

Palestine Focus

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Editorial:

50¢

US Policy Blocks Peace Process

There is some motion in the high-profile peace process promoted by the Bush administration. But that motion is completely inadequate.

The US government is applying diplomatic pressure on Israel to act on what is, after all, a proposal launched by then Prime Minister Shamir. That pressure has brought about the collapse of the Israeli Likud-Labor coalition government.

And we welcome the recent statements by President Bush opposing Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza, including East Jerusalem—although Secretary of State Baker later backtracked when he declared, "Jews and others can live where they want, East or West, and the city must remain undivided."

There has even been some hint of linking \$400 million in loan guarantees for resettlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants to a halt in settlement activity. Secretary of State Baker, according to the *New York Times*, "appeared to suggest that all aid to Israel be contingent on a pledge that no new settlements be opened in the occupied territories." Such a position would not be enough—according to existing US law, aid should be contingent on respect for human rights and other factors—but it would be a real step forward. But we doubt that the Bush administration will take such a clear stance.

Misdirection is useful in both magic tricks and politics, and the current US government posture can only be understood by

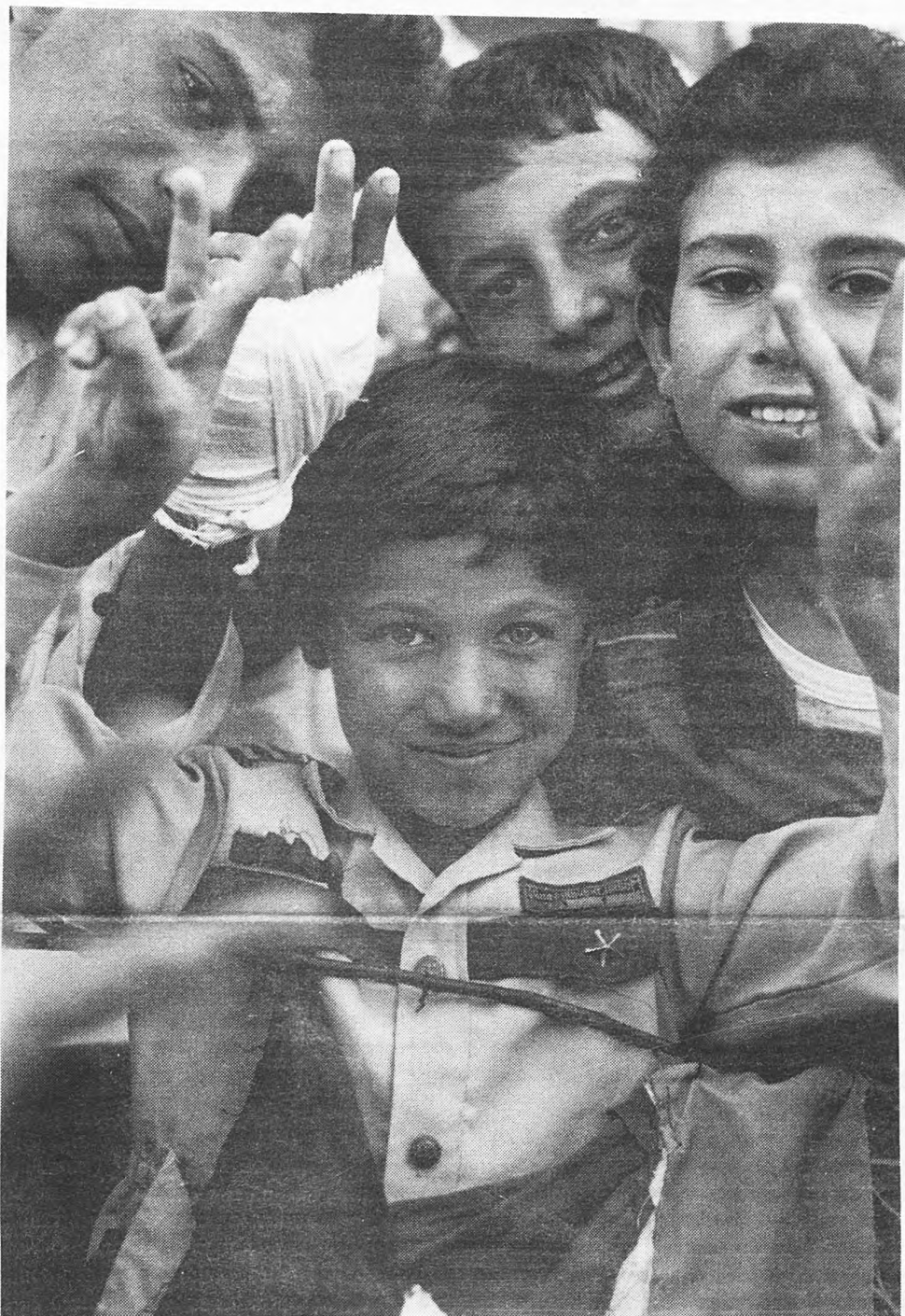
paying close attention to what we are not supposed to see. While the collapse of the coalition Israeli government gives the illusion that there is movement in a process toward peace, the scale of the motion and the intensity of the pressure by the US government on Israel are simply that: illusion.

