

Palestine Focus

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Nairobi '85

Palestine Is a Women's Issue

By Jeanne Butterfield

Despite an intense campaign by the United States and Israeli governments to keep Palestine off the agenda, Palestinian and other Arab women, along with their international supporters, made sure that the issue of Palestine was central to the debate and discussion that went on in Nairobi at both the nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs) FORUM '85 and at the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

More than ten thousand women attended the NGO conference, FORUM '85, held at the University of Nairobi campus from July 10 to 19. While delegations from nearly every nation in the world were present at FORUM '85, many Palestinian women from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza were refused permission to attend by the Israeli authorities. Sama Liftawi, from the Women's Work Committees in the West Bank and Gaza, told *Palestine Focus*: "When we heard about Nairobi, we suggested that six of us from the Women's Work Committees attend. But only two of us were given permission. We appealed to the woman responsible in the Israeli government. We said, 'some of our members want to go to Nairobi.' She said, no, they cannot go, because of the reason of the security of the state of Israel. So security of Israel means that four Palestinian women from our committee cannot reach Nairobi, but one hundred and fifty Israeli women can come."

Several other prominent women leaders from the occupied West Bank were also refused permission to travel to Nairobi: Um Khalil, head of the Society for the Preservation of the Family; Zahera Kamal and Siham Barghouti from the Women's Work Committees; and Amal Khraisha and Hanan Bannoura from the Palestinian Committees for Working Women. And Israeli attorney Lea Tsemel, who defends Palestinian prisoners, was also prohibited from attending.

While only twelve Palestinian women from the West Bank and Gaza ultimately reached Nairobi, the delegation from the General Union of Palestinian Women, along with their Arab sisters from Lebanon, Syrian, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Sahara, Oman, and Yemen put the issue of Palestine squarely on the Forum agenda. Women from every corner of the world took up the challenge that the United States and Israel had thrown down. Though the "Zionism is a form of racism" formulation which had been proclaimed by previous United



Fatima Ibrahim of the Sudanese Women's Union and two other delegates to the United Nations women's conference in Nairobi.

Jeanne Butterfield/Palestine Focus

Editorial:

Sabra and Shatila —Again

In September 1982, Phalangist and other right-wing Lebanese militiamen massacred thousands of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps under the watchful and approving eyes of the Israeli military and with the silent complicity of the Reagan administration.

Nearly three years later, the Amal militia launched savage military assaults against the defenders of Sabra and Shatila, as well as the Bourj al-Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut, resulting in thousands of mostly civilian casualties. Israeli officials, while long since forced out of Beirut, wished the misguided Amal fighters much success.

Why have Palestinian camps—not only in Beirut but throughout Lebanon, not only in Lebanon but in the West Bank, in Gaza, in Jordan—why have these refugee camps so often been the target of ferocious attacks by a seemingly diverse group of attackers?

What makes the camps a target is that they are both the symbol and the living reality of Palestinian national identity under occupation and in exile. These refugee camps, scattered throughout the Arab world, are a major element of the Middle East conflict. Their existence, in the first place, results from Israel's disregard for all international law in refusing to allow civilians who fled during warfare—whether in 1948 or 1967—from returning to their homes. The refugee camps thus became a symbol for the

entire world of Palestinian homelessness and a reminder that the "Palestinian problem" remains unsolved.

At first, the camps were focal points of despair; tens of thousands sat in tents, denied fruitful lives and national identity along with their rights. They were "refugees," plain and simple, who needed to be resettled elsewhere. But, in addition to the unwillingness of most Arab countries to absorb them, the Palestinian refugees began to view themselves as more than simply displaced victims, but as an entire people—a nation—undergoing a national tragedy.

Over the years the refugees developed a deeper political understanding of their fate. They realized that a campaign to regain their homeland would require self-organization. The mood of the refugee camps transformed from despair to determination. From places that exemplified the utter denial of national and human rights, the camps became places where an independent Palestinian expression could be voiced, where the sort of self-determination Palestinians seek could begin to develop.

No wonder the Israeli government felt it must target Sabra and Shatila in 1982 and no wonder the other Palestinian camps throughout Lebanon continue to be attacked during the three-year Israeli occupation of

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"The call to 'depoliticize' the conference is itself part of the Arab-Israeli conflict and is politics of the worst kind."—Nadia Hijab, Palestinian delegate to Nairobi conference

Nations women's conferences was not explicitly repeated in Nairobi, thousands of women successfully asserted that Palestine is indeed a women's issue that cannot be made invisible.

The efforts to keep Palestine off the agenda were evident in a report issued by the ultraconservative U.S.-based Heritage Foundation, which reported in February: "Early indications are that the Nairobi gathering is likely to emulate its predecessors (Mexico City, 1975 and Copenhagen, 1980) in all but ignoring the genuine concern of women and focusing instead on a typical UN agenda of political issues such as ... Zionism and providing assistance to Palestinian women." This attempt to make Palestine invisible by declaring it an "illegitimate" issue for a "women's conference" was continued in the pages of the FORUM '85 newspaper, published daily during the course of the conference. One letter from Roselind Preston, of the International Council of Jewish Women, dated July 12, read: "In 'Briefing for Media' there is a reference to 'Palestine' as one of the topics to be discussed. This is not a member state of the UN. Do you mean Israel and/or Jordan?"

Nadia Hijab responded in a letter on July 16, saying "One cannot but suspect that the call to 'depoliticize' the conference is itself part of the Arab-Israeli conflict and is politics of the worst kind."

Middle East Workshops

The FORUM '85 conference included more than one thousand workshops, with one hundred and fifty workshops scheduled for each of the seven full weekdays that the conference was in session. More than thirty workshops were presented by the various Palestinian, Lebanese, and other Arab and progressive Israeli women's organizations on topics concerning the Middle East. These included workshops on the situation of Palestinian women

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Barriers to an International Peace Conference on the Middle East

By Naseer Aruri

Peace Focus has often editorialized on the issue of peace in the Middle East and pointed out that its basis must be justice and democracy, which can only be achieved by Palestinians gaining their national and human rights, including the right to self-determination. But the issue of how that peace is to be achieved is of equal importance; it does no good to speak of abstract concepts, while ignoring how they can be brought to reality.

There are, in fact, two fundamentally different approaches to the question currently being pursued. One—the Camp David approach, named after the trilateral agreement signed between Egypt, Israel, and the United States—purports to achieve peace by a series of similar agreements with other Arab countries such as Jordan and Lebanon.

The other approach is the international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, Israel, the Soviet Union, the United States, and others. The holding of such a conference is the principal peace strategy of the United Nations.

The following speech (edited for length) by Naseer Aruri, professor of Political Science at Northeastern University in Massachusetts and former president of the Arab-American University Graduates, was presented at the twelfth seminar on Pal-

estine of the United Nations Committee for the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at United Nations headquarters in New York in July 1985.

community called for the creation of two states in Palestine, one of which was realized while the other was not. Thus the exercise of the right to self-determination by a primar-

“Succeeding U.S. administrations have thwarted a comprehensive settlement and impeded the pursuit of a broad international solution.”

The Rationale

The mere fact that numerous international conferences were held in the modern period to tackle global conflicts testifies to the utility of this concept as a means of conflict resolution. The Palestine question and its derivatives, commonly referred to as the Arab-Israeli conflict, is one which is particularly suited to this method of conflict resolution. First, the problem itself was created by the big imperialist powers during the interwar period and perpetuated and expanded to dangerous dimensions by the same powers and new ones during the past four decades. The world com-

monly settler community, in a country whose indigenous people are still denied that right, is a problem whose resolution is necessarily an international responsibility. Secondly, this is a conflict in a highly strategic area of the world, in which the two superpowers claim vital interests. Thus the people of the region, the third world, and the big powers share a common objective: the avoidance of an all-out world war in the nuclear age.

The Obstacles

The principal obstacle to the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East lies in the present tension, ongoing since 1967, between two main cur-

rents: the first envisions a peace settlement on the installment plan reached in direct bilateral negotiations between states; the second seeks a comprehensive settlement under the auspices of the Security Council, its permanent members, or a peace conference including the major powers and the parties to the conflict.

