

# Palestine Focus

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NEWSLETTER OF THE PALESTINE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

May - June, 1988

## Editorial

### Palestinian State and the PLO Shultz Plan Fails

U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz tried to usher in Spring 1988 by using the momentum of the Palestinian uprising to impose a settlement on the Palestinians which offers them nothing at all. Palestinian leader George Habash told the *New York Times*, "It is fine to say we should end the uprising and talk peace. But give me something to work with, not this Shultz proposal."

The irony of Shultz's efforts is that the goods he is selling have been explicitly rejected by the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza through the uprising itself. The uprising has issued a printed statement of its demands, which are quite clear, specific, and eminently reasonable: "Complete ban on live ammunition in dispersing demonstrations and cancellation of barbaric instructions to beat the population; End the policy of expulsions and detentions; Return the deportees and release administrative detainees; Immediately end the curfew and the starvation of the refugee camps; Disarm the settlers; End land expropriation and creation of settlements; Release all the prisoners and detainees from the latest events, and close the detention centers at Fara'a, Dhahariya, and Ansar 2; Reopen all the educational institutions, trade unions, and popular organizations, and end the intervention of the authorities in their internal affairs; Dissolve the appointed municipal authorities and hold democratic elections for all the authorities and committees in the occupied territories; Remove Ariel Sharon from the Old City; Respect the holy places of all religions; Release the national insurance money paid by Palestinians working inside Israel for the needs of the Palestinian population; Remove the IDF from all Palestinian population centers; and The right to self-determination of the Palestinian people."

There can be no doubt that Palestinians want the uprising to end with an Israeli withdrawal and that they want to live in an independent Palestinian state. And there can be no question that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and all over the world are willing to be represented only by their sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

As lame as Shultz's plan is, Israeli Prime Minister Shamir rejected it, saying the only part he recognized was the signature at the bottom. Shamir rejects any discussion of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. Nevertheless, the United States made clear its continued support for Israel when it sent a new shipment of planes, despite Shamir's rejection and despite Israel's brutal repression of the current uprising.

Shultz continues to insist that he will not speak to the Palestine Liberation Organization, i.e., he wants a role in the selection of Palestinian representatives. And Shultz and his Israeli allies, such as Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, continue to reject any consideration of a Palestinian state. Instead, Shultz is will-

ing to negotiate over what kind of Israeli/Jordanian partnership will reign over the Palestinians and over the precise borders of the territory in question.

Indeed, Shultz has been told by even President Hasni Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan that his plan offers much too little to the Palestinians. Both men have ruthlessly suppressed sympathy demonstrations for the uprisings in their countries. Still, the uprising exerts considerable pressure on them and they have been forced to acknowledge that a "Camp David" style formula is no longer acceptable.

In fact, the Palestinian uprising is a clear rejection of any role for Jordan's King Hussein in the future of Palestinians; Hussein's few allies are considered collaborators and have little influence. After centuries of Ottoman, British, Jordanian, and Israeli rule, Palestinians want self-determination—they want to control their own affairs. After centuries of foreign rule, is it not time for them to be free, to have a state like any other state, to choose their own representatives as any other people do?

Although Shultz's proposal has heightened splits within the Israeli gov-

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*Palestine Focus* joins the Palestinian people and their friends and supporters all over the world in mourning the tragic loss of Khalil al-Wazir, also known as Abu Jihad, who was murdered in Tunis by a hit team from the Mossad and the Israeli army. Abu Jihad was beloved and respected by Palestinians the world over not only because of his effective leadership and organizing abilities, but also because of his tremendous efforts to foster

unity within Palestinian ranks. It is painfully ironic that Israeli officials who ordered the operation described Abu Jihad as a "terrorist." The Palestine Solidarity sent a telegram to the PLO: "Abu Jihad's martyrdom will inspire further struggle to end Israeli occupation and to achieve Palestinian self-determination. We will redouble our own efforts to change U.S. policy to support Palestinian rights."



## Editorial

### Jesse Jackson and the Palestinians

The tremendous popular response to Jesse Jackson throughout the United States, coupled with a growing wave of sympathy and understanding of Palestinian aspirations highlighted by the ongoing uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, signals a significant shift in public opinion toward Palestinian rights. Alexander Cockburn wrote in his column in the *Nation* that "a Gallup poll in March showed that 58 percent of all Americans believe that Israel should recognize the PLO; 53 percent say the United States should deal with the PLO; 41 percent say U.S. aid to Israel should be decreased, while only 7 percent say it should be increased." A March *Los Angeles Times* poll showed that more than 60 percent of American Jews favor an international peace conference and 29 percent favor a Palestinian homeland and negotiations with the PLO. American Jews also believe, with a 65 percent majority, that "Israelis will have to change their attitudes before peace can be achieved."

Thus Jackson's position on Palestine and his broader anti-interventionist position, far from being outside the mainstream, actually reflects a growing majority of American voters and signifi-

cant numbers of American Jews. Even the *Wall Street Journal* acknowledged that Jackson "is urging a fundamental redirection of U.S. foreign policy that a number of experts believe is overdue." John Steinbruner of the Brookings Institution told the *Journal*, "The Jackson phenomenon is very interesting. What we're seeing is that the country is ready for this kind of discussion." When establishment experts and the *Wall Street Journal* concede the validity of Jackson's position, it is Bush and Dukakis who are out of step with the views of U.S. citizens.

Jackson's growing support makes his position threatening to those who attack him. To be sure, carefully conducted polls reveal that about half the opposition to Jackson is racial and has little to do with his stance on issues. But the degree of pressure exerted on Jackson to change his stance, especially toward the Palestinians, during the New York primary is a strong indication that his ideas are seen as dangerously popular by demagogues like New York Mayor Ed Koch.

Despite the inevitable pressures on the campaign trail, Jackson has held his position that Palestinians have the right

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# U.S. Moves to Close UN PLO Office

By Jeanne Butterfield

The unprecedented attempt by the Reagan administration to "shut down" pro-Palestinian voices in the United States must be challenged not only by the movement for Palestinian rights, but by all concerned about civil rights and civil liberties. A little over one year ago, a broad coalition of individuals and organizations came together to defend the constitutional rights of Palestinian activists arrested in Los Angeles and threatened with deportation from the United States merely for articulating pro-Palestinian opinions in their organizing work. While the case of the L.A. Eight is still to appear at the Board of Immigration Appeals, the U.S. government is again on the move to try to silence Palestinian voices.

The government is currently proceeding with its efforts to enforce the recently enacted "Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987," also known as the Grassley Bill. Attorney General Edwin Meese issued a closure order against the PLO's official observer mission at the United Nations on March 21, the very day that the Anti-Terrorism Act took effect.

The closure order against the PLO Mission is opposed by the United Nations itself, as well as by domestic organizations who maintain that the order directly threatens their first amendment right to hear the viewpoint of the PLO and to debate that viewpoint at a very critical stage in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The administration appears to be divided over the issue with the State Department objecting to the legislation as it pertains to the PLO UN Mission and with the Justice Department halfheartedly moving to enforce what it maintains is a clear Congressional mandate.

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987 was enacted in late October and slipped through Congress as a rider amendment to the State Department authorization (funding) bill without passing through the normal channels of subcommittee review, debate, and hearings. Because it was attached to a major appropriations bill, the Reagan administration said that although it did not agree with the legislation, the president would be unable to veto the entire State Department funding bill merely to stop the Anti-Terrorism Act. The bill thus became law and was scheduled to be implemented on March 21, 1988.

The Anti-Terrorism Act is far-reaching in its scope and in the threat it poses to pro-Palestinian voices in the

United States. The act makes it illegal for anyone, including U.S. citizens, to maintain any office in the United States with funds provided by the PLO or "at the behest of" the PLO. Anticipating the conflict such legislation might pose with the United Nations, the act explicitly maintained that this legislation supplanted any other international or treaty obligations that the United States might have. Since the PLO Information Office in Washington had already been closed in December by a State Department order classifying it as a "foreign mission," the PLO Mission at the UN was the most obvious target of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The United Nations General Assembly has taken the threat posed to its operation by the act very seriously. Convening in special session in early March, the General Assembly passed two resolutions: one declared that the U.S. decision to close the PLO Mission violated U.S. treaty obligations to the UN under the headquarters agreement; the other asked the World Court for an opinion on whether the United States must submit to binding arbitration to resolve the dispute. The first resolution passed 143 to 1 (Israel); the second vote was 143 to 0. The United States refused to participate in both votes.

While the World Court considered the matter, the PLO Mission received a letter from Meese, ordering the office to close on March 21. The mission declined to obey what it considered an illegal order. In response to this flagrant violation of international law, indicating the refusal of the United States to enter into any arbitration with the UN as required by the headquarters agreement, the UN convened another special General Assembly session on March 22 and 23. With a vote of 148 to 2 (Israel and the United States), the General Assembly reaffirmed that a dispute

exists between the UN and the United States, that the arbitration required by the UN headquarters should promptly be implemented, that the United States should name its arbitrator to a tribunal as provided for in section 21 of the headquarters agreement.

