

# Palestine Focus

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NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NOVEMBER 29th COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE

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50¢

## South Africa: The Israeli Connection

By Steve Goldfield

**A**pologists for Israel have several lines of defense for Israel's warm relations with South Africa. First of all, they say, Israel abhors apartheid but cannot base its state and trade relations on moral concerns since its very survival is at stake. Then they argue that other states have far larger and more significant ties to South Africa than Israel. Finally, they turn on Israel's critics whom they accuse of "singling out Israel" and imply are applying a moral double standard.

Certainly, we should criticize those countries which trade with and supply arms to South Africa. But none of these states has the type or magnitude of relations with South Africa that Israel has. None has built military and economic ties with the so-called Black homelands, which are boycotted by all the rest of the world's governments. None is so important an intermediary between South Africa and the United States as Israel.

No other country is using U.S. aid to develop weapons and sell them to South Africa in defiance of United Nations agreements. And none shares an historical and ideological affinity with South Africa like that of Israel and the Zionist movement which founded it.

In *Palestine Focus* no. 2, August 1983, Alfred Moleah covered many aspects of the Israel/South Africa relationship, including arms sales. In this article, more recent information is combined with analysis which fits the United States into place.



Trade and Investment with South Africa

On November 26, 1984, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Benjamin Netanyahu rose in the General Assembly to denounce South African apartheid and ridicule criticism of Israel for its close relations with the apartheid state. Netanyahu said, "Israel's trade with South Africa is so modest as to be scarcely visible, amounting—according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) figures—to less than

*"It is possible for South African manufacturers to export half-finished goods to Israel, finish them in Israel, and re-export them to Europe."*—*Financial Mail (Johannesburg)*

one-half of 1 percent of exports and three-quarters of 1 percent of imports."

James Adams of the London *Sunday Times*, in his recent book, *Israel and South Africa: The Unnatural Alliance*, had already refuted the IMF figures, which do not include trade in diamonds (hundreds of millions of dollars per year) and military equipment, the two largest items of trade. Adams concluded, "It is probable that when *all* trade is taken into account, Israel may be South Africa's biggest trading partner."

*Continued on page 4*

### Editorial:

## Cut U.S. Aid to Israel

**A**id to Israel is in the national defense orbit. It is security assistance, not only for Israel, but for the United States.... I view it in almost the same framework as a naval base."—Conservative Congressman Jack Kemp (R-NY) in *Near East Report*, December 31, 1984.

Those who seek to actually cut the U.S. military budget—and not only limit its rate of increase—must consider aid to Israel as an additional item on the Pentagon's list. This year Israel received \$1.4 billion in military aid and \$1.2 billion in economic aid. For fiscal year 1986, Israel has requested \$2.2 billion in military aid and \$1.9 billion in economic aid, a total of \$4.1 billion.

Amidst congressional dogfights over deficits and cutbacks, such a huge request has met understandable anxiety. But on the whole, congressional leaders join President Reagan in viewing aid to Israel as a "strategic" and not a budgetary consideration. Israel's importance as a "naval base" from which to dominate the Middle East explains why Washington is willing to continue pouring one-quarter to one-third of its foreign-aid money to Israel.

There is a new condition on Israeli aid this year, one many other countries have become only too familiar with. The offer of increased economic aid is accompanied by the demand for austerity measures to shore up Israel's troubled economy.

At the end of 1984, Israel's official inflation rate approached 500 percent and its foreign debt reached \$24 billion—the highest per capita in the world. It spends about one-half of its budget on the military (half of that provided by the United States)—approximately a million dollars a day for the occupation of Lebanon alone.

With U.S. aid accounting for a substantial portion of the Israeli government's budget, it is clear that without U.S. financial backing Israel would be unable to continue its occupation of the West Bank (including Jerusalem), Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights, much less southern Lebanon. American economic aid is paid directly into the national treasury and is spent on whatever the government wants—including settlements on the West Bank or invasions in Lebanon.

Other recipients of U.S. aid must spend the funds they receive on designated projects and usually to buy products from the United States. Egypt, for instance, which receives about the same amount of aid as Israel (though it has ten times the population) in accordance with the Camp David agreement, has 138 American aid officials to oversee its spending of aid. Not one U.S. official watches over the spending of U.S. aid to Israel; the money goes directly into general funds.

But President Reagan and most of his congressional colleagues are hardly examining

the economic distortions created by Israeli militarism and expansionism. Instead they are demanding that Israel save money by cutting social programs affecting Israeli Jews and by altering the structure of the Israeli economy to increase private corporate profits.

As the *Wall Street Journal* recently declared, "Israel badly needs to reduce government intervention to give market forces freer play. If the United States asks for such a policy as a condition of economic aid, it is no more than it is beginning to ask, although in different contexts, from other debt-ridden applicants for U.S. help."

The Israeli practice of indexing salaries to keep up with inflation is a particular target for "reform." Another is the extensive government

ownership of industrial companies; three-fifths of Israeli companies are owned either by the state or the labor federation, the Histadrut.

However, the Peres/Shamir government is nervous about implementing policies leading to austerity, thus asking the Israeli people to swallow its dose of Reaganomics. Israel has been able so far to conduct its wars with little economic suffering, buffered by U.S. largesse.

**B**elt tightening in Israel threatens dangerous social dislocations which trouble Israeli leaders. High unemployment could force many Israelis to leave for other countries and discourage other Jews from emigrating to Israel. As a settler society, Israel needs to make life appealing to those with the option of living in a Western country.

*Continued on page 7*

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# Lebanese Women Fight Occupation

By Douglas Franks

A Lebanese woman described a recent Israeli raid on the Lebanese town of Burj Rahal: "We [several women] grouped together and faced them. They began to advance. A tank opened fire. We threw rocks at it. The troops kept advancing while they fired at us.... They were firing in all directions trying to hit us."

Increasingly, Lebanese women are joining the resistance to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Whether facing the enemy in Burj Rahal, demonstrating in Beirut, speaking at the United Nations, or providing social services for war victims, Lebanese women are more than ever an active and visible component in Lebanon's struggle to regain its freedom and achieve peace.

As survivors of the invasion, occupation, and civil war, Lebanese women must also bear an additional burden in the postinvasion period. With fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers killed, imprisoned, or "disappeared," they have, in large part, had the responsibility of rebuilding homes, families, and social-service institutions. Particularly onerous have been agonizing searches for missing family members. Particularly in refugee camps, such harsh conditions have generated unprecedented activism.

Nor are women spared other dangers inherent in resistance. Occupation authorities established a prison for women at Nif-Risa and accounts are on record of women commandos losing their lives in combat against Israeli soldiers. The Lebanese newspaper *Nida'* reported that three women, Najat Shore, Mariam Dhaini, and Aida Nasr-Allah, were killed in combat December 16. Israeli raids in the south have not been selective in terms of whose lives are taken. In mid-December, for example, Israeli troops surrounded and searched seven villages. In two, Tura and Marakah, a woman and a fourteen-year-old girl were among those killed.

Continuing a movement begun in November 1982 by a group called the Committee

of the Parents of the Kidnapped, Disappeared, and Missing Persons, many Lebanese (along with Palestinian) women have mobilized around the issue of the disappeared. By the summer of 1984, wives, mothers, and sisters of the disappeared had instituted a regular series of West Beirut demonstrations which took place every Thursday morning at 9 a.m. Their goal was to draw international and Lebanese government attention to the issue of unaccounted-for disappearances.

On July 9, 1984 two hundred women and children brought Beirut to a virtual standstill by means of citywide demonstrations; even the airport was forced to

close. As a result, on August 12 the Lebanese government released a list of seven hundred prisoners being held in military and police jails. Thus some of the five thousand Lebanese Beirut police say have been reported missing since June 1982 were finally accounted for, though not returned.



American activist Jeanne Butterfield (fifth from right) meets with representatives of Lebanon's women's groups.

Another dramatic demonstration was staged the end of December 1984 by the mothers and other family members of kidnap victims in response to the suicide death of Nayifa Najjar Hamade, staff member of a leading Beirut newspaper, who was despondent over the kidnapping of her thirteen-year-old son nine months earlier. Furious at her death, the demonstrators blocked three of the

four crossing points between East and West Beirut, insisting the government find their missing relatives.

Among them were the Child and Mother Welfare Society, Union of Progressive Women, Council of Lebanese Women, National Union of Women, Union of Democratic Women, and the Women's Union for Development.

"We come from Lebanon to represent every mother, sister, and wife," states a document released by the delegation. "We come to represent the Lebanese people in a vigil in front of the United Nations and to raise our voices demanding the withdrawal of the occupying Israeli Army from our country."

Their document details Israeli aggression against Lebanon. One chilling passage reads, "Israel has transformed our villages into

collective concentration camps. Residents must obtain permission to enter or leave their villages for any reason. Israel cordons off villages and kills its men and youth in the presence of their mothers and children."