The veil of illusion can be seen through in two hot contemporary issues: the influx of Soviet Jews to Israel and the stalled peace process.

Soviet Jews: Which Shell Has the Pea?

Until last year, most Soviet Jews who emigrated came to the United States; today, they are going to Israel. The reason is the Bush administration's sudden decision to lower immigration quotas for Soviet Jews

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The youth of Yatta, West Bank, at a celebration of the first anniversary of the intifada, December 9, 1988. Neal Cassidy/From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising

One Year Later

PLO Assesses the Peace Initiative

By Jeanne Butterfield

What is the PLO's assessment of the peace process now, over one year after launching its bold peace initiative? I had the opportunity to discuss this question with members of the PLO Executive Committee during a recent series of meetings in Tunis.

"The Europeans are convinced about two states," declared President Arafat. "The United States is not yet convinced. If the dialogue does not begin soon—an Israeli/Palestinian dialogue under the auspices of the UN—we will call for the UN Security Council to intervene. We have three bottom line points: that the PLO name the Palestinian delegation, that the delegation be composed of Palestinians from inside and outside the occupied Palestinian territory, and that the agenda for the dialogue be open."

"We were hopeful about the Palestinian/American dialogue," continued Farouk Kadoumi, Palestine's foreign minister. "But unfortunately, the United States avoided talking about the substantive issues and would only talk about procedures. First there were ten questions, then ten points, then five points. Unfortunately, Baker's five points outline the start of a Camp David process. It is very clear that all of the guarantees which the Israelis have been asking for are there in the five points: that the Israelis will come to the dialogue only to discuss Shamir's election plan; that they

will not come to dialogue until a satisfactory list of Palestinian delegates is selected by them. The Baker initiative has given all

PLO Peace Initiative

The PLO launched its historic initiative and declared the independent state of Palestine at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers in November 1988. The initiative proposes that a political solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict be negotiated at an international conference of all parties to the conflict. It called for Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 and for UN trusteeship over the territories until a settlement could be negotiated. It accepted UN resolutions 242 and 338, along with Palestinian national rights, as the basis for negotiations. It asserted UN resolution 181, the 1947 partition plan, as the basis for international legitimacy for the state of Palestine. The PLO further elaborated its peace initiative in press conferences following the PNC and in President Arafat's address to the UN General Assembly in Geneva in December 1988. Determining that the PLO had finally met its preconditions, the U.S. government announced on December 15, 1988, that it would open a "dialogue" with the PLO.—J.B.

guarantees to the Israelis. Still, we have said that we are ready for this dialogue."

As the PLO continued to indicate, with patience and flexibility, that it was ready for a "dialogue" with Israel, the Baker initiative, which was designed to implement Shamir's own election plan, failed to get support from Shamir himself. In remarks that foreshadowed the present crisis in Israel's coalition government, Qadoumi continued, "Shamir is demonstrating exactly what we have said. He demonstrates that the Israelis are not working for peace, that they are not responding to the

international community in serving the cause of peace. It is their intention to annex the West Bank and Gaza because they consider it a part of Israel. They do not recognize the rights of Palestinians to self-determination. They are not ready for the international conference, and they continue to consider the PLO as a terrorist organization."

Looking back on the events of the past year, Abu Iyad, Fatah Central Committee member and official in charge of PLO security, reflected on PLO expectations as

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Israel and South Africa: A Recomparison

By Steve Goldfield

Some time ago, *Palestine Focus* published a satirical article entitled "Ten Differences between Israel and South Africa." Many supporters of Israel felt that frequent comparisons between Israel and South Africa were unfair to Israel. The Israeli government produced a list of differences but did not release it publicly. We set out to produce as comprehensive a list of differences as possible. For example, in South Africa, 87 percent of the territory is reserved for Whites only, whereas in Israel, 92 percent of the territory is for Jews only. More than half the territory of the West Bank and Gaza has also been seized from Palestinians. Some readers objected that our list of "differences" really only amounted to similarities.

Since the publication of that article, there have been changes in South Africa, and supporters of South Africa could rightly claim that it is unfair to South Africa to compare it to Israel. *Palestine Focus* is determined to be fair, and in fairness to South Africa, we believe the time has come to update our comparison.

Since our earlier article saw the light of day, South Africa has legalized the African National Congress, agreed to negotiate, and released ANC leader Nelson Mandela from prison. The South African government has allowed peaceful demonstrations and rallies to be held by the opposition, although the police have attacked some of these. South Africa has not lifted its state of emer-

gency, has not released other political prisoners, and has not agreed to dismantle the apartheid system under which South Africans classified as "Black" are not considered citizens and cannot vote. In South Africa, there is still detention without trial but limited to six months. Apartheid is by no means history, but at least there is some

currently no real peace process of which Israel is a part.