The impetus for the first current is usually provided by the United States and Israel; while the Soviet Union, the third world, and often Western Europe and the Arab states have urged an international solution. The first approach almost consistently promoted state-to-state relations to the exclusion of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The second approach assumes the centrality of the Palestine question and the necessity of participation by the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Moreover, the first approach involves various maneuvers to bypass the principle of inadmissibility of territorial acquisition by force, while the second current adheres scrupulously to that principle enshrined in resolution 242. In all, the second approach has been more compatible with the global consensus on the prerequisites for peace in the Middle East: Israeli withdrawal from the Arab land occupied in 1967 and the recognition of Palestinian national rights.

The diplomatic history of the Middle East since 1967 reveals clearly and unmistakably that succeeding U.S. administrations have, in one way or another, thwarted a comprehensive settlement and impeded the pursuit of a broad international solution. Quite simply, America's redefinition of the Middle East as a cold-war arena—combined with a growing perception of Israel as a bastion against radicalism, manifested in a special relationship and a strategic alliance—has dictated a policy which remained consistent with the Israeli perimeters of a political settlement. The questionable assumption that Israel is a

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FOCUS On Action

By Steve Goldfield

About two thousand people demonstrated against Apartheid in Chicago on August 24 with the slogans, “U.S. Out of South Africa” and “Go to Hell Falwell.” The rally was called by the Free South Africa Movement. Sponsors and speakers included Operation PUSH, the Chicago NAACP, the Chicago Peace Council, United Steel Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, United Auto Workers, City Councilmen Danny Davis and Clifford Kelly, and Dick Reilly of the November 29th Committee for Palestine, among others. Reilly spoke of the shared aspirations and enemies of the South African and Palestinian people and highlighted the roles Israel and South Africa play in protecting U.S. interests.

“Just Don't Say You Didn't Know!” That's the theme of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign's (PHRC) national conference, September 20–21, 1985 in the Americana Congress Hotel in Chicago. The conference features panels on “Israel: The Global Context” with Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, Adrien Wing of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, Jane Hunter of *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, and Muhammad Hallaj; “Israeli Right-Wing Violence and Palestinian Rights” with Israel Shahak, chairperson of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, Don Betz, formerly with the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights, and authors Grace Halsell and Ann Lesch. Professor Shahak will be joined by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod at the banquet. Nablus Mayor Bassam Shaka'a has also been invited, though it is unlikely he will be permitted to attend by the Israeli occupation authorities. Palestinian singer Mustafa al-Kurd will perform.

Before and after the conference, Professor Shahak is scheduled for an extensive speaking tour throughout the United States. We urge our readers to look for and attend these events. In addition, as part of its campaign against settler violence, the PHRC has just released a 124-page in-

vestigative report, *Israeli Settler Violence in the Occupied Territories: 1980–1984*. Copies can be ordered from Resources for Change in the Middle East, P. O. Box 53365, Temple Heights Station, Washington, DC 20009 for \$7.95.

Elihu Harris, a member of the California state Assembly, recently wrote a letter to the president of the University of California. Harris asked five questions about South Africa's relationship to University of California-managed weapons laboratories, such as the Lawrence Livermore Laboratories and Los Alamos.

The answers Harris received are illuminating, though of course qualified by the university, which claims foreign nationals are not permitted access to classified information. Out of 607 visits to Los Alamos by foreign citizens between June 1984 and June 1985, Israelis headed the list with 64 visits. Two South Africans also visited Los Alamos; neither country has ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a point raised in one of Harris' questions. Livermore reported 1,340 foreign-national visitors without a breakdown of citizenship, though the university cited one visit by a South African citizen and claimed that the Los Alamos “breakdown by nation is probably fairly representative of the visitors at Los Alamos and Livermore during the past twenty years.”

The university response concludes, “Any prohibition of visits from nations that have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty would be complicated by the fact that several nations, such as India and Israel, who are nonsignatories, are major sources of visitors. The university might find itself in conflict with U.S. foreign policies, as determined by the State Department.” Though the university denies foreign visitors have had access to secret weapons information, the question remains: What were 64 Israelis doing at Los Alamos and what were the apparently larger number of Israelis doing at Livermore last year?

In July 1985 the second North American non-governmental organization (NGO) symposium on Palestine and the twelfth seminar on Palestine of the United Nations Committee for the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were held the same week in New York. Invited guests presented papers at the seminar, which focused on the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East. The article by Naseer Aruri in this issue is taken from one such paper. The symposium was organized primarily for NGOs to exchange experiences and discuss ways to cooperate in work for Palestinian rights.

The November 29th Committee for Palestine was represented by Steve Goldfield, national chair, and Susan Pashkoff, eastern regional coordinator. Camille Odeh, western regional coordinator, and Jeanne Butterfield, national director, represented our committee at the United Nations NGO FORUM '85 women's conference in Nairobi. And Hilton Obenzinger of the National Executive Committee attended the 1985 international NGO meeting on Palestine in Geneva.

Readers of *Palestine Focus* have twice read of the persecution of Professor Fred Dube, a South African psychologist at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, whose course on racism briefly touched on the issue of Zionism. Professor Dube recently wrote to tell us that his tenure was approved by his academic committee but turned down by the administration, apparently a result of unprincipled intimidation from New York Governor Mario Cuomo and others. Our sadness is tempered by Professor Dube's report that he is overwhelmed by work, particularly giving lectures on the present crisis in South Africa. While his attackers have won a battle, Fred Dube, like his compatriots, is far from beaten.

“My name is Sameeha Khalil. I am a Palestinian woman, and I am the head of a women's organization in the Occupied West Bank of the River Jordan.” Thus begins a letter, dated August 17, 1985, describing how Ms. Khalil of the Society of In'ash El-Usra has “consistently been denied permission to leave the West Bank” whether to attend international conferences such as the Nairobi women's conference or to visit her five children, two of whom were expelled from the West Bank and not allowed to return. Ms. Khalil was also under town arrest for two and one-half years until 1983 in El-Bireh. Sameeha Khalil was, most recently, prevented from attending the September meeting of Palestine NGOs in Geneva, to which she was invited as a resource person by the United Nations. Her letter appeals for support in her attempts to travel “by either sending a telegram or a letter of protest to the military authorities or by publicizing my case in any way you can.” We are happy to oblige. Telegrams or letters should be sent to Israeli Defense Minister Itzhak Rabin, the Knesset, Jerusalem, Israel.

A second letter from Rayna Moss of the Israeli group Women Against Occupation arrived to report on the case of Na'amat Al Hilu, a young Palestinian woman from Jbaliya refugee camp near Gaza who spent eight years in Neve Tirza prison after a bomb she was preparing

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How Much Is Palestine Focus

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From a financial point of view, the difference between *Palestine Focus* and no *Palestine Focus* is about \$50,000 a year. That's the minimum for typesetting, printing, rent, telephone, shipping, and other expenses associated with publishing a newspaper. This is just the bare minimum: to improve it and grow will take even more.

But to the more than twenty thousand people who get each issue, we think *Palestine Focus* means more than just a sum of money: To bring you in-depth coverage, we sent representatives to Nairobi to get on-the-spot coverage of the United Nations Women's Conference. And we not only report on Palestine, we work to build the movement we write about.

Palestine Focus also features:

Firsthand interviews

- **Bassam Shaka'a**, deposed mayor of Nablus, who lives under severe political restrictions and without his legs, destroyed in a bombing by Israeli terrorists;
- **Noam Chomsky**, the respected intellectual who pulls no punches whether he is discussing the peace movement, the Zionist movement, or the U.S. and Israeli governments;
- **Mustapha Sa'ad**, courageous Lebanese political organizer disfigured in a car-bomb attack;
- **Felicia Langer**; Israeli lawyer who dedicates her life to defending Palestinian legal, human, and national rights;
- **Jack O'Dell**, international affairs director for Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH, who candidly discusses Black-Jewish relations and Afro-American perspectives on Palestinian rights;

Articles

- **Naseer Aruri**, respected Palestinian author of many penetrating analyses of the hurdles facing the Palestinian people;
- **Rev. Don Wagner**, National Director of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, who documents the rise of the pro-Israel Christian fundamentalist right;
- **Rabbi Elmer Berger**, for fifty years a principled opponent of Zionism on religious, moral, and political grounds;
- Our own articles on Lebanon, Palestinian and Lebanese women, Israel's global role, and U.S. policy in the Middle East;
- Original translations of poetry by poets such as Mahmoud Darweesh;
- Editorials on important issues of Palestinian rights and U.S. intervention.