Zuhdi Labib Terzi, chief PLO observer at the United Nations, addressed the General Assembly and challenged the United States to observe its treaty with the United Nations and to pursue a real peace in the Middle East. "What peace are you bringing to the Middle East by arming the Israelis with sophisticated weapons to eliminate the Palestinians, stifling the Palestinian voice in the United States, and throwing out the representative of that people from the United Nations?" he asked.

After the General Assembly made its position clear and while the World Court decision was still pending, Attorney General Meese went to Federal District Court to seek an injunction to order the mission to close and cease functioning. At the same time, 65 North American individuals and organizations also filed suit in Federal District Court to challenge the constitutionality of the Anti-Terrorism Act itself. Judge Palmieri, of the Southern District of New York, will hear both cases. Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, appearing for the PLO, has already challenged Meese's case with a motion to dismiss, arguing that the matter is currently under deliberation in the World Court and is a matter of international treaty between the United States and the United Nations. On April 26 the World Court ruled that the headquarters agreement was part of international law and thus took precedence over U.S. domestic law. Civil rights attorney

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## FOCUS ON ACTION

By Steve Goldfield

Once again, our office has been inundated with so many reports of actions and events supporting the Palestinian intifadeh (uprising) and protesting Israeli occupation and U.S. support for the occupation throughout the United States that this column can only report about a few of them. A number of speakers from the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel have been touring the United States, including Hashem Mohammed, the mayor of Um El Fahm; Tewfik Zayyad, mayor of Nazareth; lawyers Lea Tsemel and Felicia Langer; Marty Rosenbluth from Al-Haq in Ramallah; Rana Nashishibi from Bir Zeit University; and others.

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Important breakthroughs are occurring in the U.S. labor movement toward support for Palestinian rights. A number of local unions and regional bodies have passed resolutions against the occupation and calling for an end of U.S. support for it. Perhaps the most notable to date came from the Central Labor Council of Alameda County, California, which was also the first central labor council to oppose the war in Vietnam. The Alameda council, without opposition, passed a resolution which noted the brutal suppression of the Palestinian people's rebellion against repressive occupation and calling for a three-point policy to be adopted by the national AFL-CIO: "That the United States government, using its massive economic and military aid to Israel as leverage, 1. Pressure the government of Israel to immediately stop the killings and beatings of Palestinians in the occupied territories; 2. Pressure the government of Israel to end all of its occupation; 3. Give full support to the United Nations program for an international conference of all interested parties to guarantee Israel's security and to establish and protect a Palestinian homeland."

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Children leading national march on Washington for Palestinian rights, March 13th.

Photo: Mary Barrett

trespassing at the Israeli consulate in Houston, Texas, January 7, 1988. Neimann was acquitted after evidence showed that she had not entered the building, but her three codefendants Maggie Elestwani, Jean Foty, and Yolanda Garza Birdwell were sentenced to five days in county jail and \$500 fines each. The defense relied on the Nuremberg principles and First Amendment arguments. To contribute to defense costs, including an upcoming appeal, write to Women for Palestinian Justice, P. O. Box 6582, Houston, TX 77265.

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The case of the Los Angeles Eight, seven Palestinians and one Kenyan arrested and threatened with deportation because they were distributing pro-Palestinian literature, has been awaiting appeal for many months. In late April in Los Angeles, a Federal District Court judge agreed to hear a suit challenging parts of the McCarran-Walter Act on behalf of six of the defendants and other plaintiffs.

Another Palestinian, Faoud Rafeedie from Cleveland, was also threatened with deportation because of his political activities. In the Cleveland case, the Immigration and Naturalization Service wanted to deport without even a hearing but was over-ruled by the courts. For more information, write to Committee for Justice, P.O. Box 11367, Cleveland, OH 44111.

In a bizarre outgrowth of the L.A. case, Assistant Dean William J. Hill of the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley censored an announcement of a meeting at which defendant Khader Hamide and attorney Marc Van Der Hout discussed the case from the school's Boalt Bulletin Board newsletter. Hill insisted on deleting as "too editorial" references to Palestinians being deported "for their political beliefs" and to the U.S. government closure of PLO offices in New York and Washington. Perhaps Dean Hill needs a refresher course in constitutional law, focusing on the First Amendment.

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"The decision of the court will not silence us from petitioning the Israeli consulate, a government representative, to stop killing Palestinian men, women, and children," said Juanita Neimann, one of four American women, the "Women for Palestinian Justice," arrested for

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Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's March visit to the United States was met with protests around the country including in New York, Washington, and Los Angeles where he appeared. Five thousand rallied in Washington at an event, called by the Palestine Coordinating Committee and endorsed by a wide range of Palestinian rights and peace and nonintervention groups, ranging from the Palestine Solidarity Committee and American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee to CISPES and SANE/FREEZE.

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The Latino Task Force of the Palestine Solidarity Committee has just published the second issue of its Spanish-language *Noticiero Palestino*, a 24-page magazine with both translations from English and original articles in Spanish. *Noticiero* features exclusive interviews with Doctor Jumana Odeh and teacher Nadia Habash, both Palestinian women from the West Bank, and Alicia Partnoy, an Argentinian poet and writer who visited the West Bank and Gaza in February. Other articles include an editorial calling for an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, an article on the "Ship of Return," the common legacy of Chicanos and Palestinians, articles on Chile and solidarity with the Palestinian uprising in the United States, and a statement from the Latino community. Subscriptions to *Noticiero Palestino* are \$4 a year; checks should be made payable to *Palestine Focus*, P. O. Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127.

On a sad note, Ramon Hernandez from Austin, Texas, who traveled to the West Bank and Gaza with the 1987 Latino Task Force delegation and wrote about his trip for

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# Support for Palestinians Grows Around the Country

By Ginny Kraus

Federal Labs, Shame, Shame! No more tear gas in our name!" the crowd of 350 shouted marching through the snowy western Pennsylvania countryside to the gates of Federal Laboratories, Inc. in Saltsburg, 40 miles east of Pittsburgh. Federal Laboratories is the manufacturer of toxic CS tear gas used by the Israeli army against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Aroused by at least 42 Palestinian deaths and over 80 stillbirths (in Gaza alone in two months) attributable to Israel's use of the tear gas, the protestors presented the company with a statement calling for an immediate stop to shipments of the toxic gas to Israel in accordance with the U.S. Arms Export Control Act which forbids sale of weapons to countries that use them in violation of human rights. "They have a moral as well as legal obligation to stop the use of the toxic gas," said Todd May, a Pittsburgh peace activist with the ad hoc Committee to Stop Chemical Aggression against Palestinians (CS-CAP), as he and

twelve others chained themselves to the fence of the company to "express our solidarity with the victims of the tear gas."

"We're pretty far out in the country to have protests," said a local Saltsburg resident as the crowd passed her farm. "I never thought they'd find us." But the movement to support Palestinian rights is reaching out to every corner of the American political landscape.

The current uprising has brought about a marked and remarkable increase in activities in support of Palestinian rights. These include sit-ins at Israeli consulates in Houston, New York, San Francisco, and Chicago; demonstrations in Washington, D.C., Seattle, Albuquerque, and Youngstown, Ohio; caravans in San Francisco and Houston; delegations to the West Bank and Gaza of elected officials, doctors, lawyers, and community organizers; letters of protest and mailgrams to Congressional representatives; postcards to Israeli ministers; newspaper ads and statements from Jewish, Latino, trade union, legal, medical, religious, and peace communities, all protesting Israeli policies and calling for an end to the occupation.

This upsurge occurs in a period in which support for a Palestinian homeland and criticism of Israeli policies are more prevalent than ever before in the media. Public sympathy for the Palestinians is growing, even though it is an election year, and Jesse Jackson's genuine support for a Palestinian state and an international peace conference has injected the issue into the very center of the national debate.

While much more remains to be done, several activities which aim at building American support for Palestinian rights deserve to be highlighted. The Saltsburg demonstration is one example. Others include the battle for a Berkeley, California sister-city relationship with the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza and the mounting nationwide organizing for broad marches and rallies on June 4 in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Houston, and other cities to mark the 21st anniversary of the 1967 war when Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights.

The Saltsburg demonstration became a national focus because of the shocking number of deaths resulting from Israel's dangerous misuse of military CS gas. Father Bill O'Donnell, St. Joseph the Workman Church in Berkeley, came to the demonstration in Saltsburg with a tear gas cannister which had been fired directly at him and others as they spoke with Palestinians during a February 1988 delegation to the occupied territories. The cannister is marked with instructions which clearly state that it "must not be fired directly at persons as death or injury may result." The date and location of manufacture: "Saltsburg 1988."

