

Palestine Focus

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September-October 1988

Editorial:

50¢

U.S. Aid to Israel and the Elections

In 1988, challenging U.S. aid to Israel is no longer like tilting at windmills. Not only has the U.S. relationship to Israel and Palestinian rights been debated at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, in several state Democratic conventions, and by numerous trade unions, but public-opinion polls demonstrate significant opposition to further increases in aid to Israel. A March Gallup poll, for example, found that 41 percent advocated decreasing U.S. aid to Israel, while only 7 percent were in favor of an increase.

Over the years, U.S. aid to Israel has grown steadily until it now surpasses \$3 billion a year. About 60 percent of that amount is military aid; the remainder is so-called economic aid, which flows directly into the Israeli treasury without restrictions or oversight. Although officially Israel is barred from using aid funds in the West Bank and Gaza, no mechanisms are in place to prevent juggling the books. During the Palestinian uprising, important provisions of aid have flowed to Israel, contradicting occasional U.S. government statements criticizing Israeli practices in quelling the uprising.

Nevertheless, Israel's loyal supporters in Congress are mounting yet another campaign to renew existing levels of aid, to continue to pay for repressing the Palestinian uprising with U.S. tax dollars. The consequences are dire: U.S. funds are financing expulsions—even as the U.S. government declares them illegal under international law—lethal use of U.S.-supplied tear gas, the maintenance of the Ansar 3 (Ketziot) detention camp in the Negev, and many other human-rights abuses.

The continued flow of U.S. aid during the uprising exposes the real

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Palestinian children on the streets of Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza, displaying victory signs on the first day after a four-day, total, shoot-on-sight curfew imposed by the Israeli military.

Photo: Adam Kufeld

Firsthand Report:

Palestinian Rights in the Electoral Arena

By Hilton Obenzinger

I. The Democratic Convention

When Dr. James Zogby, director of the Arab-American Institute, and Rep. Mervyn Dymally mounted the speaker's platform at the 1988 Democratic National Convention to defend the minority Middle East plank, U.S. politics took a qualitative leap. From then on, the debate on Palestinian rights would be a legitimate item on the agenda. No longer could unqualified support for Israel remain the boundary for any debate, while support for Palestinian self-determination was pushed to the fringes of the political universe.

"We've won a victory today," Zogby said, speaking for millions of voters. "The deadly silence that has for so long submerged the issue of Palestinian rights has been shattered.... The violation of [Palestinian] human rights, the killings and beatings, and the agonizing expulsions, the daily humiliations of being a people without a state, without a home of their own. Today we address them, and we say to them that our party is open to their concern.... Because we discuss ignored principles and because we discuss forgotten people, we've a victory today."

The minority plank, while taking as

"This is history. Reverend Jesse Jackson and his call for peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians are being heard."

— Mervyn Dymally

its starting point the Democratic Party's historic support for Israel, broke new ground by calling for a change in U.S. foreign policy to recognize the legitimate human and national rights of the Palestinians. Zogby criticized the majority plank for "focusing on the failed policy of the Camp David accords. Camp David did not work because it failed to recognize the Palestinian right of self-determination, the right to be represented by the leadership of their choosing, the right to freedom, to independence, to statehood." On the other hand, the minority plank advocated that "Israeli peace and security and Palestinian peace and security are interdependent" and sought to project "the principles of peace, mutual recognition, territorial compromise, and self-determination."

Congressman Mervyn Dymally of California supported Zogby's passionate appeal, describing how "I have seen at first hand the pain of an oppressive occupation. I visited Gaza and the West Bank, and I spoke with the young people there, people who were born under occupation in camps, and now they're asking to be free. I returned to the United States committed to find the way to bring peace for both Israelis and

Palestinians." Praising the debate, Dymally said, "In many ways this is history. It means that Reverend Jesse Jackson and his call for peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians are being heard."

As Zogby and Dymally spoke, a huge banner calling for "self-determination and statehood for the Palestinian people" was unfurled, along with placards calling for Middle East peace. On the convention floor of one of the most pro-Israel parties in the world, there was a demonstration for Palestinian statehood!

Although Zogby and Dymally chose to take the "high ground" of political debate, the speakers for the majority plank distinguished

themselves by their rabid, demagogic style. Senator Daniel Inouye (Hawaii) said that the minority plank would be a "vicious kick in the teeth of America's interests in that part of the world."

Rep. Charles Schumer (New York), with even greater fervor, denounced the proposal as "duplicitous" and blamed Arab "intransigence" and "PLO bombs" for the lack of peace. "The minority plank does not have the votes, and that is why we're not voting on it today." At that point, boos erupted from the convention floor, cutting Schumer off. House Speaker Wright had to gavel the convention back to order, reminding delegates that Schumer was "a member of our party."

Perhaps it was not only that so many rank-and-file Democrats supported the minority plank, but that Schumer and Inouye took the debate to such a vicious level that offended delegates' sense of fair

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King Hussein Cuts Ties to West Bank

Jordan is Jordan, and Palestine is Palestine," said one of King Hussein's closest aides. "We do not consider West Bankers any longer Jordanians." Hussein's announcement on July 31 that he is severing Jordan's claims over the Israeli-occupied West Bank marks a victory for the intifada. In fact, the king's act, which was intended to undermine the intifada and the PLO, provides an opportunity for Palestinians to consolidate and extend the political gains they have recorded since the uprising began last December. In spite of all the king's many maneuvers to maintain control over various administrative and legal institutions in the occupied territories—a legacy from his grandfather, King Abdullah—he has plainly failed. Only the PLO can represent the Palestinian people. The Palestinians have made one thing very clear: they will not accept occupation by Israel or Jordan.

The king's decision did not allow for any transitional period and came with no warning to the Palestinian leadership. But given the recent gains made by the Palestinian uprising, now almost one year old, it is not likely that the Palestinians will ask the king to reconsider his decision. On the contrary, the PLO has assumed the responsibility of paying salaries cut off by Jordan. Under the stewardship of the Unified National Leadership of the uprising, a new infrastructure is being built inside the occupied territories. Hussein's moves have only speeded the process toward genuine Palestinian independence.

At the same time, Hussein's disengagement has challenged the PLO leadership to respond and has sharpened a debate over whether to declare a government in exile, whether to issue a declaration of independence, and other proposals which will be taken up at an upcoming Pales-

Only the PLO can represent Palestinians.

tine National Council meeting.

The official Israeli response has been continued rejection of any recognition of Palestinian rights. Since the announcement of the king's decision, Israeli repression of Palestinians in the occupied territories has increased. Israel's iron fist is even more tightly clenched, resulting in more house demolitions, curfews, mass arrests, expulsions, and killings. While the responses of the different factions in the Israeli government seemed to vary slightly, it is clear that Israel is at a roadblock, not being able to carry out their plan of negotiating with Jordan and Palestinians selected by Israel and Jordan, rather than those Palestinians who genuinely represent the Palestinian people.

Historically, Hussein has attempted to undermine the role of the PLO. In 1974, at the Arab summit in Rabat, Morocco, the PLO was confirmed as the sole representa-

tive of the Palestinian people over the king's bitter opposition. Hussein responded by dissolving the lower house of the Jordanian parliament. Until Hussein's latest announcement, half the members of the lower house were Palestinians, appointed by the king himself and symbolically responsible to oversee the occupied territories. That attempt by the king to impose himself as the representative of the Palestinian people failed. In both instances—the recognition of the PLO at the Rabat summit and the gains of the intifada—Hussein's reaction has been symbolic. His announcement of disengagement is more of the same.

Hussein's announcement also throws a wrench into the U.S. plan to negotiate with the Jordanian regime instead of with the PLO. The United States government currently has no constructive proposals for resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict; all the United States can offer is rejection of the PLO as a negotiating partner and rejection of any possibility of a Palestinian state.

In these circumstances, there is also an important challenge to the international peace movement, particularly those of us in the United States. We are challenged to mobilize opposition to the U.S. government stance, to mobilize support for the PLO and for an independent Palestinian state.

It is not our role to provide "advice" to the PLO on its negotiating posture; our appropriate role is to support the Palestinian people and provide real advice to our own government. Those who make demands on the PLO, who pressure the PLO to make concessions, only provide a smokescreen for Israeli and U.S. intransigence and rejection of the only reasonable path towards peace. □

FOCUS ON ACTION

By Steve Goldfield

An international campaign has been launched to close Ansar 3 detention camp at Ketzioth in the Negev Desert at the request of the detainees. The camp houses thousands of Palestinians held in extreme daytime heat and night cold under brutal treatment by Israeli guards. Few prisoners have been charged or convicted, and most have been brought from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention. The Palestine Solidarity Committee is sending postcards to Congressman Gus Yatron, chair of the House Subcommittee on Human Rights, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 with the following message: "Congressman Yatron: I urge you to pressure the Israeli government to immediately close Ketzioth Prison and to call for hearings on Israeli human-rights violations. U.S. funding of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza must stop." Copies are also being sent to Israeli authorities.