No, we don't count the value of *Palestine Focus* just in dollar and cents. We believe *Palestine Focus* is invaluable to our readers and to the growing movement for Palestinian rights in the United States. But to publish *Palestine Focus* for the next year, we need to raise about \$50,000 and we need your help to keep producing it, to expand our readership, and to improve our coverage.

And so we're launching our first campaign to get individual donations to keep the presses rolling; we're appealing directly to you—our readers—to respond with the un-

South Africa: The Israeli Connection
"Salute! to *Palestine Focus* for answering questions rarely asked—but which should be—about the Middle East's central and most obdurate problem. In highly readable style it puts into perspective the events, usually too glibly reported in TV one-liners or incoherent, simplistic reportage of conventional newspapers. In my own work I find its knowledgeable expositions of the 'why's' to be valuable contributions to understanding the 'what's'."
—Rabbi Elmer Berger, President, American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism

A Sandinista Speaks: Israel's Role in the U.S. Attack on Nicaragua
"Palestine Focus meets the ultimate test: I met a man at an event who told me he hadn't done anything political in 20 years but came out that evening because he had been handed a *Palestine Focus* on the street. I was impressed."
—Jane Hunter, Editor, *Israeli Foreign Affairs*

Challenging Militarism: Israeli Women Speak Out
"Palestine Focus is a courageous publication which addresses a broad range of issues related to the Palestine question. It is a reliable source of information and analysis for all those concerned with the conflict."
—Omar Kader, Executive Director, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

The Myth of Jewish Wars: The Myth of the Jewish War
"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."
—Rev. Don Wagner, National Director, Palestine Human Rights Campaign

Aid to Israel: Money for War
"It is possible for African manufacturers to export half-finished goods to Israel, finish them in Israel, and re-export them to Europe."
—Finn Hannesburg

Lebanon
"Facing large scale unemployment and economic crisis in social services, can Americans afford to fund Israel's military aggression and illegal occupation and annexation of Arab lands?"

derstanding, commitment, appreciation, and generosity many of you have already demonstrated spontaneously. We value highly the encouraging letters and unsolicited donations we receive. But we need to make your financial support more systematic.

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- \$25 or more—Receive copies of our brochures ("The Palestinians and the Quest for Peace," "The November 29th Committee for Palestine: Who We Are, What We Stand For, What We Do, What You Can Do," and "Human Rights for Palestinian and Lebanese Prisoners") plus our new book, *Garrison State: Israel's Role in U.S. Global Strategy* by Steve Goldfield.
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Focus on Action...

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exploded in her hands. Al Hilu is in need of immediate surgery to remove bomb fragments from her arms, chest, and stomach and to prevent the loss of her eyesight within months. Because she is denied coverage by Israeli health insurance and because hospitals in the West Bank are un-

able to perform the delicate surgery she needs, she must go abroad for treatment but is denied permission to leave by the same Israeli military authorities. Rayna Moss asks, "Why, after being imprisoned for so long, is she being punished again, by being restricted? Why, after paying such a heavy price, must she pay again, this time by loss of her eyesight?" Once again, telegrams or letters should be sent to Itzhak Rabin at the same address.

At press time the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) was preparing for its September 1985 national convention in Washington, D.C. The long list of invited speakers included Lebanese leader Walid Jumblatt, journalist Alexander Cockburn, Israel Shahak, Vanessa Redgrave, Edward Said, Lea Tsemel, Nawal Saadawi, Rabbi Elmer Berger, and Rev. Don Wagner, to name only a few. □

Barriers...

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strategic asset for the United States, entrusted with the task of nipping in the bud potential forces of change ranging from Nasserism and Palestinian nationalism to the present Shi'ite fundamentalism, has rendered the United States partisan and collaborator rather than an impartial mediator. The more U.S. policymakers were inclined toward that perception, the less favorable U.S. policy was toward the concept of a peace conference and a comprehensive settlement and the more insistent on direct negotiations and incremental solutions.

On the surface, U.S. policy throughout the past eighteen years was vacillating between the two directions; in reality, how-

ever, U.S. leaning toward the comprehensive approach and the broad international sponsorship was an aberration. In order to illuminate the trend, I will divide this period into five stages:

1. Between June 1967 and March 1969, while great international pressure was exerted to effect Israeli withdrawal from Arab land, the United States was engaged in a vast attempt to persuade Egypt to conclude a separate peace with Israel. The quid pro quo was Israeli withdrawal and Egyptian termination of belligerency. That endeavor, which remained at the heart of U.S. policy, was temporarily suspended when the pressure for a comprehensive solution began to mount in July 1969.
2. Between March 1969 and October 1973 various attempts were made to

strengthen the United Nations and restore it as the framework for a settlement.... [In the section deleted, Professor Aruri cites the history of efforts to convene a conference and Israeli and U.S. efforts, under President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, to thwart it.]

3. The period between the October 1973 war and Carter's assumption of the presidency in 1977 witnessed a triumph of U.S. diplomacy in its endeavor to promote separate agreements away from the Palestine question and outside the UN framework. The Geneva conference, which was held in December 1973 pursuant to resolution 338, produced no substantive results, and none had been expected.... [Syria did not participate and the PLO was not invited. Professor Aruri points out that the conference was

used "as a smokescreen for Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy.'"

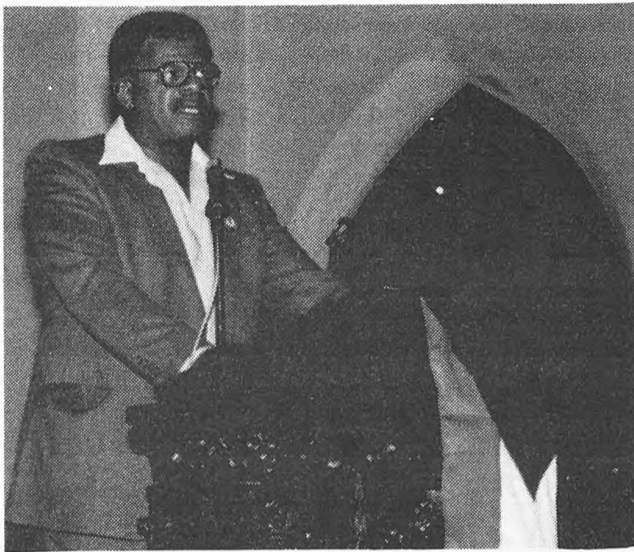
The September 1975 Sinai Accord was particularly harmful to the cause of peace.... In return for withdrawing from a small portion of Egyptian territory, Israel obtained from the United States important concessions, three of which have already proven detrimental to a comprehensive settlement under international auspices. 1) The pledge against dealing with the PLO has practically meant that the Palestine question can be treated as a territorial and security-related matter rather than a national question which involves self-determination. 2) The pledge to coordi-

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"No people I know have been more victim

Eugene "Gus" Newport was elected mayor of Berkeley, California in 1979 and re-elected in 1982. Gus is a leading member of Berkeley Citizens Action (BCA) which now holds eight out of nine votes on the City Council of Berkeley, a city of 120,000. Gus is also co-chair of the U.S. Peace Council and vice-president of the World Peace Council. Gus first became concerned with the Middle East in the early sixties when he worked with Malcolm X. He was interviewed by Palestine Focus on August 9, 1985.

would oppose it. That seems irrational to me. What Measure E said was that if the citizens of Berkeley voted yes, as the mayor of this city I'd write a letter to the president and secretary of state requesting that they cut the amount of aid that goes to Israel for the settlements in the West Bank,



Steve Goldfield/Palestine Focus

the Golan Heights, and the Gaza Strip. That seems to be straight. You're establishing another apartheid situation over there. Certainly, it's not of benefit to the overall economy of Israel based on Israeli academics that I've heard speak to the matter. You're condensing a lot of your resources in one place. Ninety percent of the people who go and live in the West Bank as a result of the loans that are underwritten from monies both from the Pentagon and HUD (Housing and Urban Development) are American Jews. It just doesn't make sense because it doesn't do anything to even stimulate their own economy or anything else. But it is meant to maintain the Palestinian people in a second-class status, having to work for subminimum wages, laws determining where they live and where they won't live. Even when you've had four presidents speak out against the aid going to the West Bank, the United Nations, the Congress, the Geneva conventions and everything else, still the Israeli lobby seems to have the capacity—not only because of their threat to people—but because our foreign policy is such that they do so much of our dirty work, I think that Congress permits it to happen.