Federal Laboratories' instruction manual specifies that the tear gas should not be shot into confined areas or

directly at crowds. The United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) has documented numerous incidents where the toxic gas has been fired into private homes, hospitals, mosques, schools, and directly at demonstrators. Just days before the demonstration, the New York Times reported the death of a 70-year-old woman asphyxiated when Israeli soldiers fired cannisters into her home.

Demonstrators came to Saltsburg from Pittsburgh, New Castle, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Youngstown



Demonstrators chain themselves to Federal Lab's fence to stop lethal tear gas shipment to Israel. From left: Youngstown, Ohio PSC Coordinator Sami Bahour, Berkeley City councilmember Maudelle Shirek, Father Bill O'Donnell, Chicago PSC coordinator Lynn Zippel and Pittsburgh peace activist Todd May. Photo: Palestine Focus/Steve Goldfield

and Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; and as far away as California at a park near Conemaugh Dam, about two miles from the factory, where a rally was held. Speakers included Sam Roy of the western Pennsylvania Jesse Jackson campaign, Jules Soble of the National Lawyers Guild, Hilton Obenzinger of the Palestine Solidarity Committee, and Barbara Lubin, former president of the Berkeley Board of Education. 76-year-old Berkeley City Councilmember Maudelle Shirek also spoke, saying that after she returned from her recent visit to the occupied territories, she would "go anywhere to protest the human-rights violations by Israel." Later Shirek, Father O'Donnell, and Lubin joined members of the Palestine Solidarity Committee national and local leadership and others in chaining themselves to the Federal Laboratories' gate in an act of civil disobedience. The demonstration was covered thoroughly by Pittsburgh and national media, and Federal Laboratories and its parent company, TransTechnology in Sherman Oaks, California, have since announced that they are considering suspending shipments. This campaign to stop U.S. support for Israeli repression is not abstract; it provides supporters of Palestinian rights a direct way to end the supply of lethal aid and raise all the political issues of our government's responsibility. [At presstime, TransTechnology agreed to stop selling tear gas to Israel for "the time being." Burl Alison, vice-president of TransTechnology says the decision was a result of the "tremendous pressure from Arab-American groups to end the sale." This is a significant victory. However, the pressure must be continued to make the ban to Israel permanent.]

## Berkeley/Jabalya—Sister Cities

Another attempt to build material support for Palestinians was the proposal for Berkeley's sister-city relationship with Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza. Jabalya, one of the largest refugee camps, is severely crowded, has no sewer system, one clinic, and only three doctors for its 63,000 residents. Its harsh conditions truly reveal the roots of much of the current uprising. "These people must know that we as a people care about them," declared Councilmember Maudelle Shirek as she offered the proposal to the council. "The appalling conditions of the camp are demeaning to humanity.... American people can start the process of understanding, of peace, and of change."

Enormous debate erupted as a result of the proposal, climaxing at a council meeting where a shouting crowd of 500 heatedly argued and demonstrated. Supporters of Israel argued that the proposal was "one-sided" and not "balanced." One opponent declared that "if you adopt this proposal, you throw a gauntlet in the face of Israel."

The expression of basic humanitarian support for Palestinians became a cause through which all the issues of the occupation were raised, with particularly sharp debate among the large Jewish population in Berkeley. "I am proud of those Jews, like my 71-year-old mother," said Dr. Marc Sapir, a former city medical officer, "who have realized the current Israeli government is a colonialist government."

At the end of the uproar, six members of the council voted against the proposal, with Nancy Skinner and Mary Wainright joining Maudelle Shirek in support. While many councilmembers expressed opposition to Israeli policies and even to the occupation, Mayor Loni Hancock (who had authored the ballot argument opposing Measure E, an earlier referendum in Berkeley on cutting off U.S. aid for occupation) and others declared the issue was too "divisive."

The uproar over Jabalya has shaken the progressive political community in Berkeley and set the stage for further local actions to express support for Palestinians. Arguments about the need to be "even-handed" were exposed as merely ways to shield Israel from criticism and to prevent material aid for the victims of Israeli policies. And the fact that the Jewish community itself was so divided exploded myths about unanimous Jewish support for Israeli repression.

Berkeley is still bubbling with the controversy, and a "notice of intention," the first step in placing an initiative on the ballot, on making Jabalya a sister city was filed with the city clerk on April 22. Organizers said, however, they might withdraw the initiative if the City Council passes a compromise resolution calling for "direct dialogue between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization" and a peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The controversy showed how many who consider themselves progressive remain inconsistent when the issue of Palestinian rights is raised. Still, the campaign is an example for others to follow in placing the Middle East crisis on the agenda in their local communities.

## June 4: End the Occupation

The upcoming National Day of Protest to End Israeli Occupation on June 4 draws together the broad opposition to Israeli occupation and U.S. complicity. The marches and rallies demand an end to the killing, beating, and other human-rights abuses against Palestinians; an end to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; and a stop to U.S. funding of the occupation. The demonstrations will also highlight the need for the United Nations international peace conference—which would include the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people—as the only means of obtaining a comprehensive settlement which can guarantee peace in the region. Demonstrators will also proclaim that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent Palestinian state, is the key to achieving lasting peace with justice.

The National Day of Protest was called by the Palestine Solidarity Committee and has been endorsed by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Arab-American Institute, Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Palestine Coordinating Committee, CISPES, SANE/Freeze Campaign, La Raza Legal Alliance, Chicanos Against Military Intervention in Latin America, African National Congress, SWAPO, Nicaragua Information Center, International Indian Treaty Council, Union of Palestinian Women's Associations, Guatemala News and Information Bureau and a whole range of other organizations and individuals in the peace and anti-intervention movement.

A program which emphasizes ending the occupation and the U.S. support for it can focus the energies of the movement for Palestinian rights. It sends a clear message to government leaders and articulates coordinated, vocal opposition to U.S. policies which enable Israel to continue its repression. It also places the issue of Palestinian rights squarely on the agenda of the broader peace movement in the United States, which, because of the influence of Israel's supporters, that movement has been reluctant to address in the past. As the horrors of Israeli brutality awaken American conscience and consciousness, more creative tactics to reach an even broader public, like the activities in Saltsburg, Berkeley, and nationally on June 4, will be developed to change the direction of U.S. foreign policy. •



By Naseer Aruri

The article which follows is adapted from a speech Naseer Aruri gave in New York in January. Naseer Aruri is professor of political science at Southeastern Massachusetts University.

In 1967, Israel had beaten Egypt, Syria, and Jordan on the battlefield. Since then, no one has denied Israel's qualitative military superiority over the Arab states combined. This superiority, however, has failed to constitute an effective military option against the West Bank towns of Nablus and Ramallah, the refugee camps of Dheisheh, Balata, Jabalia, and Al-Shati. In fact, the Arab defeat in 1967 reignited and refueled Palestinian nationalism. The Palestinian struggle, which spans three-quarters of this century re-emerged in 1967, and the very fact of its re-emergence represented an indictment of Arab armies and Arab diplomacy.

The past 20 years of struggle against the latest installment of the Israeli occupation in Palestine represent but one chapter—the most recent of a struggle which dates back to 1917. And the uprising of 1987 is but the latest phase of that chapter. So, before discussing this latest and current phase of the past 20-year struggle against the 1967 occupation, I must address two things: 1) the nature of the confrontation, the cleavages and the major areas of contention. What are the main issues over which the two communities have collided over the past two decades? 2) I would like to place the current phase of resistance in the proper historical perspective. What are the antecedents of this phase? Then I can proceed to look at the objective conditions, which produced this phase and discuss its salient features. What is new about this phase? How does it differ from previous phases of the 20-year chapter? What kind of leadership does it have, what kind of tactics does it use, and what is its likely impact on the occupation?

### Major Issues

One major issue is legal. The Israeli occupation of 1967 is distinguished by the fact that the occupier denies its very existence. Unlike all other occupations, which are governed by international law (mainly by the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949), this one is declared a nonoccupation. Yehuda Blum, an international lawyer who represented Israel at the United Nations in the late seventies, put forth a legal charade before the UN, but the prime minister, a former leader of the murderous group known as the Stern Gang, sees no need even to justify the occupation. He dismisses serious questions about why Israel occupies Palestinian territory flippantly with the word "Because!"

On the 20th anniversary of the 1967 occupation, when an Israeli correspondent (David Grossman) asked him about the effect of the occupation on Israeli society, he replied: "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know of any occupation by us....Whom are we occupying?"

Such contempt for reality was matched by contempt for morality when the Chief Sephardic Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu ruled that the person who shot and killed an Arab girl in Nablus was "not to be considered a murderer."