The visiting delegates also spoke on behalf of the resistance, "In light of Israeli state policy, what choice have we except that of resistance? ... In this total support of [the] resistance, the Lebanese people are united." The recent partial withdrawal of Israeli troops is a result of the popular support for the resistance.

One week before their appearance at the United Nations, the organizations represented had participated in a general strike in Beirut and south Lebanon. Their strike succeeded in winning the release of four Shi'ite leaders arrested by the Israelis. Another demonstration was held in the south two weeks prior to that, six hundred women squaring off against Israeli troops.

In December, members of the women's organizations met with Jeanne Butterfield, a November 29th National Interim Steering Committee member who was visiting south Lebanon as part of a National Lawyers Guild delegation. At that time, plans were announced for a women's march to the Awali River to protest Israel's presence in Lebanon.

Variouly referred to as mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives, Lebanese women are, above all, a major part of this growing tide of Lebanese resistance to the occupation. Their involvement measures up to what they, along with other Lebanese, have at stake: their country and freedom. The woman from Burj Rahal best expressed their response to that responsibility when she was asked if she and the others were afraid in the face of Israeli tanks. She replied, "No, we were not, though each woman had to confront six or seven soldiers who used whatever they could to stop us."

Telling how she and other women and townspeople later guarded their village against repeated Israeli raids, she encapsulated the experience of the resistance as a whole: "The people gathered together and confronted them and prevented them from entering." Lebanese women provide much of the strength now keeping Israeli occupiers on the defensive. □

## FOCUS On Action

By Steve Goldfield

"No Intervention! Build a Just Society! Reverse the Arms Race! Oppose Apartheid/End Racism!" With these demands, people around the country are mobilizing for four days of protest and witness, Friday, April 19 to Monday, April 22, in Washington, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. The November 29th Committee for Palestine has endorsed the national mobilization and is participating in all the events, particularly major demonstrations on Saturday, April 20. We'd like to draw particular attention to the full wording of the first point as it marks a giant step forward for such an event: "Stop U.S. military intervention in Central America. Support human freedom and dignity by also ending intervention in the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific, and Europe."

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"From Um Al-Fahm...to Brookline, No to Racism, No to Kahanism!" Meir Kahane, one of the more embarrassing U.S. exports to Israel, has been making unpublicized visits to East Coast cities recently. In Boston, the Ad-Hoc Committee to Oppose Kahanism organized a successful protest. The committee included the June 6th Coalition, Arab-American University Graduates, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, All People's Congress, Boston Alliance Against Registration and the Draft, the Boston Peace Council, Central American Solidarity Association, Casa El Salvador Farabundo Marti, City Life, Committee for a Democratic Palestine, Grassroots

International, Iranian Students Association, Lebanon Emergency Committee, Mobilization for Survival, the National Lawyers Guild, and the U.S. Anti-Imperialist League. Kahane was also met with a picket line in New York.

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Why would an organization claiming to be against defamation publish a "hit list" defaming teachers, students, and researchers? That's what the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) asked in a resolution passed November 30, 1984 at its annual meeting in San Francisco, according to the *New York Times* (January 30, 1985). The New England office of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of the B'nai Brith mailed out the list to "several dozen campus Jewish leaders" in November 1983. Leonard Zakim, executive director of the ADL's New England office, "agreed that the document had been careless," though he mailed it with a cover letter citing "alarming increases in anti-Semitic incidents and anti-Israel propaganda."

MESA also objected to a "Survey of Political Activism" conducted by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC—the organizational center of the pro-Israel lobby); MESA protested "the creation, storage, or dissemination of blacklists, 'enemy lists,' or surveys that call for boycotting individuals" or intimidating scholars. Nevertheless, be on the lookout for the ADL's crudely written descriptions of groups working for Palestinian rights and for AIPAC's slickly produced *The AIPAC College Guide: Exposing the Anti-Israel Campaign on Campus*. Though these scurrilous publications have been used in an attempt to isolate us from other organizations in the broad peace movement, they also indicate that our work is having a real effect and that supporters of Israel justifiably feel they are on the defensive.

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Jihan Sadat, widow of the assassinated former president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, spoke at the University of Texas in

Austin on January 31. Her lecture, entitled "Road to Peace" was attended by Governor Mark White, Lady Bird Johnson, and others. The General Union of Palestinian Students and the November 29th Committee for Palestine picketed Mrs. Sadat's lecture, pointing out that her husband's Camp David agreement was not a "framework for peace" but rather a "framework for war."

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"Everything hurts, especially for the woman who has children and a family, she suffers a lot ... but we are all here one family and we help one another."—displaced Lebanese mother. Two groups based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Grassroots International (P. O. Box 312, Cambridge, MA 02139) and Women for Women in Lebanon (P. O. Box 9, Cambridge, MA 02140) recently released the documentary video, "Beirut: On a Clear Day You Can See Peace." Grassroots International is an independent, nonprofit social change agency which funds community-based relief and development projects in Africa and the Middle East.

Women for Women in Lebanon is a group of Arab, Arab-American, and North American women formed in October 1982. They address the immediate needs of Palestinian and Lebanese women whose lives have been disrupted by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Women for Women works towards the empowerment of these women, especially those under occupation, by supporting projects that promote self-sufficiency and communal staying power. In the United States, they pursue the same goals of empowerment by working together with women in the Arab, Arab-American, and U.S. women's communities.

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In January, our committee showed the award-winning film, "Occupied Palestine," in Santa Cruz, Sacramento, and Berkeley to enthusiastic audiences. Berkeley's La Pena Cultural Center was packed for the film, which was a preview of a planned once a month series of events at La Pena. □

# “Who’s a Jew?”—and Why the Debate

By Hilton Obenzinger

The recent debate within the Israeli Knesset on changing the Law of Return presented the strange spectacle of a governmental body deliberating and voting on the question of “Who is a Jew”—debating an issue of utmost religious importance that properly belongs in a religious not a state body. As if to underscore the irony, the handful of Palestinian Knesset members voted on whether or not someone is a member of a religion other than their own and therefore eligible to settle in Israel—and to take away Palestinian land!

Indeed, within the context of the Zionist political movement, the question “Who is a Jew?” is not simply a question of faith—but one with very practical implications. Those deemed “Jews” and allowed to possess Palestine receive a great many privileges. Those who are deemed “non-Jews” and whose ancestors happen to have lived in Palestine for generations receive severe repression to deny them a homeland.

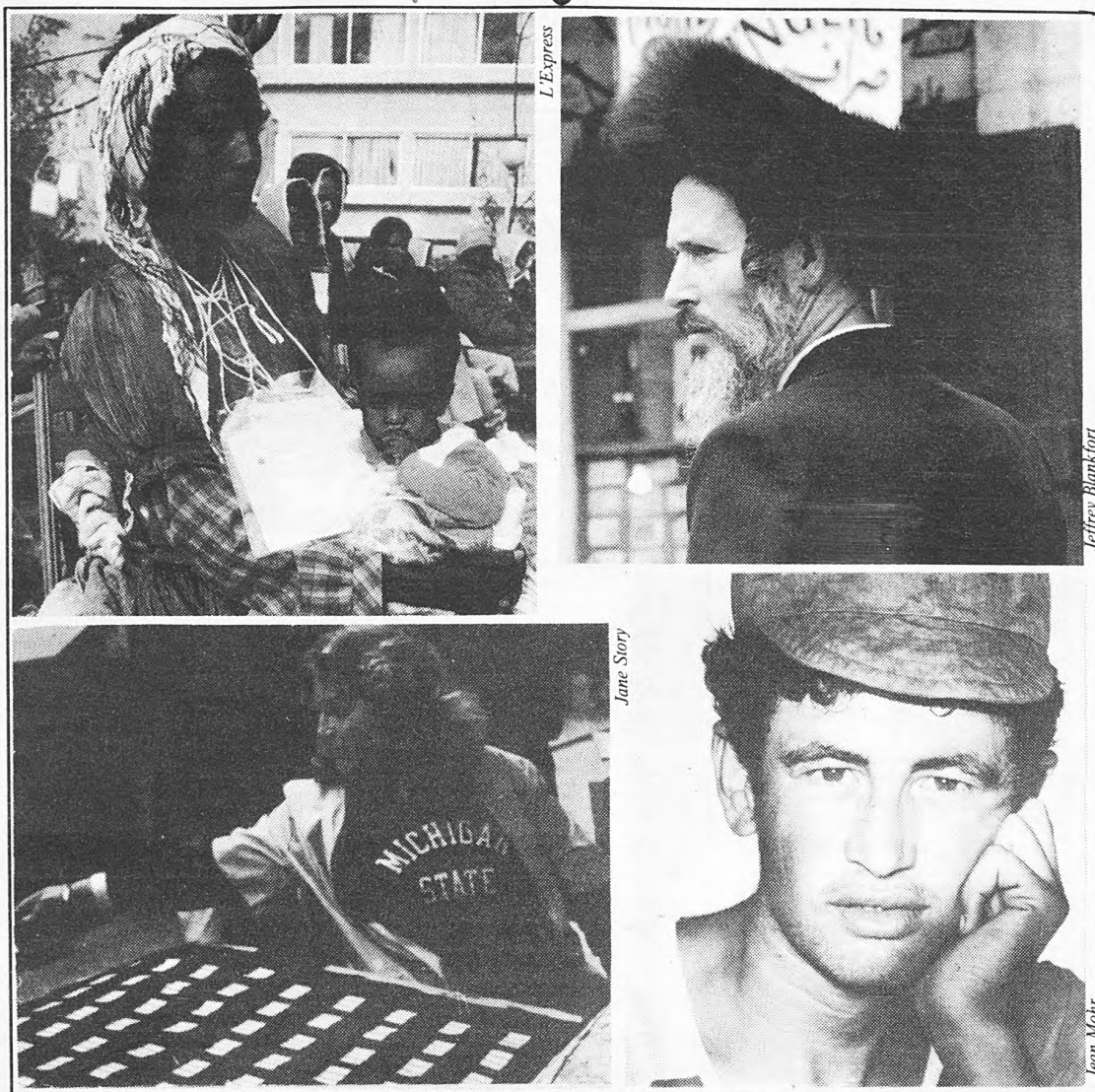
The Law of Return allows Jews born anywhere in the world to claim Israeli citizenship virtually overnight, while Palestinians who fled or were driven out during the wars of 1948 and 1967 are relegated to refugee camps, forbidden to return to their own homes.