PF: How would you evaluate the Measure E campaign?

GN: The people who were opposed to it raised money nationwide, printed up some of the slickest documents I've ever seen, fraught with lies and misstatements, labeled themselves as the "doves of peace." I think it was very good, though, from the standpoint of dialogue. Because if nothing else, for the first time the issue was discussed and never again can you sweep it into the background. It can be discussed again and I would dare say that there are some places, even in the Bay Area, where it might possibly pass.

And I'm not so sure that in another campaign, a measure like this couldn't be won. Had that campaign gone on a little longer—because of the glut of information that was being mailed by these people that began to turn off a lot of people. Who could have even thought that they were going to run a campaign that visible and spend that amount of money on a ballot initiative? It's unheard of. They spent more money on that than we've had landlords spend against rent-control initiatives. And they raised that money in nothing flat.

But the fact is, it's interesting that it didn't have a longlasting effect. Because the manager of their campaign against measure E, Epstein, ran for City Council. He certainly tried to ride the coattails of that campaign. And he lost by seven or eight thousand votes.

PF: What about the significance of the Palestinian issue—and the attacks against him—in Jesse Jackson's campaign?

GN: The attacks that came down on Jesse were as racistly motivated as anything I've ever seen. The fact that the "hymietown" remark was kept in the forefront of the media for something like two months. If you remember in 1980, Jimmy Carter talked about ethnic purity, that stayed in the media for exactly two days. Reagan, when he ran in 1980, attacked every ethnic group in the country. Nobody even cared. But even when Reagan went to Bitburg, [New York City Mayor] Koch said, "Let's go easy on him. We have to work with this guy." That's all right. He represents the white establishment.

So it's a game to attempt to put a split between Blacks and their concerns about the oppression of Palestinians—they always try to suggest that any Black who makes a statement is anti-Semitic so that he or she is always reactionary rather than objectively laying out a position. Of course, as Blacks in this country, you can look at it histor-

November 29th Committee for Palestine First National Convention

The November 29th Committee for Palestine held its first, and therefore founding, national convention in San Francisco in mid-August. Fifty elected delegates represented eighteen cities, including Boston; New York; Washington, D.C.; Chicago and Champagne-Urbana, Illinois; Iowa City; Kalamazoo, East Lansing, and Detroit, Michigan; Seattle; Portland, Oregon; Austin, Texas; Sacramento; San Francisco; Denver; Tucson; Los Angeles; and San Diego. Members from several other cities where we are active were unable to attend.

The November 29th Committee for Palestine began in 1981 as the November 29th Coalition, a loose coalition of more than one hundred organizations in only a few cities. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon sparked a wide range of resistance around the country to the invasion and to the U.S. government role in making it possible. The coalition organized demonstrations, teach-

ins, vigils, forums, and other events in more than fifteen cities. As the initial wave of constant activity slowed, coalition members around the country began to reflect on how to strengthen and prolong such a burst of work. We realized that the loose coalition of organizations had to become a committee of individuals prepared to maintain and build a viable national solidarity organization and committed to working for Palestinian self-determination and against U.S. intervention in the Middle East.

First, we started a national newspaper, *Palestine Focus*, to develop a common national perspective and common national work in distribution. Next, we formed the National Interim Steering Committee, charged with coordinating national work and preparing for the national convention. The NISC, as it was called, was composed of activists from San Francisco, Chicago, Austin, Boston, Washington, D.C., and New York. The NISC began drafting docu-

ments and soliciting input from the local chapters. In 1984 we held four regional conferences to move this process forward. In 1985 the NISC organized the national founding convention, thus completing its work.

In the midst of the nationally focused work, our local chapters worked and gained experience in organizing events and campaigns, distributing *Palestine Focus*, networking with other groups, holding internal study groups, raising funds, and a myriad of other types of activities. The chapters grew in number and in ability, and the work at the local level fed into the national experience through the four regional organizers.

The main purpose of the convention was to establish the committee with a clear political basis and perspective, a democratic structure, and a detailed work plan. The convention discussed and approved four documents: principles of unity, strategy, program of

work, and bylaws. And, for the first time, we elected national officers. Readers of *Palestine Focus* will find they are quite familiar with most of the features of the committee's unity and strategy, as reflected in our past editorials. Essentially, though, the committee defines itself primarily as a United States committee in solidarity with the Palestinian people and as part of the larger Palestine solidarity movement which is itself a component of the broad movements for peace and social justice. Its work is primarily educational with an emphasis on working with those communities which have already demonstrated a strong basis to take up the issue of Palestine in an active way, particularly the Arab-American community, Blacks, Latinos, and other third-world communities in the United States. The committee also targets those active in the broad peace and social justice movement, often including members of the above-

timized than the Palestinian people.”

ically, W. E. B. DuBois, Martin Luther King, we're not supposed to speak about world concerns. Even though two-thirds of the people in the world are people of color. This is supposed to be outside of our purview. We don't have the capacity nor should we be concerned about what's happening in the world, especially in the third world. That's what we are constantly told.

I was called in by the Jewish community here. They suggested that I should never speak out about the Middle East. I told them to forget that. I'd step down from the office before somebody would tell me what I should talk about. So, they look at me through jaundiced eyes. Who knows what will eventually happen? I told them from a principled standpoint; I'm speaking for that which I believe is correct. Nobody is going to suggest to me what I should and shouldn't talk about. I never aspired to be a politician anyway; I got drafted into this. I have no problem stepping down, leaving.

PF: Could you speak more about the receptivity to dealing with the Middle East you find in the broad national peace movement.

GN: Going back to some recent coalitions, nobody even wanted to bring up the Middle East when you are talking about 25 to 30 percent of a \$313 billion defense budget going into the development of Diego Garcia and creating new bases in Egypt and the rest. You're taking resources away from this country for one thing, which means jobs and everything else. But you're also creating the most volatile situation, probably, in any area in the world as unstable as it is. And to provide nuclear warheads in an area like that is totally unconscionable. For the peace movement not to speak up about that makes them extremely corrupt in my eyes.

PF: How hard was it to persuade the national April 20 mobilization to take up the issue of U.S. intervention in the Middle East?

GN: I don't think it was hard. That was a case of a coalition being put together by the right set of players at the national level who early on knew that this was an issue that had to be addressed if you were people concerned about peace. I think what happened here [in the San Francisco Bay Area, where the April 20 coalition refused to take up the national demand on the Middle East—ed.] was we got taken by some people who feel that Israel is untouchable, some people who claim to be labor representatives, who I think are very much in the long run for themselves, who

were totally committed to people of color, in general, not really having a statement. That's the most racist coalition I've ever dealt with, that April coalition here in San Francisco. And I will never again participate with people like that, under any circumstances.

PF: The national did take it up, and those folks raised all sorts of arguments, such as it's going to split the people, it's going to be divisive.

GN: But the fact is that the peace movement is split anyway. The Freeze, for instance, does not want to deal with jobs, needs of working-class people, people of color. And until somebody comes up with a method or mechanism of

late seventies received \$18 million in jobs programs, today, even with real inflation and everything else, we only receive a half million dollars. Or there's no money for mass transportation. No money for infrastructure repair. They're getting ready to kill all money for housing. Getting ready to kill block-grant monies, revenue sharing. They're getting ready to totally decimate any monies that would go toward developing maintenance of people here. That's directly attributable to them maintaining a position in Central America, the Middle East, and all these other places. When they talk about having to increase this for national defense, hell, they've got sufficient arma-

“Blacks in this country are not supposed to speak about world concerns, even though two-thirds of the people in the world are people of color.”

addressing all these problems, then you don't have a viable peace movement in the United States anyway.

