

Palestine Focus

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Editorial:

50¢

U.S. and World Opinion: Pressure U.S. and Israel for Peace

There is a grave danger that the Bush administration will squander the current opening for Palestinian-Israeli peace. Israel outright rejects all the terms of the Palestinian peace proposal, and the administration has so far refused to challenge Israel's rejection. Nevertheless, public opinion is far ahead of the government's position in demanding steps toward negotiations and peace.

The diplomatic dialogue between the U.S. government and the Palestine Liberation Organization is of historic importance. The U.S. government has been forced to acknowledge the gains of the Palestinian uprising, the inti-

fada, and the widespread international credibility of the bold Palestinian initiative launched at the Palestine National Council (PNC) in November, which also declared an independent Palestinian state. However, during the first months of the Bush administration, the U.S. government has dragged its feet, declining to pressure Israel or to move toward the international consensus of the United Nations international peace conference and a Palestinian state. While the Bush administration takes an indulgent position toward Israel, it has increased pressure on the PLO.

The Bush administration says it is just being "cau-

tious," but the new president has not hesitated to make aggressive demands on the PLO. The U.S. government strategy has been to use the dialogue to demand additional concessions from the Palestinian people. The Bush administration calls on Palestinians to "halt violent demonstrations in the territories, stop the distribution of inflammatory literature, and block raids against Israeli targets from southern Lebanon," according to the *New York Times*. Israel is also to be asked to "ease its grip on the territories by releasing [some] Palestinian prisoners and reopening schools." Nabil Shaath, chairman of the PNC political committee, responded, "We are the only occupied people in the world who are being asked to refrain from any expression against the occupation. This is ridiculous. This is really a double standard." Shaath continued, "What I totally reject is the notion that you stop the intifada in all its facets—including publications and leaflets—while the Israeli occupation continues.... We want the dialogue to continue, but we want it to move into areas of substance."

At the sixth session of meetings between the PLO and the United States, PLO representative Yasser Abed Rabbo told Ambassador Robert H. Pelletreau, "The intifada is continuing until the Israeli evacuation of our homeland." Responding to the U.S. insistence on having individual Palestinians hold discussions with Israel, Rabbo said, "The address is the PLO, and there will be no other address. This is the will of our people, and this is the united wish of our people everywhere."

The Israeli government, despite public-opinion polls showing that 66 percent of Israeli Jews believe peace talks with the PLO are inevitable, has opposed the dialogue from the beginning and sought to "convict" the PLO of "terrorist" actions in violation of its pledges in Algiers and



Demonstration for Palestinian rights in Washington, D.C. last March.

Photo: Mary Barrett

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Israelis Divided over PLO Peace Initiative

By Roland Rance

Jerusalem, March 1988—"Since the government has declared the PLO a terrorist organization, it is only permissible to broadcast on the television items which fit this declaration and portray the PLO negatively as a terrorist organization. It is forbidden to broadcast anything which contradicts this declaration and portrays the PLO as a political organization."

So ruled Judge Goldberg, chair of Israel's election commission, in banning a broadcast by the Progressive List for Peace in November's Knesset election. Indeed, anyone relying only on Israeli television would be totally unaware of the dramatic developments in the PLO's position and of the no-less-dramatic response of parts of Israeli society.

During the meeting of the Palestine National Council (or "meeting of the heads of some of the gangs of murderers," as one politician proposed calling the PNC), the director of broadcasting banned any broad-

cast of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's speech; interviews on the subject with Palestinians from the occupied territories have been forbidden; and broadcaster Ehud Ya'ari has not been allowed to screen an interview he recorded with Arafat during his recent press conference for Israeli journalists. Journalists have also been disciplined for using the words "intifada" and "territories," instead of the officially approved "disturbances" and "Judea, Samaria, and Gaza."

Despite this ostrich-like attitude of the media, it is apparent that wide circles of Israeli society have responded positively to the new tone of the PLO. The recent meetings between Israeli Knesset members and Palestinian activists abroad and the calls for a government opening to negotiations with the PLO are definite signs. Significantly, such meetings have included not only veteran non-Zionist supporters of negotiations, such as Hadash (the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) and the Progressive List for Peace, but also Zionist Knesset members Shulamit Aloni, Ran Cohen, and Yossi Sarid of Ratz (the Citizens' Rights Movement), Yair Tsaban from Mapam, and even Ora Namir and Lova Eliav from the

Israeli Labor Party. Others in the Labor Party calling for negotiations with the PLO include Knesset members Avram Burg and Haim Ramon and former party General Secretary Uzi Baram.

The Labor Party, however, remains in the Shamir government. Its deputy leader, Yitzhak Rabin, as defense minister has been responsible for the killing of hundreds and maiming of thousands of Palestinian civilians, for the arrest of many thousands of Palestinians, for the closure of scores of Palestinian national institutions, and for the

expulsion of leading activists, who can now only meet Rabin's more moderate party colleagues abroad. And Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, on this as on so many other issues, has attempted to face both ways. His position is neatly summed up by the front-page headline in *Hadashot* daily on 10 March, which reads "Peres authorized a Labor Party representative to meet Arafat in Tunis, then changed his mind." The PLO remains a "terrorist organization," and the chances of Shimon Peres changing or breaking the law seem remote.

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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors:

Allow me the opportunity to tell *Palestine Focus* readers about a traveling art exhibit, organized out of Berkeley, California. Entitled "In Celebration of the State of Palestine," it includes original works on paper by over 40 artists inspired by the November 15 Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine. Each piece, 22 by 30 inches, is backed with foam core and "shrink wrapped." The show is easily mounted with push pins and travels in a specially designed wooden box. The work is of exceptional variety and quality. Because there is so little imagery celebrating Palestinian independence there are no tired clichés to fall back upon.

As the artists' own statement concludes,

"Our show honors Palestinians' struggle to become visible in their own right. We celebrate the forbidden longing of a people for liberation. Politicians shuffle from one foot to another. We rush in and create, on rectangles of paper, a place where the Palestinian flag flies freely. We prefigure in the realm of the imagination the end of a bloody journey while we honor the suffering that will be necessary to bridge the distance between imagination and reality."

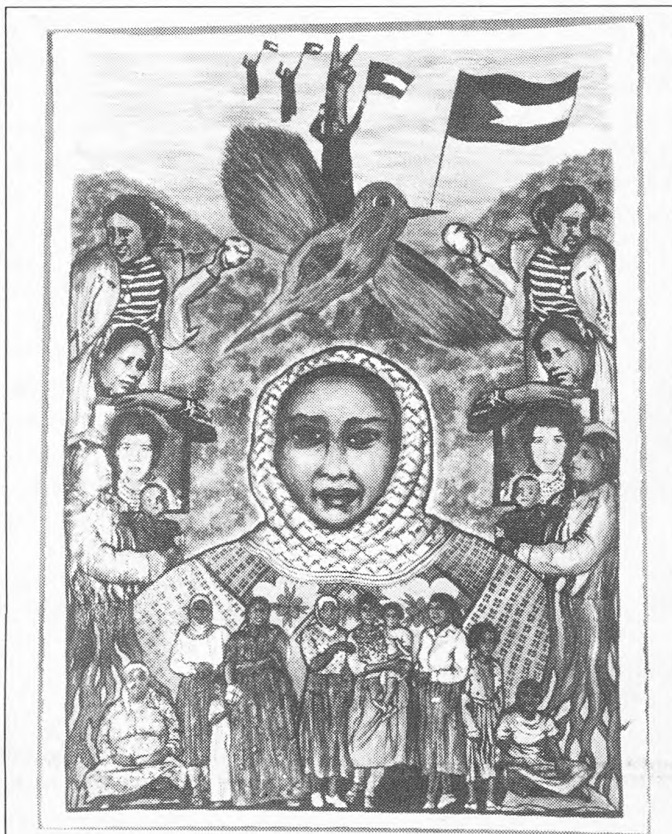
We would very much like this show to be seen by communities across this country and internationally. We hope that, some day, it will hang in East Jerusalem or Gaza City or Ramallah. But its proud and explicit images

would not pass the vigilant eye of Israeli military censors. So the show will probably remain in exile for a while.

We have been honored by a request to display the exhibit in October 1989 at the European Parliament gallery hall in Strasbourg, France. We hope that in September it can be displayed at the meeting of the United Nations NGOs on the Question of Palestine in Geneva, Switzerland.

If your readers want more information or are interested in having the exhibit in their community they should write PALART, 114 Echo Avenue, Oakland, CA 94611 or call (415) 653-0776.

Osha Neumann
Berkeley, California
March 1989



Painting by Miranda Bergman for "In Celebration of the State of Palestine" art exhibit. Photo: Osha Neumann

Israel Divided ...

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The most positive response to the PNC has come from the protest organizations of the extraparliamentary left. Dai la-Kibbush (End the Occupation), Hala ha-Kibbush (Down with the Occupation), and the 21st Year Committee have organized several demonstrations and published statements in support of the Algiers decisions and the Declaration of Independence and have intensified their contacts with Palestinian activists in the occupied territories. These groups, which bring together people long involved in various protest activities together with others disappointed at the response of Peace Now to the intifada and its repression, see the developments inside the PLO as a vindication of their long-held demand for peace negotiations with the PLO, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state next to Israel.