The New York chapter of the PSC held an emergency picket to protest Israeli treatment of prisoners and call for the closure of Ansar 3 on September 1. The picket was timed to coincide with demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza called in communiqué no. 24 of the Unified National Leadership (UNL) of the intifada. The UNL called for more demonstrations to protest prison conditions and to demand the closure of Ansar 3 on September 26, and national activities were planned across the United States at presstime.

Five members of a PSC fact-finding delegation to the West Bank and Gaza and a Palestinian-American had their U.S. passports confiscated by Israeli soldiers in Ramallah on September 18. The six were observing a peaceful march by about fifty Palestinian women when several truckloads of troops blocked the street, seized some of the women, and began firing tear gas and rubber bullets, all without any provocation whatsoever.

Israeli authorities told the six that their passports would be returned only if they submitted to interrogation, even though they were not charged with any offense. The six

ISRAEL PUTTING OUR TAX \$\$\$ TO WORK!!



Photo credit: George Azar

- * Since December 1987, Israel has spent \$132 million per month to crush the Palestinian Uprising.
- * William Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, stated that Israel is guilty of "clear violations of human rights."
- * Annually, American taxpayers give Israel \$3 billion in economic and military aid. This amounts to nearly \$10 million per day.

ONLY CONGRESS
CAN STOP THIS MADNESS!

PLEASE "JUST SAY NO" TO UNCONDITIONAL AID TO ISRAEL

Postcard the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is using to protest unconditional U.S. aid to Israel. Postcards are being sent to Rep. Gus Yatron, chair of the House Subcommittee on Human Rights, and to congressmen and senators. For more information about ADC's postcard campaign, call (202) 244-2990, or write to 4201 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008.

stated that they would refuse interrogation and retained Israeli lawyer Lea Tsemel and U.S. lawyer William Kunstler to represent them.

In the end, Israel backed down and returned the passports without any interrogation. However, Israeli authorities circulated a fabricated story that the six had participated in an "illegal demonstration" and were deported. The clear intent was to intimidate other U.S. citizens from traveling to the West Bank and Gaza to see how our tax dollars are used to finance the occupation.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who work for Palestinian rights around the world met in Geneva in late August. The meeting called for simultaneous international activities to mark the first anniversary of the intifada on December 8 and 9. In addition the NGO declaration called on all governments to declare that their bilateral relations with Israel would be influenced by continued human-rights violations. It called on the United Nations to intercede to ensure the physical and legal protection of the Palestinian population living under Israeli occupation and urged the

UN to send in observer teams. The declaration demanded Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon. The NGOs announced their support for Israeli peace forces, many of whom attended the meeting, and condemned Israeli actions against journalists and those who meet with the PLO. The declaration expressed concern for the medical and health conditions in the West Bank and Gaza, and called for a peace march from Europe to Palestine in conjunction with a renewed Ship of Return carrying Palestinians home. The NGOs also recognized the importance of increased coordination and cooperation.

In that light, we note the important work of the international coordinating committee for NGOs, the ICCP, which has published a background paper on Palestinian trade unions, a book on the first 100 days of the intifada, three issues of a newsletter on the uprising entitled *Children of Stones*, and a special newsletter on prisoners. For information on how to get these and future publications, write ICCP, P. O. Box 127, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

National Chair Jeanne Butterfield and National Director Ginny Kraus represented the Palestine Solidarity Committee at the conference. □

Ansar 3: The Camp of Slow Death

By Issam

Issam is a Palestinian legal worker in the West Bank.

Deep in the Negev desert, a few miles from the Egyptian border, stands one of the most notorious detention centers yet created by Israeli military authorities. It is located in an area inhabited only by snakes, lizards, and scorpions and with hellish heat often exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and dropping below freezing at night. The Israelis call the camp Ketziot, but as is often the case, the Israeli name is not the only name used for the place. For Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, it is the Ansar 3 prison camp.

Palestinians call the camp Ansar 3 because of its similarities with the Ansar camp the Israelis opened to hold arrested Palestinians and Lebanese during the invasion of Lebanon. Palestinians in Ansar 3 have also given it another name—"camp of slow death"—because of the "organized violence, terrorism, and humiliation, leading us to a slow death," as they described it in a letter written on toilet paper and smuggled out of the camp last May.

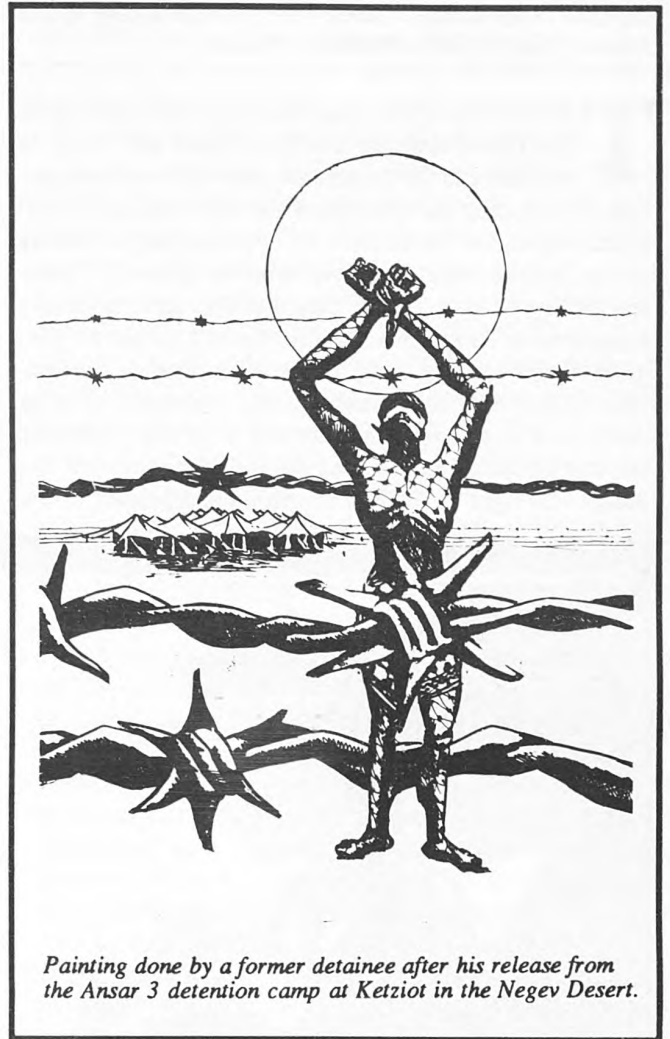
Human-rights organizations, along with international legal associations, argue that this detention center is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which clearly prohibits the transfer of detainees out of occupied territories. The West Bank-based human-rights organization Al-Haq (Law in the Service of Man, West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists) issued a bulletin last May calling for the closure of the camp of slow death on the basis of Article 76 of the con-

Israeli soldier to arrest and imprison any person without a warrant for 18 days for any reason. This military order has been widely applied during the uprising and used to conduct mass arrests of Palestinians. Many detainees are kept in prison after serving the initial 18 days.

Briefing Paper no. 12 published by Al-Haq states "the majority of Palestinians who have been arrested during the uprising have been either picked up off the street by soldiers or settlers, arrested from their homes in the middle of the night by army forces in large numbers, or summoned to military government buildings for questioning and been arrested." Al-Haq also notes that "due to the wide range of powers granted to Israeli soldiers, arrest is often arbitrary." It is safe to say that most of the detainees in Ansar 3 have, in fact, been arbitrarily arrested.

In addition to granting powers of arrest to a broader range of military personnel, the new regulations canceled the quasi-judicial review process that had previously been in effect. The elimination of this semblance of "due process" was undoubtedly meant to allow army authorities to arrest as many Palestinians as possible without the hindrance of judicial formality.

The minimal level of judicial review in Israeli military courts is described by Naila Hateia, a lawyer who represents more than 120 prisoners in Ansar 3: "Each trial lasts for 7-20 minutes, and its pattern is always the same—the prosecutor looks at the files and says that they contain secret information." The prisoner and his lawyer are not allowed to see the contents of the files. Naila concludes that administrative detention in Ansar 3 amounts to a form of torture.



Painting done by a former detainee after his release from the Ansar 3 detention camp at Ketziot in the Negev Desert.