“Who is a Jew” takes on added importance considering that 92 percent of the land within Israel’s 1948–1967 borders is owned either by the state or by such semigovernmental agencies as the Jewish National Fund in the name of the entire Jewish people, worldwide. Laws expressly forbid sale or lease of such lands to non-Jews.

The significance of “Who is a Jew” becomes apparent from a comparison between the Jewish settlement of Karmiel in the Galilee and the four Palestinian villages whose lands were confiscated and given to Karmiel. Karmiel is a thriving, exclusively Jewish city with health services, highrise apartments, parks, schools, and other services. The Palestinian villages, by contrast, are overcrowded, underdeveloped, and have few public services.

As a rule, Arab municipalities receive half the budget subsidies received by Jewish townships, although Palestinian Moslems, Christians, and Druze who live within Israel’s 1948–1967 borders pay the same taxes as Israeli Jews. Uri Davis comments, “The segregation is both a de facto segregation and a legal segregation. The government and Karmiel authorities have been on record numerous times declaring Karmiel to be closed to non-Jews.”

The meaning of “Who is a Jew” can also be seen in the Jews-only settlements continuing to be built on the West Bank and Gaza. Likewise, when we consider the constant arrests without cause, suppression of free speech, land confiscations, expulsions, and other indignities faced by Palestinians living under occupation, we can readily appreciate that the question “Who is a Jew” is central to the question “What is a Jewish state.”



Jewish people, like members of other world religions, cannot be described as being from one race or nation. Clockwise from top left a Jew from Ethiopia, Eastern Europe, Morocco, and the United States.

Now Israeli officials proclaim that this gesture in the face of Africa’s tragedy “absolutely refutes the cruel and incorrect assumption that Zionism equals racism.” (*New York Times*, January 4, 1985) But it would be hard to convince the residents of Hebron as more settlers—backed by the Israeli government and U.S. tax dollars—build colonies in the heart of their city, loudly proclaiming their intention to drive all the Arabs out!

For years Ethiopian Jews were not considered bona fide and, therefore, were ineligible for citizenship under the Law of Return. Practicing a form of Judaism developed in isolation from other Jewish communities for centuries, the Ethiopians are now forced to undergo ritual conversion and symbolic circumcision to prove to the theocratic state that they are, indeed, “real” Jews. Already some have borne the brunt of the pervasive chauvinism of European toward non-European Jews. The Ethiopian Jews, as *Al Fajr* notes, “will continue to be treated as a political commodity, a hedge against outside charges of racism, a human wedge in the West Bank, inside Israel, and perhaps even in south Lebanon.” And, as if to drive the point home, some Ethiopians were sent

trappings of democracy are in discord with the systematic discrimination and dispossession of the Palestinians blatantly and without apology conducted on the basis of religious sectarianism.

A rchracist Meir Kahane ironically captured the inherent contradiction when he declared that “a state can be permanently defined as Jewish or as democratic, but never both.” His resolution is simple: Throw the Arabs out! But even if this demagogue’s complete scenario is not carried out, the pretence to democracy in any real sense of the word is belied by “official” Israeli policies.

Palestinians are not struggling against a religion but against a system which determines people’s destinies on the basis of religion—with certain “racial” and “national” characteristics thrown in as well. Still, the Palestinian movement is regularly labeled “terrorist,” “radical,” and extremist, as if the desire to determine one’s own destiny and to achieve equal rights should be something repugnant to Americans. Palestinians suffer such smears even though they seek a secular society, an expression of a democratic right Americans can still claim to enjoy.

It seems almost absurd to assert that it is a fundamental democratic right to be able to live in one’s own homeland, though this is one right enshrined in the Geneva declarations which protect people living under occupation. To own land and seek a livelihood without religious strictures are democratic rights. And perhaps most basic, to be able to freely determine national destiny is a democratic right.

**“A state can be permanently defined as Jewish or as democratic, but never both.”**

**—Meir Kahane**

Determining who is a Jew has become a critical political question because Israel is a state founded on religious sectarianism, one where a colonizing political movement based in a single religion systematically denies rights to adherents of all other religions. Israel is not simply a country where a majority of the population share one faith, but one where Jews have rights because they are Jews and those who are not Jews, namely Palestinian Arabs, are denied rights; indeed they are deemed lucky to remain in the country at all.

The recent airlift of Ethiopian Jews only served to tragically magnify the injustice. As these hapless victims are taken to a new land and a new life for public-relations purposes, Palestinians remain imprisoned in refugee camps. “Israel’s rather cavalier transfer of whole populations to advance its interests is a policy well-known to Palestinians,” comments *Al Fajr*, a Jerusalem Palestinian weekly. “They feel the Israeli description of the Ethiopians as being well-suited to perform ‘honest work at low wages’ indicates they will become a Hebrew labor pool to substitute for Palestinian labor.”

to the Kiryat Arba settlement on the West Bank to facilitate their “absorption” into Israel.

The Knesset narrowly voted that those Jews converted by Conservative and Reform rabbis still have the “right” to colonize Palestine. Almost at the same time, the Israeli press blew the cover off the very badly kept secret of the Ethiopian affair. In response, much of the media reaffirmed the vitality of Israeli democracy. Israel, touted as “the only democracy in the Middle East,” is exalted as an example in a region—and, indeed, a world—filled with a multitude of repressive regimes.

Yet the facts remain: Palestinians living within the 1948–1967 borders of Israel are at best third-class citizens (after the second-class African and Asian Jews), while those in the West Bank and Gaza live under military occupation, denied virtually all rights. As for the Syrians living in the Golan Heights, recently annexed outright by Israel, their situation can hardly be deemed “democratic.”

The assertion that Israel is a model of democracy simply crumbles under the weight of the facts. Certainly, Israel has a parliament (the Knesset) and regular elections. But the

The goals of the Palestinian liberation movement and the PLO reflect an essentially democratic thrust. In response to racialized religious chauvinism, the Palestinians call for secularism to replace sectarianism, for equality instead of structural discrimination. In calling for an independent Palestinian state led by the PLO, the Palestinian people have sought to exercise their democratic right to self-determination.

What the Palestinian people are asking for is democracy, first and foremost. They have not called for an “Islamic” Palestine alongside a “Jewish” Israel and a “Christian” Lebanon. Americans should have no difficulty understanding such aspirations. We live in a country where church and state are separated, where religion does not determine one’s fate in life. Of course, the United States is wracked by inequalities—most importantly those based on the color line—but widespread support persists for secularism.

Still, with Jerry Falwell and his ilk bringing their challenge to secularism into the Oval Office, no one can take religious freedoms for granted. Indeed, as Palestinians aspire to democracy and secularism, we can identify with their quest: our own democratic rights are under attack. □

# Israel's Political Support among

**RUSSIA HAS LONG BEEN THE ENEMY OF ISRAEL**

2000 YEARS AGO THE PROPHET EZEKIEL, PREDICTED THE TERRIBLE "DESTRUCTION OF RUSSIA WHEN SHE MOVES AGAINST ISRAEL."

THAT ACTION SETS OFF WORLD WAR III, A ONE DAY FIRE WAR -- AS A RESULT 1/4 OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION DIES.

\*38th chapter of Ezekiel (Magog ancient name for Russia). \*\*Rev. 6.8.



**INTERESTING NOTE: — ISRAEL SURVIVES THIS WAR!**


After World War III, Israel enters "The time of Jacob's trouble" . . . the worst 7 years of her existence \*2/3 of all Jews die.

\* "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein." Zech. 13:8



At the close of that 7 year period, the armies of the world move to destroy Israel at the Battle of Armageddon . . .