Peace Now Makes Important Shift

But it is Peace Now itself which has responded most dramatically to the PNC decisions. Within a week, Peace Now published a statement that "in Algiers, the PLO abandoned the path of rejection and adopted the path of political compromise ... the government of Israel must call for direct negotiations with the PLO.... Speak with the PLO." One does not have to agree with Peace Now's language and analysis in order to see this as a radical departure from their earlier refusal to talk with the PLO "until it rejects violence and recognizes Israel's legitimacy." Peace Now now accepts that these conditions have been met by Arafat's speeches in Algiers, Geneva, and Stockholm, and its representatives have also taken part in meetings with PLO supporters abroad. Additionally, Peace Now mobilized many hundreds of Israelis on March 4 for a series of visits to Palestinian communities in the occupied territories, and its call for a "Day of Peace" on April 8 has been welcomed by the PLO.

According to Peace Now spokesperson Amiram Goldblum, "We try to go half a

step in front of the public ... this time maybe we have stepped a whole step in front of the public." Possibly, though, the public was in front of Peace Now: A poll published in *Yediot Ahranot* at the end of the year showed that 54 percent of those questioned (all Jews, as in all Israeli opinion polls) favored peace negotiations with the PLO. It is clear that the extraparliamentary right takes seriously the threat of such negotiations. Israeli settlers in the occupied territories have accused Shamir of treason and have stepped up their vigilante activities against Palestinians. Responsibility for a series of arson attacks has been claimed by a new group calling itself Sicarii (after the extremist gang of Jewish assassins in the Second Temple period). Their targets have not been, as might be expected, Peace Now and the groups to its left, but rather two artists associated with the center-left, the sociologist responsible for the *Yediot Ahranot* poll (and for the Likud's election polls), and Prime Minister Shamir himself.

Sections of the left, too, seem to believe that peace negotiations with the PLO are imminent. Soon after his release from administrative detention, Faisal Husseini addressed a meeting of Dai la-Kibbush in Jerusalem. The atmosphere was one of mutual admiration and self-congratulation, as if peace and a Palestinian state would arrive the day after tomorrow—and, indeed, if these were the parties to negotiations, such might be the case. Faisal Husseini is indeed close to the Palestinian mainstream—though increasingly the demands are those of the intifada generation, and concessions which the older leadership might offer would not be acceptable to those who have sustained the uprising for so long. But it is still an illusion to believe that Dai la-Kibbush represents the mainstream of Israeli politics.

The intifada continues and is relegated further and further back in the pages of the daily press. The trials continue of Israeli leftists accused with contact with or support of the PLO (Michel Warshawski, the *Der-ech Hanitzotz* editors—who recently pled guilty to lesser charges, and the "Romania

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FOCUS ON ACTION

By Steve Goldfield

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was scheduled to visit Washington in April to explain his government's response, or lack of one, to the PLO peace initiative to President George Bush. Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) chapters across the United States planned demonstrations to protest Shamir's visit. As a PSC statement, calling for national protests, said, "It is time the American people sent a message to Yitzhak Shamir. You cannot visit the United States with your continued rejectionist policy without vocal opposition from Americans of all backgrounds. You must wake up to reality as presented to you by the intifada and by the condemnation of world opinion. You cannot return to Israel and expect that U.S. citizens will continue to pay for human-rights abuses, that we will rescue your government with more bailouts while millions of Americans are homeless."

The New York chapter of the PSC has been holding weekly vigils at the Israeli Mission to the United Nations in memory of the Palestinians who have lost their lives in the fight for self-determination and to protest Israeli brutality and the continued denial of the Palestinians' basic human right to a homeland. The vigils are held every Wednesday from 5 to 6 pm at 42nd Street and 2nd Avenue. For more information, call (212) 964-7299. Similar weekly protests are beginning to spread to other cities as well. The San Francisco Women in Black (inspired by the Israeli group of the same name) meet at San Francisco Civic Cen-

ter, opposite City Hall, every Friday at 12:30.

The Boston Women in Black demonstrate on the first Friday of each month in front of the Israeli consulate at the Statler Building, near the Park Plaza Hotel. We learned of their activities from *The Intifadah*, the new newsletter of the Coalition for Palestinian Rights, P. O. Box 2316, Cambridge, MA 02238 (\$10 donation for a yearly subscription). The CPR, which includes Palestine Solidarity Committee, Arab-American Institute, Mobilization for Survival, Boston Peace Council, and other organizations, is the group which sponsored Question 5 on the Cambridge-Somerville ballot, which called for an end to U.S. aid for Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Question 5 passed 53 to 47 percent. The CPR received an award at the Rainbow Leadership Banquet in January.

The *New York Times* reported in February that "Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu, the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner, asserted this week that he found events in the Israeli-occupied territories similar to those in South Africa. He urged American Jews to press Israel to reach a settlement with Palestinians and to repudiate its joint programs with the South African government." Tutu was speaking at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York; "his strongly worded appeals for changes in Israeli policy were applauded by the congregation."

Tutu also said he found it "very, very difficult to understand" Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. "If you changed the names, the description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would be a description of what is happening in South Africa." Tutu told the congregation that he had previously kept his silence because he feared he would be accused of anti-Semitism.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee is holding four regional conferences this spring. East coast chapters met in New York in February. The Midwest and West meet in April; the South will meet in June. The conferences are

focusing on developing the committee's program of work, educational workshops on how to do the work, and on building up the organization to carry it out. The PSC is giving particular attention to an effective political strategy to discuss and influence U.S. government policy in the period of the intifada, the Palestinian peace initiative, and the U.S./Palestinian dialogue. If you are interested in joining the PSC, these conferences provide a unique opportunity to find out more about the organization and its work. For more information, phone the PSC national office, (415) 861-1552.

The Jerusalem newspaper *Al Fajr*, the Israeli peace movement magazine *New Outlook*, Friends of Peace Now, and the American Council for Palestine Affairs held an unprecedented peace conference between Palestinians, including members of the Palestine National Council, and Israelis, including members of the Knesset, at Columbia University in New York in March. The historic conference on the prospects for peace drew extensive media attention, particularly because of the intense diplomatic activity between the United States government and the PLO on one hand and Israel on the other.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is holding its national convention in Virginia in April, its theme "Breakthroughs, Achievements & Hopes." Some of ADC's invited speakers include Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, Mubarak Awad, George Ball, Julian Bond, Rep. George Crockett, Jr., Norman Finkelstein, Glenn Frankel, Dan Georgakas, Marwan Hamade, Gary Hart, Faisal Husseini, Archbishop George Khodr, Rep. Jerry Lewis, Mustafa Saad, Nabeel Shaath, and Ibrahim Souss. Contact ADC at (202) 244-2990 for more information.

Chapters of the Palestine Solidarity Committee across the United States plan to protest the use of tax dollars to pay

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The United Nations, NGOs, and Palestine

By Jeanne Butterfield

The United Nations has become the forum of international consensus, especially on the burning issue of Palestinian rights. In the United States, where the government is strongly isolated from that consensus, it is easy to forget that virtually all the governments of the world, including our Western European allies, share an essentially common position, except for Israel, the United States, and South Africa. With the growth of the Non-aligned Movement, the voice of the people of the world has reached into the halls of the UN. And the United Nations also provides for participation of NGOs, nongovernment organizations such as churches, trade unions, lawyers' committees, and solidarity committees. NGOs have been particularly active at the United Nations on issues of nuclear disarmament, the condition of women, human rights, and Palestinian rights. Since the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is usually viewed as an intractable, complex problem, it is worth tracing its history at the United Nations in some detail.

The United Nations and Palestine

The United Nations first became involved in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict when Britain brought the thorny problems of its mandate territory of Palestine before the UN in April of 1947. The UN established the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which after much deliberation, recommended by majority vote that Palestine be partitioned into two states, Jewish and Arab, with international status for Jerusalem under the administrative authority of the UN. The partition plan was adopted by the General Assembly as Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947.

In the months and years that followed, the UN supervised various truces, attempted to mediate the conflict, and passed several resolutions relative to a peaceful settlement. Resolution 194, adopted in December 1948, delineated the way to resolve the Palestine problem, including the right to return or compensation for displaced refugees, demilitarization and the internationalization of Jerusalem. UN Security Resolution 242, adopted in November 1967, stipulated two principles necessary for a just and lasting peace: "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and "respect for ... the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area." Resolution 242 also called for a "just settlement of the refugee problem."

In December 1968, the General Assembly established a three-member Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. This committee issued sixteen reports between 1970 and 1984 and continues to provide a wealth of information to the international community about Israeli annexation and settlement practices and violations of human rights under occupation.