The serious human-rights violations and intense human suffering require the Camp of Slow Death be closed once and for all.

vention. Article 76 asserts that captives shall be "detained in the occupied country, and if convicted, they shall serve their sentences therein."

Administrative Detention

Ansar 3 was opened three months after the uprising began. According to Israeli authorities, the desert camp has a capacity of over four thousand detainees. Reports from several sources all agree that more than three thousand detainees are currently incarcerated in Ansar 3. Prisoners range in age from 16 to 60 and come from all sectors of Palestinian society: journalists, students, merchants, university lecturers, workers, farmers, intellectuals, and community leaders. They were arrested because of their political beliefs or often solely because of their national identity.

During the intifada the Israeli army is using administrative detention on a much larger scale than ever before. The Israeli law of administrative detention enables the military to detain anyone for six months or longer. Detainees in Ansar 3 have been imprisoned without trial and without formal charges filed against them.

The law of administrative detention is a carryover from the Emergency Regulations introduced and enforced by the British during their Mandate in Palestine. Even though the Emergency Regulations were officially canceled when the Mandate ended, they were revived—contrary to international law—and stiffened within days following Israel's occupation in 1967.

Under the administrative detention law, the military commander of the West Bank or Gaza or the Israeli defense minister has the right to sentence any resident to a six-month detention period without filing formal charges or informing the detainee of charges, if any. The administrative detention order is renewable, meaning that the detainee can be held indefinitely as long as the occupation continues. In an extreme case, one Palestinian was detained for over seven years.

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, administrative detention may be employed only during the first year of occupation. The massive detentions in the current uprising occur after 21 years of Israeli occupation.

Three months into the uprising, the Israeli military authorities issued new regulations concerning administrative detention. These new regulations empowered any military commander to issue an order of administrative detention, not solely the area commander as before.

Other provisions of detention regulations authorize any

Conditions at Ansar 3

Ansar 3 covers an area of more than four square kilometers. It is divided into two large compounds, one in which detainees from the West Bank are kept, the other holding detainees from Gaza. Each compound is made up of at least three sections, and each section comprises six units of eight tents each. Each unit is equipped with a miniature cell for solitary confinement.

Article 85 of the Fourth Geneva Convention clearly expresses the obligation of the detaining authority to accommodate detainees in "buildings and quarters which afford every possible safeguard as regards hygiene and

health and provides efficient protection against the rigors of the climate." Conditions in Ansar 3, however, do not meet any of these minimum standards.

Detainees are housed in tents which do not protect them from the harsh effects of nature. Each tent measures approximately ten square meters but houses from 26 to 30 detainees. The resultant overcrowding deprives prisoners of adequate space for sleeping. Detainees "sleep elbow to elbow" and cannot "even turn over without rolling onto a neighbor," as one detainee reported to the *New York Times*.

Tent facilities fail to comply with required basic health and hygiene standards. No water source is available in the tents. When detainees are allowed access to water, all 26 to 30 detainees from a single tent must share one bar of soap. The letter smuggled out in May reports that "water is scarce and cut off for many long hours daily. When there is water, it is hardly sufficient for drinking, toilet

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Appeal from the "Camp of Slow Death"

The following letter was smuggled out of the Ansar Three camp in May 1988, written on toilet paper.

To all people of conscience:
To all defenders of human rights:
We call upon you to rescue us from the Camp of Slow Death, Ansar Three, the Negev

We, the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Ansar Three, have been detained without any judicial formalities whatsoever. We have not even been told the charges which have been leveled against us. We are kept in inhuman desert conditions where the daytime temperature reaches 45°C and drops below zero at night, in an area teeming with lizards, insects, and rats.

But this hardship is nothing compared with the cruelty and arbitrary brutality of the soldiers. A physical and mental war is being conducted against us through starvation, thirst, humiliation, and physical and psychological torture. Their behavior breaks all international conventions governing the treatment of prisoners and reflects a lack of even the most basic moral and human values.

We are forced to keep our tents open from 5 a.m. to midnight, exposed to the searing heat of the sun and the sandstorms of the desert. Two or three times a day we are made to sit outside under the scorching sun, for periods of up to half an hour, under the muzzles of our captors' guns.

Water is scarce and is cut off for many hours each day. There is barely enough for drinking, washing, and twice-monthly baths in this suffocating heat. We have

only one change of clothing, and we are forbidden to receive clothes or other necessities from our families. Neither are we provided with items for washing clothes.

Our health is deteriorating and we are suffering physical deterioration and disease; health care is virtually nonexistent.

In addition, we are totally isolated: our families are not allowed to visit us; we are not allowed to send or receive letters; and we are forbidden radios, newspapers, magazines, books, writing paper, and pencils.

We are being subjected to punitive measures which aim to crush our human spirit and deny our social selves. We are not even given those rights contained in the law of administrative detention.

We call upon you to stand by us and to call for an end to the organized violence and humiliation which is leading us to a slow death. The peace and justice which the people of the Holy Land long for is being strangled in this evil place.

We urge you to organize humanitarian groups to visit this murderous detention center and to work for its closure.

We call upon you to stand on the side of humanity. May the world hear our voice.

May 1988

The Palestinian detainees at the Camp of Slow Death/Ansar Three/The Negev

Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi is dean of the School of Arts at Birzeit University in the West Bank. She was one of three Palestinians who participated in ABC's "Nightline" discussion, moderated by Ted Koppel, in Jerusalem in the Spring of 1988. She delivered the speech from which this article is excerpted at the United Nations in June 1988 and on a subsequent national speaking tour in the United States. For a complete copy of the speech, send \$2.50 to Palestine Focus.

An Anatomy of the P

By Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi

The intifada is the mass-based popular uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in resistance to the twenty-one-year-old Israeli occupation. By rejecting the occupation and affirming their inalienable rights, the Palestinians are exposing the true nature of the Israeli occupation as the implementation of a ruthless policy of state terror; they are also simultaneously transforming Palestinian society through an active program of self-reliance and popular restructuring. The intifada, its achievements, premises, and objectives, must be understood and placed in the context of its urgent demand for a political solution based on the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination and leading to the

establishment of the independent Palestinian state.

As Palestinians under occupation, it is not only our right but our duty to resist occupation and oppression. No self-respecting nation in the world today can wrest respect or recognition from the world community if it does not actively seek to assert its own national integrity and freedom. It must be understood, furthermore, that all allusions to improving the "quality of life" of Palestinians under occupation are inherently unrealistic and in direct contradiction with the aspirations of the Palestinians and the objectives of the intifada. There can be no "quality" to life under occupation beyond the quality of resistance to occupation and rejection of all its manifestations, including the unnat-

There can be no "quality of life" under occupation beyond the quality of resistance to occupation.

ural reality of its premises of subjugation and its system of exploitation and inequity. The "quality" argument must be viewed in its correct light as another attempt at "sugar coating" the occupation for both public consumption (hence the contradictory terms "benign occupation") and for local consumption as a means of making an abhorrent system of oppression palatable to the oppressed. Both rationalizations suffer from political as well as moral blindness and must be exposed as subversive when it comes to dealing with the essence of the problem, which is the occupation itself.

In addition, the intifada has nullified and exposed all proposals of "autonomy" as a concession to the Palestinians under occupation. As shall be demonstrated, the Palestinians have already taken major steps toward creating their own autonomy through the intifada *in spite of* the occupation and as a result of a conscious effort of will aimed at creating alternative and indigenous structures to replace those imposed by the occupation. Viewed as such, the new infrastructure created by the intifada is statehood at its seminal stages established in direct defiance of the occupation and as a clear response to its patronizing tactical smokescreen of "autonomy." The operative word here remains "liberation," and it can never be partially or gradually implemented.

The third delusion which must be exposed is the arrogance and deception implicit in the "Jordanian option" argument. A basic premise of the intifada and a historical assertion of Palestinians everywhere has been consistently the recognition of



Members from the local women's produce cooperative in Si'ir, a village near Hebron, West Bank, packaging plum jam, pickles, and orange and lemon juice concentrate. Such cooperatives play a crucial role in developing Palestinian self-sufficiency during the intifada. Photo: Adam Kufeld

U.S. Aid ...

Continued from Page 1

U.S. government position on Israeli occupation. Our government is rewarding Israel for its stepped-up violence against the Palestinians. Our government is an equal partner in Israel's attempts to crush the intifada.

The time has never been more ripe to say "No more U.S. aid for occupation." The debate at the Democratic Convention set the stage. Both Bush and Dukakis maintain the standard pro-Israel stance; still they need to be challenged. All members of the House of Representatives and one-third of senators are up for election. The candidates

for these national offices are campaigning throughout the United States, speaking in local communities, answering questions, and trying to persuade their constituents to vote for them. They can no longer ignore the issue of Palestinian rights with impunity.