Israel continues to insist that an independent Palestinian state is beyond the pale of discussion; indeed, Prime Minister Shamir provoked an international brouhaha when he argued that the expected Soviet Jewish immigrants should be permitted to

said he would like to remove these sanctions, but there is a good chance that Congress will leave them in place until real changes are made.

In the case of Israel, the United States continues to reward Israel for its occupation and its human-rights violations with ever-increasing financial and military aid. The Bush administration went so far as to limit Soviet Jewish immigration into the United States, as was done after World War II, to coerce the emigres to go to Israel, and some supporters of Israel are so crass as to suggest that the United States has a responsibility to pay for settling the immigrants in Israel. They tell us that reducing aid to Israel would only make Israel more intransigent, which sounds like the miracle of turning a rock into stone.

Some people used to question whether comparisons between Israel and South Africa were fair to Israel. But whereas South Africa has clearly embarked on a course of change—willingly or not—which must end in the dismantlement of apartheid, Israel has just as clearly dug in its heels, determined to maintain the Israeli form of apartheid. It is indeed appropriate to ask whether comparisons between Israel and South Africa are fair to South Africa.

Let us not mince words. Despite the motion, the cruel and inhuman system of apartheid is still firmly in place in South Africa. There is no guarantee that the present negotiations will really lead to a transfer of power. The South African government deserves no praise for giving in to pressure from a people's movement and international sanctions. □

Whereas South Africa has clearly embarked on a course of change — willingly or not, Israel has just as clearly dug in its heels.

real progress in the battle against it. In South Africa, there is a peace process, though nobody yet knows how it will turn out.

Upon his release, Nelson Mandela traveled abroad to meet with the ANC and international supporters. In Zambia, Mr. Mandela embraced PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and said that, like the foes of apartheid, Mr. Arafat "is fighting against a unique form of colonialism, and we wish him success in his struggle."

Israeli leaders, on the other hand, continue to insist that they will never negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization or its designated representatives or even with Palestinians living outside the West Bank and Gaza or in East Jerusalem. South Africa will talk to Mandela, but Israel refuses to meet with Arafat. Indeed, there is

settle in the occupied territories to make a "Big Israel." Whereas Nelson Mandela was released, Israeli authorities briefly arrested nationalist leader Faisal Hussein on an absurd charge. A large peaceful demonstration of 30,000 Israelis, Palestinians, and foreign visitors was brutally attacked by Israeli soldiers and police on December 30, and the daily human-rights atrocities of Israeli repression of the intifada continue. In addition, the period for which a prisoner may be held without trial was increased from six to twelve months.

There is also a sharp difference in US policy toward Israel and South Africa. The US Congress, under massive grassroots pressure and over the loud objections of the Reagan administration, imposed effective sanctions against the apartheid government in South Africa. Now President Bush has

FOCUS ON ACTION

By Ginny Kraus

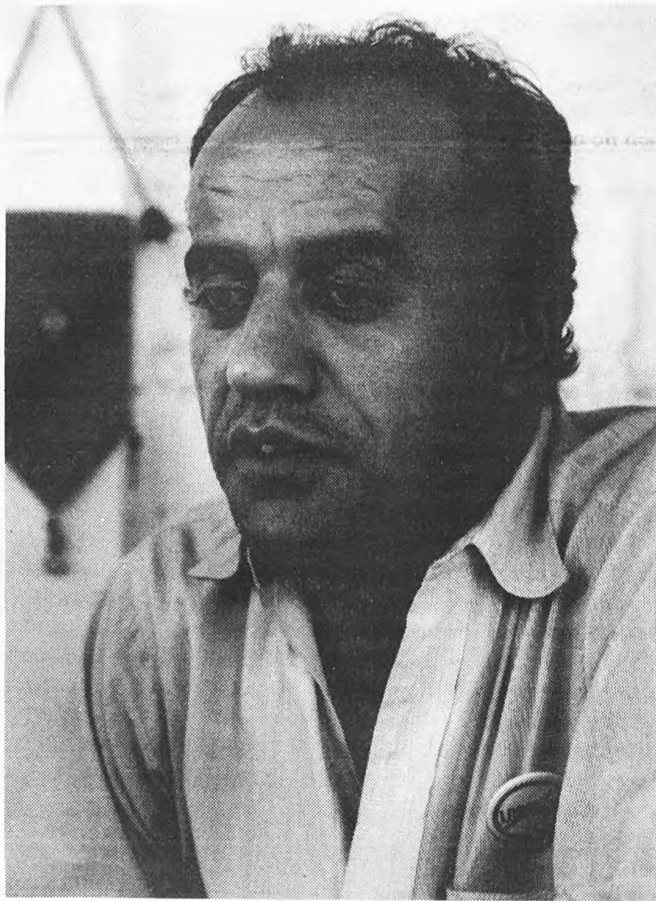
Thousands of Postcards Calling for Hearings Reach Congress

Since the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) launched a national campaign calling for Congressional hearings to determine whether US aid to Israel is in violation of the US Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, thousands of postcards have been sent to Congressional representatives across the United States. Sections 502B and 116(a) of the FAA state that "No assistance may be provided ... to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, including torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges, or other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person." Last month, a delegation of members of the North American Coordinating Committee of Nongovernmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine met with an aide to Congressman Lee Hamilton to again call for hearings on Israeli human-rights violations. Hamilton chairs the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. PSC is urging that thousands of the postcards be sent to Congressman Hamilton to keep up the pressure for hearings.