The international focus for much of the fifties and sixties had continued to be on the problems facing Palestinian "refugees." A broader political context in which to view the "Palestine problem" began to be asserted onto the international agenda with the founding of the PLO in 1964 and the subsequent adoption of its National Charter in 1968. In December of 1969, the UN formally recognized that "the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

During the outbreak of armed hostilities between Israel and the Arab states in 1973, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 338, which called for an immediate truce and cessation of all military activity. Resolution 338 also called for the implementation of Resolution 242 and for the convening of an international peace conference under UN auspices, jointly chaired by the United States and the Soviet Union. In fact, this international conference was convened in Geneva in December 1973 but adjourned after only three meetings. Calls for resuming the Geneva peace conference were made annually by the General Assembly until 1979.

General Assembly Resolution 3236, in November 1974, reaffirmed that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were indispensable for the solution of the question of Palestine. These rights include the right to self-determination, to national independence and sovereignty, and the right to return to their homes and property. The General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, consisting of 23 member states, in November 1975. The committee prepared a special report, which contained recommendations regarding the Palestinians' right of return and

A Program for Peace in the Middle East

In the context of recent historical shifts, the U.S. peace movement is developing a new agenda for Palestinian rights. The North American Coordinating Committee of Nongovernmental Organizations (NACC), which works in collaboration with the United Nations on the question of Palestine, is an effective umbrella organization linking hundreds of organizations from churches to solidarity committees [see article, page 3]. The NACC has launched a major national petition campaign, entitled "Peace for Palestine and Israel in 1989." The petition has four demands which call on the U.S. government to 1) recognize the Palestinian state; 2) recognize the PLO; 3) take steps to immediately convene the international peace conference under UN auspices; 4) press Israel to immediately end the occupation. The petition campaign will culminate in public presentations of signatures to the White House and Capitol Hill next November 15, the anniversary of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. The campaign will be accompanied by media ads and local congressional visits to present congresspeople with the sentiments of their constituents.

The thrust of the campaign is to raise the question of Israeli violation of Palestinian human rights and U.S. aid to Israel directly in the halls of Congress and before the public. The State Department report is now officially part of the Congressional debate on U.S. aid. U.S. law prohibits granting aid "to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." Under this standard, U.S. aid to Israel is clearly illegal.

Rather than being merely punitive, curtailing U.S. aid to Israel can provide important leverage in pressuring Israel to the peace process. Public opinion must be mobilized in coming months to push the Bush administration and Congress to apply that pressure. NGOs are working to call on Congress to convene full, open, and public hearings on the human-rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza. Such hearings can set the stage for a fuller campaign around the aid question in the coming year. We urge everyone to support and participate in the NGO program.

Other upcoming activities also fit into this framework, from protesting the upcoming visit of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in early April, to April 17 Tax Day actions, when questions about the use of our tax dollars will be raised, to the 22nd anniversary of the Israeli occupation in June and the anniversaries of Palestinian independence and the intifada in November and December. □

their rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, which it presented to the Security Council in June 1976. While the General Assembly endorsed the committee's recommendations, the Security Council was unable to do so when the United States vetoed the decision. In 1978, the UN designated November 29 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

It was also in 1975 that the General Assembly debated the issue of Zionism and racism. In 1963, the UN had proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which provides that "discrimination between human beings on the ground of race, color, or ethnic origin is an offence to human dignity and should be condemned." The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted in 1965, proclaims that "racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin." On November 10, 1975, the General Assembly voted 72 to 35 with 27 abstentions to adopt Resolution 3379, which "determines that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination."

In 1981, after three decades of involvement in trying to resolve the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the General Assembly decided to convene the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to be held by 1984. With an increased sense of urgency generated by Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the General Assembly convened the conference in Geneva in August 1983. Although both the United States and Israel boycotted the conference, 137 member states attended—117 as full participants and 20 as observers—in addition to the PLO and other observers, including 104 NGOs. The resulting Declaration on Palestine and Program of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights recommended action by UN organs,

governments, and nongovernmental organizations in support of Palestinian rights and called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East in order to achieve "a just solution to the problem of Palestine." The declaration was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1983, and in Resolution 38/58c, the General Assembly welcomed the call by the Geneva conference for an international peace conference. The Secretary General was mandated to prepare to convene the international peace conference in consultation with the Security Council.

NGOs and Palestine

The Geneva conference gave new momentum to the work of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to its own Division for Palestinian Rights, a special division of the UN Secretariat. A special staff was appointed within the division to facilitate liaison work between the UN and NGOs, and after a series of regional symposia were convened, the first International NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in Geneva in August 1984. The symposium was attended by representatives from 98 NGOs from around the world. In addition to passing a resolution supporting the UN call for an international peace conference, the symposium established an interim Coordinating Committee to further develop the cooperative work of NGOs throughout the world. The Coordinating Committee consisted of 15 NGOs, including representation from Palestine, Israel, Western Europe and North America, the socialist countries, and the developing world. This committee, now called the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) has guided the work of the international NGO community through four subsequent international symposia, the most recent of which was held in Geneva in August 1988. A total of 278 NGOs attended the 1988 symposium, reflecting the significant work of the ICCP in building and strengthening NGO cooperation and involvement throughout the world.

The work of the ICCP has been immeasurably strengthened by the opening of an office in Geneva under the outstanding leadership of Jean Marie Lambert, who serves as director. The ICCP office publishes a regular newsletter which reports on events in the occupied territories and on the work of NGOs throughout the world. The ICCP office has also produced excellent background papers on the intifada and on Palestinian trade unions. It regularly issues action alerts to focus attention and action on particularly urgent situations facing the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The work of the NGO community in North America is coordinated by an 11-member North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC), which is elected at the annual North American NGO Symposium, held at the UN headquarters in New York. This year the NACC is chaired by the Palestine Solidarity Committee, with the Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation (Canada) as vice chair, New Jewish Agenda as secretary, and Najda: Women Concerned about the Middle East as treasurer. Other members include the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Methodist Board of Global Ministries, Presbyterian Church, Canadian Arab Federation, Palestine Human Rights Campaign, and National Lawyers Guild. The NACC is about to launch a petition campaign which will call on the U.S. government to recognize the Palestinian state, to recognize the PLO, to take steps to convene the international peace conference under UN auspices, and to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Planning is also underway for the 1989 symposium, which will be held in New York, June 21-23.

The NGOs are challenged as never before. The Palestinian peace initiative has captured world attention and heightened support for peace negotiations, for dialogue with the PLO, and for an independent Palestinian state. The UN has reasserted its principles for the achievement of a comprehensive peace in Resolution 43/176, which calls on the Security Council to take measures to convene the international peace conference. The UN has acknowledged the proclamation of the State of Palestine and has decided that the designation "Palestine" will be used instead of "Palestine Liberation Organization" throughout the UN system. Only the governments of the United States and Israel remain intransigent in the face of overwhelming international consensus. U.S. NGOs, in particular, are exploring new and creative ways to mobilize public opinion to transform government policy and make the elusive peace for which so many have yearned and strived a reality. □

Jeanne Butterfield currently chairs the North American Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine. She is also National Chair of the Palestine Solidarity Committee and an attorney in Boston, Massachusetts.

Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi is dean of the School of Arts at Birzeit University in the West Bank of Palestine. The article which follows is based on a speech she gave while touring the United States in June 1988.

There is an intensity in the women of Palestine today—a fearlessness and calm determination, an energy emanating from within, a defiance surging beyond the imposed confines of subjugation and oppression. There's a sisterhood among the women of Palestine today, transcending the narrow proscriptions of region, class, faction, religion, age, and occupation. I have seen all these; I have lived them; and I am proud to be a Palestinian woman today.

There is a recognition in the hearts and minds of Palestinian men today—a knowledge that freedom cannot be fragmented and equality cannot be selective and that national integrity is the sum total of the individual integrity of each Palestinian person. And I am proud of Palestinian men today.

There is a power in the children of Palestine today—the strength of innocence versus the depravity of occupation, the force of purity in the face of tainted morality, and the drive of conviction in defiance of universal duplicity. Exposing an historical conspiracy of denial, Palestinian children are defining our moment of truth. They have witnessed the theft of their own childhood and have transformed their painful knowledge to expose the true nature of Israel's "Brave New World." I have shared their vision, and I'm proud to be the mother of Palestinian children today.

There is a unity among the people of Palestine today—a cohesiveness of spirit, a convergence of effort, a wholeness of vision penetrating the barriers of divisiveness and artificial distinctions and forging the foundations of liberation. There's a oneness of endeavor that recognizes diversity as the responsible practice of democracy and values interaction of opinion as generating the force of progress. With this unity the Palestinians are weaving the fabric of our new society based on the positive values of self-reliance, initiative, commitment, and courage; and I'm proud to be a Palestinian today.