These candidates must be questioned about U.S. aid to Israel. Candidates who support continued U.S. aid to Israel must be confronted and debated. Their active participation in the violation of Palestinian human rights and in the prevention of peace must be exposed.

It has become obvious that the U.S. government, and especially the Congress, is out of touch with its constituency, with public opinion. How can this gap be bridged? The 1988 elections are a key opportunity to press

Congress and whichever administration takes office to re-examine the untenable position of uncritical backing of Israel. Nobody expects it to be easy to change these long-held, entrenched positions, but we do expect to build a growing constituency favoring such a change. Such a constituency is vital to the long-run campaign to turn our elected officials around.

For now, congressional approval of continued aid to Israel must be made contingent upon Israeli respect for human rights of Palestinians. Congressional hearings on U.S. aid to Israel (expected next February) must be a special focus of attention. These decisions cannot be made in a vacuum; they cannot be allowed to be made behind closed doors. □

Facts About U.S. Aid to Israel

- \$3 billion in U.S. economic and military aid is given to Israel annually—\$1.2 billion in economic aid and \$1.8 billion in military aid.
- More than one-fifth of total U.S. foreign aid goes to Israel.
- Annual U.S. aid to Israel averages about \$600 per Israeli; U.S. assistance to Black Africa averages \$1 per person.
- U.S. aid to Israel equals 11 percent of Israel's gross national product.
- U.S. aid to Israel pays for more than one-third of Israel's defense budget
- Through a complicated debt-restructuring scheme approved by Congress last December, Israel is guaranteed an increase in U.S. aid of at least \$100 million per year for the next 15 years.
- In 1977, the Carter administration formalized the policy of never attaching any sort of conditions to military aid to Israel.
- Budget-cutting pressure of the Gramm-Rudman Act

has resulted in major cutbacks to most recipients of U.S. aid—but not to Israel.

- U.S. economic aid to Israel is not tied to specific projects, a condition placed on nearly every other recipient of U.S. economic aid.
- Until 1986, Israel used U.S. aid to subsidize Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, evading the restriction that U.S. aid not be used for that purpose by rendering it impossible to track the use of those funds.
- In 1986, when the Agency for International Development pressured Israel to place U.S. funds in a separate account for tracking purposes, Israel again evaded the settlements restriction simply by using money U.S. aid freed up and made available for settlements.
- Israel has 30 years to repay U.S. military aid in the form of long-term loans while most other countries must pay in 10.
- In 1981, Congress converted all past economic aid to Israel to outright grants and "forgiven loans"; in 1985, military aid was likewise converted.
- Free-trade agreements give Israel unrestricted access to U.S. markets despite strong protectionist sentiment in Congress.

- The Israeli defense industry has unlimited access to U.S. military technology.
- The Pentagon recently approved a ten-year agreement granting Israel the same access to Pentagon contracts as America's NATO allies, a privilege enjoyed by only two other non-NATO allies, thereby opening up every area of U.S. defense procurement to Israeli bids.
- Contrary to a basic tenet of U.S. foreign-aid policy, Israel is allowed to further its own military industry with U.S. aid dollars.
- In December, Secretary of Defense Carlucci and Israeli Minister of Defense Rabin agreed on Israeli participation in "Star Wars" research and development to the tune of \$1.2 billion, namely for the design and manufacture of the Israeli Hetz, or Arrow, antimissile missile.

Without these many forms of U.S. aid to Israel, Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza would be impossible.

The above data was compiled from a special issue of Multinational Monitor, April 1988.

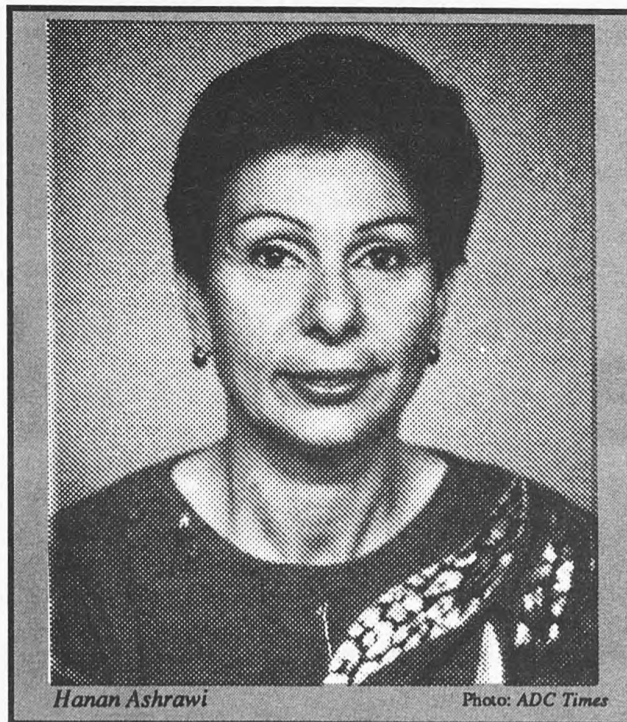
Palestinian Intifada

Ashrawi

lity" to life under the quality of occupation.

Palestinianhood as nationhood. The Palestinians are neither an appendage to another state, nor are they so deficient as to require artificial adoption by more responsible and mature parties. And if the Jordanian connection (in its various forms) is viewed as a precondition to Palestinian statehood, then the mind really boggles at such preconceived notions pertaining to a state which is perceived as "infantile" and at the presumption of minutely drawing up its ties (and dependencies) even before its establishment. Independence is the essence of statehood, and it cannot be compromised.

What is the intifada, then, and what are its unique characteristics, achievements, objectives, and goals? To define the intifada in general terms, one can see it as a simultaneous active statement of rejection and affirmation: a total and unequivocal rejection of the Israeli occupation with all its implications, norms, and realities; and as an affirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to freedom, self-determination, and statehood. The intifada is the coming of age of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, a culmination of a gradual process of organization and resistance, which took the form of a spontaneous eruption—an upheaval that has shaken the very foundations of the occupation and brought into question all