PF: How do we move the peace movement forward around the Middle East given these splits around many issues?

GN: I don't think you just focus on the Middle East. I think you have to focus on those situations of which we are all victims from the maintenance of second-class status to maintaining control over resources in various parts of the world and show how the Palestinians are victimized for the same set of reasons as the South Africans or Salvadorans or whatever else. I think we have to make that the central nucleus and begin to work from that. And also show how resources going into maintaining people in this second-class status so they won't rise up are taken away from jobs and programs which would have domestically benefited us here.

People often say why do you as a mayor of a local city get involved in the national and international scene. Well, with the massive increase in the military-industrial complex, there's been about a \$200 billion decrease in domestic programs. Whereas Berkeley in the

ments to decimate the world ten times over. That national defense is just protecting the multinational corporations interests throughout the world. That's what it's all about.

PF: If our strategy is to raise the Middle East and integrate it with these other issues, but right now there's this resistance ...

GN: But that's for us to do. Because we've never done that in the peace movement either. If we integrate those situations and we don't allow them to separate us, then if the media's going to cover it, then they've got to cover everything. They've got to also cover some of the truth of the situation as we're laying it out there.

PF: So it's getting our own house in order and not just around the Middle East but the whole conception.

GN: Exactly. And I think they have to be integrated. As well as being integrated with the treatment of people right in this country. It's all one thing, intrinsically tied together.

PF: So it's more a matter of our taking the initiative and not just reacting to what's in the headlines this week or next week.

GN: Oh, yeah. If we respond to the *New York Times*, we're lost. □

mentioned communities.

The committee's program of work is the most fluid of the four documents, both because it will be constantly refined and adjusted to the needs of solidarity work and because discussion on its specific provisions needs to continue after the convention. The document discussed at the convention has five main sections. The first is organizational consolidation; the convention itself was an important tool of consolidation. This area also includes fundraising and establishing and strengthening national, regional, and local bodies. The second section concerns developing our educational resources and disseminating them. This section includes *Palestine Focus* and the committee's other publications, along with plans for internal education and study groups. The third section, which covers national campaigns and events, includes our ongoing campaign for Palestinian prisoners, events for Sabra and Shatila, our slide show tour, November 29th events, and a number of other projects. The fourth section includes plans for our work with the Palestine solidarity movement as a whole, from cooperative activities and networking to international work. The last section deals with building the Middle East component within the peace and social justice movements and covers such work as Anti-Apartheid and Central America.

The convention discussed many issues, beginning with a forum on Palestinian and Lebanese political conditions and their significance to solidarity work in the United States. Mudar

Abed, national president of the General Union of Palestine Students, emphasized that the PLO is deeply polarized but has not broken up. In the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, such a thorough and broad debate within the PLO is only natural. Whatever the outcome, the PLO will continue to exist and to pursue its program of Palestinian self-determination and independence.

A Lebanese supporter of the National Resistance Front analyzed the complex interplay of political forces which drove Israel out of most of Lebanon. Focusing on the attacks on Palestinian refugee camps, he emphasized the range of political trends which exist within movements such as Amal and noted that the agreement which ended the fighting isolated those who wanted the conflict to continue.

Jeanne Butterfield, our newly elected national director, focused on the appropriate role of North Americans in organizing solidarity for Palestinians and Lebanese. Our primary role is to organize to pressure our own government to desist from blocking, along with Israel, any and all initiatives to achieve Palestinian and Lebanese self-determination and independence and establish a genuinely just peace.

Particularly significant were convention discussions on racism and other forms of discrimination. The need to deal with the complex interplay of racism and religious sectarianism in supporting Palestinian rights demands a high level of clarity on these issues. Racism and religious sec-

tarism, practiced by the Israeli state, victimize the Palestinian people. Largely unchallenged racism is constantly directed against Arab-Americans.

Systemic racism is also endemic to the United States. We considered the role of all these forms of racism in our strategy and in our own internal affairs. In this respect, after considerable discussion, we affirmed our need to be an organization representative of the entire American population. The convention unanimously adopted a proposal by our third-world members to mandate the newly elected National Executive Committee to actively encourage the participation of activists from third-world communities in the leadership and at all levels of our work.

The convention ended with a buffet featuring Palestinian cuisine; our new slide show, "Palestinians under Occupation," produced by Linda "Spike" Kahn; and reports on the convention, on the Nairobi women's conference from Camille Odeh; and on the Moscow World Youth Festival by Pedro Noguera, student body president at the University of California, Berkeley. Osama Doumani, regional coordinator of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, Cati Okorie of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, Shashi Dalal from the San Francisco Bay Area Peace Council, and Jamal Daibis from the General Union of Palestine Students read messages of support. A message from Jews United for Peace and Justice in Los Angeles was also received and read.

In his closing speech, National Chair Steve Goldfield commented on the significance of our organization and our primary issue. "Without our organization and the larger Palestine movement, the broader movement was unable to address issues central to its agenda. How could peace be addressed everywhere in the world but in the Middle East, where the United States spends 20 percent of its defense budget to maintain the Central Command? How can social justice be fought for while ignoring the diversion of funds from education, job creation, welfare, and other social programs toward U.S. aid to Israel? How can we combat racism in the United States while ignoring racism against Arab-Americans in North America and against Palestinians in Palestine? How could U.S. intervention be opposed without opposing U.S. intervention in Lebanon or Iran? And how could these movements—our movements—which depend for their support on moral consistency, be seen to be selective on the geographical areas of their concern?"

For us, our first national convention was a very momentous occasion, which embodied more than two years of work, of organizing, of preparation, of discussion, of successes and difficulties. But we also view the founding and consolidation of a national solidarity committee for the Palestinian people and the growth of the larger Palestine solidarity movement of which we are a part as events of major significance to the movement for peace and social change in the United States. □

Nairobi '85 ...

Continued from page 1

under occupation, the impact on Lebanese women of the Israeli invasion and the continuing occupation of the villages of southern Lebanon, the role of Israel both in the region and globally, and the issue of peace and the nuclear threat in the region.

Dialogue at the workshops was often heated, but in the opinion of Zipporah Toubi, an Israeli woman from the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and head of the Democratic Teachers Union in Israel, "In general, I felt that the level of the discussion here was high. Perhaps it is not so militant as in Copenhagen, with slogans and so on, but the level is higher. It means it is militant in another way."

Sama Liftawi from the Women's Work Committees, told *Palestine Focus*: "I went to a workshop given by the Israeli organization Na'amat (Israeli women's council). The panelist said that all the children in Israel, Arabs and Jews, have the same facilities of education. So I just asked, please tell me why you establish a school in the Jewish settlements before you even establish the houses and yet you don't establish any schools in the Arab villages. She said no this is not true. She couldn't give facts; she just shouted. I told her OK, don't shout, I will give you examples. If you have examples, you give them to me. She refused to hear my examples. Because she knows that I really have examples and she doesn't. She said this workshop is not about education, don't mention education. I said you mentioned it, and I'm replying to it."

Zipporah Toubi told *Palestine Focus*: "In my workshop, I was feeling that we have a common language with the Palestinians. I was feeling solidarity from the Palestinians. They understand more and more that we are the real peace forces in Israel and that we are struggling for the same ends. It showed how important it is to be united. The

Zionists are united, even though they come from different parties. They attacked me after my workshop. One of them said, 'I agree with some of how you put things, I know some of them are true. She belonged to Shulamit Aloni's party, the Citizen's Rights Party. But she said, 'You can say this inside Israel, you can attack your government inside Israel, but not outside. Outside we have to vbe united. Together. To defend our state.' I told her, 'What I say outside and inside are the same, because I want to change the situation. I don't want it to keep going on.' So if I will defend Israel and be on her side it means I agree and I will let it go on. I want the public, the people outside, to know what is going on. Perhaps they can also influence their governments to change the policies of Israel, their relations with Israel. To know the facts about Israel. It will help me also to change the inside. What does it mean, solidarity? This is one side of solidarity. If I don't talk with women here about the facts, about the situation in Israel, what will I talk with them about? About clothes? About cosmetics? I don't have to come to Nairobi for that."