When all is lost . . . her Messiah bursts through the clouds and saves her.



He destroys the invading armies. Then He takes over all the governments . . . no more wars! He is the Prince of Peace.

Israel gets her greatest shock . . . her Messiah will have \*nail prints in His hands.



Israel's Messiah is known in the New Testament as the Lord Jesus Christ. All this will occur at his 2nd coming.

\*Psalms 22:16-Zech. 12:10

**Excerpts from a fundamentalist tract:**  
**"Support Your Local Jew:" Cold War mentality mixed with religious fantasy.**

persons to become enchanted with Christian Zionist themes such as "Armageddon" and "Israel." The Reagan administration is not the first team to employ such rhetoric either for political expediency or because they actually believe it, nor will they be the last. However, what is surprising is the fact that Middle East analysts and progressive forces continue to underestimate the political power of fundamentalist Christian Zionists.

**What Do Fundamentalist Christian Zionists Believe?**

First, it may be useful to clarify a common misconception concerning evangelicals and fundamentalists. The secular media often employs these terms interchangeably, thus distorting both the political and theological beliefs of two distinct trends in American Christendom. In the late 1970s, American evangelicals were identified by political and ecclesiastical analysts as undergoing a phenomenal resurgence. Gallup Polls used the figure of 50 million adherents and *Newsweek* declared 1977 as "The Year of the Evangelical." Meanwhile, evangelical Christianity is a far more complex development than most observers recognize.

During the 1970s American evangelicalism began to distinguish itself into at least three communities, which theologian Richard Quebedeaux and others describe as the "left, center, and right wings." The left, characterized by a strong commitment to social justice and a progressive political agenda, is a small but influential movement. The center, by far the largest community, might be described as "the establishment." It is exemplified by such leaders as Billy Graham or the journal *Christianity Today*. The right wing, which has increasingly accepted the conservative political agenda of the Moral Majority and others, has its roots in early British and American fundamentalism. It is this latter movement, particularly its millenarian wing, which became the primary vehicle of fundamentalist Christian Zionism.

A key to the fundamentalist fascination with Israel and apocalyptic visions of the end-times lies in the theological system called "premillennialism." While millenarian thought and predictions of Jesus' return have arisen throughout Christian history, the premillennialist thrust is a recent

development. The doctrine holds that Jesus' bodily return to earth will precede his establishment of a new kingdom, where Jesus will be recognized by all as the Messiah, defeat the Anti-Christ, and reign from a throne in Jerusalem.

The premillennialist system of theology developed and spread to the United States during the late eighteenth century. It became attached to the central role of the Jews in the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. The concept of Israel and "the return" of the Jews to Palestine receives a higher priority in premillennialism than the Christian church. The believer is encouraged to focus upon preparation for Christ's "Return" and thus becomes a spectator witnessing the unraveling of God's prophetic plan.

Recently, premillennialist authors and evangelists have linked their Biblical literalism to political events. Among the key events premillennialists identify with the "prophetic puzzle" are: Israel's capture and control of Jerusalem in 1967; the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem; a final battle at Armageddon (the Plain of Megiddo in the Galilee) which will involve a great Northern power (the Soviet Union) and Israel with her allies. Jesus will then return to establish the millennial Kingdom.

Most evangelicals and many fundamentalists may reject this literalistic and apocalyptic system of theology as a distortion of Christianity, but the premillennialists experienced a phenomenal growth in power and visibility throughout the 1970s. Their "televangelists" and political leadership provided constant visibility and new organizations emerged to politicize their constituencies. At the top of their agenda is unqualified support of Israel, with frequent appeals to support the Zionist political agenda.

**The Revival of Christian Zionism Today**

The true revival of the movement did not begin until well after the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. While the 1948 and 1967 events triggered a host of prophetic fantasies ranging from the Second Coming of Jesus to World War III, it was the American Bicentennial in 1976 that marked the true revival of fundamentalist Christian Zionism as a political factor.

By Rev. Don Wagner

behalf of a Jewish state occurred as early as 1891. The campaign was conceived and choreographed by the Christian fundamentalist author and preacher, William Blackstone. A few years later, when Herzl showed a lack of commitment to Palestine as the site for the Jewish state, Blackstone sent him a marked copy of the Old Testament with the clear message that the Jews must return *only* to the Holy Land in order to fulfill Bible prophecy.

Palestinians and their advocates should not be surprised by the current groundswell of support that Israel receives in the United States from Christian fundamentalists. Nor is it unique for an American president, Pentagon officials, and key senators and congress-

## Israel and So. Africa...

Continued from page 1

On May 11, 1984, the *Financial Mail* (Johannesburg) published a fifty-page supplement survey of Israel. Filled with ads from Israeli and South African firms promoting trade and investment, the survey is quite revealing. Israel Export Institute's Reuven Livny, for instance, promotes Israel's high-tech exports for such South African industries as mining. A full-page paper company ad declares, "Mondi turns the vast forests of South Africa into front page news in Israel."

According to the *Financial Mail's* survey, "the history of direct SA investment in Israel goes back at least 50 years to 1934 when a group of SA investors established Africa Israel Investments. Today a subsidiary of Bank Leumi, the company still has SA minority shareholders. Its portfolio includes substantial property and construction interests, one of Israel's largest insurance companies (Migdal), and a tourist complex at Tiberias Hot Springs."

Koor, Israel's largest industrial conglomerate and owned by the Histadrut labor federation, "has a number of SA interests, including a share in Sentrachem's Agbro herbicide factory near East London." Americans unfamiliar with the Histadrut should not confuse it with the AFL-CIO. The *Financial Mail* described the Histadrut as "the largest single factor in the Israeli economy." About one-quarter of Israeli workers work for Histadrut-owned companies; only the government employs more.

Koor alone controls 100 industrial plants, 100 commercial and financial companies, and 50 management and property holding companies. As Ben Rabinovitch, director of the Histadrut's economic arm explains, "Our motto may be to advance socialist endeavours, but we have no war with private enterprise." Tadiran, a joint subsidiary of Koor and the American General Telephone and Electronics, for instance, has formed a large electronics combine with South Africa's Consolidated Power to produce military electronics and computers. The Israeli and South African subsidiaries of Motorola also operate several joint ventures. Iskor, which manufactures half of Israel's steel, is 51 percent owned by Koor and 49 percent owned by the South African government.

South Africa also provided capital to develop Israeli warships which the South Africans later purchased. In the past three years, foreign investment in Israel has been about \$200 million per year, of which South Africa accounts for \$15 million, Europe \$25 to \$30 million, the rest from the United States.

**Israel's Back Door to Europe and the United States**

"It is possible for SA manufacturers to export half-finished goods to Israel, finish them in Israel, and re-export to Europe." The *Financial Mail* went on to explain how these goods, labeled "made in Israel," could qualify for preferential duty-free treatment. Israel has the same sorts of trade agreements with Japan and the United States. It is possible that many goods with Israeli labels are of South African origin.

Zimcom is a joint shipping venture by South Africa's Unicorn Shipping Lines and Israel's Zim. Zim, along with the Dutch Nedlloyd and American President Lines, carries South African cargo directly to U.S. harbors. We cannot determine how much cargo, however, travels between the



**ZIMCOM**  
 the trading link between South Africa and

United States and South Africa—in both directions—disguised with an origin or destination in Israel.

**Israel and the "Homelands"**

In early November 1984 Ciskei "president" Lennox Sebe and Mayor Ya'acov Faitelson of the West Bank settlement of Ariel signed a twin-cities agreement between Ariel and Bisho, capital of Ciskei. Three Likud Knesset members attended the ceremonies in Bisho. Israel's extensive military and economic ties with the Ciskei have become extremely embarrassing. No other country in the world except South Africa gives any form of recognition to these concentration camps for South African Blacks, designated as tribal dumping grounds for those too old or weak to work.

# ng American Fundamentalists

At least four developments contributed to the Christian Zionist revival in 1976. First, by the late 1960s the premillennialist-Charismatic wing of Christianity became the fastest growing element in the American church. The election of a "born again" President Jimmy Carter, who taught Sunday School in his Southern Baptist Church, sent a signal to several political power brokers that the 45 to 50 million evangelicals were now a major political force. Such conservative strategists as Ed McAteer of the Religious Roundtable and Jerry Falwell of the recently formed Moral Majority began to mobilize high-tech resources to politicize their formerly apolitical constituencies.

Second, the American Jewish Committee, several pro-Israeli lobbys, and major Zionist

pro-Israeli, pro-Jewish sentiment in this country. Since the 1967 War, the Jewish community has felt abandoned by Protestants, by groups clustered around the National Council of Churches, which, because of sympathy with third-world causes, gave an impression of support for the PLO. There was a vacuum in public support to Israel that began to be filled by the fundamentalist and evangelical Christians.