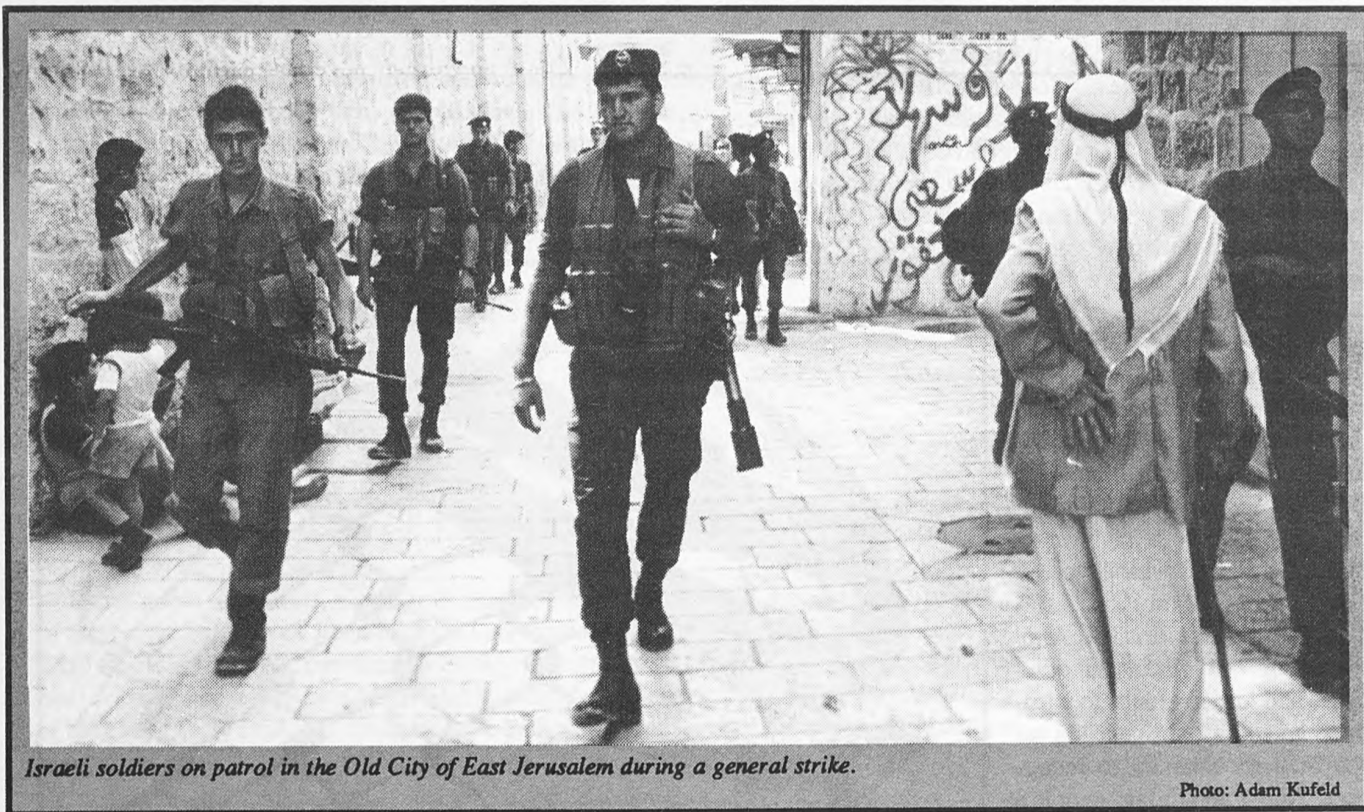


Hanan Ashrawi

Photo: ADC Times

strations, stone throwing, tire burning, sit-ins, and marches. These acts serve to attract the attention of Israel and the world to the Palestinians' total rejection of the occupation and are consciously carried out in overt defiance of its alien authority. They are the external manifestation of an internal reality, a visible expression of the violation of the Palestinian people's rights and lives; thus their message is one of urgency and disruption, of exposing the true nature of the occupation and the appropriate response to its "hidden" terror.

The second and less dramatic aspect of the uprising is the more enduring and significant process of restructuring society, at once severing the ties of inequality, dependence, and exploitation as imposed by Israeli occupation, while



Israeli soldiers on patrol in the Old City of East Jerusalem during a general strike.

Photo: Adam Kufeld

the complacent assumptions which underlay its short-sighted policies and expansionist dreams.

The uprising's truly democratic and revolutionary nature has been clearly demonstrated at every level and stage of its development, with a dynamic that is singularly appropriate to its perspective and objectives. Comprehensive and deep-rooted, it has emanated from the base as a genuine grassroots movement and has cut across all lines of distinction such as region, sex, religion, and political/factional affiliation. It has forged a cohesiveness—both vertically and horizontally—uniting all classes and sectors of society in an active pursuit of clear objectives and goals. Its popular mass-struggle quality has succeeded in creating a two-way system of communication whereby the Unified National Leadership's role is not solely to lead but to articulate the demands and different modes of struggle which are sought and are capable of being sustained by the masses. The effectiveness of the leadership lies in its sensitivity and openness to the mood and needs of the population as a whole, in its being intrinsic as essentially popular and mass-based, and in its being truly underground.

The intifada as an expression of the collective will has maintained a dual function/role in actively pursuing its objectives; the more visible and dramatic aspect is the external expression of rebellion in open clashes such as demon-

strations, stone throwing, tire burning, sit-ins, and marches. These acts serve to attract the attention of Israel and the world to the Palestinians' total rejection of the occupation and are consciously carried out in overt defiance of its alien authority. They are the external manifestation of an internal reality, a visible expression of the violation of the Palestinian people's rights and lives; thus their message is one of urgency and disruption, of exposing the true nature of the occupation and the appropriate response to its "hidden" terror.

painstakingly and systematically creating alternative Palestinian structures based on authenticity and an effective reordering of priorities and life styles. Popular committees have started to assume some of the responsibilities of a national authority, aiming at organizing all areas of civil life and gradually replacing the "civil administration" authority of the occupation. More than one thousand schools were closed down for a period of four months (February–May) by the Israelis in an attempt at exerting further pressures on the Palestinians through collective punishment and as part of a policy aimed at depriving them of the basic rights—including the right to an education. Neighborhood and popular committees set up alternative popular schools as a result of a collective, voluntary effort to neutralize such Israeli measures and to establish the counter-authority of the people. Popular committees are gradually setting up and consolidating an infrastructure to encompass the various facets of Palestinian life without succumbing to Israeli domination in a national program of self-reliance and self-help. Such committees include, in addition to education, those of medical relief, provisions and supplies, legal aid, security and guard duty, community work, and agriculture. Committees are formed democratically on a voluntary basis, and representatives are elected to form the

larger coordinating committee which, in turn, establishes regional ties, and so on. Although the nature of their work is not overtly political, the political implications are enormous and must be given a significant weight in any future settlement. Thus both aspects of the intifada are essentially political in nature and in perspective and are a complementary force in the launching of a political offensive for an equitable solution. The intifada is a unique experience in the history of the struggle for national liberation in that it espouses the positive politics of restructuring and peace and eschews the negative politics of hatred and revenge.

The achievements of the intifada, in addition to those already mentioned, also carry tremendous weight in the transformation of the realities of the area, whether actual or perceived, and form a historical turning point in national and international politics. Primarily, the intifada has succeeded in demythologizing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by calling misconceptions and distortions and dispelling the cloud of ignorance, racism, and prejudice which had engulfed the Palestinian problem; while Israel's success at the tactics of distraction and distortion had obscured the essential realities of the problem, it also created an unhealthy *albeit* comfortable (for Israel) international complicity, which relegated the problem to a limbo of stasis and neglect, perhaps in the hope that it might eventually disappear or consume itself by sheer inertia and oversight. But the volcano lay dormant, although Israel and its allies had failed to read its rumblings, and the eruption has released waves of pent-up energy that cannot be suppressed. This eruption is the moment of truth which Israel and the world have to face and comprehend.

The myth of the "besieged" or "beleaguered" Israel as the perpetual victim has been negated by the reality of Israel's "besieging" of a captive, civilian population, which it has succeeded in systematically victimizing for over two decades. "David and Goliath" has become a myth turned against itself. The "invincible" army has been exposed as a rabble of children beaters, bone breakers, and murderers of innocent civilians. When the soldiers buried four Palestinian boys alive, Israel buried with them the last vestiges of its claim to morality; when the guilty soldiers received reduced and minimal sentences, Israel sentenced to death its own system of justice; when Israel demolished houses in Beita and deported some of its inhabitants even before investigating the incident, it destroyed its credibility and brought to light the ugly truth of the occupation. By habitually punishing the victim, Israel's double standard of victimization is paralleled only by its double system of values and justice. When nearly forty people, among them two nine-month-old babies and a three-year-old girl lose an eye each to a rubber bullet, it is Israel that loses its vision and insight. When the Palestinians are described as "grasshoppers" by Shamir or "dogs" by Kahane, the dehumanization is self-inflicted by the Israelis. When thirty thousand Palestinians are subjected to arbitrary arrests and administrative detentions and then herded off to huge concentration camps in the desert, it is the aridity of Israeli "values" that is bared to world view. When more than two hundred pregnant women miscarry as a result of lethal doses of tear gas, it is Israel that dooms itself to a barren future. When Israeli soldiers break the bones of defenseless captive Palestinians or bludgeon them to death while simultaneously playing the role of policeman, judge, and executioner, the brutalization is that of all humanity and its reverence for the rule of law. When people are expelled from their homes and houses are demolished, the exile and destruction are symbols of Israel's own loss of touch with reality and morality.

The myth of the "benign" occupation by a "democratic" Israel is exposed as an inherent contradiction in terms; for occupation in all its forms of physical and nonphysical violence is demonstrably malign, and democracy can never be selective in its application, nor can it survive its own subjugation and oppression of others. In an escalating spiral of terror, Israel has provided the world with an open model of systematic, deliberate, and cold-blooded state terror and has reversed the myth of the "terrorist Palestinians." The list of atrocities and reprisals against civilians is too long (and perhaps by now familiar) to recount, nor does it constitute a new policy hitherto unknown to the Palestinians. The significant difference is that Israel has been caught red-handed and has been *seen* to commit acts which it had succeeded for twenty-one years in covering up. A major "contribution" of the intifada (not without its heavy price) has been the exposure of Israel as the one genuine practitioner and perpetrator of terror in the region. This "Brave New World" can no longer maintain its disguise.

The Palestinians by openly defying and visibly resisting Israeli terror, are also engaged in passing on the burden of knowledge to the rest of the world and to a major segment of Israeli society. Knowledge is a responsibility and a challenge which must be acted upon, for in the future no one should repeat the excuse "I just did not know." It is indeed a wonder how Israeli society and the world had succeeded for so long in maintaining their ignorance and apathy with regard to the Palestinians. The intifada is a message of urgency, with an austerity and purity of purpose, with a pristine clarity of vision, which no one can afford to ignore. □

Palestinian Rights in the Electoral Arena ...

Continued from Page 1

play. Many joined the Jackson forces to cry, "Foul!"

Nonetheless the support for the minority plank was substantial, with a CNN poll showing 70 percent of delegates supported a Palestinian homeland. As Rep. Dymally said, explaining why the minority plank would only be debated and not voted on, "We have the votes, but we want unity in the Democratic Party."