Postcards including the text of Section 502B are available from the San Francisco PSC office and are to be addressed to your local representative in the House, Washington, DC. For copies of the postcard, contact the New York PSC office at P.O. Box 372, Peck Slip Station, New York, NY 10272, (212) 227-1435 or the SF PSC office at P. O. Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127, (415) 861-1552. Coming up June 2, the PSC is planning national protests against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and our government's role in funding it.

Act on Conscience Launches National Campaign for Responsible Aid

Act on Conscience is an ongoing national campaign to end US complicity—moral, legal, diplomatic, and financial—with Israel's escalating human-rights assault on the Palestinian people in their struggle for national rights. The campaign includes people of many faiths, ethnic backgrounds,



Hani Beydoun in San Francisco.

Bill Hoffman/Palestine Solidarity Committee

political affiliations, and educational and vocational experiences. The organizers are committed to increasing public awareness of our country's role in the continuing crisis in Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories and to translating that awareness into effective political action.

Act on Conscience is also calling on the Bush administration and Congress to implement sections 502B and 116(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act. The national campaign organizers are urging concerned Americans to call for Congressional and other public hearings to investigate US compliance with the human-rights provisions of the FAA and are calling on President Bush, US Senators, and members of the House of Representatives to implement these provisions. In addition to mailing the previously mentioned postcards, organizers held demonstrations, lobbying efforts, forums, and acts of religious witness on April 14, 15, and 16 (tax filing day) to heighten public awareness, protest current US policy, and urge the administration and Congress to comply with international law. Specifically, they cite the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. This convention prohibits expulsion of inhabitants, establishment of civilian settlements, long-term detention without

trial, and other measures routinely carried out by the Israeli military occupation. The campaign's national coordinators are Hilda Silverman and Richard J. McDowell. Its Advisory Council includes William Sloane Coffin, president of SANE/Freeze, Jack O'Dell of the National Rainbow Coalition, Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf, TV personality Casey Kasem, and peace activist Brian Willson, among many others. To join this national campaign, write to Act on Conscience, P. O. Box 21104, Washington, DC 20009 or phone (202) 939-6050.

Hani Beydoun, Trade Unionist, Arrested

Hani Beydoun, a 35-year-old trade unionist from the West Bank and father of three children, was arrested on March 20 at an Israeli checkpoint in Ramallah. He was seen being beaten by Israeli soldiers as they dragged him off in an army jeep. Israeli authorities have refused to release any information about his arrest, and he has been denied the right to see his lawyer, the Red Cross, or his family. The Israel Defense Forces may hold Palestinian prisoners incommunicado for 18 days after their arrest, during which time harsh interrogation and torture commonly occur. In Mr. Beydoun's case, this period was arbitrarily extended to 55 days.

Hani Beydoun is a prominent leader in the Palestinian trade-union movement and a founder of the Hotel Workers Union in Jerusalem. In 1989, he toured eighteen cities in the United States and Canada. He met with trade unionists from locals and internationals, with human-rights activists and peace organizations, with Rev. Jesse Jackson, and with Congressmen Lee Hamilton and George Crockett. He also met with national and international executive directors of Amnesty International.

During an earlier detention, Beydoun's health deteriorated drastically; he suffered a heart attack. The harsh conditions and torture in prison mean his life is now in danger. An international campaign has been launched to demand his immediate release; in some past cases, such campaigns have been successful. We urge all concerned individuals to send a mailgram to President Chaim Herzog, c/o Embassy of Israel, 3514 International Drive, N.W., Washington DC 20009. Phone Western Union at 1-800-257-4900 and ask for operator 9664. A prepared mailgram will be forwarded in your name; \$5.75 will be billed to your telephone bill. If you prefer to telephone the Israeli consulate directly, call (202) 364-5500 to protest Beydoun's arrest and demand his immediate release. For more information, contact Committee to Release Hani Beydoun, P. O. Box 29340, Chicago, IL 60629 (202) 332-9667.

University of California at Berkeley Students Adopt Bethlehem University as Sister

A coalition of student activists on the University of California at Berkeley campus (International Jewish Peace

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This column highlights recent events of the intifada that convey the magnitude of repression and the breadth and depth of the resistance. It is the continuing chronicle of what ordinary people can do in an extraordinary time. And because the gains achieved by the day-to-day resistance in Palestine are registered as well on the political and diplomatic fronts, our aim is to provide our readers stories not only of the clashes on the ground, but also of their repercussions around the world.