The second issue is political. Israel denies the political existence and national identity of the Palestinian people. It considers them as people living on sufferance—Arabs of Eretz Israel, an ethnic but not a national minority, but an ethnic minority nonetheless that is de facto not de jure a part of Israeli society. This minority is not entitled to a share in the allocation of power. The most Israel is willing to concede is autonomy based on the system in South

# A Perspective On Palestinian

African bantustans, not even that of the Basque region of Spain, i.e., on unequal division of functions. Under no conditions would the Israeli government (Likud or Labor) surrender sovereignty in part or in whole over the West Bank and Gaza. It would agree to sharing its military occupation with Jordan, but that is all.

The third issue is economic. The occupied territories provide Israel with cheap labor resources, water and land resources, tourism facilities, and a captive market. More than one hundred thousand workers cross into Israel daily to do menial work which Jewish citizens do not like to perform. Palestinians pick vegetables, carry cement, clean streets, and so on. They are an exploitable resource: lower wages, no benefits.

There are other economic aspects of the occupation. Control of the West Bank accounts for more than one-

internal refugees in crowded Gaza and the West Bank, the uprooted peasants in Galilee and the West Bank, the merchants and small manufacturers victimized by the occupation, the students and intellectuals under occupation, and the external refugees in Lebanon, who manned the infrastructure of a state-in-formation.

Israel's newest antagonists since 1967 were not seen in the world as mad people threatening to drive the Jews into the sea. They came to be recognized as the world's newest colonized people. Not unlike other colonized, such as the Mozambicans and Algerians, they offered the colonial master a way out: a coexistence based on the equal

protection of the law. It was enshrined in the 1968 Palestinian proposal of a democratic secular state. While Israel engaged in the politics of negation, by referring to the indigenous Palestinians as a "nonexistent" phenomenon or Arabs of Eretz Israel, the Palestinians engaged in affirmation. They did not reject a Jewish presence in Palestine but instead offered their antagonists coexistence and a vision of plurality.

The rise of the Palestinian resistance was the single most important factor that exposed Israel as a colonialist oppressor, its enterprise based on legal discrimination between Jews and non-Jews, not unlike legal apartheid.

The refugees in Gaza and Lebanon, the Palestinian workers inside the so-called Green Line, the demolished homes, the barbed wire, the interrogation centers, the military orders now numbered in four digits and enshrined in six volumes are a stark reminder of a bitter reality for Israel—the reality that many favorable assumptions about Israel as a democracy, a refuge, a land of freedom, a utopia for Jewish autoemancipation are being rendered superfluous by a community whose most effective weapon is civil disobedience. The more Israel endeavored to put forth a semblance of normalcy in occupied Palestine, the more did the Palestinians resolve to declare it abnormal. The signs of abnormality are stones and flags and burning tires and strikes, workers staying home, and shopkeepers keeping their doors shut. This Palestinian resistance, with its internal and external components, has not only challenged the basis of Israel's existence as a discriminating system, it has also created a national obsession with the Palestinian national movement.

The predominant conception of the state of Israel dictated a fight with Palestinian nationalism to the finish. There was no room for both. Hence, Israel's zero-sum solution had inevitably led to the war not only against Palestinian nationalism in Lebanon, but also against every single component, symbol, reminder, and embryo



Photo: New York Times

third of Israel's total water consumption. More than 55 percent of the land in the occupied territories has already been expropriated. Tourism provides Israel with \$1-1/2 billion each year.

In addition the occupied territories have provided the Israeli treasury with \$800 million. Former Jerusalem deputy mayor Meron Benvenisti calls this an "occupation tax." Much of this revenue collected from workers, generated from value-added taxes, and customs duties stays inside Israel. Taxes which Israel collects from Arab workers in Israel alone account for the entire budget of the occupied territories.

How did the Palestinians respond to the occupation in 1967? Suffice it to say that the rise of the Palestinian national movement in 1967 was a re-emergence, for which the Arab defeat served as an impetus. It did not come as a new departure for the Palestinians and it was more than a mere reawakening. On the positive side, it has assumed different forms of struggle: nonviolent resistance inside Palestine and a militant armed struggle outside, combined with diplomacy. It produced a new type of leadership and a new class base. The elite families who presided over the Arab Higher Committee were replaced by professionals and intelligentsia from the Palestinian mainstream. The new social backbone consisted of the

# Palestinians in Israel at a Crossroads

By Michal Schwartz

Michal Schwartz is editor-in-chief of the Israeli newspapers *Derekh Hanitzotz* (Hebrew) and *Tariq al-Sharara* (Arabic), which was closed by Israeli censors in January 1988 on the charge that it had links to a Palestinian organization. Schwartz was himself arrested in April and is being held incommunicado (even his attorney is forbidden contact) under administrative detention along with three other members of his editorial board. He wrote this article especially for *Palestine Focus*. It was written before the Day of the Land, March 30, 1988 when there was a general strike by Palestinians inside Israel and major demonstrations in several cities, including Nazareth and Sakhnin, where the Day of the Land started in 1976.

The uprising in the occupied territories shook the Palestinian scene in Israel. The pictures coming from Gaza left no one untouched. From Um al-Fahem, just half an hour away from the Jewish town of Hadera, one can see the smoke rising from the Arab villages around Jenin in the West Bank. Events are happening at too close a distance to leave the Arab citizens of Israel passive.

Since the coming of the National Unity government to power, a continuous struggle erupted between Palestinian representatives, mainly the Committee of the Arab Local Councils, and the government. Because they have no budgets, the municipalities and local councils have been completely paralyzed, pupils have had to learn in unfit rented rooms scattered at great distance from each other, there are no housing projects for young couples, and unemployment badly hurts workers, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians in Israel.

The humiliating attitude of the Israeli government toward the Palestinians in Israel led all the active bodies in the Arab community in Israel to announce the "Day of Equality" on June 24, 1987. The response to the general strike call was overwhelming, pointing out that the Arabs in Israel are perfectly aware of the discrimination against them and are ready to struggle for their rights.

Thus when the insurrection in the occupied territories erupted, the Palestinian population inside Israel was prepared to respond to the signals coming from the West Bank and Gaza.

The Israeli authorities understood that the uprising might, at least partially, spread from the occupied territories into Israel and reacted accordingly. Roni Miloh, who functions as a minister in charge of the Israeli Arabs, warned the Committee of the Heads of Arab Councils to refrain from doing anything and especially to refrain from a general strike.



# n The Current Uprising

of that nationalism in the West Bank, Gaza, and in Israel proper. Israel's war against Palestine has been waged against Arab mayors, students, electric companies, flags, research centers, and even Israeli dissidents such as Gideon Spiro, who protested a 5-year jail sentence in a prison for adults given to a 14-year-old Palestinian child. He is now facing a jail sentence himself and a fine for having "libeled" the so-called Court.

## Stages of Palestinian Resistance

The internal struggle against the 1967 occupation may be divided into three stages:

1. Israel's attempts to consolidate the occupation in the early 1970s triggered a nonviolent resistance in the West Bank, leading to the formation of the Palestine National Front on August 5, 1973. The PNF employed various means of nonviolent resistance ranging from setting up a legal defense fund for dissidents and landowners facing expropriation to organizing boycotts, strikes, and public rallies to protest the occupation. It struggled against the regime's effort to subordinate the Palestinian economy to Israel and encouraged businessmen not to pay taxes. When the crackdown finally came in April 1974, most of the PNF leaders landed in prison, while others were expelled across the Jordan River.

But the resistance continued with added inspiration derived from the October 1973 war, the Rabat summit conference in 1974, and Yasser Arafat's appearance at the United Nations. The resistance gained broad momentum when the nationalist bloc achieved a sweeping victory in the Israeli-sponsored municipal elections of 1976 in the occupied territories and when the Nazareth Democratic Front, led by Tewfiq Zayyad, ended a long reign of Arab "moderates" on the Nazareth City Council. Observance of the Day of the Land on March 30 became an annual Palestinian event not only in the Galilee, where ten thousand demonstrators from 32 Arab villages protested the killing of six Arabs by the police in 1976, but also in the West Bank, Gaza, and elsewhere. The resistance was further intensified by the Sadat visit to Jerusalem and the Camp David affair (1977-1979).

2. Resistance entered the second phase when it was reorganized under the umbrella of the National Guidance Committee, which followed in the footsteps of the banished PNF and impelled the Begin government to institute the "Iron Fist" policy, culminating in the ouster of all mayors elected in 1976 except Bethlehem's Elias Freij. By 1982, Palestinian nationalism had forced Israel to govern the West Bank and Gaza directly. Having dealt a crippling blow to the Hashemite establishment by rejecting its mayoral candidates in 1976 and having stood effectively against the quisling Village League which Israel tried to impose, the Palestine national movement put Israel in the position of having to run the local municipalities through its own army officers as part of the ill-named civil administration. Israel was willing to govern directly, but direct governance has failed to quell the resistance, particularly as every single Palestinian is seen by the occupier as suspect.