Solidarity Is Not Just a Slogan

For those of us from the U.S. solidarity movement, as well as for the Palestinian women at Nairobi, the overwhelming international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people was an incredible antidote to the isolation that we sometimes feel. Time after time, the link between South Africa and Israel was drawn out. Time after time, women from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the socialist countries, and the democratic movements in all parts of the world, voiced their strong support for Palestinian women and offered words of encouragement.

Sama Liftawi told *Palestine Focus*: "Today the PLO had a display of pictures of the results of the 'Peace for Galilee' operation, the invasion of Lebanon. I was passing by when I saw a woman shouting, 'Is this a forum of propaganda or is this a forum of women?' I was very proud that many African women came up to answer her. Not the Palestinians. And a French woman was also with

them. We have many friends at this conference. And it's not something strange, because when people are demanding their rights, they will have friends. This one, the Zionist woman, was shouting 'At this conference I can see everyone against Israel.' So she feels it. This is not because people don't like the Jewish people but because really they can now understand the problem of Palestine. There are so many friends here defending our case."

Florence Maleka from the ANC was perhaps one of the most eloquent supporters of the Palestinian people. She told *Palestine Focus*: "The common ties between the PLO and the ANC are that we are both dispossessed nations. We've been thrown out of our countries. We have to go asking for space, to live and to fight from. Our enemy is one in the sense that the PLO is being terrorized and deprived of their land by the Zionists and the Zionists are part and parcel of the South African regime. They work in collusion. They exchange all information, materially, militarily, and otherwise, even up to nuclear knowhow. Therefore we are very much on the same path. Therefore the Palestinians and the South African people have a common enemy. We are fighting the same war, we have the same problems. And our oppressors have come together, under the umbrella of the United States of America."

The United States of America failed to keep Palestine from coming to Nairobi. The United States and Israel failed to crush the vibrant solidarity that the rest of the international community has for the struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese people. The expression of that solidarity in Nairobi was both an inspiration and a challenge to those of us working in support of Palestine and Lebanon here in the United States. As Ngo Ba Thanh, Vice President of the Vietnamese Women's Union, told *Palestine Focus*: "Solidarity is not just a slogan. Solidarity is our very survival." □

Jeanne Butterfield is National Director of the November 29th Committee for Palestine. She represented the committee in Nairobi along with Camille Odeh, Midwest Regional Coordinator.



Palestinian children in Sabra refugee camp in Beirut, November 1983. This photo and four others are available in a set of ten postcards for \$5 plus \$1 for postage and handling from ADC, P. O. Box 2621, Berkeley, CA 94702.

Sabra and Shatila ...

Continued from page 1

southern Lebanon. No wonder the Israeli occupation authorities have built concrete barriers to enclose the Dheisheh refugee camp on the West Bank, supposedly to deter stone-throwing Palestinian children but really a form of collective punishment.

But sadly, Israel is not the only one to attack refugee camps. The political ferment in the refugee camps even led such erstwhile allies of the Palestinians as the Amal militia to surround them with tanks. And Jordan's King Hussein killed thousands in his infamous attacks in September 1970.

Recently the Western press, led by the *New York Times*, has engaged in a semantic massacre of its own. The *Times* now refers to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon as "settlements," thus converting refugees trying to return to their homeland into colonists in the homeland of others. While this is only one instance of irresponsibility, it is unfortunately representative of the prevailing attitude not only of the media, but of the official government policy which encourages real massacres to occur. This attitude denies the Palestinian existence as well as evading responsibility for the plight of the Palestinian refugees.

This "play" on words serves to fuel the attack on all those the United States defines as

enemies. There are too many racist stereotypes to enumerate here; however, all Arab regimes, even those friendly to the United States, are treated with indiscriminate racism. The Western media have covered Amal and other Arab movements with the same sort of racism, which can only be countered with objectivity. But we must criticize those such as Amal whose narrow, misguided views lead to genocidal attacks. And we must also criticize Arab regimes when their inaction allows such attacks to proceed.

Syria, for example, was slow to use its considerable political and military influence in Lebanon to stop what became known as "the war of the camps" in 1985. And, while a ceasefire was successfully negotiated after the PLO defenders repulsed the onslaught, the potential for further fighting remains high. In July, Syria supplied the Amal militia with fifty tanks, ostensibly to be used against Israeli attacks. Yet some in Amal stated they were to be used to "confront the Palestinians," and some tanks were immediately deployed around Palestinian camps.

Sabra and Shatila in 1982 and the "war of the camps" in 1985: Both events seem to be based on the same gruesome premise that the "Palestinian problem" can be eliminated simply by eliminating refugee camps. Such a premise is, of course, horrifying, for the implications are, and can only be, genocidal.

Israeli officials—including General Sharon, the mastermind behind the Israeli invasion and the 1982 massacres—clearly spoke of such a goal using provocative language like "decapitating the head" or "destroying the infrastructure" of the PLO. The "infrastructure" was the network of mass institutions—schools, medical services, production facilities—in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, not simply the PLO's military capabilities. The "head" was not just the leadership, but also the mobilized population in the refugee camps that could sustain the effort to recover Palestinian rights.

The massacre at Sabra and Shatila was not only particularly horrible; it came as the climax of the 1982 invasion. Israeli officials hoped, by encouraging their Lebanese rightist allies to murder Palestinians, that the refugee camps throughout Lebanon would empty as thousands fled in terror. Palestinians resisting occupation in the West Bank and Gaza would then despair, enabling Israeli annexation plans to proceed with a free hand, while Palestinians would scurry, in the words of former General Rafael Eitan, "like drugged cockroaches in a bottle."

Massacres to induce terror and thus disorient Palestinians have been used before by Israeli authorities

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Palestine Focus is the national newspaper of the November 29th Committee for Palestine (formerly November 29th Coalition). 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.

Signed articles are not necessarily the opinion of the November 29th Committee for Palestine. Letters, opinions, 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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Getting It All In FOCUS

Israel, with a population of 4 million people, has the fourth most powerful army in the world and ranks high among world arms exporters. One-quarter of the Israeli workforce is employed in military jobs. Israel's best customers include South Africa, Zaire, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, and most of the rest of the world's rightwing dictatorships, many of them openly anti-Semitic.

Garrison State, by *Palestine Focus* editor Steve Goldfield, examines how Israel's military industry was built with massive U.S. aid, who is buying arms from Israel, and how Israel's international activities mesh with those of the United States. This study is fully documented, and the book includes interviews with Victor Tinoco, Nicaraguan deputy foreign minister; Johnny Makatini, director of the International Affairs Department of the ANC of South Africa; and Francisco Herrera of the FDR/FMLN, El Salvador.

This book is copublished by the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and is the first of our new series of *Palestine Focus* Publications. Send \$5 plus \$1 for shipping to *Palestine Focus* Publications, Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127.

Palestine Focus on your home computer? Rick Charnes, a November 29th Committee for Palestine supporter in San Francisco, writes to us about a new way to read about—and respond to—the issues:

"Articles from *Palestine Focus* are now accessible through a new communications medium: computer networking. People anywhere in the country interested in Middle East issues need only a computer and a modem—a device that connects a computer to a telephone. This enables one to call in to a San Francisco-based 'computer

bulletin board' which carries articles on topics ranging from U.S. intervention in Central America to the role of religion in America, from the effects of computers on society to the situation in the Middle East—including articles from *Palestine Focus*."

Rick Charnes explains that you can enter comments after reading articles. "At any given time there is usually a spirited dialogue taking place on all aspects of the Middle East, Judaism, Zionism, etc. One can leave thoughts or messages that normally remain posted for about thirty days.

"This is not a commercial network; the only cost is that of the phone call. To log on, call Newsbase at (415) 824-8767. After receiving a password, type "ME" which will take you to the "Middle East" section."

The word about Palestine and peace in the Middle East spreads in all kinds of ways. David Barsamian, independent radio producer at KGNU in Boulder, Colorado, recorded an hour-long interview with noted author Noam Chomsky on his regular "Hemispheres" program. Now he's making a cassette tape of "Noam Chomsky on Israel and the U.S.—An Analysis of the Special Relationship" available. For copies send \$7 to David Barsamian, 1612 Mapleton, Boulder, Colorado 80302.