Tannenbaum's comments are a distortion of the actual policies and positions taken by the National Council of Churches and member bodies, which, if anything, were still decidedly pro-Israel. Yet positions began to emerge, ever so carefully framed to be as balanced as possible, but demonstrating a slight awareness of Palestinian rights.

Nevertheless, Tannenbaum and other Zionist leaders sensed that if they were to receive less than 100 percent pro-Israel support from the mainstream of Protestant-

and the use of Biblical references to justify hardline Zionist strategies toward the Palestinians. Begin and the fundamentalist Zionists in the United States established an immediate alliance and the two proceeded to manipulate each other whenever it proved expedient.

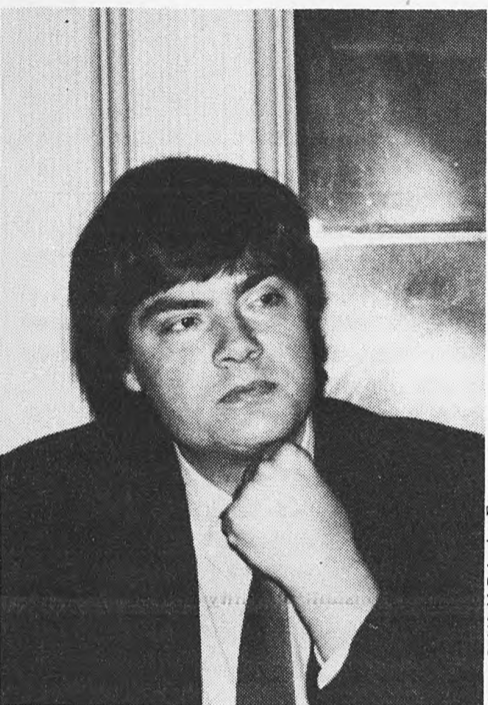
The fourth development may have been the primary catalyst to accelerate the rate at which the Begin-fundamentalist Christian connection exerted itself as a political force. When the recently inaugurated President Jimmy Carter launched his human-rights policy and began to discuss the need for a Palestinian "homeland," Mr. Begin and the Zionist apparatus shifted into overdrive to head off a potential tilt toward a Palestinian state. Discussions concerning an international conference on Palestine added fuel to the fire. The long range political answer was to usurp Palestinian rights through the Camp David Accords, however a series of activities developed immediately with the fundamentalists.

Institute for Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem and had the endorsement of leading evangelicals such as Pat Boone, Kenneth Kantzer of Christianity Today, and Dallas Seminary President John Walvoord.

This important campaign would be one of several political initiatives taken by Christian Zionists which reflected the marriage of Christian premillennialist theology and Begin's Revisionist Zionism. The Likud government was not about to allow a new U.S. administration to alter the Zionist domination of its Middle East policy, particularly when the newly politicized Christian right shared the Eretz Israel myth on Biblical and political grounds.

The evangelical newspaper campaign was coordinated in the United States by a former employee of the American Jewish Committee named Jerry Strober who told *Newsweek*: "[The evangelicals] are Carter's constituency and he'd better listen to them.... The real source of strength the Jews have in this country is from the evangelicals."

***"The time has come for evangelicals to affirm their belief in biblical prophecy and Israel's divine right to the land."—Evangelical ad***



Rev. Donald Wagner

Steve Goldfield, Palestine Focus

ism, they would embrace the fundamentalists. In several cases Zionist organizations assigned staff to cultivate relations among fundamentalists and the broader evangelical community. The Anti-Defamation League in Chicago until 1984 employed Rabbi Yeckiel Eckstein, whose primary task was the evangelical movement. The Rabbi landed part-time positions in a Baptist Seminary as well as with fundamentalist Baptist leader W.A. Criswell's First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, the largest church in the United States.

A third factor was the 1977 election of Menahem Begin and his Likud Coalition to power in Israel. This dramatic change in rhetoric if not actual policy gave legitimacy to religious extremism

An important political initiative by the Christian Zionists came in the form of full-page advertisements in major U.S. newspapers titled "Evangelical Support for Israel." The text stated in part: "The time has come for evangelical Christians to affirm their belief in biblical prophecy and Israel's divine right to the land." Taking aim at Jimmy Carter's still premature discussions of an international conference, the advertisement went on to state: "We affirm as evangelicals our belief in the promise of the land to the Jewish people.... We would view with grave concern any effort to carve out of the Jewish homeland another nation or political entity."

The campaign was financed and coordinated from Israel through the fundamentalist

Strober's comments summarize why the Zionist establishment suddenly adopted the right wing despite its latent anti-Jewish sentiment, racism, and antiseccular humanism. A case in point was the President of the Southern Baptist Convention, Rev. Bailey Smith, who expressed doubt that God hears the prayers of Jews. Smith was quickly taken to Israel by Rabbi Eckstein and others and returned with a "corrected" message. However, this tension between the right wing's political agenda will continue to haunt the Zionist establishment for years to come. □

***Don Wagner is National Director of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, a national organization based in Chicago. His article will conclude in the next issue.***

leaders saw the fundamentalists as their most important new ally. Many Zionists de-emphasized their work with mainline Protestant churches and turned to the fundamentalists, despite the numerous political and ethical contradictions entailed in such a shift. Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee summarized the change in this way:

The evangelical community is the largest and fastest growing block of

One Israeli newspaper pointed out that military sales to Ciskei were particularly outrageous. Ciskei is entirely surrounded by South Africa and has no use for its weapons except against its own citizens. Ciskei's dictator, Lennox Sebe, is a notorious human-rights violator.



In August 1982 the Ciskei Trade Ministry in Israel was opened. Ten Israeli-owned factories are under construction in the territory. Israeli state-financed companies are also building hospitals and running educational and agricultural development programs. (*Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 9, 1984)

Embarrassed by the revelations about the Ciskei, many Israelis have recently moved their operations to other homelands, particularly Bophuta/Tswana.

### Israel and South Africa: Common Roots, Common Themes

In South Africa, 87 percent of the land is reserved for white ownership; the other 13 percent, mostly dry and useless, is allocated for the African "homelands." In Israel 92 percent of the land is owned by the state and can only be

leased to Jews. The other 8 percent is not reserved for Palestinians; it is simply available for private ownership.

On April 9, 1976, then Israeli prime minister, now Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said that Israel and South Africa share the same ideals. There are obvious differences between Israeli and South African colonization, but the similarities are still more striking. Israeli officials claim to be embarrassed at the closeness in their relations with South Africa, yet it has become increasingly common for Israelis to criticize the growth of racism in their country by comparing it to South Africa.

Israel has not built its racially discriminatory system in the name of race separation as South Africa has. Israel has used a confusing mixture of religion, exploitation of the Jewish holocaust of World War II, pseudosocialism, and well-financed public relations to justify its form of exclusivist state. But beneath the ideological blanket, Israel and South Africa function in remarkably similar ways. Palestinians and Black South Africans increasingly live in enclaves—their indigenous agricultural economy devastated—and migrate to work for their masters in areas where they are prohibited to live with their families.

Former South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts is generally credited with persuading the British cabinet to issue the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which called for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The close ties between South African leaders and the Zionist movement go back at least that far. The pro-Nazi Afrikaner leaders who took over South Africa in 1948 were able to curb their anti-Jewish sentiments and find much to admire in Israel. The Jewish community in South Africa provides the largest per-capita financial support

to Israel of any such community in the world. We do not have to search far for links and parallels. The only thing surprising is that there is such resistance to viewing Israel and South Africa as common phenomena, states which brutally suppress indigenous peoples.

### Closing the Triangle

As we have pointed out, Israel has strong historic and ideological reasons for its close ties with South Africa. Both countries see themselves as outposts of Western civilization threatened both by "Soviet-sponsored subversion" and barbaric neighbors. Israel also gains important economic benefits from its South African links, no small concern at a time of unprecedented crisis for the Israeli economy.

Israel's close relations with South Africa fit perfectly into the larger picture of U.S. relations. No American administration has had to pressure Israel to build its relations with South Africa; none, certainly, has applied any pressure on Israel to diminish its ties to apartheid. Common perceptions of interests lead to common strategies, whether arrived at in consultation or not.

Yet Israel's relations with South Africa cannot be viewed as independent from the United States since no part of the Israeli economy is independent from the United States. Israel cannot sell to South Africa without involving American companies, without transferring American technology or weapons, without using facilities constructed with U.S. aid. In this sense, cutting off U.S. ties to the apartheid regime cannot succeed without either cutting all U.S. ties to Israel or all Israeli ties with South Africa. □

# Bir Zeit University under Siege

George Giacaman is dean of the Faculty of Arts at Bir Zeit University on the occupied Palestinian West Bank. Bir Zeit has 2,400 students, 42 percent of whom study humanities and social sciences in the arts faculty. Dean Giacaman has been at Bir Zeit for eight years, three years as dean. He was interviewed by Palestine Focus in August of 1984 in San Francisco.