3. The ferocity of repression, together with changing

# ssroad

According to Miloh, the Arab public institutions should limit themselves to municipal matters and keep away from political issues. Yet Miloh's threats proved to no avail, and the leading bodies of the Palestinians inside Israel did declare a general strike in solidarity with their brothers in the occupied territories. From that moment, it became clear that the Palestinian population in Israel had decided to actively support the insurrection, i.e., it chose sides.

In Um al-Fahem, youth closed the road connecting Ila-deera and Afula; in Jaffa and Lydda, youth staged heated demonstrations, and in the Negev town of Rahat, youth built barricades. All these places, long forgotten by the Israeli authorities and considered to have lost their Palestinian identity, signaled their entry into the struggle.

As a result, Zionist leaders, from President Herzog and Defense Minister Rabin to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, issued racist statements, threatening to repeat the

economic and demographic realities and changes in the regional and international arenas have combined to produce the current phase of the resistance. The current uprising seems to involve a broad segment of the population and to have an overlapping leadership which cuts across age, sex, and social class. It combines the Islamic groups and secular elements. It is the most widespread, long-lasting, and bloodiest since 1967. The footage on American TV provides eloquent testimony to the fact that more and more young Palestinians are willing to sacrifice their lives in confronting Israeli soldiers.

The uprising of December 1987 has been brewing for several years, during which new and changing factors have accentuated the struggle. Three factors precipitated the uprising: the economic, the demographic, and the international.

The decline of the Arab oil economy during the past five years has given the Palestinians a new sense of realism about the future. The more the decline, the stronger the realization that the future was on the land and in the towns and cities of Palestine, not in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. The oil boom had siphoned off a significant sector of the high-level manpower in the occupied territories during the seventies. When that bubble finally burst, more and more graduates returned home and more new graduates stayed put. The majority of the annual four thousand university graduates either join a growing army of unemployed or go on to accept menial work for the Israelis.

Meanwhile, government expenditures for public service has deteriorated to \$158 per capita in the occupied territories, compared to \$1,350 in Israel. The rate of public consumption in the occupied territories is 13.7 percent of the rate in Israel. Also, Palestinian access to water and land has been threatened severely as 55 percent of the land in the West Bank has been expropriated and less than three thousand Jewish settlers sit on 30 percent of the land in Gaza.

At the demographic level, the Palestinians have come to realize their strength. Official Israeli statistics show that between 1968 and 1983, the annual rate of increase was 2 percent. Since 1983, it has been over 3 percent. This increase can be attributed to the decline in employment opportunities in the Gulf states: From 1975 to 1980, emigration to the Arab states averaged 17 per thousand; in 1981 it decreased to 9 per thousand; and in 1983 it decreased to 3 per thousand.

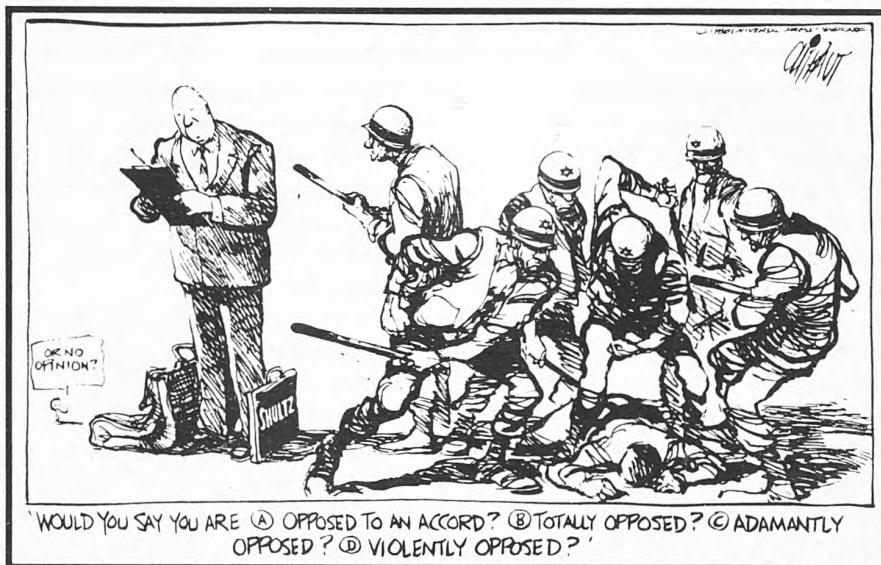
This combination of economic and demographic factors did not auger well for a stable occupation. A shrinking production, a stagnant GNP, and investments which came to a

standstill produced social conditions in the occupied territories which were further aggravated by the economic crises in Israel and the Arab countries. The sociopolitical significance of these economic and demographic developments cannot be underestimated in view of the revolutionary potential of a rising mass of unemployed in the ranks of the intelligentsia and those of the manual workers. To all this we must add that the population in the occupied territories is exceedingly young; a majority is under the age of 20. Of Gaza's population, 77 percent are under the age of 29.

At the regional and international levels, the Palestinians saw powerful forces trying to remove the Palestine question from the center of the stage. The question did not merit space on the agendas of the Reykjavik and Washington summits. It was hardly a primary item at the Arab summit of Amman, a meeting dictated by the Gulf war.

This uprising has certainly pulled the rug from beneath those who finally convinced themselves that the centrality of Palestinian question has vanished.

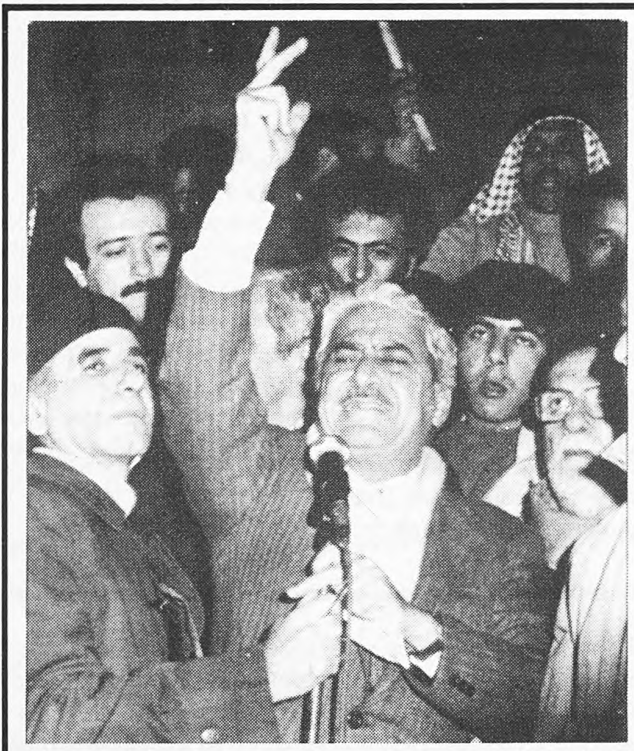
Moreover, the Palestinians in the occupied territories were undoubtedly influenced by the success of the national-ist Lebanese resistance. Israel's retreat from Lebanon was



the first of its kind. It gave a new generation of Palestinians, free of their parents' complex of defeat, hope and determination—determination not to accept subjugation.

The uprising has shown that the manner in which the Palestine/Israel question has been conceptualized in the West is flawed. Palestinian prospects were shown by that conceptualization as very gloomy, particularly as these prospects were analyzed in terms of conventional international relations with emphasis on governments and elites and with emphasis on rules of the game always defined by those who enjoyed a monopoly on the allocation of power. There was very little room in that kind of analysis for people's power.

What the Palestinians are expressing today—having stood against the Israeli army for four times longer than the Arab armies did in 1967—is people's power. They are expressing an unequivocal "No to the occupation," "No to subjugation," "No to apartheid," "No to colonization." "Yes to independence, to self-determination, to statehood." And "Yes to PLO representation." •



Tewfiq Zayyad, mayor of Nazareth and member of Knesset, one of the most outspoken representatives of Palestinians living in Israel. Photo: Jerusalem

1948 tragedy in which the Palestinian people were uprooted. In fact, they decided to implement the Iron Fist policy against the Palestinians in Israel, especially against the so-called "extremists." Extremists, in this official talk, are all those who regard the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories as an historic opportunity which should be used to reach an independent Palestinian state.

For the Palestinians inside Israel, the insurrection offers

an opportunity to fulfill their demands for complete civil and national equality through radically changing the Israeli society and the establishment of a new democratic regime.

Actually, the struggle against occupation is tightly connected with the possibility to end discrimination. Only ending the occupation can change Israeli priorities and thus free the necessary resources needed to end discrimination against the Palestinians in all walks of life.