January 29 *Al-Fajr* newspaper reported that six students who graduated from Palestinian universities since the uprising began have recently been denied employment at government schools. Israeli authorities refused to recognize the degrees on the grounds that the students must have participated in illegal classes in order to have graduated. Despite worldwide protests, Palestinian universities, which were already closed when the intifada began, have remained closed ever since.

February 20 Foreign ministers of the European community, meeting in Dublin, issued a strongly worded statement condemning Israel's building of settlements in the occupied territories. The statement said Israeli intentions to expand settlements are counterproductive to achieving peace in the Middle East. The ministers welcomed the Soviet decision to allow free emigration of Jews but said it should not be done at the expense of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

February 21 The US State Department released its annual report on worldwide human rights, expressing "deep concern" for the human-rights situation in the occupied territories. *Al-Fajr* (Feb. 26) reported that Israeli reactions to the report were much milder than last year. The report's findings "are correct and they are not new," said Judge Advocate General Amon Strashnow, adding, "I must say the criticism is not very severe. Compared with other countries mentioned in the report, our situation is definitely good." Jan Abu Shakra, director of the Palestine Human Rights Information Center in East Jerusalem, told *Al-Fajr* that the report is not a serious human-rights report, but a "political document which supports US policy and makes provisions for its foreign-aid package." Abu Shakra pointed out that the report makes no attempt to substantiate allegations of human-rights abuses and omits mention of the killing, injury, detention, or torture of children. There is also no mention of the illegality of Jewish settlements, despite the fact that the Geneva Convention—signed by both the United States and Israel—prohibits the transfer of people from the state of the occupier into the territories occupied. The State Department's criticisms of Israel were allegedly watered down by Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for humanitarian affairs and founding president of the pro-Israel Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

March 1 The two largest labor factions in the West Bank agreed to remerge their organizations as the General Federation of Trade Unions. The federation split into several competing factions eight years ago. The new federation will encompass 90 percent of organized workers in the West Bank. A statement issued by the Federation's new Executive Committee asserted the need to reunify in the face of "the challenges posed at this critical stage, such as increasing unemployment and a decline in real wages and standards of living." It also reaffirmed the Palestinian labor movement's longstanding support for an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO.

March 2 The Israeli military authorities issued an order requiring news organizations to submit all material pertaining to the immigration of Soviet Jews to military censors. The unusual order came in response to the furor created by Prime Minister Shamir's remark in January that a "big Israel" will be needed to accommodate the emigres from the Soviet Union. Many

Intifada Chronicle

observers expect these to number half a million over the next several years.

Israel is currently mounting a major effort to attract settlers, especially the new immigrants, to the occupied territories. Palestinians and their supporters point out that even if the rate at which the new immigrants accept the inducements offered to settle in the West Bank continues at the current 1.5 percent (this figure does not count Israeli settlers in Jerusalem), the settler population will rise more than 10 percent. The special incentives offered by the government include interest-free or reduced-rate mortgages and other housing subsidies, special subsidies to schools in

the settlements, and subsidies for transportation of students to schools inside Israel.

March 3 Some say the intifada is waning as a result of brutal Israeli repression. To illustrate that the reality is quite the contrary, here are the events of just a single day: Three molotov cocktails were thrown at army patrols in Gaza City during clashes in which crowds burned tires and erected barricades. Soldiers fired indiscriminately and tried to enter a hospital in search of demonstrators; they were stopped by Red Cross and UNRWA officials. In Khan Yunis refugee camp in Gaza, the army sealed a three-room house

of a person arrested and charged with membership in the popular committees. Two schools in the camp were also closed on the grounds that stones were thrown in the area. At least four people were shot in other clashes in the Gaza Strip. In Rafah, the army lifted a curfew but ordered all schools closed indefinitely. Curfews remained in force in several refugee camps and neighborhoods of several other cities. In Nablus, scores of women sat in at Red Cross offices to protest house demolitions. Soldiers dispersed the demonstration by force. Merchants in Jerusalem's Old City

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Two Brothers

By Phyllis Bennis

Shabura Camp, Rafah, Gaza, February 1990—Um Talat Zakout sat in her bare, sparsely furnished two-room house in the Shabura district of Rafah refugee camp at the southern tip of the Gaza Strip. She was surrounded by friends, extended family, and her two daughters and youngest son. She showed us the pictures of her two older boys, and it was only then that Um Talat began to cry softly.

Um Talat's middle son, Ayman, had been killed by Israeli soldiers outside her home ten days earlier, on February 7, 1990. He was eighteen years old. Just one year and a half earlier, her eldest son, Talat, was shot and killed in the sixth month of the intifada. Talat was eighteen when he died, too.

I visited the Shabura neighborhood of Rafah camp two weeks after a busload of Israeli tourists was attacked in Ismailia. From the first day after that incident, some Israeli officials had claimed that one of the perpetrators came from Rafah—maybe even from Shabura. Other officials had other views and the Palestinians in Rafah disputed the claim, but the allegation was enough for the soldiers of the IDF to wreak a terrible blood vengeance on the people of Rafah for weeks.