The Armageddon Network almost reads like a novel. A former head of a major Arab-American organization waits

for a business luncheon in the Madison Hotel Coffee Shop in Washington, D.C. on March 9, 1978. The potential client does not show up, but Michael Saba finds it impossible not to overhear the conversation in the table next to his, some of which is in Hebrew. A fourth man arrives and is introduced as "Stephen Bryen of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee." The conversation covers a whole range of Middle East issues, particularly the Carter administration's plan to sell jet fighters to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Stephen Bryen replies to a question, "I have the Pentagon document on the bases, which you are welcome to see."

Michael Saba recalls that fateful moment, "Little did I know at the time that what I was about to hear—and the events which followed—would lead me down a path of inquiry which would reveal to me the activities of a small group of influential U.S. policy makers who used their positions to shape American policy—regardless of the economic and strategic costs—so as to favor the military interests of the Israeli government. Ultimately, it would reveal to me the full extent of America's dangerous and tragic policies toward Israel and the threat those policies pose to world peace."

Indeed, Michael Saba began to investigate not only the ascending career of Stephen Bryen, now Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, but also that of Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard N. Perle, two members of a larger "Armageddon Network" of Reagan administration officials who promote an "Israel first" policy that may even violate espionage laws, a network which promotes "policies that will resurrect Armageddon as the final battlefield for the Middle East—and the world."

Armageddon Network by Michael Saba is a harrowing journey into the labyrinths of Washington politics, revealing just how deeply pro-Israel influence stretches into the offices of key policy makers. (Amana Books, 58 Elliot Street, Battleboro, Vermont 05301. \$9.95.) □

Sabra and Shatila...

Continued from page 6

and prestate Zionist militias, most notably during the 1948 Deir Yassin massacre organized by Menahem Begin, who planned it to strike such terror in the population that many would flee.

The Amal militia, while not proclaiming openly its intention of destroying Palestinian civilians and at least nominally allied with PLO forces in opposing the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, carried out its action along similar lines, advancing Sharon's objectives whether intentionally or not.

With the Lebanese political system organized in a "confessional" state which divides political and economic power along sectarian religious lines, Amal seeks a better share for the oppressed Shi'ite community. Amal's goals thus begin to parallel and ultimately could converge with those of the Phalangists and their Israeli backers. The

Lebanese democratic forces, on the other hand, seek to eliminate the confessional system altogether and replace it by a secular one.

Because the PLO is one of the parties in Lebanon most committed to ending sectarianism, its continued organizing to achieve Palestinian rights poses the threat of continued attacks by Israel. Amal, which merely seeks to broker a more equitable re-division of Lebanon's confessional system with the Maronite Christian-based Phalangists, hopes that removing the PLO from the camps would not only weaken the Lebanese secular and democratic forces but also placate Israel. The next target could then be the Lebanese progressives, the aim being to take Lebanon out of the overall confrontation with Israel, thus reinforcing the Camp David process.

Consciously or not, Amal's actions also echo the Phalangists' view that Lebanon's troubles stem from "foreigners," i.e., Palestinians, and that the solution is their re-

moval—if not back to Palestine then to somewhere, anywhere, else. Such logic led to the hideous attack by the Phalangists on the Tal al-Zaatar refugee camp in 1976, resulting in over five thousand deaths. Then, as today, Syria looked on, doing little to stop the slaughter, pragmatically hoping that if all sides to the Lebanese conflict were to remain off balance, Syria would be able to better determine the outcome.

In each of these instances, the attempts to "solve" the Palestinian question by repressing Palestinian political activity in the refugee camps, or by destroying the camps and their inhabitants altogether, have failed. Despite the tragic losses of Sabra and Shatila in 1982, Palestinians returned and rebuilt their lives and their resistance.

How ironic that the American media so often portrays the Palestinians as the "terrorists" or the "troublemakers" in the region. Palestinians, so often victims at the hands of far stronger adversaries, themselves need protection: the Palestinian quest

for self-determination incorporates the right of self-defense.

We who concern ourselves with the fate of the Palestinian people and with peace in the Middle East must speak out when Palestinians are under attack, whether in Beirut, Dheisheh camp, or Hebron. But we must also speak out and act to solve the deeper problem; these attacks are but symptoms of the disease: Israeli occupation and all that it entails—land dispossession, settlements—ultimately the denial of national and human rights. These are the full dimensions of the problem.

Only when Palestinians win their right to self-determination, their right to return to their homeland, and their right to organize an independent state, only then can they make their lives secure from massacre. Those who block such a solution, who call on the Palestinians to continue to live as stateless refugees, whether in other Arab countries or in their own, are really exhorting Palestinians to go quietly to the slaughter. □

Barriers...

Continued from page 3

nate with Israel in any Geneva talks has given Israel a virtual veto over U.S. policy in the Middle East. 3) U.S. agreement that Arab-Israeli negotiations be conducted on a bilateral basis was a formal endorsement of Israel's policy aiming to divide the Arab states and to maximize its goals at the expense of Palestinian rights....

4. The fourth period is the Carter interlude, a nine-month campaign (January–November 1977) by the U.S. president to revive a Geneva conference and achieve a comprehensive settlement.... In a September news conference, Carter said that there could be no Middle East settlement unless there was "adequate Palestinian representation" at Geneva, and he expressed the view that the PLO represented a "substantial part" of the Palestinian people.

President Carter's 1977 offensive was climaxed in the October 1, 1977 joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. statement calling for a comprehensive political settlement in Geneva. The reference to the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinian people and its implication of a reactivated Soviet role provoked opposi-

tion from the U.S. Israel lobby, rightwing political forces, and the governments of Menahem Begin and Anwar Sadat.... The Dayan-Carter working paper of October 5, 1977 drilled a crucial nail in the coffin of the Geneva conference while the Sadat visit to Jerusalem issued its death certificate. The Carter interlude was over, and since then, Camp David was placed at the center of the stage of Middle East diplomacy.

5. The fifth phase, which extends from Camp David in 1978 to the present witnessed the effective abandoning of the idea of an international peace conference and a corresponding ascendancy of the pursuit of separate deals under U.S. auspices. This phase is also characterized by the consolidation of the U.S.-Israel strategic alliance, which provided a green light for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.... The United States has neither allowed the international community to act in accordance with the well-established global consensus, nor has been able to implement its own separatist solutions, thus perpetuating the diplomatic paralysis which it had caused in the first place.

United States opposition to a comprehensive settlement under international auspices has persisted until this very time, even when Jordan and the PLO seem to have met the

American conditions for settlement. Secretary Shultz's first reaction to the February 11, 1985 Amman accord was couched in the form of questions: Will it lead to direct talks between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation? Will the Arabs insist on a broad international conference? ... The available evidence shows that the commitment of Jordan and Egypt to an international conference is not a serious commitment, but rather a cover for direct negotiations. Neither Hussein nor Mubarak want to be accused of pulling a Sadat. Moreover, the broad Arab consensus requires that this concept be invoked, no matter how seriously it is contemplated....

It is small wonder then that Washington seems to be paying special attention to trying to find a face-saving formula which would permit some sort of an international ratification of whatever might be agreed upon in direct negotiations between Israel and Jordan, with Palestinian participation—Secretary of State Shultz characterized that procedure as finding a "supportive international context."

As for the possible inclusion of the Soviet Union in that "context," the State Department now places conditions which are impossible to meet. They include: 1. Resumption of full diplomatic relations with Israel;

2. Ending "anti-Semitic" propaganda; 3. Improved treatment of and more emigration visas for Soviet Jews; 4. Soviet pressure on its "clients" to reduce arms supplies to Iran; 5. Cessation of Soviet weapons deliveries to Lebanese factions; and 6. "Desisting from efforts to obstruct positive moves toward expanding the peace process in the region."

This startling new development in U.S. Middle East diplomacy is bound to retard even further any future progress toward a durable settlement. Not only will it make the de facto exclusion of the Soviet Union from the diplomatic configuration of the Middle East permanent, it will also sow the seeds of the next conflict.