**PF:** What problems do you face as an administrator of a university in the West Bank.

**GG:** During the last academic year, Bir Zeit has been closed down twice for a total of three months. Bir Zeit has two campuses, one old campus in Bir Zeit village and a new campus, still under construction but partially used by Science and Engineering. The old campus was closed down for a month; the new campus was closed for a month; and then both campuses were closed down together for another month. This upsets normal operations; we have to worry about how to reorganize the whole operation to finish the year. Each closure brings a set of administrative nightmares.

**PF:** What actually happens when the university is closed down?

**GG:** The acting president is called in by the military governor and handed a written closure order. They usually give us about twelve hours to evacuate; women students in the dormitories need time to remove their belongings. After that they put up roadblocks at the entrance to Bir Zeit town and guards at the main gates of the university, at least for the first week. Then a patrol checks to make sure no one gets in.

**PF:** Do you get any support from your Israeli counterparts?

**GG:** Yes. We get a lot of support from different groups ranging from student groups who have visited Bir Zeit often to faculty members, either individuals or groups, at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, at Tel Aviv University, and also at Haifa University. The kind of support we usually receive is primarily publicity. When Bir Zeit is closed down, they protest, write letters to the editor, and sometimes demonstrate and hold sit-ins for us. The idea is to make the price of each closure higher for the military government.

We also receive a regular stream of visitors from various countries. We look at visitors from abroad as an important asset for Bir Zeit, as part of the contacts we seek to establish because we feel that the main protection we have as an institution of higher education on the West Bank is our friends outside, who would raise a fuss if something happens to us. In the past, particularly with major closures, a stream of letters and phone calls to Israeli consulates is sent. Letters to the editor appear. Articles are written and so on. We feel it has helped. The situation would be far worse than it is for us today without this kind of assistance.

**PF:** How are the relations between administration and students affected by the occupation?

**GG:** It is primarily the students that are under heat from the occupation rather than the administration. We have our



Bir Zeit poster: Israeli soldiers occupy classroom erasing "Academic Freedom," "Democratic Rights," "Palestine"...

share of problems, but the students are routinely arrested and/or detained and interrogated. Their identity cards are confiscated; by law they cannot walk around without them. They are placed under town arrest, meaning a person's movements are restricted to the town in which he lives and he has to report to the police station every day. The current president of the Bir Zeit Student Council is under house arrest. This means he cannot attend classes at Bir Zeit. Last year's president was also under town arrest.

**PF:** How would you describe the mood of the students?

**GG:** The students, taken as a group, on the West Bank are more politically conscious than the rest of the population. Of course, this does not please the military



Students at Bir Zeit University.

authorities. When institutions of higher education are closed down, the excuse given normally is political activity. But how is one to define political activity? The military government, for instance, does not approve of raising the Palestinian flag or holding cultural activities pertaining to Palestine.

At Bir Zeit we have an annual event called "Palestine Week." It is generally banned, but once Bir Zeit was closed down to prevent holding this activity. I'm not sure that one should not defend political activity. It is allowed for students in Israeli universities; it is not allowed for students in West Bank universities. Israeli students take political positions for or against Israeli parties in the Knesset, and that is regarded as normal whereas the very same thing is not regarded as normal for Palestinian students. It is clearly a case of double standards. The reason is obvious, but it's not something defensible. To be interested in the political situation of your country is quite normal and healthy. It just happens that the Israelis don't like it, and I think that's their problem.

[Editor's note: On November 21, 1984, Bir Zeit engineering student Sharaf Tibi was shot to death by Israeli soldiers during a peaceful demonstration. The car carrying Tibi to a hospital was delayed for 25 minutes at an army checkpoint and then for another hour at a second roadblock. Such incidents are unfortunately not rare on the West Bank.]

**PF:** How did you suffer when Hanna Nasser, president of Bir Zeit, was expelled?

**GG:** He was deported from the West Bank and now lives in Jordan. There's always this threat of deportation, town arrest, detention, or prevention from traveling. This is a very frequent means of punishment by the occupation authorities, not only against students, but also against the rest of us, particularly those of us that work at Bir Zeit. You need a permit to leave the West Bank; you cannot just pick up and leave. Before you can apply you must have clearance from the military government. That's usually used as a kind of bargaining counter on the part of the military authorities.

**PF:** What about the oath demanded of the foreign instructors?

**GG:** That was a major problem we had to face last year. For those who are not residents of the West Bank and intend to work at Bir Zeit, we have to apply for a work permit. We've always done that, but last year a new condition was placed for receipt of the work permit, namely, to fill out a particular application form which includes a pledge not to provide any assistance to the PLO or, as it was described, any terrorist organization. Naturally, the faculty at Bir Zeit refused to sign this application because they viewed it as needlessly politicizing work permits. After a long, drawn-out affair, a formal application form was agreed on so they have applied, but none have received any work permits so far over a period of ten months.

**PF:** What other problems does the occupation cause?

**GG:** A major problem facing us—not only Bir Zeit but higher education on the West Bank in general—is the lack of work opportunities for graduates. Because the West Bank is not undergoing economic development, which in turn creates job opportunities, it has been very difficult for university graduates to find employment on the West Bank.

There simply aren't enough jobs. There are no companies or corporations or small businesses to create jobs for them. The public sector, working for the government, for instance, is extremely limited in its ability to absorb college graduates. What are we doing with, if I may call it that, what we produce: I mean with our graduates?

**PF:** Unemployment leads to emigration?

**GG:** Yes, but emigration is taking place in any case. The question I think should be raised is: Is it better to have a college graduate emigrate or is it better to have a high-school graduate emigrate. Sometimes we feel we keep people on the West Bank for four more years and that may be something. Some people also feel that the chances are that somebody who has a college education will be more political than somebody who doesn't. Maybe there is some benefit there.

**PF:** What causes this lack of job opportunities?

**GG:** The lack of economic development in the West Bank is principally and directly related to the fact that it's under Israel. If there were a national government to plan for the economic development of the West Bank, I think the situation would be different. Before 1967, the West Bank was part of Jordan. Before 1948, it was under British mandate. Between 1948 and 1967 the West Bank was an economic unit with Jordan and it shared the normal economic development that Jordan underwent. Palestinians felt then and still do feel that preference for economic development was usually given by Jordan to the East Bank rather than the West Bank.

But the situation after 1967 under Israeli occupation has not improved in terms of economic development. Agriculture is in a depressed situation on the West Bank. Numerous restrictions are placed on farmers to benefit either settler farmers or to protect the agricultural produce of Israel itself. For instance, Israel is allowed to export vegetables and fruit to the West Bank, but a permit is necessary to export vegetables and fruit from the West Bank to Israel. Scarce water resources are restricted to West Bank farmers; the main beneficiaries are the Israeli settler farmers. It is generally believed by people on the West Bank that, had they not been under the occupation of Israel, the economic situation would be rather different.

**PF:** How would you describe the mood of the people in the West Bank?

**GG:** I would say the people in general are eager for some sort of solution to rid them of the present situation. Of course not a solution at any cost, but opinion is divided as to what would be the cost that can be paid and this reflects the difference of opinion that exists among Palestinians outside the West Bank as well. The various main lines of thinking that are found among the Palestinians, for instance, in Beirut or in Syria or throughout the Arab world or in the United States are found as well on the West Bank. In that sense, the difference is not large.

But at the same time the general mood is not a happy one. It can often be depressed, but at the same time people have to try to go on and try to adapt themselves to the situation they are in. After Beirut the mood was quite depressed actually, but lately I would say that things have improved at least since they saw that the Palestinians outside did not disintegrate as a group or as an organization. I think that was very important to them. □

By Hilton Obenzinger

Jeanne Butterfield's article about Palestinian prisoners in this issue highlights Fara'a prison. Now a new booklet, "Torture and Intimidation in the West Bank: The Case of Al-Fara'a Prison" published by the International Commission of Jurists and the West Bank-based Law in the Service of Man, presents the results of an investigation of abuses at one Israeli prison. Based on a series of affidavits by former prisoners, a hideous picture of torture, sexual abuse, beatings, and completely degrading conditions is painted.

"The outstanding feature of al-Fara'a—as this report shows—is that confessions are manufactured. The evidence demonstrates that al-Fara'a is intended to operate as an intimidation center to which groups—mainly of young people—are taken for a certain period, given harsh treatment, and later tried on the basis of confessions that appear in many cases to be extracted against their will, then released," the report states. To all of this is added the conscious policy of releasing prisoners for one or two days and then reimprisoning them—a psychological warfare trick.

This booklet is being distributed in North America by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 220 South State Street #1308, Chicago, IL 60604. Cost \$4.50 per copy plus postage.

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The National Director of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Rev. Don Wagner is also a contributor in this issue of *Palestine Focus*. He sends us a gratifying note: "*Palestine Focus* continues to be a fabulous contribution to the cause. And I must say, it is the best newsletter published in the U.S. on Palestinians." Thanks to Rev. Wagner and to the many who have given us encouragement.