In just the last five days preceding my visit to Shabura, more than 300 people in Gaza were injured by Israeli gunfire in Rafah. The gunshot victims were so numerous that the normally cautious UN Refugee Works Administration (UNRWA) issued two letters of concern to the Israeli occupation authorities, reflecting the fear that UNRWA's network of hospitals and clinics could not cope with the flood of injuries.

Countless more Gaza Palestinians were subjected to attacks with intense tear gas and a new kind of nerve-affecting gas. Scores were arrested in late-night arrest raids, in sweeps through the camp's houses and schools, and during the fierce daily clashes that pitted the stone-throwing shebab (youth) of Rafah against the military might of the Israel Defense Force's Southern Command.

The extended Zakout family had more than 25 members in jail by mid-February: some for six- or twelve-month terms of administrative detention; some in the first or second year of long prison sentences; some still awaiting trial. Mrs. Zakout, Um Talat, age 47, was herself imprisoned for fifteen months, one year before the intifada began. Without ever being brought to trial or even seriously questioned, she was released soon after the uprising began, when occupation authorities finally acknowledged they had no basis on which to hold her.

Um Talat held tightly to her daughters and especially to her youngest son. "He's the only one I have left," she said. Since her husband's death fifteen years

ago, she had raised her children alone. While Um Talat was in jail, family and neighbors watched her children.

The family's grief at the loss of their second son shadowed, but did not hide, their intense desire to tell the story of Shabura, to tell the world what had been happening to their people in the last weeks. Um Talat's youngest son has been jailed twice during the intifada: first he spent five months in prison and paid a 1,000-shekel



Um Talat holds photos of her two sons killed by Israeli soldiers.

Phyllis Bennis

(\$500) fine; the second time was eight months and 1,500 shekels (\$750). The second time soldiers broke his arm.

The critical factor in Rafah, the family agreed, after the arrest raids and the constantly escalating level of shooting, was the use of gas. "This is a different kind of gas than the usual CS [extra-strong] tear gas," one of the young Zakout cousins explained. "This kind of gas we haven't seen since the first weeks of the intifada. It seems to be a kind of nerve gas. It doesn't affect the eyes so much, but it affects the nerves and respiratory systems. Some people seem to get very sleepy when they breathe this gas; other become partly paralyzed. It's a kind of nerve gas."

Um Talat's youngest son described how "it feels like there is no oxygen in the air. If you just smell it, you can't close your hands. I was hit by this gas just at sunrise today; I could not move my hands or fingers, or close my fists, for about 30 minutes."

Family members described how this gas is used. "It isn't fired from rifles like regular tear gas," one explained. "It is dropped from helicopters, in whole cartons full of the gas cannisters. Then they explode, either outside or inside people's houses." I asked if anyone in Shabura had kept an empty cannister. No, the answer came, nobody keeps them any more because too many people have been arrested by soldiers when the empty cannisters were found in their homes during the constant searches.

Later, in Jerusalem, I spoke to a Palestinian journalist, the only cameraman operating in Rafah on a regular basis during those terrible weeks. He confirmed the terri-

fying impact of the new gas. "I was filming at one house a couple of days ago, seven hours after the cannisters were dropped. Twenty-two cannisters had landed inside their house. I couldn't stay inside the house more than a minute, even after that much time. Imagine what it must have been like for the family inside?"

The new gas appears to be of local Israeli manufacture. Shabura residents and the Palestinian journalist all confirmed that all writing on the cannisters was in Hebrew. There were no English markings and no references to Federal Laboratories, the Pennsylvania-based

company that produces the "regular" tear gas used by the IDF.

When I was in Rafah, in Shabura Camp and Rafah City, no other foreign journalists were around. Um Talat and her family asked over and over again, "Where is the international press? Why is there no one to see, to tell the world about these horrible things that are happening to us?" The one Palestinian cameraman still functioning in the area, whose film provided the only record of the IDF's assault on the people of Rafah, echoed their question. "We know how crucial the events in eastern Europe are; we follow those events closely. But still, has the entire foreign press corps left?"

The answer, sadly, appeared to be "Yes." With the eyes and ears of the world absent, the arrests, the nerve gas, the shootings continue unabated, unnoticed by international public opinion.

The only eyes that watch, that see, are those of the Palestinian residents of Rafah, of Shabura. Written in Arabic beneath the portrait of Ayman Zakout, on a poorly reproduced poster commemorating his death, is a fragment of a lament for the young martyr. "If the bullets could see your eyes," it says, "they would cry their sorrow." □

Phyllis Bennis is the Middle East correspondent for New York radio station WBAI's "Undercurrents" and hosts the "Frontlines: Middle East" radio show. Her forthcoming book with photographer Neal Cassidy is entitled *From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising*.

Soviet Jews and the Peace Process

By Jeanne Butterfield

The expected immigration of massive numbers of Soviet Jews to Israel has provoked a storm of criticism around the world and a warm welcome from the Israeli government. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir has announced that a "big Israel" is needed to accommodate the new arrivals, fueling fears that outright annexation of the West Bank and forced transfer of Palestinians from their land is on the immediate agenda.