All this has become part of a national consensus among Palestinians inside Israel, so much so that Knesset member Abdel Wahab Darawsheh announced his resignation from the Labor Party at a mass demonstration in Nazareth held in solidarity with the occupied territories. It is clear today to every Arab public figure that he will not be accepted by Palestinians in Israel if he remains tied to a government party. This position is, indeed, a great change from the situation prevailing during the last three years.

Therefore, it seems that Shamir's and Rabin's threats failed to check the wave of sympathy with the occupied territories. The administrative arrests of three activists from the Sons of the Village, the mass arrests after the Day of Peace, and the threats to close the *Tariq al-Sharara* newspaper, cannot prevent the Palestinians inside Israel from continuing their support of the Palestinian people and of the PLO as its sole legitimate representative. Hundreds of tons of food that were collected for the refugee camps and tens of meetings and demonstrations held in support of the uprising testify to their resolve.

The next general strike, which will inevitably occur, will prove the Palestinians in Israel are an important component in the struggle for self-determination of the Palestinian people and for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative. •



## Schultz Plan Fails...

Cont'd from Page 1

ernment and even provoked criticism of the Israeli government's position by thirty senators, Shultz's futile mission has underscored the continued intransigence of both the U.S. and Israeli governments—both major factions of the Israeli government—toward Palestinian national aspirations. And although Shultz talks about an international peace conference—an event of no substance that only precedes the same old bilateral negotiations symbolized by Camp David, the poverty of his position is answered by the genuine article, United Nations resolution 38/58c, which calls for an international peace conference to end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state and which recognizes that Palestinians are represented by the PLO.

The United Nations proposal represents an incredibly broad international consensus. The only parties isolated from that consensus are the United States and Israel. But UN resolution 38/58c deserves support not only because of its broad international backing, but because it addresses the questions of justice and lasting peace which are swept under the rug by Shultz. Shultz's objective is to confuse genuine supporters of an international peace conference by offering them the same old formula the United States and Israeli governments want in a new package.

Shultz offers the Palestinians continued occupation and continued military repression by Israel in the name of protecting its security. He does not offer security to the Palestinians, let alone democracy or fundamental human rights. He fears any and all manifestations of Palestinian national identity. In Shultz's plan, even more concessions were made to Shamir, stretching one year to three. Shultz maintains the position that Palestinians have no right to their chosen leaders, no right to a state. Palestinians are

expected to accept whatever Shultz offers, yet Israelis may reject everything.

Shultz makes the U.S. government's position quite clear. But what is the position of the people of the United States? Will we back politically and pay for a policy which denies national and human rights to the Palestinian people? Will we vote for elected officials who join in obstructing the road to peace or will we replace them with a president and members of Congress who will address the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people? That is the challenge the Palestinian uprising presents to us. Public opinion polls taken recently show that a majority favors negotiations with the PLO and an independent Palestinian state. Jesse Jackson's stunning successes in primary elections confirm the electorate's broad dissatisfaction with a range of U.S. government policies, including on the Middle East. These opinions must be converted into grassroots activities which pressure our government to opt for peace and justice for the Palestinians and for us all. •

## Israeli Peace Movement ...

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longer prepared to kill and be killed to satisfy Sharon's dreams. On a number of occasions in the past, we have witnessed the anger of reserve soldiers who have had to endanger themselves on behalf of settlers in Hebron and Ramallah. It is a reasonable assumption that, in the near future, with the decision to send reservists to the occupied territories, we will again see such opposition and anger among the soldiers who are supposed to "preserve order," to run after children, and to beat and to starve the population. There is no doubt that the growing activity of Yesh Gvul [There is a Limit/Border] will support and encourage this opposition.

Yesh Gvul is the "jewel in the crown" of protest movements against the occupation, in terms of its influence on Israeli society, its democratic way of organization, and its type of action. The movement arose during the Lebanon war and became the vanguard for draft resisters in Israel. It was a determining factor in the reserve units, in which the discussion of refusal had become daily conversation, in Israeli society as a whole, which was forced for the first time to deal with the question of the borders, and in the decision-making processes of the government and the army, who were forced to take into account among other considerations the extent of the refusal of reserve soldiers to carry out this or that military step.

The strength of Yesh Gvul lies in the fact that it is not based on a platform and does not see its role as advocating any particular political solution but rather in organizing active protest, drawing its strength from the common experience of all reserve soldiers. Yesh Gvul would not have received such a loud public response without the immediate protest of the refusers within the army units themselves.

Many other signs show that the recent oppressive policy is creating difficulties for the army leadership, which more and more recall the crisis during the Lebanon war. If a similar process develops now, we can foresee an extremely difficult period for the Israeli regime. Already, even before many reserve units have been sent

to the West Bank and Gaza, about 300 soldiers and officers have signed the Yesh Gvul petition stating that they will refuse to take part in putting down the revolt in the occupied territories; this includes some who did not refuse to take part in the Lebanon war.

In addition, since the outbreak of the revolt, dozens of additional signatures have been added to the petition of the high-school students who announced that they did not want to serve over the green line. The first of these to receive his draft papers did indeed refuse and was sentenced to detention. It would seem that the disquiet and confusion among high-school students facing conscription is growing in strength and, for the first time, is finding expression in protest activities. In February, students from twelve high schools in Jerusalem demonstrated opposite the prime minister's house. The students, including some facing conscription, out of personal choice, into operational units, demanded that the government change its policy in the occupied territories and make a political initiative to bring about negotiations and a solution on the basis of territorial compromise. They asked the government to "enable them to carry out their military service with a clean conscience and to prevent them from encountering the stick and the tear gas."

### First Signs of a Call for Civil Disobedience in Israel?

Beyond the semitradectional frameworks of the left and beyond the spectrum of new initiatives of various sectors of the public, there are the buds of a new line of thought which moves the focus of criticism to the daily collaboration of all citizens of Israel with what has been defined as "the consensus of occupation" or "the culture of occupation." A group of academics issued as far back as November the "Charter for a Struggle against the Occupation," which was given a great impetus by the uprising in the occupied territories. A group is now developing around the charter which calls itself "Against the Occupation—the 21st Year." Active commitment and financial

support have been demanded by the hundreds of signatories to the charter.

The authors of the charter call for a change of direction by opponents of the occupation. The "other way" of which they talk is "systematic long-term treatment of the consensus of occupation... We must become a bone in the throat, of the type that you can't vomit out, but neither can you swallow back into the consensus that enables the occupation. In the text of the charter they call for nonviolent opposition to the occupation and for refusal—not just refusal to serve in the occupied territories but for politics of refusal in every sphere of life, not just refusal to carry out patently illegal orders.... If Israel has abandoned the tentativeness of the situation of occupation, then refusal is legitimate, even if the orders are patently legal."

We can once again see that Israel is not united and that the consensus which was cracked by the 1973 war and shattered by

the Lebanon war is about to break open again. The principal factor which in the past gave impetus to this process was external: the Egyptian and Syrian armies in 1973 and the Lebanese-Palestinian resistance in 1982/3. Now, too, there is a sort of external factor, in the form of the uprising of the Palestinian masses. But, unlike the two earlier instances, the subject of the crisis is no longer an "external problem" as in Lebanon or Sinai, but the nature of the relations between the Israeli population, the Palestinian population, and the land of Palestine. It is a matter of the basic question of existence of the two peoples in the land. There are signs that the development of a mass awareness in Israel will sooner or later lead many to question the foundations of Israeli society, which a long time ago became a society of occupation, and its basic assumptions, which have until now been considered sacrosanct. •

## UN PLO Office ...

Cont'd from Page 2

Leonard Boudin is arguing the suit brought by the 65 plaintiffs and expects that arguments will be heard on the case by early June.

While the court cases are pending, the plaintiffs plan a broad strategy of public education and media work to focus attention on the danger to constitutional rights and civil liberties posed by the Anti-Terrorism Act. The plaintiffs include 18 churches and religious leaders (rabbis, bishops, and other clergy), 12 individuals (including actor Edward Asner and Congressman George Crockett), several academics, and 27 organizations, including the Palestine Solidarity Committee, American Friends Service Committee, and New Jewish Agenda.

In a press statement released on March 23, the plaintiffs explained the purpose of the lawsuit: "All the plaintiffs believe that the Grassley Bill and Attorney General Meese's subsequent action of seeking to close the Observer Mission of the PLO to the UN deny the American people at home and the world community at the UN the right to hear all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian controversy. They join in a common belief that it is for the American

people to decide what they should think and whom they should hear from on one of the most urgent and compelling public issues of our time, in which the United States plays a vital role. If a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to occur, an open public debate must be permitted; one side cannot simply be shut down."

As the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza continues into its sixth month, the United States continues its stubborn refusal to recognize that there will be no peace in the Middle East without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Secretary of State Shultz's refusal to meet with representatives of the PLO, coupled with Shamir's intransigence, seems designed to ensure that the PLO would be excluded from any negotiations.