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A lot of hard work has been required to document Israel's international role—notably in Central America and South Africa. As Israel's involvements grow, material is

## Getting It All In FOCUS

becoming more available, yet a single source for such vital information has been lacking—that is, until *Israeli Foreign Affairs* appeared a few months ago. Describing itself as "an independent monthly research report on Israel's diplomatic and military activities worldwide," it offers a comprehensive, up-to-date overview on Israel's relations with the United States, its ties with South Africa, the dictators of Central America, etc. One recent article examines "Israel's Return to Africa," covering not only Israel's relationship with apartheid South Africa, but other less-known involvements in Liberia and Zaire. Once again, the close cooperation between the Reagan administration and Israel marks all these relations.

This major new resource, edited by Jane Hunter, deserves to be read by many. Write to *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, 5825 Telegraph Ave. #34, Oakland, CA 94609. Yearly subscription for individuals, \$20.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Time* may have technically won the famed Sharon libel suit, but certainly Sharon walked away with his chest puffed out, ready to make his bid for prime minister as the one who fought back against *Time*'s "blood libel against the Jewish people."

While much of the media went limp after the verdict, some noted the chilling effect on freedom of speech. The

excellent coverage by Alexander Cockburn in the *Nation* stands out. In the midst of the trial, when *Time* declined to launch a defense, he was one of the few to note that "*Time* has shirked the task of an aggressive defense against Sharon. There are plenty of witnesses available, but perhaps *Time* finds them discomfiting. Perhaps it feels that the truth about Sharon could not be told without excessive perturbations of U.S.-Israeli public relations."

Editorially, the *Nation* has also raged against the charade. "Sharon's lawsuit has cast a darker shadow on the Bill of Rights than *Time*'s erroneous story did on the general's reputation." The "erroneous story" is the fact that the famed appendix B to the Israeli report on the massacres did not contain the information *Time* thought would back their case. The fact that Sharon knew there would be a bloodbath still remains true. The *Nation*'s editors gather a "sampler" of quotations from a wide array of Israeli personalities and journalists denouncing Sharon. In one quote, Amos Elon summarizes General Sharon's crimes at Sabra and Shatila: "A man who puts a snake into a child's bed and says, 'I'm sorry. I told the snake not to bite. I didn't know snakes were so dangerous.' This man's a war criminal."

*Palestine Focus* has been denouncing Ariel Sharon as a war criminal since our first issue. The crimes resulting from the invasion of Lebanon itself—even without the Sabra and Shatila massacres—could easily lock up the Butcher of Beirut for twenty consecutive life sentences. Now that we've made the assertion—backed up by international investigations, affidavits, and other documentation—the *Palestine Focus* staff eagerly awaits Sharon's lawyers' libel suit.

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One final, sad note: We join many in the peace movement who mourn the loss of U.S. Peace Council activist Sandy Pollack who died in a plane crash while on her way to the inauguration of newly-elected Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega—to represent the side of America that refuses to swallow Reagan's militarism. Sandy Pollack's efforts for peace also included the Middle East. We hope to keep her memory alive by redoubling our efforts for peace and justice around the world. □

## US Aid...

Continued from page 1

By turning down Israel's request for an emergency grant of \$800 million, President Reagan signaled that the Israeli government will have to accommodate American wishes. But the United States also plans to expand its already considerable system of support to the Israeli economy with forms other than direct aid.

The newly adopted Free Trade Area agreement will completely lift all tariff barriers. Israeli products will enter the United States dutyfree, thereby increasing private U.S. investment in the Israeli economy. Israel wants to "combine American companies with Israeli knowhow," according to Israeli officials. *Forbes* magazine sings praise: "Israel is just one giant R and D [Research and Development] laboratory."

Rafael Benvenisti, director of the Israel Investment Authority, estimates that Israeli engineering graduates earn 40 percent of U.S. salaries. The chief executive of an American electronics firm noted, "It is costing us 30 percent of what it would cost us to do the same type of research in the U.S." Principally, the kind of research under discussion is the

development and sale of military weapons systems and related products. In 1980, 37 percent of Israel's exports to the United States were sales of aviation and computer products to the U.S. Defense Department.

in U.S. aid to Israel between 1948 and 1984. Unaccounted in this total are such items as the outright gift of hundreds of millions of dollars of excess construction material used to rebuild Israeli air bases moved out of the Sinai. In

### "Funding a burgeoning U.S. naval base in Israel is no way to cut the defense budget and reverse the arms buildup."

In a 1977 episode without precedent in the annals of foreign aid, the United States permitted Israel to cancel orders for U.S. tanks and use aid money to develop and purchase its Merkava tank. Standard practice dictates that military aid be used to buy from the United States. The Israelis customarily use U.S. aid money to purchase Israeli-produced weapons. Israel's new advanced fighter plane, the Lavi, the development of which the United States has financed to the tune of \$900 million to date, is only the harbinger of future arms deals.

The U.S. government's General Accounting Office (GAO) reported a total of \$29 billion

1981, for instance, Israel officially received \$2.2 billion in aid. Not included in this amount was \$3.3 billion given the same year to pay for withdrawal from the Sinai. Also unaccounted for is the fact that Israel typically pays only 50 to 60 percent of the price of U.S. weapons it purchases. The \$29 billion figure thus grossly underestimates the real cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

Other U.S. aid recipients are required to set aside enough aid to pay for long-term purchases. Israel is permitted to operate on a cash-flow basis which forces the United States to grant additional aid in later years to

complete projects. Only aid to Israel flows with absolutely no oversight by U.S. government officials to see that such funds are not spent contrary to U.S. law or U.S. policy.

We welcome, therefore, any congressional scrutiny of U.S. aid to Israel, even if its fundamental premises and purposes are left unquestioned. But, unlike Congress, we are unable to sidestep the responsibility of raising deeper questions. U.S. aid to Israel is an integral part of the Reagan administration's military buildup. Jack Kemp's "naval base" comes with a 4-billion-dollar pricetag.

With our taxes, Israel has doubled the number of settlers in the West Bank in the last two years. Israel has built the fourth most powerful army in the world and invaded Lebanon, financed by American tax dollars. Would it not be better to spend these funds for education, low-cost housing, jobs, and other social services in the United States? The choice between guns and butter has never been clearer, and the litmus test of sincerity in budgeting for peace and social justice is just as clear. Funding a burgeoning U.S. "naval base" in Israel is no way to cut the defense budget and reverse the arms buildup. The time has come to cut U.S. aid to Israel. □

### PALESTINE FOCUS

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*Palestine Focus* is the national newsletter of the November 29th Committee for Palestine (formerly November 29th Coalition). The newsletter 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 November 29th Committee for Palestine takes its name from the date declared by the United Nations as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Our 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 November 29th Committee for Palestine. Letters, opinions, articles, and other contributions are welcome.

#### Contributing Editors:

Douglas Franks, Steve Goldfield, Linda (Spike) Kahn, Tony Martin, Hilton Obenzinger, Cathryn Salazar, Ur Shlonsky

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# Palestinians in Israeli Prisons

By Jeanne Butterfield

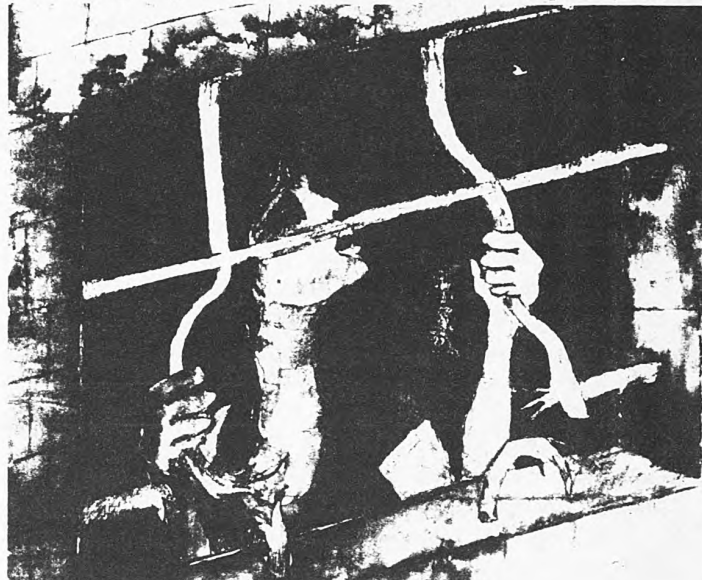
Being arrested doesn't mean the end of struggle," said Siham Barghouty, describing her two-and-one-half-year ordeal in Neve Tirza prison. "The struggle against occupation becomes a struggle against the inhuman treatment we Palestinian prisoners face inside Israeli prisons. Inside or outside the prisons, they look at us as 'dirty Arabs.' But through our strike and our resistance, we succeeded in making them respect us."

Barghouty, an activist with the Women's Work Committees in the West Bank, was released on August 27, 1984. She led a successful strike, demanding that the women not be required to cook for their Israeli guards but be afforded the rights guaranteed to political prisoners under all norms of international law.