For years, Israeli leaders have agonized over the fact that the Palestinian population is growing much faster than the Israeli Jewish population. Declaring that the demographic time bomb has been defused, Likud hawks feel no pressure to engage in peace talks with the Palestinians. And feeling themselves once again in danger of displacement or outright expulsion as the result of massive Jewish immigration, Palestinians have sounded the alarm and asked the international community to respond.

Once again, the United States is being asked to bankroll Israel \$400 million in new loan guarantees for new housing for Soviet immigrants on top of the \$25 million already allocated last year by Congress.

The question of Soviet Jewish immigration raises many thorny questions which the PLO and others in the international community have begun to address. "The Soviet Jews are not leaving the Soviet Union because they want to go to Israel," declared President Arafat in a recent interview. "They are leaving because they are looking for a better life. We do not oppose this desire, but we demand that there be a stop, between Moscow and Tel Aviv, and that the Soviet Jews be given a choice about where they will go. The Soviet foreign ministry itself has issued a statement critical of Shamir and his plan to settle Soviet Jews in the occupied territories. This is detrimental to the peace process."

In fact, most Soviet Jews who wish to leave the Soviet Union wish to resettle in the United States or in other Western European countries. The United States, which has long pressed the Soviet Union to relax its emigration policy, has suddenly declared that Soviet Jews no longer meet the U.S. definition of refugees and that only 50,000 Soviet citizens will be allowed to emigrate to the United States each year. This hypocritical policy on the part of the U.S. government seems in part designed to accommodate Israeli goals of encouraging massive immigration to Israel to reverse the trend of the past several years in which more Jews have left Israel than have exercised their so-called right of return.

"The immigration of Soviet Jews is one more factor which is complicating the peace process," explained PLO Executive Committee member Abu Iyad, "especially the statements accompanying this subject

made by Shamir and others. For us, it means, in addition to the military occupation, there is an occupation by people, by settlers, of our land. We have to take into consideration as well the statements made by Sharon about the transfer of our people from their land. All these factors indicate that the situation in the area and could indicate an Israeli intention that talk about peace in the area should be postponed."

The Israeli government denies that it has any intention of settling Soviet Jews in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. In fact, over

ments indicate that, in fact, many Soviet Jews will be resettled in this occupied territory. But wherever the Soviet Jews are settled, bringing hundreds of thousands of Jews to Israel stiffens Israeli intransigence and sidetracks the peace process.

In addition, a combination of government subsidies and settler recruitment efforts promise to increase the resettlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied West Bank and Gaza and to dramatically increase the number of settlers. Information about settlement activity is scant, especially in light of the recent Israeli order imposing full

Costs of utility hookups are absorbed by the government, and government-subsidized transportation is provided to bus settler children to schools in Israel. Given these subsidies and incentives and the shortage of housing in Israel, it is no surprise to find that hundreds of Soviet Jews have "chosen" West Bank settlements in recent months.

"We should address ourselves to human rights," stated Abu Iyad. "Is it permissible that the United States obliges the Soviet Jews to go to Israel? Give them the liberty or the freedom to choose. American pressures—the immigration quotas they are establishing—these are against human rights. If the United States and Israel think that the forced transfer of these immigrants will solve the demographic problem which the Labor Party in Israel is always referring to, they are really mistaken."

"An influx of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union will pose one of the biggest obstacles in the peace process," concluded PLO Foreign Minister Farouk Qadoumi. "It is an obstacle to peace because the Israeli government intends to accommodate in the West Bank and Gaza the Jewish immigration which is planned. If the number of the Jewish settlers there increases, it will become difficult to have peace, and this will support Shamir's plan to annex the West Bank and Gaza. The United States and the Soviet Union have to work hard on this problem in order to limit and to prevent such immigration." □

"The immigration of Soviet Jews is complicating the peace process."

— Abu Iyad, PLO leader

the past several years, only 1.6 percent of Soviet Jews (about 300 of the 13,000 who immigrated in 1989) have been resettled in the West Bank (outside Jerusalem) and Gaza. However, 12 percent have been settled in East Jerusalem, Palestinian territory annexed by Israel in 1967.

Current plans announced by the Israeli government to build thousands of new units of housing in the Jerusalem-area settle-

military censorship on any news articles about Soviet Jewish immigration. But it is known that direct housing subsidies to settlers who choose the West Bank or Gaza range up to \$21,000, and those building their own homes are given land at 5 percent of its assessed value. Interest-free mortgages are given to settlers at 65 percent of the loan's value with reduced interest rates for an additional 25 percent of the loan.



Demonstration at funeral for two youth killed by Israeli death squads in Yatta, West Bank, October 1988.

Neal Cassidy/From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising

PLO Peace Initiative ...