I intend today to bring to you the quality of the intifada rather than recite before you numbers in a long list of statistics to quantify the immensity of Palestinian suffering and heroism. Rather than conform to the methodology of political analysis, I choose to share with you the experience of the intifada from a human perspective as the perception and expression of an individual sharing in a unique, dynamic, and collective experience. My intention is at once modest and ambitious, and your task is at once more immediate and more challenging. The perspective is mine; the conclusions are yours.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are a strange breed indeed, beyond the comprehension of Israel's racist typology and literal-mindedness, as they continue to defy the laws of nature and logic:

A Palestinian youth under attack can claim no less than ten to fifteen mothers. A boy was being brutally bludgeoned by several armed Israeli soldiers when suddenly a human shield of a dozen women miraculously materialized, diverting the physical blows and embracing the victim. All women invoked the elemental maternal right of defending one's young. The Palestinian extended family at the political front can still produce at a moment's notice instant cousins, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and a medley of other "relatives" on a collective rescue mission within a collective support system. The army's confusion at this natural Palestinian reaction to aggression is symptomatic of Israel's chronic incomprehension of the Palestinian reality as a whole.

Another strange phenomenon continues to baffle the Israeli forces of occupation: On Fridays, Christians flock to mosques to await Friday prayers, while on Sundays, Muslims congregate in church courtyards and emerge with the Christian worshipers at the end of the service. The chants, stones, and flags are nonsectarian. One Friday, an ancient almost-blind woman stood by the mosque wall totally ignoring the flying bullets and the dense tear gas. In her hands she carried a bag of onions and lemons which she ritualistically handed out to the protestors in a unique secular communion; when many were overcome by tear gas, she carried out a systematic baptism by cologne.

Many of you, I'm sure, have heard the myth of the "flying Palestinians." (Whenever soldiers shoot "in the air" to disperse demonstrators, they invariably shoot down several Palestinians). We have added to this the myth of the "invisible Palestinians" who can disappear and regroup at will. Perhaps that is one reason Israel has been unable to find any Palestinians with whom to negotiate—to them the PLO is also invisible. This, however, must not be confused with the "nonexistent" Palestinians of Golda Meir for example ("there are no Palestinians") or of Meir Kahane ("there are no Palestinians, only temporary residents of Eretz Israel"). Another significant "invisibility" to the

The Palestinians A Personal

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Israelis is the Unified National Leadership of the intifada. The leadership is so clearly visible as the expression of the collective popular will that it is entirely invisible to those who can see only individuals such as notables, dignitaries, and appointed officials.

Another unaccountable phenomenon is the Palestinians' ability to be in more than one place at any one time. With each wave of mass arrests, Israel confidently announces that it has captured the leaders of the intifada. At the same time, it carries out arbitrary deportations and declares the expulsion of the leaders of the intifada. Yet the UNL persists in distributing leaflets and organizing mass struggle in the West Bank and Gaza. Such a Palestinian leadership is indeed unique—simultaneously imprisoned, deported, and underground. As one child stated, "perhaps we are all the leaders of the intifada" in the same breath as "we are all the PLO."

Strange also is the new Palestinian diction that insists on redefining reality in terms that bear no relationship to earlier distorted forms. "Autonomy" for instance has been unanimously rejected both as a Camp David gift or in the guise of the Shultz initiative; yet the uprising proceeds to transform itself into a grassroots democratic, popular infrastructure which asserts its own "autonomy" in spite of the occupation. As the popular committees (now declared illegal) emerge from each neighborhood, village, and camp, a new structure and "quality" of life materialize to replace those which had been artificially and externally imposed by the occupation. Yet the Israelis and their American patrons insist that by improving the "quality" of life under occupation they will be able to impose law and order on "the inhabitants of the territories." But the Palestinian sense of "quality" as expressed effectively in their own transformation of social realities and priorities is entirely antithetical. We are willing to do with less, not more; we practice self-help and collective responsibility rather than seek handouts and artificial dependence. We close shops more than we keep them open; we grow our own vegetables, teach our own children, guard our own streets, find our own blood groups, treat our own sick, and share our own resources and supplies. Unequivocally, in our dictionary there is no "qual-

ity" to life under occupation except in the quality of our resistance to it and active rejection of all its imperatives and implications.

Hence, the Palestinians are giving appropriate, active definitions to an alternative way of life. When my ten-year-old daughter Amal works on the collective vegetable plot as a member of the voluntary work committee, she has found a true "quality" to her life. When she and her six-year-old sister walk to our neighborhood committee school to study in makeshift classes in homes and backyards, they are actively learning the meaning of education. When Amal and Zeina witnessed the soldiers' beating up of their friends, they did not run away, and in coming to their assistance, they learned to confront their own fears and the actual meaning of solidarity and responsibility.

Israel habitually uses the term "closed area" as an expression of a siege mentality which has turned against itself, besieging the occupier and liberating the occupied. Each siege brings the Palestinians in the camps, villages, and towns closer to each other and destroys all vestiges of fear and fragmentation. Im Youssef, a 72-year-old woman from Jalazoun refugee camp (besieged for 43 days in April-May), succeeded after several attempts to "exfiltrate" and managed to reach Ramallah across the hills after a four-hour

trek (Jalazoun is only 10 minutes away by car). With fuel, water, and electricity cut off, Im Youssef had burned what little furniture she'd had and all the family's old shoes as an alternative energy source for cooking purposes. Carrying a can of kerosene and a bag of rice and canned food, she proceeded on foot to "infiltrate" back to the camp. Two of the camp's provisions caches were discovered by the army during the siege and were totally destroyed. At great personal risk, volunteers from other popular committees made numerous attempts to infiltrate the camp at night with food supplies. Many were caught and had to pay a high personal price for daring to feed the hungry.

Then there is "terror by night." Salfit, for example, was reoccupied at midnight in a military raid for daring to organize itself and take entire responsibility for running all aspects of civilian life. Almost one hundred citizens of "liberated" Salfit were arrested on the charge of effectively proving their ability to take control of their own lives. Thus Salfit is the microcosm of all the Palestinian occupied territories—on the way to self-determination and statehood. Israeli terror is a vast world that cannot be contained in words; the senselessness of hurling tear gas grenades into houses at night, of rounding up whole communities for collective punishment, of conducting "search and destroy" missions in the dark against unsuspecting civilians, of arbitrary beatings and even murders committed by masked soldiers and settlers are all aspects of the nightly terror to which the Palestinians under occupation are subjected. This is the invisible face of the occupation which is all too visible to us—not least in the nightmares of our children.

Our children—whose childhood has been taken hostage by Israel's deliberate policy of victimization—are a heartbreaking blend of innocence and maturity. They are probably the only children in the world whose parents have to teach them how to be carefree and frivolous; their confrontation with experience has been raw, abrupt, and concentrated—a head-on collision with the worst that the adult world has to offer, in the form of a brutal and brutalizing occupation. By Israeli law, a twelve-year-old child is old enough to be tried and punished, while the parents of younger children are punished in their place—a bizarre admission of early maturity and responsibility. Beaten, imprisoned, shot at: nevertheless they continue to hope and to love and to trust because we do. They have to deal with terror, with irrational hostility and violence, with the unpredictable as the norm, and for all this, Israel mobilizes its top experts to assess the psychological efforts of their own violence on its soldiers, the perpetrators of this war against children. Any sane person will tell them that such cruelty and brutality can be practiced only by those who are already damaged and perverse. Occupation is madness indeed.



Palestinian woman tries to rescue a boy from Israeli soldiers in Ramallah.

Photo: Washington Report on M.E. Affairs/Tiktiner/SIPA Press

of the Intifada: Perspective

life under occupation of our resistance to it.

confront the actual humanity of the Palestinians, hence the consequences of their actions.

The occupied territories are undergoing a tremendous transformation through the confrontation of two antithetical forces: On the one hand, we have the Israeli racist, expansionist ideology and policy (Zionism), which find expression in destructive measures attempting to alter the geopolitical and demographic realities of the area through land expropriation (40 percent of Gaza and 53 percent of the West Bank), establishment of settlements, usurpation of natural resources (70 percent of the water), demolition of houses, deportation of Palestinians, etc. On the other hand, the intifada is the constructive expression of the Palestinians' resistance to the occupation and affirmation of their

rights—for which they are made to endure the most inhuman and cruel primitive measures. We are paying the price for daring to yearn for freedom and for harboring a longing for peace, for having a vision which defies the greed and grand design of Israel. The irony in this clash of wills and warped perception whereby the victim is punished and the oppressor rewarded is nowhere as accurately and dramatically expressed as in the Beita "incident"—the tragedy of Beita.

The collective punishment of Beita has transformed this idyllic, pastoral village and thrust it violently into the heart of the conflict as a compound symbol of humanity and resistance in the face of brutality and senseless aggression, even in attempting to protect Israelis from their own self-inflicted violence. Ironically, such is the only Israeli democracy that is practiced on the Palestinians—an equality

of oppression and nondiscrimination of victimization. I know. I live across the street from the "Civil Administration" and the prison—a British Taggard building occupied by three different armies for the same purpose, but the victims have been consistently Palestinian. The horror stories related by people who are lucky enough to emerge from its depths are hair-raising. At any hour, day and night, a knock at the door brings into our house children with battered faces and limbs, friends with cigarette burns all over their bodies, and many other victims who sometimes find their

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Women at Beita, West Bank, demonstrate for an independent state.