This survey has shown that America's diplomatic enterprises—from the Rogers plan to the "shuttle diplomacy," to Camp David and the Reagan plan—have produced no positive results. More importantly, these plans have created a facade of diplomacy, which enabled Israel to divide, conquer, and wilfully ignore the global consensus. The resultant diplomatic perversion, euphemistically known as the peace process, has effectively rendered the concept of international peace conference to the periphery. Not unless that concept occupies its proper place, as the center, will the hope for a just and durable peace become genuine. □

"The Palestinians Are Today's Vietnamese"

By Felicia Langer

Felicia Langer is one of the best-known Israeli lawyers; her specialty is the defense of Palestinian prisoners. This article is excerpted from a speech she gave in Brooklyn, New York at a November 29th Committee for Palestine event in June 1985.

Palestinian Women in Prison

I am here on behalf of the Palestinian sisters and brothers and representing—not officially, but in spirit and in mind—those in Israel who revolt against the official policy of all the Israeli governments from the beginning and now. And I come with greetings from the prisons of the occupation and from the big prison, the occupied territories, one big prison of Gaza and the West Bank.

I want only to describe the heroic struggle of the Palestinian women behind bars and especially behind bars. For eighteen years I have been accompanying the Palestinian women, my sisters, behind bars. All their struggle to retain self-respect, national dignity, high spirit thrives in front of the most sophisticated, hypocritical oppression of the Israeli jailers. It is not easy to cope with such an oppression which is supported by media and unfortunately supported by the majority of the Israeli population because of the brainwashing and media and so on. You have to be not only courageous but you have to retain your love to the surroundings, your love of human beings, your dedication to the cause—not to be embittered—to show

Peace or Surrender?

I want to tell you the truth of the Palestinian children. You are far away. Some of you are Palestinians. I am not a Palestinian. I am a Jew, an Israeli, but I dare to say that my life is almost completely connected with the Palestinian cause because it is for the benefit of my people, too. I think that the bridge which I try to build is something which may be remembered after some years. But I am coming from the occupied territories. And I feel the spirit of the occupied territories.

I was a little bit surprised by some moves of people and organizations saying that "the time is running out and that we have to be in a hurry to take whatever we can get, which means whatever the Americans will give us or the Israelis will give us because otherwise we shall miss the train. This is an irreversible situation in the occupied territories because forty thousand of the Israeli Gush Emunim (it means the Bloc of the Faithful) living in the occupied territories. And now or never. Whatever they will give us."

Mr. Sadat, when he came to Jerusalem, said almost the same. He said, "Now or never." Of course, I am not a Palestinian, therefore, I am not interfering too much. I am only giving the message of what I know. I am convinced that it is a true message.

I am defending the second generation of Palestinians; it means I am defending, in the military courts, the sons of my clients of 1967. I was a lawyer for a father in 1967; I am now defending his son. And his son says to me, "Felicia, don't be excited.



Jeff Semaani/November 29th Committee for Palestine—Binghamton, New York

massacres. Enough massacres! Enough.

So I think that I am entitled to deliver the message. But I think that I am entitled because I am following the children and their parents for so many years. And I know their mood. They feel bad, yes. They feel terrible. But after the victory which was in Lebanon and the failure which was in Lebanon, I don't think that there is any objective necessity of surrender. Because Israel suffered a terrible failure in the defeat in Lebanon.

Israel's Defeat in Lebanon

They wanted to expand. They failed. They wanted to liquidate once and for all the Palestinian question and to eliminate the Palestinians in Lebanon and to show to their brothers and sisters in the West Bank and Gaza, you will never raise your head because everybody is all dispersed. You see what was done. And they didn't succeed. They wanted to guarantee American domination over the Middle East and in Lebanon and to crush all the national movement in Lebanon and they failed. They wanted to impose peace over another Arab country by force. For the first time they wanted to show that by arms, by brutal force they are able to impose peace. And they failed.

After all these failures came another one. A very deep crisis among the Israeli society. Inflation, economic crisis, and the morale which is—I don't know how low, beyond zero. And now, of course, the Israeli peace forces understood more than before that there is no other solution than the solution of granting to the Palestinians their legitimate

rights and, of course, the right of self-determination.

Therefore, objectively speaking, there is no justification for desperate moves. But, of course, there is a justification to intensify our struggle to solve the Palestinian question, to convene this international conference because of these prolonged and continuous massacres of the Palestinians. Because now those in Lebanon, those Shi'ites

Palestinians Need to Return to Palestine

It is bringing us once again to this contention, which is something of which we have to persuade everybody, that this enforced homelessness of the Palestinians which started in 1948, this homelessness is bringing disaster to the Palestinians and they cannot be safe except on their own soil in their homeland. And if somebody wants to solve the Palestinian question and to save the refugees, I don't think that the king of Jordan will ensure the right of the refugees to return or to receive indemnities as the UN resolution of 1948 said. Otherwise, I don't know how the refugee camps in Lebanon or in Syria will be emptied. Because only by pressure, international pressure and by the help of the Soviet Union, will Israel be forced to recognize the right of self-determination of the Palestinians including the right of the refugees to return or to receive indemnities. To be citizens, to have rights not to be at the mercy of fascists; and it isn't important if they are Arab fascists or Jewish fascists.

Therefore, we speak about those who are dedicating their lives in prisons, who are denied the fresh air and the sunshine and the smile of a child. We are talking about the children who, instead of playing and studying or eating ice cream, are lighting matches to bottles filled with gasoline and then going from here to prison. I am seeing day by day such hands—such little hands—handcuffed. In the name of those we have to proceed and to persuade people and to be determined to help the Palestinians, to struggle along with the Palestinians, to try and persuade the peace movement in the United States

"I don't envy those who think they can convince Palestinian youth to take anything less than a Palestinian state."

how your moral standards are high and how eroding are the moral standards of the occupiers at the prisons.

The prison authorities all the time tried not only to imprison their bodies but to imprison their souls, their minds, and the cultural struggle in prison was one maybe of the most painful punishments against the prisoners, to deny them to read what they wanted, to deny them the right to paint, to draw.

This is also true in the big prison, in the occupied territories; it is the same even outside prison, but for the prisoner to express herself, her love for her homeland, for liberty is forbidden. It means the separation has to be total in order to create a personality of a slave, of somebody who would be indifferent to everything, and if the day will come and the gate will be opened, a crippled woman will be released.

But I know as an eyewitness that all of them retain high spirits. They are observing and commemorating all the Palestinian holidays of the Palestinian movement. They are beaten and harassed and sometimes placed in solitary confinement after every such celebration, after singing a song, of speaking out only about the hope to be free and to enjoy freedom as every human being has the right to. And nevertheless, every time, every holiday is observed by prisoners in Neve Terza. And no repression is able to cause them to abandon this beautiful tradition.

Because I have a younger brother and he will come after me." And they are patient. It means they are struggling against occupation by all means: songs, paintings, bottles—whatever they have.

I don't envy those who think that they are able to convince them to take anything less than a Palestinian state. Why am I speaking about this? Because I think that to have less than an independent Palestinian state means to have less than the right of self-determination, means to betray the second generation of Palestinians whom I am defending. And I think it is a very great sin and it will never be forgiven and it will not work, too.

Those who are now fighting the occupation have never seen any other regime. They were born into the Israeli tanks and machine guns and soldiers and the Israeli flag. They don't know anything more. They are not even instigated by their fathers. But they cannot go on with this occupation. And as the 1 million French who lived in Algeria for one hundred years didn't make the situation in Algeria irreversible, so forty thousand Israeli extremists in the occupied territories are not turning the situation in the occupied territories irreversible.

Only an international conference with the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council, including the Soviet Union, can guarantee a real peace. Not a mockery. Not another prescription for massacres. As the Sadat "peace" was a prescription for the Lebanese war, another so-called peace will be a prescription for more

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Therefore, objectively speaking, there is no justification for desperate moves. But, of course, there is a justification to intensify our struggle to solve the Palestinian question, to convene this international conference because of these prolonged and continuous massacres of the Palestinians. Because now those in Lebanon, those Shi'ites

and the whole world to take over the Palestinian cause as they took before the Vietnamese one.

The Palestinians of today are the Vietnamese of yesterday because they are the only people under the sun denied all human and political rights in the last decade of the twentieth century. It is an anachronism which we have to erase and united we can. Thank you. □