Although many pro-Palestinian activists wanted the debate to be brought to a vote, Jesse Jackson's forces played a shrewd game of showing real political muscle, while maintaining the fragile "common ground" need for the highly volatile party coalition stretching from conservative Sen. Lloyd Bentsen to progressive Jesse Jackson. "We want a debate," Zogby said. "We don't want a fractious fight." The Middle East issue, along with the growing strength of the Jesse Jackson wing of the party, was successfully positioned to contend for power in the future.

While the debate on the convention floor was the highlight in Atlanta, other activities also underscored the tremendous support for Palestinian rights. Outside the convention, a coalition formed by the Palestine Solidarity Committee sponsored two rallies, and a symbolic refugee tent was set up in the main park in downtown Atlanta. Over fifteen thousand pieces of literature were distributed, including brochures on cutting U.S. aid for Israeli occupation, *Palestine Focus*, and an appeal to Democratic delegates to support the minority plank.

Before the convention, the "Fannie Lou Hamer Convention" (named in honor of the famed civil-rights activist from Mississippi who challenged that state's segregated delegation at the 1964 Democratic Convention) brought together many peace and justice groups to advance a progressive agenda for the Democratic Party and the progressive movement. Called by Clergy and Laity Concerned and attracting such organizations as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SANE/Freeze, Southern Organizing Committee, and many others, the Fannie Lou Hamer Convention endorsed a platform calling for "the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination," including their own state "alongside Israel, with peace and security for both states. Recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the chosen representative of the Palestinian people." The platform also included support for the United Nations international peace conference and, in yet another advance for the peace movement, a position calling for "cutting aid which supports the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza." This platform emerged from workshops held with the participation of the Palestine Solidarity Committee, the Arab-American Institute, New Jewish Agenda, and the International Jewish Peace Union.

Old Goals Achieved—New Goals Set

Both the Democratic Convention debate and the platform of the Fannie Lou Hamer Convention demonstrated the achievement of basic goals long held by the Palestine solidarity movement. For years, Middle East peace activists have worked to convince the peace and justice movement to adopt Palestinian rights as an issue with the same weight as South African apartheid or U.S. intervention in Central America. Another long-standing goal has been to make Palestinian rights an issue of legitimate debate throughout U.S. politics, particularly in the electoral arena. Both of these goals were achieved in Atlanta, and all the organizations and individuals who have worked so hard for so many years should pause, if only briefly, to exult in the victory.

Such a victory came about because of the convergence of several inter-related factors. First came years of grassroots work by pro-Palestinian organizations to educate a growing constituency. Then Arab-Americans and other Middle East peace forces became involved in electoral politics, identifying themselves as a bloc that must be contended with. At the same time came the startling rise of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition as a significant progressive alternative within the Democratic Party. Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition welcomed Arab-Americans and pro-Palestinian forces within their agenda of inclusion for all communities and support for self-determination and noninterventionist politics, allowing the flowering of long-dormant political energy.

Of course, all these new developments in U.S. politics have been propelled by the unprecedented strength of the Palestinian people themselves. The intifada has accelerated the change in U.S. public opinion at a lightning pace (for example, a recent poll conducted by the American Jewish Congress revealed that support for Israel fell to a new low of 37 percent). Sadly, such a change in public opinion was only achieved by much suffering and sacrifice.

II. New Electoral Tactics

The movement for Palestinian rights must now set new goals. Now that the national debate has begun, we must plan on winning it. *The movement for Palestinian rights must now aim at actually changing U.S. foreign policy.*

This new period means that our task is to cut aid to the occupation, to demand that our government seriously pressure Israel to come to the negotiating table in an international peace conference with the PLO and to support Palestinian self-determination as the path to peace. These goals are bold and will not be achieved overnight. But for those who worked for peace during the last two decades of Israel's occupation and before, nothing could be more satisfying than to reach for what once seemed an utter impossibility: a real change in U.S. foreign policy.

The change in public opinion means that the Palestine solidarity movement will be even more greatly involved in challenging all the candidates—congressional and presidential—to take a positive stand for Middle East peace. While both George Bush and Michael Dukakis reaffirm the dominant pro-Israel consensus, all candidates must answer to the peace and justice program outlined in the minority plank. Even if candidates' positions reject such a stance, they need to acknowledge that a significant constituency supports it. Through the acknowledgment of a constituency, politicians are put on warning that they must at least recognize the alternative viewpoint. They must make themselves accountable to visits by their constituents, lobbying efforts, appeals for hearings on Israel's human rights abuses, etc. Politicians, particularly on the congressional and senatorial level, can no longer stonewall the issue.

Ballot Initiatives

New electoral tactics will be used to continue building pressure within the debate. Of particular note is the use of ballot initiatives, three of which are on the November 1988 ballot in San Francisco and Berkeley, California, and in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The initiative in Berkeley follows the ongoing battles in that city over making the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza a sister city. The initiative simply calls for making the sister city link, after the City Council voted the proposal down amidst furious debate. Although Berkeley Mayor Loni Hancock and mainstream Jewish organizations argue that such a humanitarian gesture would hold back Middle East peace, a significant alliance of political forces is supporting the Jabalya initiative. The Berkeley Jewish community, a large sector of the city's population, is vehemently split on the issue, with the initiative garnering much Jewish support. Overall, the initiative campaign will polarize other citywide campaigns. Given the previous 1983 initiative effort (Measure E) and the amount of publicity and widespread support already in Berkeley for Jabalya, the initiative should have a significant impact whether it wins or loses.

In San Francisco, the National Association of Arab Americans has joined with other peace and justice groups to introduce an initiative that calls on the U.S. government to recognize "the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and statehood in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza side by side with the State of Israel with guarantees for the security of both states." If it passes, the mayor and board of supervisors are to send the initiative to the president and all members of both houses of Congress.

Although the San Francisco initiative is phrased within the bounds of support for Israel, pro-Israel groups have already marshalled pledges of over one million dollars, along with arguments that local communities should not get involved in foreign affairs. According to Earl Raab, retired director of the Bay Area Jewish Community-Relations Council, both initiatives are "about as benign as a pair of rattlesnakes." Jewish Federation

President of the Greater East Bay Amy Sternberg noted that they are "very aware that political precedents like this sometimes begin in the West and set the tone for future political activities in other parts of the country—and the world."

The initiative battle, however, is not just confined to the West. The Coalition for Palestinian Rights, initiated by such groups as the Palestine Solidarity Committee, the Arab-American Institute, the Boston Peace Council, and Mobilization for Survival, has placed a referendum in three state legislative districts in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The referendum asks voters to send a message through their state representatives to the Congress and President of the United States "to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East by: 1) demanding that Israel end its violations of Palestinian human rights and its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; 2) stopping all expenditures of U.S. taxpayers' money for Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; 3) favoring the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with peace for all states in the region, including Israel."