Photo: Washington Report on M.E. Affairs/Tikiner/SIPA Press

Confronting the Difficult Questions

By Rashid Khalidi

Rashid Khalidi is associate professor of Middle Eastern history at the Center for Middle East Studies of the University of Chicago and gave the following speech at the Palestinian/Israeli peace conference sponsored by Al Fajr, New Outlook, and others at Columbia University in New York in March [see "Focus on Action"]. The dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis raised many controversial questions. Professor Khalidi expresses his opinions on some of these questions in this speech.

I am going to say some things, but I ask you to do something. A politician (I am not a politician) told you recently to "watch my lips." Listen carefully to what I say. I will say some things that may be unpleasant to some of you, but I will say them in a way in which every word I say is intended to qualify or modify some of the points.

I have four points, all of them difficult and unpleasant. The first is the easiest. It is not to be fixated on today, not to be fixated on governments, not to be fixated on what the Bush administration is doing or not doing. We should focus rather on ways to put pressure on these people from below via public opinion. That is the only reason that anything has happened so far. That is what the intifada understood. That is what we are going to have to understand.

We are going to have what in Arabic is called *nafas tawil*. You have to have a little bit of patience. You have to recognize that this conflict is not ready to be solved. A quick solution, given the current balance of forces, will neither be just nor will it last. We have to be realistic.

The second point is the absolutely vital importance of equity and symmetry. What we want for ourselves we must be willing to grant the others and vice versa. This principle cannot be transcended if this thing is going to work. This presupposes a number of things but is basic to the point I am about to raise. It is something we must never lose sight of or the thing will not be just and it will not last.

I think it is absolutely imperative not to downplay our differences, not to downplay the extent to which our national narratives differ, our self-views differ. If we build whatever is coming out of this on lies, we build it on denial of what we as people know to be true. Again, it cannot possibly last.

Here it has to be said that there is no symmetry between the two sides. It has to be said that as it happens, Israelis today are revising their view of what happened in 1967 in an entirely healthy way, a revision going back even further to 1948. It is commencing and it is extremely important but has yet to be completed.

You should not expect the Palestinians to rush out like a bunch of lemmings to revise every aspect of their national narrative simply because in Israel the national narrative is being revised. There are things that are true and are not going to be changed simply because they are

uncomfortable. The way in which Israel was created caused massive suffering to the Palestinian people. It is true. It is part of our national narrative. It is not deniable. The way in which it took place, the structures it created, the outcomes are facts as far as our national narrative is concerned. They have a different meaning, a different weight in the Israeli or the Jewish national narrative. But there are elements in our national narrative which cannot and should not be expected to change. They will not change, and we should not expect them to change, perhaps, some questions dealing with this war.

Now I am going into the really difficult things. And these are the hardest things for Israeli and American liberals to deal with, but if you don't deal with them, you are just going around the real issues because for Palestinians they are really central. I want to talk about the right of return. I want to talk about the fact that Palestinians are a single people, and I want to talk about linkages to the Arab world and a comprehensive settlement. These issues are not negotiable in principle, but, listen now, they have to be negotiated into a settlement. There is much room for guarantees, for phasing, for give and take, for interim periods, for multilateral accords. And never forget Israel is a dominant superpower in the region. At any stage in a process where Israelis feel that their vital national interests are at stake, Israel could simply say, "No, this is essential that such and such happen or not happen."

Now let me talk a little bit about each of the things I raised. The right of return terrifies Israelis. It is the scariest thing that could be said in this room. But for the majority of the Palestinian people—remember we are one people, we are not for some reason three lists—it is one list. We all say the same thing on these issues. For Palestinians, this is a basic issue. Palestinians, since the PLO began to elaborate on this point in the last few years, have clearly and explicitly linked the right of return to international legitimacy.

You may think it is a slogan, but go back and read United Nations resolutions, General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948. It said explicitly the right of return or compensation is modified by the willingness to live in peace with their neighbors. This means Palestinians have two choices, to return to a Palestinian state to live in peace with their neighbors or to live as Israeli citizens within the state of Israel at peace with their neighbors. Palestinians have no other choice, and they are not asking, nor is the PLO asking for anything else.

The 3 million Palestinians outside are not going to rush tomorrow to the state of Palestine, whenever peace, God willing, starts. The PLO has been saying at four consecutive PNCs since Algiers in February 1983 that the Palestinian state will be linked by confederation to Jordan. The largest number of Palestinians outside is in Jordan. Most Palestinians in Jordan can be expected to stay right where they are to enjoy their Palestinian citizenship and nationality within the context of a democratic Palestinian-Jordanian confederation. All this needs a great deal of working on, but it means not all of the 4 to 5 million Palestinians have to be accommodated in the West Bank

and Gaza Strip.

I would raise one other point, the entry of Palestinians who may be allowed to return. Ultimately, it is going to be at the discretion of Israel. What is now Israel will do so within the context of conditions, of quotas, which will have to be negotiated, which Israel will have a major share in determining, and which cannot be imposed from without and will not be imposed from without.

So what are we so afraid of? If you say you have no right to go to your homeland, then you are telling me I have to fight you, which is as simple as that. If you want to dress up a bantustan and say this is Palestine, that that fraction of your people who managed by tenacity to survive in its country are the only ones that have the right to live here, then you are condemning yourselves by your own admission to a perpetual war. You are continuing the process which has led to the sorry past. That process has got to be reversed; that process is being reversed.

Fortunately there are courageous people in Israel—many of whom are here—who began the process of revision of the Israeli national narrative in a way that hopefully will make all these things possible. There are courageous people in the Palestinian national movement—from top to bottom, from the kids in the streets of the West Bank to the leadership—who are engaged in the same process.

It is perfectly possible for there to be peaceful coexistence, but it has to be based on equity, it has to be based on symmetry, and it has to take place—this is my last point—in the context of a comprehensive settlement. Again, this should not be the bogeyman that it is for some people. There cannot and there will not be a Palestinian-Israeli peace in any other fashion or incomprehensively. This means Israel will have the kind of binding, internationally guaranteed, secure, hopefully eternal peace with Syria and Jordan and Lebanon as it has with Egypt. This means that when we talk about international guarantees, we can now begin to envisage, as a result of the changes in the world, a level of U.S.-Soviet cooperation which would have been inconceivable before.

Therefore, when we talk about the UN and international forces, we are talking about U.S. Marines, Soviet paratroopers, Chinese, British, and French soldiers guaranteeing something all the superpowers are committed to. So, in conclusion, this means not only a level of security for all concerned which would have been unimaginable until now, it also means a freeing of resources for all concerned. The defense budget can finally be reduced. It means that whatever it is we end up with at the end of this process, after however many years it takes, let us be assured it is just, that it satisfies everybody because it has to last. If it is not just, it will not last and, given the rigid structures that have to be built around it, it will perhaps be a worse situation than we have now. So do not try to brush the difficult issues under the rug because they are painful. The whole process is painful. Believe us, it is painful for us as it is for you. □

Israel Divided ...

Continued from Page 2

Four"—accused of meeting with the PLO). Threats are made against the reserve soldiers resistance movement Yesh Gvul (There Is a Limit). Broadcasters are trapped in ever-more-surreal regulations. The Labor Party members who have been meeting Palestinians abroad and calling for negotiations with the PLO are now being blamed for the party's poor results in this month's municipal election results. They are sure to be blamed, too, if the Labor Party, as many predict, loses the Histadrut elections later this year. Once again, the call is being made for the replacement of Peres as Labor leader by the more popular Rabin. In this atmosphere, it is hard to accept the belief of Science Minister Ezer Weizmann, expressed in a recent interview in *Hadashot*, that "within a year, Arens and Shamir will sit down to talk with Arafat."