It is precisely at this time when the uprising has focused world attention on the just demands of the Palestinian people and when the United States has reaffirmed its "special relationship" with Israel that pro-Palestinian voices must be strengthened rather than stifled. It is the responsibility of all concerned about peace and justice in the Middle East and about civil and constitutional rights in the United States to stop this assault on civil liberties and international law. •

## Jesse Jackson ...

Cont'd from Page 1

to an independent state and to be represented by their own representatives. After he was interviewed on "Face the Nation," Jackson told *Al-Hawadeth* magazine: "There can be no negotiations, finally, that the PLO is not involved in. There cannot be... No one else will represent the Palestinians. Jordan will not, cannot, Syria will not, cannot. No one else can represent them but the PLO." When asked by NBC's Gabe Press if there should be a Palestinian state, Jackson responded: "Absolutely."

The challenge for the peace movement is to activate

the millions who agree with Jackson and support Palestinian rights. We need to demand of our representatives: no more U.S. aid for Israeli occupation. We need to convert the six-to-one public opposition to increased aid to Israel into congressional action.

Israeli lawyer Lea Tsemel was recently asked how long Israel can maintain the occupation, considering that current estimates of the cost of the uprising to Israel are approximately \$2 billion. Tsemel answered tersely: "As long as you pay for it." There will certainly be moves to supply Israel with supplemental aid to shield its economy and its citizens from the disastrous effects of its policies.

As the polls indicate, growing public opinion opposes increasing U.S. aid to Israel. Jesse Jackson and his constituency are building a movement which can demand of our

elected representatives that they spend our taxes on fighting crack, homelessness, and unemployment rather than on occupation.

Jesse Jackson's electoral success refutes the long-held political assumption that support for Palestinian rights is a liability for any candidate. Jackson is getting support because his stance on the Palestinians is consistent with his overall positions in favor of peace and justice in the world and in the United States. Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition are important mobilizers of millions of Americans for fundamental shifts in U.S. policy. Whatever the results of the Democratic convention and the 1988 elections, peace and justice in the Middle East have been thrust into the center of political debate as never before. •



One of the results of the Palestinian uprising has been an unprecedented level of vocal dissent within the American Jewish community. Criticism has included cautious statements by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (reform), Woody Allen's now-famous expression of anguish over the Israeli policy of breaking bones in a *New York Times* op-ed piece, and Hassidic orthodox anti-Zionists of the Neturei Karta organization joining Palestinians in demonstrations against the occupation.

There has always been opposition to Israeli policies and to Zionism from at least some American Jews, but what is new is the amount of open criticism by many of the staunchest supporters of Israel (along with virulent attacks by others who still feel that any public criticism is a betrayal of both Israel and the Jewish people).

*Tikkun* magazine has positioned itself as a loyal but vehement critic of Israel. Edited by Michael Lerner, *Tikkun* views itself as "the liberal/progressive alternative to the 'neo-conservatives' who have dominated the American Jewish world," most notably *Commentary* magazine. Lerner has attacked the occupation, particularly the recent outrages, and believes that "those who are deeply troubled by Israeli policy are actually a majority of American Jews.... We did not survive the gas chambers of Europe to be the oppressors of Gaza," he wrote in a *San Francisco Chronicle* op-ed piece (March 30, 1988) in which he also called for a Palestinian state, albeit "a demilitarized state with Israel having treaty rights to supervise all of the borders of this state and prevent the introduction of weaponry."

Lerner's position will be inadequate for many, but he was able to attract the ire of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who condemned Lerner by name during Shamir's March visit to the United States. The fissures in the American Jewish community are making Israeli leaders nervous, and for good reason. Without monolithic and unquestioning loyalty to Israel on the part of American Jews, a valuable reservoir of support for unbridled Israeli expansionism and for massive U.S. aid is jeopardized.

Indeed, instead of appearances of unanimity, American Jews are arguing more and more with each other—and in public—such as at the March 13 Los Angeles rally called by supporters of Peace Now in Israel, which was heckled by members of the Jewish Defense League. National Organization of Women founder Betty Friedan, author

## GETTING IT ALL IN FOCUS

By Hilton Obenzinger

Irving Howe, and others spoke over the din, and actor Richard Dreyfuss cried out that "I want Jews to be righteous. I want them to be righteous in Tel Aviv and righteous in Gaza and righteous in the West Bank and righteous in their own gut.... If I do not speak out in this way, then I will be denying that which I truly believe is the most and best Jewish part of me."

Ads have appeared in newspapers by Friends of Peace Now and New Jewish Agenda condemning Israeli repression. One group, calling itself Jews Opposed to the Occupation, ran an ad in the *New York Times* in April signed by poet Adrienne Rich, Professors Cheryl Rubenberg, Noam Chomsky, Bluma Goldstein, Tod Gitlin, and Herbert Aptheker, Rabbi Susan Einbinder, Adam Hochschild, Abby Hoffman, Mark Rudd, and Jonathan Boyarin, among many others. The text condemns the current policies of "might, force and beatings," and calls upon the United States to endorse the United Nations proposal for an international peace conference, for which all member nations of the UN, with the exception of Israel and the United States, have voted. The ad also calls on the Israeli government "to cease its systematic violations of the human rights of the Palestinians" and calls upon the U.S. government "to end military, political and economic support for the Israeli occupation."

The statement is framed with the understanding that "the safety and security of both Israelis and Palestinians can only be obtained through negotiations which will ensure the secure existence of the state of Israel and guarantee self-determination for the Palestinians in an independent Palestinian state." If you are interested in adding your name to this ad, write to Jews Opposed to the Occupation, P.O. Box 5672, Berkeley, CA 94705.

One of the strongest Jewish ads against the occupation

appeared in the *Nation* and the *New York Review of Books*. Its headline read: "Time to Dissociate from Israel," and it was signed by such well-known intellectuals as Henry Schwarzchild of the American Civil Liberties Union, Rabbi Susan Einbinder, Profs. Yigal Arens, Seymour Melman, and Noam Chomsky, *Israeli Foreign Affairs* publisher Jane Hunter, and Jeremy Levin, former hostage in Lebanon.

"We are Americans and Jews and we come together at this time publicly to express our strong desire to see the United States take meaningful steps to dissociate our country from the policies of Israel," the ad began. After recounting the human rights abuses by Israel, the text exclaims, "How tragic that in our own time the very state established by Jews in the aftermath of [the Holocaust] has become a place where racialism, religious discrimination, militarism, and injustice prevail; and that Israel itself has become a pariah state within the world community." Commenting on such events as the Pollard spy case and Israel's involvement in Iran-contra, the text explains that "the close identification in the public mind between Israel and Jews—an equation vigorously fostered by both the Zionist movement and the American Jewish lobby, which has come under its control—threatens to stigmatize Jews everywhere."

Noting that Israel can only continue its occupation and conduct its militarist policies because of U.S. aid, the signers "believe the time has come to normalize the U.S. relationship with Israel. A complete re-evaluation of what has become since 1967 the American sponsorship of Israel is required. The unprecedented amounts of economic aid should be cut back...."

"The citizens of Israel, of course, will ultimately choose their own country's destiny. But at the very least the citizens of the United States should stop financing and supporting policies that are contrary to the principles and values we hold precious as Americans and as Jews." Additional signatories to this ad are being sought. Write to: Statement, P.O. Box 18367, Washington, D.C., 20036.

As you can tell from this brief sampling, Jewish criticisms of Israel are diverse but share a common revulsion toward current repressive policies. Whether the criticisms are from Zionist or anti-Zionist perspectives, the fact remains that Yitzhak Shamir has to curse even louder at all the Michael Lerner's. The fact is, American Jews have just begun to write their declaration of independence. •

### North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

June 29-July 1, 1988  
United Nations Headquarters

New York Panel on the uprising; workshops on overcoming obstacles and organizing in North America

For more information:  
Division for Palestinian Rights  
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PALESTINE FOCUS (415) 861-1552 P.O. Box 27462 San Francisco, CA 94127

*Palestine Focus* is the national newspaper of the Palestine Solidarity Committee (formerly November 29th Committee for Palestine). The newspaper is an activist vehicle tied to an activist movement, yet aimed at a general audience with little background knowledge. We report on activities, not only of our Committee, but of other groups; and we provide consistent commentary and analysis of events in the Middle East.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee's task is to spark and support consistent, far-reaching, and effective activity which brings the issue of Palestine before the American people and builds a growing and deepening base of understanding. Our Committee organizes to stop U.S. intervention in the Middle East and to cut off U.S. aid to Israel. We educate Americans on the need to support the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to oppose Israeli policies of discrimination which deny the Palestinian people their rights.