"There were fifty of us in Neve Tirza," Barghouty recounted. "About half of the women have been there since 1967. The rest of us were more recent prisoners. The Israelis put the condition on us that we must work, cooking for them and the other prisoners, in order to have the so-called privileges that should be ours all along. If we don't work, we

sentence. Throwing stones at people bears a maximum penalty of ten years.

Palestinian artist Fathi Gabin recently served six months in prison because he painted a picture of a boy lying dead on the ground. The picture may not have been the problem, but the colors were—a boy in a white shirt, with black trousers, lying on green grass, with



Drawing by Palestinian woman held in Israeli jail.

## "Being arrested doesn't mean the end of struggle"

get a place to sleep, meals, one hour of sun, and one visit every two months. If we work, we are allowed a book, a newspaper, a radio, four hours of sun, open doors to our cells on Friday and Saturday, and one visit every two weeks. Male political prisoners have the right not to work. But we had to strike, to be beaten and gassed, to win this right. We demanded that they treat us as political prisoners. We succeeded, for now."

Barghouty was only one of more than three thousand Palestinian men and women held as "security" prisoners in more than a dozen Israeli prisons—eight in the West Bank and Gaza. (This does not include those Palestinians and Lebanese held by Israel in Lebanese camps, such as the infamous Ansar camp.) Under town arrest for nearly two years, Barghouty violated her town arrest order and was arrested and charged with membership in an "illegal organization" (any PLO-related organization) and sentenced to more than two years in prison.

### Arrests under Occupation

Her story is typical—sentences for the wide range of activities made illegal by the more than one thousand military orders put into effect by the Israelis since the occupation began in 1967 have resulted in the imprisonment of more than three hundred thousand Palestinians during the seventeen years of occupation. At present, there are 3,200 to 3,500 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. Of those, 1,000 are serving long-term sentences (twenty-five years to life), 1,000 are serving from ten to twenty-five years, and the rest are serving one-month to ten-year sentences.

Sentences and penalties range from the outrageous to the absurd: On November 26, 1984, a fourteen-year-old boy, Omar D., was fined \$450 (equivalent to one-quarter of an average year's wages) for possessing a photo of Arafat with the Pope. On July 15, two other Gaza youths were sentenced to two and three years in prison for failing to report that they discovered a can of hand grenades buried in a Jabaliya refugee camp cemetery while they were doing voluntary work at the camp.

Grenades are not the only weapons considered dangerous by the Israeli occupation. So are stones, songs, colors of the Palestinian flag, and of course books, magazines, tapes, and records. Stone throwing at a moving car, whether or not the stone hits the car, is now punishable by a twenty-year

red blood spilling from his wound. Displaying the colors of the Palestinian flag is illegal under occupation, whether the colors depict an actual flag or not.

### Town Arrest

Those engaged in more public organizing activities can expect even harsher treatment. Zahera Kamal, an activist with the Women's Work Committees, was jailed for four and one-half months in 1979. Shortly after her release, she was put under town arrest—confined to Jerusalem by day and to her home from dusk until dawn. The six-month town arrest order was recently renewed for the ninth consecutive time. "They changed it this time, though," said Kamal. "I can't go out of Jerusalem to the West Bank and Gaza, except to go to work in Ramallah and back. But I don't have to be home at night. So I can sit here and talk with you. And I was free for fifteen days in July when the prior order expired and they forgot to renew it. They were too busy with the Israeli elections!"

Town arrest, similar to the banning orders used by the South African apartheid regime, was rarely used in occupied Palestine before 1979. But since 1980, Amnesty International reports that at least 148 people have been issued town-arrest orders. Zahera Kamal is one of about 70 Palestinians whose town or home is currently their form of prison.

**"90 percent of all prisoners receive ill treatment of some kind."—Israeli lawyer Lea Tsemel**

### Torture and Forced Confessions

Trade-union organizer Aman Hassan, from Dheisheh refugee camps near Bethlehem, had a different story. "I have been detained and interrogated nineteen times—each time for the eighteen days allowed by military order. I have never been charged or convicted."

Eighteen-day detentions are the most common form of imprisonment for the majority of Palestinian students and activists. Under Military Order 378, any soldier in the occupied territories has the power to arrest without a warrant, and so-called "security suspects" (i.e. any Palestinian living under occupation) can then be held for

up to eighteen days, without any access to an attorney, and before being brought before a military court. The court can renew the detention for up to six months. In practice, suspects are generally not held for more than 45 days, but it is under these conditions of incommunicado detention and interrogation that the well-substantiated mistreatment and torture of Palestinian prisoners take place.

The Red Cross is allowed access to prisoners after fourteen days. As Israeli attorney Lea Tsemel testifies, this is ample time to use many inhuman techniques to force "confessions" from prisoners. "I would estimate that 90 percent of all prisoners receive ill treatment of some kind," said Tsemel. "Ninety-five percent of those convicted of 'hostile activity' are convicted on the basis of their own confession. Sixty to seventy percent of those convicted of breaking the order (demonstrating, distributing pamphlets, etc.) have also confessed. This is because of the security services interrogations, especially at al-Fara'a. They haven't used electricity since 1977, and they don't like to do things that leave marks on the body for the Red Cross and attorneys to see. But they have other methods—sleep prevention, beatings, starvation, making them stand for hours or days blindfolded and handcuffed, or with a filthy bag over their heads, cold showers, or alternating hot and cold for hours, threats of all kinds.

"A new method we've seen in the past two years is the use of 'birds' or collaborators. They give the prisoner a nice welcome after his interrogating. They say they are the security committee of a certain PLO faction; they ask him to prove himself, to tell them what he's done, so they will know he's not a collaborator. They are knowledgeable about the internal politics of the movement. Often a client will exaggerate his story just to prove himself to these so-called friends. And if he refuses to talk, they will threaten him with drugs, with razors. They are freer to use these methods than the official interrogators. And they do use them."

### Fara'a and Jnaid Prisons

Fara'a Detention Center, opened in 1982 near Nablus, was especially designed as a short-term interrogation/detention center. Although Military Order 998 recently added Fara'a to the prisons listed in Military Order 43, it continues to be staffed by the army rather than by the prison services.

Majdi Awawdeh, a Bir Zeit University student, saw the inside of Fara'a for the first time in late March 1984, when he was held and interrogated for twenty-six days. "They made me sit in front of the toilet with a filthy hood over my head, my hands cuffed, from Friday to Sunday. They then brought me in for interrogation and started asking me about the Land Day demonstration. They said they had proof that I was there and showed me a photo of the demonstration, pointing to a figure whose face wasn't even visible. I was in Dura (another town) on the day of the demonstration, for the first commemoration of my father's death.... They put me in a cell, like a cupboard, one-meter square. I couldn't sit or stand. They kept me in it for two days, with no blanket and hardly any food. Later, they interrogated me some more, punching me in the face and stomach, putting a pen between my fingers and squeezing them like till the pen got down to the bone." The scar was still visible, six months later.

Fara'a regularly holds about 250 prisoners. Its cells are twenty-meters square and hold 30 prisoners each. Another building, a former horse stable, holds 5 prisoners in each horse pen. And tents, three by six meters, holding 50 prisoners per tent, are set up top deal with the overflow.

Jnaid, the new hi-tech prison near Nablus, was opened in June 1984 at a cost of over \$6 million. It is designed to hold about nine hundred prisoners and will become the central prison for West Bank Palestinians. Jnaid prisoners are held twenty to twenty-five in a thirty-square meter cell and confined for twenty-two to twenty-three hours per day.

Both Jnaid and al-Fara'a prisons and the others in the West Bank are among the most overcrowded in the world, averaging one square meter per person, where the worldwide average is eight square meters minimum. Not only do prisoners sleep in these cells, they live in these cells twenty-two hours per day. Food in Jnaid is served through the door of the cell and prisoners must crouch in the eighty-centimeter-wide space between bunk beds to eat. Windows are blocked with asbestos "screens" for security purposes—no light or air penetrates these cells. The two-hour exercise period is served in a 290-square meter asphalted courtyard, crammed with 150 prisoners at a time.

### Resistance

These conditions have led prisoners to strike and resist, and the international community to raise its voice in protest. On June 19, three prisoners took a petition to the Israeli High Court, asking it to intervene to stop the acts of torture at Fara'a. In September, Jnaid prisoners began a hunger strike for better conditions and an end to the use of gassing against them in closed cells. Prisoners in Hebron, Ramle, and Nafha began strikes in support and families and friends continued sit-ins at the Red Cross offices, while West Bank and Gaza residents held a general strike on October 4 in a show of support. By mid-October, the strike had been successful in winning the right to listen to transistor radios part of the day and to have sheets for the beds. But more urgent needs were not granted; overcrowding, gassings, beatings, and torture continue. The resistance to these conditions continues also. In the words of one former prisoner, "These prisons are our political colleges." □

*Jeanne Butterfield, a member of the national interim steering committee of the November 29th Committee for Palestine, visited Israel, the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon as part of a delegation from the National Lawyers Guild.*