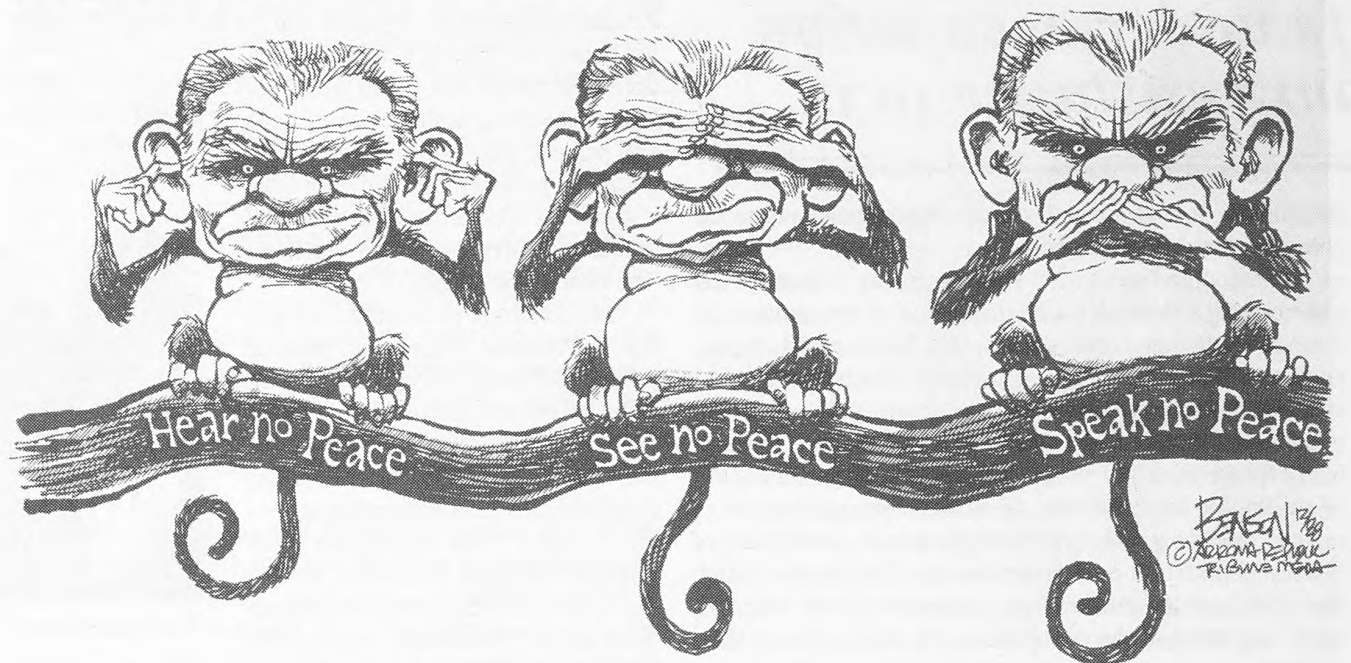
The recent decisions of the PLO have contributed to the sharpening of this development in Israeli politics. Peace Now's response, while demonstrating its awareness of the development and its acceptance of a position outside the consensus, also highlights the weakness of the Israeli protest movements and their current inability to significantly affect the outcome of the conflict.

The truth is that not only is Israeli opinion divided: The opinions of many Israelis are divided. The same 54 percent who would support peace negotiations with the PLO vote for Likud or Orthodox mayors and town councils, do their two months a year reserve duty without fuss, and hope for a massive win in the lottery. Peace Now has

still to decide whether it is an action group on the fringes of the Labor Party or part of a wide parliamentary and extraparlimentary opposition to the National Unity government. And the more radical protest groups have to restrain their exhilaration and organize for a continuing struggle against repression and for coexistence. After all, we should not forget that the first result of the decisions of the PNC and the Declaration of Independence was the re-establishment of Israel's National Unity government. This government truly represents an Israeli consensus which is moving further to the right. As it does so, more and more individuals and

groups find themselves outside this consensus. □

Roland Rance, a member of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in Britain, initiated RETURN, a petition and movement of anti-Zionist Jews. Until recently he was editor of News From Within, the journal of the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem. The center and its director, Michel Warshawski, are currently on trial in the Israeli courts on charges of providing services for a "forbidden" organization and supporting a "terrorist" organization.



World Opinion ...

Continued from Page 1

Geneva. State Department spokesman Charles Redman echoed the Israeli position by demanding that "the PLO, in addition to refraining from terrorism, must abstain from attacks on Israeli military targets inside and outside Israel." However, even the U.S. willingness to talk to the PLO is too much for the Israeli government.

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens was offended when Secretary of State James Baker suggested in Congressional testimony that Israel might one day have to negotiate with the PLO. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir kept up his futile search for alternative Palestinian negotiating partners. Maintaining the fiction of the search for a non-PLO representative, Shamir's media advisor, Avi Pazner, told the *New York Times*, "I don't think he has found one yet. But he will continue these meetings even though it is difficult."

Shamir's hard line was challenged at a meeting to rally support from world Jewry and by a leaked classified report from Israel's intelligence agencies. The intelligence estimate concluded, according to the *New York Times*, "that the Palestinian uprising cannot be brought to an end in the near future and that the government will find a political solution only if it agrees to talk with the Palestine Liberation Organization.... The report also found that there was no serious leadership in the occupied territories outside the PLO and that the PLO had truly moved toward moderation." The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* editorialized, "Yitzhak Shamir must do away with the ban on the PLO. So long as he refuses to do this, he will only exacerbate Israel's isolation in the regional arena, and the uprising in the territories will continue and

perhaps intensify."

Nevertheless, the explicit and unbending position of Shamir and his government remains the three no's: No to talks with the PLO, no to a Palestinian state, no to an international peace conference. And that is the very position Shamir brought to Washington where he met with George Bush on April 6.

Rather than criticizing Israel for its intransigence, the U.S. government issues soothing assurances that it is concerned to keep Israel strong and secure. Instead of applying the enormous leverage of billions of dollars of U.S. aid and other influence, the aid and political support continue to flow uninterrupted as if to reward Israeli intransigence rather than to discourage it. In more ways than one, the official U.S. approach to Israel resembles its discredited "constructive engagement" relationship with South Africa.

The U.S. government entirely ignores Palestinian national rights—the independent Palestinian state—only acknowledging some political rights for Palestinians. Instead of a bold plan for peace, U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker is promoting a "step by step" plan of minor measures, putting off Palestinian aspirations to some distant future. Baker and Bush are thus creating conditions which, if the current peace opening closes, will prolong the suffering of the Palestinian people and threaten the danger of renewed war between Israel and its neighbors.

Worldwide Trend for Peace

The Bush administration's policies are particularly counterproductive in the context of the many promising prospects for settling regional conflicts from Namibia to Central America, as well as for making progress on

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Lebanon Occupation ...

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resistance. Furthermore, the legitimate acts of resistance conducted daily by the people of Lebanon go unmentioned by the U.S. media. This very fact exposes the duplicity with which the charges of "terrorism" are used in an attempt to discredit and sow disunity within the PLO.

Meanwhile, Israel has begun to treat Lebanese prisoners much as it has treated Palestinian prisoners over years of occupation. In the past, Israel has held most Lebanese prisoners without trial in detention centers in southern Lebanon, such as those at Khiam and Marjeyoun. But recently, Israel has tried approximately 15 Lebanese prisoners in its own military courts, charging them with "terrorist activities" or membership in "illegal organizations." These prisoners have been sentenced to prison

terms in Israel ranging from 14 to 30 years. The Geneva Conventions provide that such prisoners should be treated as prisoners of war and explicitly prohibit an occupying power from moving such prisoners into the occupying country for any reason.

The future of Suha Beshara is even bleaker. Following her interrogation and torture in Israel, she was returned to the occupied zone and the hands of the SLA. Lahad has proclaimed his intention to personally preside over the military tribunal that will convict Suha Beshara as soon as Lahad recovers from his wounds.

The Lebanese government of Prime Minister Hoss has registered its opposition to Israel's actions and has requested that the United Nations and other international organizations intervene to prevent a trial in which Lahad would judge Beshara. Since the incident took place in Lebanon and concerned two Lebanese nationals, the matter should be resolved by the Lebanese legal system, according to both Lebanese and international law. □

Action ...

Continued from Page 2

for Israeli occupation and repression in the West Bank and Gaza on April 17, Tax Day, when 1988 income taxes are due. Plans are for informational pickets outside post offices to inform taxpayers just how their money is spent to finance Israeli human-rights violations.

The Ann Arbor campus of the University of Michigan has been in turmoil over a series of editorials in the campus newspaper which criticized Israel and Zionism. One of the editorials commented on the exploitation of Ethiopian Jews by the Israeli government. The editorials were attacked as showing "deep emotional hatred for Jews and Israel," but editorial page editor Amy Harmon, responded, "I am a Jew. None of the editorials have been anti-Semitic. I think this is being used to stifle criticism of Israel." The newspaper's letters column has been filled with comments on both sides of the issue. The University of Michigan student council has decided to fund a fact-finding delegation to visit Palestine and Israel.

The PSC chapter in Ann Arbor has been very active in this period sponsoring many events both alone and with other groups. Some of the featured speakers have included Jane Hunter of *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, Professor Howard Zinn, Tamara Kohns,

Sami Esmail, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, and Professor Ali Mazrui (on Israel and South Africa).

The San Francisco chapter of the PSC sponsored a program which featured a speaker from the Palestinian Women's Association on the Palestinian uprising and the role of women at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley in March. The program marked International Women's Day and celebrated the continuing uprising. Al Awda Palestinian cultural ensemble performed at the event. La Peña is currently displaying an exhibit of art in celebration of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence by Bay Area artists.

In Philadelphia, also in March, the PSC cosponsored an evening of "Women in Struggle" with the Juan Antonio Corretjer Center (JAC), Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Strip Search Committee of the Irish Republican Movement. Speakers included Mamazani Zulu of the African National Congress, Maha Khoury of the Union of Palestinian Women's Associations, Carmen Monaco of the National Organization of Salvadoran Refugees, Nivea Torres of the JAC, Josie Moore of the Irish Republican Movement, and Eleanor Gonzales of the Philadelphia Philippine Working Group. The event was chaired by Catherine Blunt of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Anti-Apartheid Coalition, and Los Pleneros and Al-Audah performed. □

Yes! I Want to Join The Palestine Solidarity Committee!