Signed articles are not necessarily the opinion of the Palestine Solidarity Committee. Letters, opinions, and other contributions are welcome.

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**Contributing Editors:** Jeanne Butterfield and John Masterson.

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### FOCUS ON ACTION ...

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*Palestine Focus*, recently fell victim to AIDS. We join with many in mourning the loss of a dedicated activist.



National march on Washington for Palestinian rights, March 13th. Photo: F.G. Samia

\*\*\*\*\*  
Mohamed Ahmed Younis is a Palestinian with joint U.S. and Israeli citizenship. After living in the United States for 16 years, he returned for a visit in December 1987 when he was arrested at a friend's house by Israeli soldiers, dragged to a nearby highway, and accused of blocking traffic for political ends. He was severely beaten and held for ten days without medical attention. In March he was sentenced to 18 months in prison for blocking a highway, resisting arrest, and attempting to provoke a demonstration. The U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv claims it is unable (or unwilling) to help because of Younis' dual nationality. For more information or to offer assistance, write to Joseph Mutti, P. O. Box 1623, Soquel, CA 95073. •

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The awakening of wide circles of Israeli society, who had previously not been willing to demonstrate, to sign petitions, and to organize various committees against the occupation, confirms a simple human characteristic, which is realized at all times and everywhere in the world: A people is not willing to work toward a change in its situation unless it is forced to pay too high a price for this situation; only then does it start to think of alternatives and change. It was neither abstract political thought nor high ethical considerations which led the Americans to demand the return of the troops from Lebanon, but the coffins, and the angry letters from the soldiers at the front. This is also what happened for Israel during the Lebanon war: a few hundred Israeli deaths were necessary before the protest movement became a mass demand for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese soil.

The price refers not just to the casualties, but also to the feeling of insecurity, to international pressures, to the economic cost, to the effect on the national morale and the self-image of the occupier: these are all different factors in changing the public consciousness toward the occupation and the war, and it is these, not altruistic emotions or considerations of political logic, which lead to the appearance of a solidarity movement with the occupied people.

This fundamental truth has been proved once again by the current uprising in the refugee camps, villages, and towns of the West Bank and Gaza; the sticks and stones of the youths of Balata and Jabalia, Salfit and Beit Ur a Tahta, Jenin and Khan Yunis have led to the reawakening of a movement of protest and solidarity among the Israeli population, which been almost sleeping since the end of the Lebanon war.

### The Role of the Left

The Lebanon War proved that the left has a decisive role in the appearance of a mass protest movement against government policy. It served then, and can again serve, as a vanguard and catalyst for a wider organization. The condition for success in this task is the ability of all the left organizations to overcome the differences of opinion between them and to create a united axis and a credible address for the many hundreds of potential activists who are interested in working against the occupation but are not willing to tail along behind this or that party. Such was the case with the Committee for Solidarity with Bir Zeit University and later with the Committee Against the War in Lebanon.

In Jerusalem and Tel Aviv a Stop the Occupation coalition was formed to call for an end to the occupation and for a political solution through the establishment of a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel, as a result of an international conference. In Haifa and Tel Aviv, a Down with the Occupation coalition called for an unconditional end to the occupation, without linking this demand to any specific political solution. Down with the Occupation also adopted the fourteen demands of the national leadership in the occupied territories, for democratic rights in various spheres of life including the right to self-determination. Both coalitions initiated many activities. In Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, there are regular pickets, such as the "Women in Black," who stand every Friday in Paris Square in Jerusalem, in the manner of the "Mujeres de la Plaza de Mayo" in Argentina, and the picket in front of the prime minister's house every afternoon. Protest leaflets are frequently handed out at schools, cinemas, and other places.

# Inside the Israeli Peace Movement

By M. G.

This article was originally published in *News From Within*, the newsletter of the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem in its March 14, 1988 issue signed with the initials M. G. The article has been edited for length and readability.



Israelis demonstrating in Tel Aviv for peace.

Photo: Agence France-Press

### Relief Operations to the Refugee Camps

The organization of assistance to the refugee camps started spontaneously in Palestinian villages in Galilee and the Triangle. Within a few weeks, popular committees had been organized in dozens of Palestinian communities, which collected money for the camps. The Israeli protest movements, too, mobilized to aid the camp residents. As a result of a mobilization by Down with the Occupation and a number of more moderate groups on a purely humanitarian basis, the first convoy set out for the refugee camps in Gaza on 19 January and received widespread media coverage, a fact which gave a political content to a basically humanitarian operation.

Down with the Occupation felt the operation was important for two reasons: many, mainly moderate people mobilized personally against government policy and in support of the Palestinian people and a direct link was made between the solidarity movements and the refugee camps and their representatives. This aid cannot really relieve the misery of the residents of the refugee camps struggling against the authorities' policy of starvation. Its importance is primarily in alerting public opinion, in Israel and the world, and in activating hundreds of people and bringing them face to face with the realities of the occupation and with the residents of the camps. Stop the Occupation also collected food and money, but preferred to transfer them to the camps discreetly via UNRWA [United Nations body responsible for refugees] at UNRWA's request.

These activities are important not only because they express unambiguous oppo-

sition to the occupation and the demand for a total withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. Their importance is also in the fact that they encourage larger forces, which in the course of things wake up more slowly and on the basis of less far-reaching demands. Peace Now is the main focus for these forces.

### The Awakening of Peace Now

Exactly as in the Lebanon War, it took some time until Peace Now understood that the time had come to mobilize and protest. This realization was, in part, due to the activities of the left, which mobilized more and more activists while Peace Now supporters waited in vain for any initiative from their leaders.

The first two activities of Peace Now, in Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv, attracted only a few thousand people, a tiny number in comparison to the tens of thousands that Peace Now is capable of bringing into the streets. But what these demonstrations, particularly that in Jerusalem on 26 December, showed was that many people were angry at the government policy and also at the lack of any protest against this policy. It was, therefore, decided to organize a big demonstration against the occupation in Tel Aviv on 23 January. About 35,000 people took part in this demonstration and later about 8,000 in a demonstration in Jerusalem. These protests suggest that the protest is moving from the left to the center of the political map, deep into the ranks of the Labor Party and the kibbutz movement.

It is true that the call to the demonstration and the speeches made on the platform expressed much concern for the

Israeli army, about its operational capability and its moral strength (!) and that there were only a few who demanded the realization of the Palestinian right to self-determination or declared their recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. In this sense the Peace Now demonstration was in no way an expression of solidarity with the occupied Palestinian population, but rather of concern for the interests of the Israeli public.

But such is precisely the strength of its underlying meaning: the call for evacuation of the occupied territories based on an identification with the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people cannot gain the support of more than a few thousands: the wider Israeli public—whose aspirations Peace Now expresses—respond and will respond in the future to the cost which it is forced to pay for the occupation. In this sense, the slogans of Peace Now may anger, with justice, the Palestinian people and the Israeli left. However, they express more than anything else the sentiments of the masses in Israel, and many of the Israeli protest movement believe that they should pay attention to them and thus attempt to advance the hundreds of thousands of people who have not yet cut themselves off from the national consensus but have started to understand that the occupation is a tragedy and that it should be ended quickly.

### Yesh Gvul and the Cracks within the Army

The front line of the war against the Palestinian population is the army, which also constitutes the heart of the occupation regime and an important element of Israeli society. Every crisis in Israeli society necessarily also finds expression in the army and particularly in the ranks of the reserve units.

The first response of the soldiers to the bravery and energy of the demonstrators in the West Bank and Gaza was a great anger. They felt humiliated and offended by women, youths of their own age, and small children. Many soldiers gave vent to this frustration in acts of cruelty against the population while carrying out instructions they received from Minister of Defense Rabin and Chief of Staff Shomron. However, opposing voices very soon began to be heard, as well as various expressions of revulsion at carrying out the "striking fist" instructions of Rabin. The Israeli press is full of reports from soldiers and officers voicing their opposition to the dirty task imposed on them, and their shame at carrying it out. In *Hadashot* there was even a report of blows between soldiers acting brutally and other soldiers who attempted to prevent them from torturing prisoners.

From more "professional" and less humanitarian considerations, senior officers are also coming out against the "striking fist" policy and against the placing of regular battle units in the occupied territories with the claim that these tasks do not suit the nature and purpose of battle units and sabotage their ability to train against regular armies. In addition, hundreds of psychologists published a petition in which they warned the leaders of the state against the implications for IDF soldiers and their spiritual health of allowing them the unrestrained use of violence.

There is no doubt that, sooner or later, the heads of the army will have to replace the regular units with reserve units, and then they can expect far more serious problems. Among the young soldiers, the contradictions felt by the society as a whole are weakened as a result of the discipline characterising a regular army and the pressures of a closed military culture; but such contradictions are strengthened among the reservists.

The mass opposition to the Lebanon war began when the reserve units were no

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