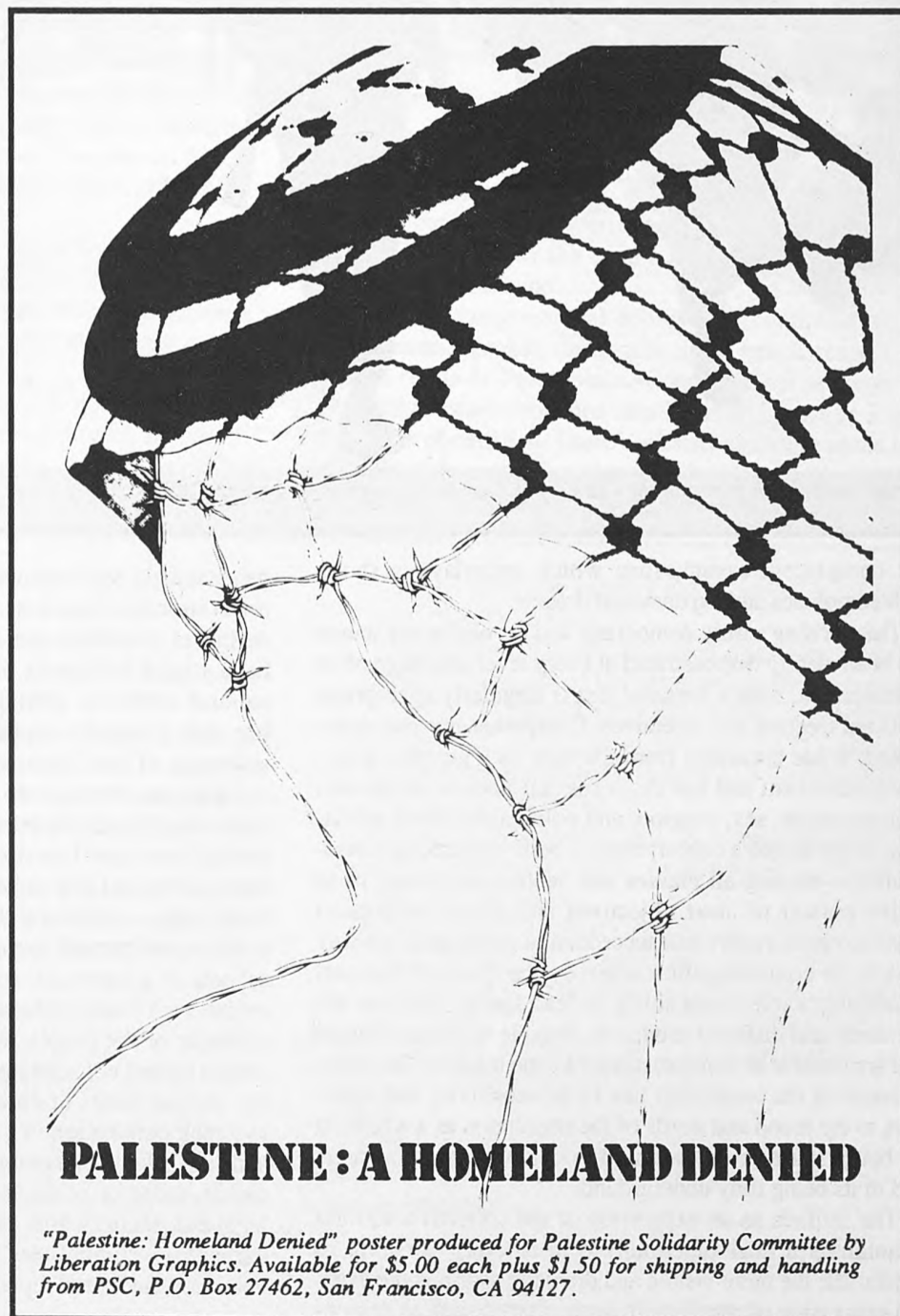
While each initiative is worded differently, the thrust of the battle over each of these initiatives should not be obscured by any differences. In each case, the issue will be Palestinian rights; and, in each case, pro-Israel advocates will reject them out of hand, no matter how reasonable or "balanced" such initiatives may seem. Each of these initiatives deserves utmost attention and support; they will all have serious national impact.

But the challenge facing us should not be underestimated. While Earl Raab, sounding the alarm for pro-Israel forces, described such initiatives as "a new level of sophistication," Middle Peace activists must demonstrate that we are indeed as sophisticated as our tactics may suggest.

Work in broad electoral coalitions demands that sharp ideological and political differences be set aside in the face of the actual battle at hand. Sophistication means reaching out to candidates and political groups whose political starting point may be traditional U.S. support for Israel, but who are now ready to consider the aspirations of the Palestinian people in a new light. It means taking people at their present level of understanding and providing them with the education to begin to change. Sophistication also means mastering the arts of electoral politics, from "get out the vote" to precinct walking and developing allies.

Such an approach also means organizing with confidence. As James Zogby concluded his remarks at the Democratic Convention, "The debate is principled and correct, and, therefore, it will continue. But because we

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ANC Discusses the Intifada ...

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This is where things are today, and it explains why apartheid has felt it necessary to not only impose a state of emergency, but to renew it twice within the space of three days. And it explains why apartheid felt compelled eventually to ban 17 mass democratic organizations, as well as 18 individuals, all committed to peaceful forms of struggle. It explains why apartheid has declared open war on the labor movement, especially on COSATU [ed.—Congress of South African Trade Unions]. Apartheid is aware that it has lost control and that our people are making attempts to put that control in their hands. And it is aware, particularly through structures like the UDF [ed.—United Democratic Front] and especially through COSATU, that people have become more united against apartheid than ever before. And its calculations are to destroy the UDF and COSATU; it wants to fragment both of them. But because the people are aware of these plans, they will not allow it to happen.

PF: That is quite similar to the current stage of the uprising. The stage of demonstrations and rocks is now passed, and it's now a stage of consolidating alternative institutions, dual power.

NM: Yes, that's exactly what's happening in South Africa. The similarities are irresistible between the two situations. We ourselves smile when we look at it. You're looking at a very sad situation, which in the first place ought not to be occurring. But you are heartened that the Palestinian people are taking steps and are moving in the direction that they are moving in. But what makes us smile is when we look at what the Palestinians are doing, we see ourselves, and when we look at the Zionist state, we also see the apartheid state. So maybe the similarities are inevitable.

PF: There was a delegation in the middle of the uprising from South Africa visiting, and their response to the uprising was, "It's a matter of law and order." You touched upon the blind spot, the word "terrorism." What is the psychological advantage for apartheid to instill fear in people's minds about the PLO, ANC, SWAPO, etc.?

NM: Here in the United States, for instance, administrations have always resorted to implications about the red scare, each time political forces or individuals appeared who held positions which the government found too inconvenient to deal with. The United States prides itself on being a democracy, so unlike other, more honest governments, it will avoid imposing a state of emergency under which it can violate individual freedoms and rights. So what it does instead is to invoke the red scare. If you articulate positions which the American government doesn't want, it's enough for them to say, "You are a communist," in order to silence you. We saw that in the McCarthy period, we saw it in the twenties during the Harding administration. We see it today on an international scale. And because the red scare is repeated too frequently, it's so central to the conventional wisdom of the establishment, it has seeped into the consciousness of many people, who are not ignorant, and it has seeped in so deeply that their reflexive response to the cry, "The Russians are coming," is one of hysteria.

Their communism, in the conventional wisdom, is associated with mindless violence, with so-called terrorism. Then, because our liberation struggles, precisely because they are authentic, represent the best interests of our people, which are antithetical to the interests of the military-industrial complex and its multinational corporations, in order to provide a rationale to move against us without seeming to be contradictory, in order to obscure the fact that we are fighting for freedom, they will immerse our struggle in the Cold War context. Then they

yell, "They're communists; they're part of the enemy." They leave you in no doubt that, as far as they are concerned, what they consider more important is their belief that we are communists and that this is more important than the fact that we are struggling for freedom. The underlying assumption, again, is that if a dictatorship—it doesn't matter how violent, and perhaps the more violent, the better they consider it—as long as it accepts American interests, has got the right to use violence in order to keep itself in place.

The people who are engaged in the just and legitimate struggle to free themselves, to bring an end to the dictatorship, do not have the right to protect themselves from the violence of that repressive state. Any time they take measures to protect themselves, they're called communists. There is no government in the world today which is as violent as the South African government and, maybe, the Israeli government. But nobody in the West has ever accused the apartheid state of terrorism. On the other hand, we who struggled for 50 years using peaceful forms of struggle against mounting odds, the moment we took a decision which recognized a new reality and embarked on our struggle, we began to be called "terrorists."

When Reagan funds the contras, which are an extension of him, I don't consider the contras part of Nicaragua; they are truly the hands of Reagan. When he funds UNITA, they don't call him a terrorist, despite the fact that this organization is killing the villagers, blowing up bridges and roads, blowing up schools and hospitals, and, in general, wreaking havoc with the infrastructure of countries which are trying to find themselves, having been recently liberated. They don't say UNITA, or the contras, are terrorists. In other words, there is a double standard. We are a terrorist if it suits them. If it suits them, we are a freedom fighter. But what is dangerous is that this represents an attempt to reinvent reality, in the way that promotes and protects the interests of the military/industrial complex and the multinational corporations. And they do this by relabeling reality, so that their traditional constituencies can see this basically unchanged reality in a new light, which will, in turn, incline them to see reason. □

Ansar 3: The Camp of Slow Death ...

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needs, and baths twice monthly in this suffocating heat."

Detainees have no access to proper toilet facilities and have only one change of clothing. An open-air hole in the ground is the only sewage facility. Medical care is also reported to be very poor; cases of food poisoning and dehydration are common among detainees, who receive little or no treatment. Only one medical worker is on duty at the prison, and he always has the same prescription no matter what the problem: two Acamol pills (an Israeli-made aspirin substitute).

While forced to endure wretched hygiene conditions and grossly inadequate health care, detainees must also endure the brutality of Israeli soldiers operating the detention center. Guards show total disregard for the sick or elderly. They force detainees to "sit on the ground for periods of up to one-half hour, three to four times a day, under the scorching sun, and under the soldiers' pointed guns" during routine head counts. Any detainee can be handcuffed and blindfolded for any reason and put into a solitary confinement cell without food and water for up to four days.