Name _____

Street or Box # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Enclosed is a check for: \$30 Regular \$15 Student/low-income
 \$50 (or more: _____) sustaining member
 Monthly sustainer: will pay \$_____ per month for the next year (suggested monthly pledge: \$10)

Send your check or money order to:
 Palestine Solidarity Committee
 P.O. Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127.

The U.S. State Department just released its human-rights report on Israel, with some very cautious criticism of Israeli policies. While this is a good start, no one has to rely on U.S. government descriptions alone. The National Lawyers Guild released its own report, entitled *International Human Rights Law and Israel's Efforts to Suppress the Palestinian Uprising*, which examines summary court proceedings and jailings, demolition of houses, banning of organizations, and expulsions, among other abuses. Thorough and accurate, it is based on observations by human-rights organizations, the United Nations, the press, as well as the NLG's own inquiry missions. To get a copy, send \$10.00 to NLG-Middle East Subcommittee, P. O. Box 4892, Washington, DC 20008.

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights conducted an investigation of the detention of four human-rights workers from Al-Haq, a West Bank-based human-rights monitoring organization, along with their lawyers, Raji Sourani and Yunis al-Jarrou. The report also contains an investigation of the conditions of prisoners held at Ketziot Prison in the Negev, known by Palestinians as Ansar 3. Conducted by two fact-finding committees, the report criticizes Israeli practices of arresting Palestinians without charges, the targeting of human-rights activists and lawyers in particular. The report criticizes Ansar 3 as "a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention" in both its location (inside Israel) and in the inhumane conditions of the prisoners.

For copies of *An Examination of the Detention of Human-Rights Workers and Lawyers from the West Bank and Gaza and Conditions of Detention at Ketziot*, write to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 330 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001.

Hundreds of books are banned from the West Bank and Gaza, while the press is heavily censored, banned, or outright attacked by the military authorities, and journalists are regularly arrested. One recent case is that of journalist Sam'an Khouri, who was placed in administrative detention for six months on February 19 after attending a meeting with leading "doves" in the Israeli Labor Party. Khouri is

GETTING IT ALL IN Focus

By Hilton Obenzinger

married to *Guardian Newsweek* reporter Anita Vitullo (a past contributor to *Palestine Focus*), who has just given birth to the couple's third child. Khouri's health has severely deteriorated in prison. Amnesty International has adopted Khouri as a prisoner of conscience and is pressing for his release.

The U.S. Committee to Protect Journalists and the British-based organization Article 19 have recently released a report on Israeli censorship of the Palestinian press. Entitled *Journalism under Occupation: Israel's Regulation of the Palestinian Press*, it is available for \$8.00 from The Committee to Protect Journalists, 36 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036.

In this country, discussion of Palestinian rights had been unofficially censored or altogether excluded for decades. However, attitudes have changed considerably, particularly in response to the intifada, with so many magazines running special issues on the uprising that we could not mention all of them. However, in the case of one literary magazine, censorship again became a pressing issue.

Last Year, *Red Bass*, published in New Orleans, produced a special issue called "For Palestine," featuring a number of writers, including Edward Said, Jean Genet, and Eqbal Ahmed. In response, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith pressured the National Endowment for the Arts to demand the return of \$5,000 the agency had granted to the literary magazine. The ADL insisted that the magazine

was political rather than literary, even though half of the contributors were poets.

According to Editor Jay Murphy, it was not surprising that the ADL did not enjoy the issue: "For the ADL, the state of Israel cannot ever make a mistake. What is disturbing is that a federal arts agency would bow to such pressure and on such grounds." In any case, the magazine's "For Palestine" issue continues to sell well, and they are not intimidated. In fact, they're working on an upcoming issue on the CIA! For copies, send \$4.00 to Red Bass, 2425 Burgundy Street, New Orleans, LA 70117.

More on the cultural front: A group of Jewish-American women artists plan to join Palestinian artists to paint a mural in East Jerusalem. Miranda Bergman, director of the "Break the Silence Mural Project," writes that "Jewish and Palestinian artists will paint together, creating a monument to the struggle for justice and peace—a Healing Wall." With twenty years experience painting walls in the San Francisco Bay Area, Minnesota, New York, and Nicaragua, Bergman says the mural will "express the joy, energy, and power of Palestinian people struggling for self-determination and of Jewish people struggling for justice and reconciliation."

The group hopes to begin the project in July. They are raising money to cover expenses for travel and materials, projected to be \$12,000. You can help bring about this powerful creative act of solidarity. Send your donations to Break the Silence Mural Project, 1442A Walnut Street, #252, Berkeley, CA 94709.

The U.S. labor movement is beginning to question U.S. and Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. Now a new quarterly, *The Middle East Labor Bulletin* focuses attention on the conditions of Palestinian unions and the beginnings of solidarity among U.S. trade unionists. For a yearly subscription of four issues, send \$7.50 to the Labor Committee on the Middle East, P. O. Box 42149, San Francisco, CA 94142-1429. □

World Opinion ...

Continued from Page 6

Soviet-U.S. disarmament issues. The current opening for settling the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is part of this international peace trend. The Soviet Union has launched a major diplomatic initiative, opening up lines of discussion to all concerned parties, including Israel and the PLO. Instead of welcoming Soviet cooperation in a genuine peace process, the Bush administration reacted with cold-war rhetoric.

Public support for peace talks remains strong. The many shifts toward peace among Israelis are very significant [see article, page 1]. In recent polls, 70 percent of Americans support the U.S.-PLO dialogue; 58 percent of American Jews say Israel should talk to the PLO, too. In response to this new atmosphere, the U.S. State Department issued its first-ever report to seriously address Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in the course of the 22-year-old occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.



Painting by Judy Hirsch for "In Celebration of the State of Palestine" art exhibit. (see "Letters to Editors"). Photo: Osha Neumann

Pressure is building, though slowly, to hold congressional hearings on Israeli human-rights violations as part of the process of budgeting U.S. aid. The number of congressional representatives speaking out

to criticize Israel has begun to increase. Budgetary constraints are an additional incentive to cut U.S. aid allotments to Israel.

The movement for Palestinian rights and the broad peace movement have a clear message for the government of the United States:

- Help convene the international peace conference and insist that Israel participate.
- Acknowledge the national rights of

the Palestinian people and recognize the Palestinian state.

● Stop funding Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Plainly, if the Bush administration begins to speak in these terms, the PLO is ready to listen and respond. And if Israel can be brought to accept the international consensus, the hope of peace can become a new reality. □

The Intifada ...

Continued from Page 5

tortured way into our house in the dead of the night. Most had been arbitrarily picked up off the street; some had survived a longer ordeal of detention and interrogation; all are equally guilty of being Palestinian. They are not numbers (the majority are not even added to the statistics because of their volume and the difficulty of conducting "surveys" of this magnitude); they have names, faces, and stories to tell with graphic physical proofs of their journeys into darkness. We see them, we hear them, we give what little help we can, and we know; in speaking to you today, I hope to bring to you, to share with you, this burden of knowledge.

But we are not passive; our victimization is a source of strength and resolve, and the intifada is our active response. We do not hate or seek vengeance, nor do we adopt the methods of the oppressors in resisting

their oppression. The intifada is a positive and healthy affirmation of our humanity and our rights, and no amount of distortion and fabrication can change that fact. And it will continue; having endured its "baptism by fire" the first six months, it has entered its next phase with renewed vigor, determination, and maturity. A qualitative change is evident in its consolidation of accomplishments as it launches a new phase of long-term resistance and enduring social, psychological, and political achievements. While open confrontations continue and escalate (as do the figures for Palestinians killed), the process of disengagement and restructuring takes deeper root, and the political drive gains greater momentum.

In having shared with you this very small part of Palestinian reality in the occupied territories, it is my hope that we have shared more than just verbal discourse. I shall not conclude, for the conclusions are yours, and in ending here I do so in anticipation of a new beginning. □

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

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

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

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South Lebanon: The Forgotten Occupation

By Salim Madi and
Jeanne Butterfield

While the world justifiably focuses its attention on the Palestinian intifada and pressure mounts on Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, another occupation cries out for attention. Israel is mounting an all-out effort to subjugate the 350,000 inhabitants of southern Lebanon who are still resisting 11 years of occupation by Israeli military forces.

People of the world are well aware by now of Israel's practice of expelling Palestinian leaders, depositing them by helicopter beyond their last outpost in their self-declared security zone and forcing them to walk north into the unoccupied part of Lebanon. But Israel's policy of expulsions within Lebanon itself has received no attention at all. On January 5, Israel expelled 38 Lebanese citizens from 5 villages in south Lebanon and sent them north across the border of the so-called security zone, after confiscating their land and all of their earthly belongings. Since the beginning of 1989, a total of 86 Lebanese citizens, ranging in age from 1 to 91, have been forced from their homes and families at gunpoint and exiled into the northern part of the country.

