition of "terrorist organizations" includes the PLO and any affiliated organizations even those which have no military functions and deal only in humanitarian fields such as health and education.

The Palestinians in Israel fear that this legislation is intended to stifle Arab community development projects and to paralyze existing institutions by cutting them off from contributions from abroad. The fact that the Israeli government practices budgetary discrimination against Arab towns would now be compounded with these restrictions on their ability to secure help from outside the country. Zionist organizations which serve only Jews in Israel are supported by contributions from abroad, especially from the United States from which they receive hundreds of millions of dollars every year, much of it given as tax deductible donations. □

The offices of ***Palestine Perspectives*** will be closed for two weeks, from 10-24 September 1989.

Self Congratulations Not Warranted

Outgoing military commander of the West Bank, Amram Mitzna, claimed that he was bequeathing a subdued intifada to his successor, Major-General Yitzhak Mordechai. "Remaining humane," Mitzna said, "we have brought to an end the massive riots."

Ironically, his remarks were reported on the same page of *The Jerusalem Post* (international edition, week ending 12 August 1989) on which also appeared a report on increasing deaths in the occupied territories. During July, the last month of Mitzna's command, 32 Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops and another was killed by a Jewish settler. The toll, according to *The Post,* was "one of the highest monthly totals since the uprising in the territories began in December 1987.

The total number of Palestinian fatalities since the uprising began is 509 according to Israeli sources. Palestinian sources — said to be more accurate by foreign reporters, because their figures are based on hospital information — say Palestinian casualties are much higher. The Palestinian Jerusalem weekly *Al-Fajr* said in its 14 August 1989 issue that 628 Palestinians had died since the beginning of the intifada. □

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