In mid-August two detainees were shot dead by Israeli soldiers during the head-count procedure. In response to the killings, the International Committee of the Red Cross publicized the incident, an extraordinary move on their part since one of the conditions of their relief work is that they not publish their findings. The Red Cross sent letters of protest to the Israeli government as well.

Other major violations, not only of international conventions with regard to treatment of prisoners, but also of Israeli regulations themselves, are very common. Detainees are totally isolated from the outside world: Newspapers and other reading material are prohibited; no radios or televisions are available; family visits are practically impossible because of the excessively stringent conditions the authorities place on family members wishing to visit.

The arbitrariness of arrest, lack of due process, and inhumane conditions of detention did not start with nor are they limited to Ansar 3. Ansar 3 is yet one more instrument of Israeli occupation and one more hardship for the Palestinian people to endure and overcome; it is one more application of U.S. aid to Israel. But the seriousness and scope of human-rights violations and intensity of human suffering involved require that whatever pressure necessary be exerted and whatever action necessary be taken to close the "Camp of Slow Death" once and for all.

What You Can Do

To protest Ansar 3 and to demand its closure, write letters to the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs (Washington, DC 20515) urging its chairperson, Rep. Gus Yatron, and its members to pressure the Israeli government to immediately close Ansar 3, to convene hearings on Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, and to stop U.S. aid to Israel used to kill and brutalize Palestinians and violate their human rights.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee is conducting a postcard campaign (see "Focus on Action," this issue). Write also to Yitzhak Rabin, Minister of Defense, Jerusalem, Israel, demanding that Israeli military forces comply with the articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention (to which Israel is a signatory). Write to international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (17 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland) and Amnesty International (International Secretariat, 1 Easton St., London WC1X-8DJ, Great Britain) asking them to put pressure on the Israeli authorities. Write now—your letter or postcard might save the life of a detainee. □

Electoral Arena ...

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are right and because peace in the Middle East is so urgent, I know we will win." □

Hilton Obenzinger's column "Getting It All In Focus" will return in the next issue of Palestine Focus.

For more information about the three initiatives, contact:

- Friends of Jabaliya, P. O. Box 8292, Berkeley, CA, 94707 (415) 995-2690.
- Yes on W, 801 Sutter Street, Suite B, San Francisco, CA 94109 (415) 921-3542.
- Coalition for Palestinian Rights, P. O. Box 2316, Cambridge, MA 02238 (617) 661-9167.

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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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Neo Mnumzana is the Chief Representative of the Observer Mission of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa to the United Nations in New York. He was interviewed for Palestine Focus at the "Beyond Containment" conference in Washington, DC in May 1988.

Interview with Neo Mnumzana

The ANC Discusses the Intifada

PF: How does the ANC view the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza? What similarities or differences do you see in terms of the uprising in South Africa?

NM: First of all, one needs to find out the parallels between Zionism and apartheid. Both are based on ideologies that preach a supremacy of one people over another, and they have translated this ideology into a constitutional reality in Israel, and in South Africa. Both are based on the uprooting of an indigenous people and the takeover of the Palestinian and South African peoples' land, by Zionism in Israel and by the Afrikaners in South Africa. In both cases, you are confronted with a situation which the people must, inevitably, find unacceptable, where they will, inevitably, engage in a struggle to correct the injustices of apartheid and Zionism.

The current uprisings represent a very important landmark in the road of the Palestinian struggle, for their right to determine their destiny, to create a Palestinian state and a homeland. As in all struggles, there is an element of spontaneity, which reflects the degree to which the wretchedness of the people, imposed by Zionism, has frustrated the people. There is an element of organization, also, which reflects the political work which the PLO, the sole authentic representative

of the Palestinian people, has been doing. As was the case when similar uprisings started in South Africa in 1976, we think that uprisings in the occupied territories are going to become a permanent feature of the situation in Palestine until the problem in that country is resolved, and the Palestinians win their right to determine their destiny.

Palestinian people to have their right to determine their destiny recognized. Again, as is the case in South Africa, they have responded by imposing censorship on the coverage of the uprisings. One, to try and hide from international view, the crimes that they perpetrate against the Palestinian people, in the same way that apartheid tries

When we look at what the Palestinians are doing, we see ourselves. When we look at the Zionist state, we see the apartheid state.

Israel, of course, has responded to those uprisings in exactly the same way that apartheid responded, and continues to respond, to the uprisings in South Africa, with more and more violence, which represents a refusal to acknowledge reality.

It has become urgently necessary for the

to hide the crimes that they perpetrate against the people of South Africa. Two, and in the strategic sense even more important, Israel is trying to hide the fact that there is a liberation movement inside Palestine, which translates into the possibility of Zionism losing control of the situation, in the same way that apartheid has been trying to hide from the international community the fact that it has lost control of the situation in South Africa. These are the more important similarities that we see.

PF: When the South African government did its news blackout, it had an effect on the movement here. Do you feel that Israel will attempt to cover up, too?

NM: Certainly they are. The censorship in South Africa has had the effect of demobilizing certain components of the anti-apartheid solidarity movement in the United States. Largely because, regrettable as it is, it is true that in the United States if an issue is not seen on television, if it's not on the front pages of the newspapers, it ceases to exist. But I think in the case of what is happening in the occupied territories, we want to profit from our experience on the effect of the press being in South Africa, and try to avoid a similar outcome. This means all those people who support the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people led by the PLO, need to develop means of making information available about what is happening. It means, in general, and this applies to the entire broad front of solidarity movements, that they must develop a counter-information service. We must utilize whatever resources we have to keep the issue alive in the public awareness.

PF: What is the current situation in South Africa?

NM: Right now there is a qualitatively new feature which informs the South African situation. It consists of the fact that thanks to the success of our people's campaigns to make apartheid unlikable, to make the country ungovernable, campaigns like the refusal to pay rents, campaigns to dismantle apartheid's administrative extensions into the Black community, and these are called Urban Councils, they are meant like hand-picked puppets. As well as the success to

drive the police out of the townships. The people have succeeded in starting a process through which apartheid is irreversibly losing control of the situation. And this is attested to by the fact that it felt compelled to resort to the use of its defense force as an occupation army against the South African people, in the Black townships.

It has precipitated a very serious conflict inside the South African defense force itself, as well as a variety of social problems. It's important to understand that the average young white person in South Africa leads such a sheltered existence that their idea of the African is derived from what they see in our mothers' and fathers' work as domestics, gardeners, chauffeurs, in white mansions. Our mothers and fathers, who traditionally had to keep a smile on their face in order to keep their jobs. And consequently, their idea of the African is that of my mother or my father, going about smiling, doing domestic jobs. Then these kids are taken into the South African defense force, and they're dispatched into the Black townships. And for the first time, they see the squalor which apartheid has imposed on our people. They begin to understand why we have always struggled against apartheid. For many of them, it becomes a traumatic experience, and they react in a variety of ways.

One, there is a growing incidence of drug abuse in the South African defense force. Two, there is a rising incidence of suicide inside the South African defense force. There are a growing number of young white people who say, "We are trapped in the South African defense force until our torture is over, but we clearly cannot go on defending apartheid. We would like to be of service to integrate. We would like to give you access to military intelligence. We would like to give you access to the secrets of apartheid."

There is a powerful draft resistance movement underway in South Africa. It grows by the day, and there's a growing number of young white people who are now coming into Umkhonto, which is the revolutionary army of the African National Congress. And in recent months, for the first time in the entire history of our country, you have young white people going to trial, charged with terrorism because of their participation in activities over the controversies. And this is very significant, considering that apartheid's military might, its defense force, is also its last line of defense. Now it has to live with the fact that this army, which used to be cohesive and used to be totally loyal to apartheid, has become divided and is going to become even more divided. It's beginning to encounter white opposition, it's becoming demoralized. The question is, considering that apartheid can no longer count on a cohesive army, it can no longer depend on the total loyalty of this army, where next can apartheid go? For us, the answer is it can only go down.

But, of course, the fact that apartheid is losing control of the situation doesn't mean that that control is automatically transferring itself into the hands of the progressive forces. But what it does mean is that the strategic challenge of the moment in that struggle is to put that control in our hands in order to end anarchy, which inevitably ends up in reactionary dispensations. Because our people have begun to move in that direction, where they have replaced their administrative structures in the Black townships, they're creating street, block, and township committees, they're creating people's tribunals, they're creating people's defense committees, to defend their revolutionary gains, and also to facilitate the participation of an ever-growing number of our people in the armed struggle which is being waged by the ANC, the objective being to escalate the armed struggle into a people's war.

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Two Palestinian children peering out of door smashed in by Israeli troops, Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza.

Photo: Adam Kufeld