A total of over 800 people have been expelled in this way since 1982. Another 150,000 have been forced to flee as a result of Israeli policies of repression in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese occupation is every bit as vicious as that in the West Bank and Gaza and is another graphic demonstration of the expansionist and annexationist aims of the Israeli state. The violence of this occupation is purposely obscured by Israel's use of a surrogate force in southern Lebanon, the Southern Lebanon Army, which serves as a front-line shock force for the IDF (Israeli army) as it attempts to subjugate the population of the south and control the precious resources of land and water.

Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon began following a major Israeli invasion in south Lebanon in 1978. After the 1978 incursion, the United Nations, with Carter administration support, fielded a peace-keeping contingent, known as UNIFIL, to replace the occupying Israeli forces. But Israel only partially withdrew from the occupied Lebanese territory. It retained control of a 6-mile-wide stretch of land along the two countries' common border.

When Israel staged a full-scale invasion in 1982, it occupied half of Lebanon and installed a right-wing Phalangist president, Bashir Gemayel (succeeded by his brother Amin after Bashir's assassination) in Beirut. The Israelis were eventually forced to withdraw from most of Lebanon after being confronted with thousands of resistance operations throughout the occupied Lebanese territories. Today, Israel still occupies a large strip of Lebanon, ranging in width from 10 to 30 miles along the southern border. The occupied zone reaches to within a few miles of Sidon, Lebanon's third largest city.

The area under occupation includes 171 villages and towns and is home to over 350,000 people. The area occupied before 1982 included only 59 villages. No Palestinians have been allowed to remain in the occupied zone. The major Palestinian refugee camp in the zone, near the town of Nabatiyeh, has been razed to the ground.

Initially, the Israelis set up a surrogate militia force in the zone, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), made up solely of Christian recruits. The militia's proclaimed task

was to patrol and control the occupied zone and protect the "victimized" Christian minority with backup from Israeli troops. After 1982, with the incentive of relatively high salaries, Israel expanded the SLA with recruits from Lebanon's other religious communities. Despite high monthly wages starting at 150 dollars in a country where the average wage is 30 dollars and unemployment is over 30 percent, the SLA still has less than 1,000 members and suffers from low morale. Recently, the SLA attempted a forced recruitment campaign aimed at swelling its dwindling ranks with youth from the southern villages. The people of the south responded with spontaneous demonstrations against both Israel and its

anon with several "gateways" connecting it to the country's interior. These gateways are controlled by a combination of Lahad forces and the Israeli "civil administration." Residents of the city of Tyre, for instance, cannot travel the ten miles to the town of Nakoura, which lies inside the Israeli-occupied territory, unless they obtain a permit which must be issued jointly by the Lebanese and the Israeli "civil administration" at Nakoura.

Villages in occupied Lebanon are regularly placed under complete curfew by the Israeli forces. Last fall, residents of four villages were forbidden to travel through any gateway out of the occupied zone for three months, simply because they refused to

The Lebanese occupation is every bit as vicious as that in the West Bank and Gaza.

surrogate SLA. At the end of January, Israel expelled 42 people from the village of Shebaa for taking part in such a demonstration. Several dozen youth have recently fled the zone in order to avoid the forcible recruitment campaign. The SLA remains essentially an auxiliary force for the Israeli army, which itself has 2,000 to 3,000 troops stationed in the south with thousands more on call to intervene from across the border.

Israel claims it established the Lebanon security zone as a buffer to protect itself from attacks by "Palestinian terrorists" or "Shi'a extremists." But this justification is belied by history. In 1949, 13 Lebanese villages were annexed to the new Israeli state, and the inhabitants were expelled from their land. In 1967, Israel annexed another 13 Lebanese plantations, comprising thousands of acres. Since 1967, Israel has periodically annexed portions of Lebanese territory, claiming "minor" border adjustments were needed to ensure its "security."

The Nature of the Occupation

Israel's apparent plan for the currently occupied territory of Lebanon seems to be to impose a de-facto annexation with land and water resources diverted to Israel's use. In this scenario, the population will be governed by a "civil administration" of Israeli proxies in the form of the SLA led by Antoine Lahad. Israel has already imposed travel restrictions that isolate the occupied part of Lebanon from the rest of Lebanon and has exerted economic pressures to make the area dependent on Israel. Measures have included land confiscations and relocating of borders that make land and water resources available for Israel's sole use.

The occupied Lebanese territory has effectively been cut off from the rest of Leb-

anion with several "gateways" connecting it to the country's interior. These gateways are controlled by a combination of Lahad forces and the Israeli "civil administration." Residents of the city of Tyre, for instance, cannot travel the ten miles to the town of Nakoura, which lies inside the Israeli-occupied territory, unless they obtain a permit which must be issued jointly by the Lebanese and the Israeli "civil administration" at Nakoura.

Israel has imposed a high tax on all goods, individuals, and vehicles attempting to travel north into the rest of Lebanon, as a means of forcing residents to establish trade relations to the south—with Israel.

Farmers have been forbidden to work their land. Commercial exchange between factories and businesses in the occupied zone and the rest of Lebanon has been halted. Israeli goods have been shipped in and often dumped at prices intended to undercut the local market. These policies have caused extremely high unemployment: At least 3,000 manual laborers from the occupied villages now go to work in Israel, and this sector is growing rapidly as social and economic conditions deteriorate.

Israel has been using this Lebanese labor force to replace the Palestinian laborers who have been boycotting Israeli fields and factories during the intifada. Israel has even opened two branches of the Bank Leumi at two of the gateways into the occupied zone for the use of Lebanese businesses that import Israeli goods.

Israel's intentions are perhaps most clear in the area of water supplies. Ten towns and villages in the occupied zone have now been connected to Israel's water network, giving Israel total control over the water supply. Lebanese residents must now pay an Israeli company for their water.

Israeli troops have also installed new barbed-wire border lines throughout the occupied zone, burned and bulldozed farmland, and built new roads connecting the partitioned areas to Israel. It is no accident that many of these new borders surround key water resources in the zone, such as the Wazani spring area.

There is more at stake for Israel in its south Lebanon occupation than economic gain and control of natural resources. This zone provides Israel with a base from which it can quickly mount military operations that extend its strong arm into the heart of Lebanon's nationalist areas. With air raids (26 in 1988) and direct military intervention by ground forces, Israel attacks Palestinians and keeps the nationalist forces off balance and limits their capacity to fight the Phalangist forces further north.

Israel has always preferred a weak Lebanon made up of warring sects that each control a limited area and that would seek favor and protection from the Jewish state. Israel sees the development of a Christian ministate, as well as Druze and Shi'a entities, as somehow making its own existence as an exclusivist Jewish state more palatable to the region and to the world.

Lebanese Resistance to Occupation

Israel's goals continue to be frustrated, however, by strong resistance to the occupation. Last November, a young woman named Suha Beshara, a member of the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF), shot SLA head Antoine Lahad. Beshara's attempt to kill Lahad, while almost completely blacked out in the U.S. press, has had an important impact on Lebanese public opinion. Every day since her arrest, public campaigns, meetings, petition drives, and solidarity strikes have engulfed the nationalist areas. The fact that a young Christian woman would sacrifice her future in order to free Lebanon of the hated occupation, symbolized by Lahad, has sparked the imagination of a population weary of years of sectarian in-fighting. Beshara's action has come to symbolize, particularly for young people, the vision of a nonsectarian progressive Lebanon.

The LNRF has staged armed acts of resistance since 1982 and has been joined by the Islamic Resistance, a more recent organization formed by Islamic religious forces. The recent fierce battles between Amal, which claims hegemony over the Shi'a areas of the south, and Hezbollah have led, however, to a serious drop of Islamic Resistance operations. Nonetheless, operations are continuing. For example, during October 1988, resistance forces mounted 55 operations in the south, resulting in the deaths of 8 Israeli soldiers and 2 SLA militiamen.

Repression in south Lebanon is meanwhile reaching unbearable levels. Only 200,000 of the zone's 350,000 inhabitants have been able to remain. Expulsions are frequent and arbitrary. Villages are punished wholesale and mass arrests occur daily. More than 600 prisoners are being held without trial by the Israeli forces in a prison in the town of Kham.

Under the pretext that it is the SLA that controls the prison and the whole security zone, Israel has consistently refused to allow the International Red Cross or any other humanitarian groups to visit the prisoners. Released prisoners have described terrible conditions of detention, including the regular use of torture. There is no legal recourse, legal representation, or communication with the outside world for these prisoners, and no international norms or rights are recognized for them. In the last few months, seven detainees are known to have died during detention from torture or illness.

Recent military operations against the IDF by PLO groups have been used by the United States and Israel to discredit the Palestinian peace initiative. Yet not once has the Israeli occupation of Lebanon been mentioned as a context for these acts of

Continued on Page 6

"INTIFADA" Images of Palestinian Uprising

A photo exhibit of the
Palestinian quest for freedom
and independence

Photographs by: George Azar,
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