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the peace initiative was launched. "After the Algiers meeting," Abu Iyad stated, "and after the UN meeting in Geneva and Arafat's press conference, we imagined that many of the complicated problems had found their way to a solution. We imagined that there would be an American position and an Israeli position which would at least understand our position and the message we were trying to convey. And we didn't stop at the Geneva statement. We have followed them up with other statements, other actions. For example, our political department has made every possible effort to meet with Israeli Jews, and I personally have sent a videotaped message to the Jerusalem meeting last year."

"In fact, our peace initiative was very forthcoming," Abu Iyad continued. "Then we were faced with Shamir's plan, and the

U.S. administration and Israel started manipulating the whole concept of elections. We haven't objected to elections. We have said we are ready to accept elections. But we want a comprehensive plan. In the final analysis, all the political action and movement has come down to what is known as 'the Baker plan.' Objectively, the Baker plan can't even be called a plan. It is a series of measures. In spite of that fact, we have dealt with it. We said we would accept the Baker plan according to our three conditions."

"We have done our best to push the process of peace," commented Farouk Qadoumi. "We have shown all flexibility. It is difficult. The enemy has to negotiate with its enemy, not with its friends. Israel has to negotiate with the Palestinians. Ignoring the Palestinians means prolonging this process. There doesn't seem to be any real interest on

the part of the Americans to do something. They are asking us for more concessions. We are doing our best, but we don't see any response from the other side. The Israeli mood is adamant and obstinate." Even US Secretary of State Baker acknowledged that the PLO had met all conditions demanded of them.

"The problem we are facing is not a formal one," added Abu Iyad. "On the question of the delegation, no Palestinian would go to the meeting if the PLO does not give them the OK, the approval to go. The question is: Can there be peace without the PLO? If talks begin with the PLO, then that means a first step in talking about establishing a Palestinian state. But if talks begin with a delegation from the occupied territories, then it means we are talking about the first step of establishing self-rule or self-autonomy and not independence. This will not establish peace. It is a solution which will freeze the problem but will not solve it. It's not that we want a compre-

hensive solution to take place at one blow, but at least we have to take one step forward, to achieve one step forward in the direction of peace."

What, then, is next for the Palestinian peace initiative? "What is the alternative?" asked Abu Iyad. "I assure you that the peace initiative is a strategic alternative, a strategic decision for us. We are convinced about our peace initiative, and we are convinced that there should be two states coexisting together in that area. Even while we are saying now that we are going to call the PNC into session, we are not calling it in order to change or to revoke our peace initiative. We want to assess, to think about new ways in which to put a new driving force to this peace initiative."

"I cannot say that Baker's plan, or that the Israeli/Palestinian dialogue, or the American/Palestinian dialogue has come to a dead end," Abu Iyad continued. "But if we stick to the same approach, we will

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Interview with Abie Nathan

"Without talking to the PLO, there is no chance for peace"

Abie J. Nathan (better-known as Abie) is an Israeli peace activist who was recently released from an Israeli prison where he served three months of a six-month term for meeting with PLO Chairman and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in violation of Israeli law prohibiting such contacts. After his release, Nathan met again with President Arafat in March 1990. Since 1965 Nathan has devoted his life to promoting contact between the Israeli and Palestinian people. He is best-known for his Peace Ship in the Mediterranean, from which messages of coexistence have been broadcast since 1973. Abie Nathan was interviewed for Palestine Focus by Rabab Hadi at the annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington.

PF: Why did you meet with the PLO chairman knowing you might be jailed?

AN: We have a law in Israel which is undemocratic and an obstacle to peace. It is also dangerous because this law today tells you not to meet with people. Tomorrow it will tell you what to talk about with people and what to see. This is very dangerous if we continue to observe this law. I am fighting to try to change this law the only way I know. People have said that sometimes when you think a law is illegal, you have to demonstrate and pay the penalty and go to prison, self-sacrifice in order to appeal to the conscience of other people to join you to try to change it. I carry the pain in order to reach people in the Israeli [society] and government to change that law because it is really barbaric.

PF: Why do you want to change the law?

AN: Because by not talking to the PLO, there is going to be no chance for peace. All this talking and all this business of the peace process started with dishonesty because the man who suggested it—Shamir—was dishonest. He had no intention for it to succeed; ten months have passed and nothing has been done. He had no intention of giving up one inch of land. He has no intention of stopping settlements in those areas. He has no intention of giving anything, and all the talk—when he talks of peace—becomes a joke.

There are no short cuts to peace. When you have an enemy, you have to speak to your enemy and not to your friends. Today, for the Israelis, Arafat is the enemy. They must sit with him and him alone on the assumption that he is the representative of the Palestinian people. If the people of Palestine say he is the leader, then it is him. If they have a referendum, I am sure he will



Abie Nathan and Yasser Arafat in Geneva.

New Outlook

be the leader. But if they elect somebody else, we speak to them because Israel cannot tell the Palestinians who should represent them. Otherwise it becomes a joke.

Why do I continue? For one main reason: for many years I never tried to speak to the PLO because they said to me: you have no right here, you do not exist, we do not know you. But the moment I heard the first

come to Jerusalem, we'll put you in prison. That is a slap at everybody.

PF: What has been the impact of the Palestinian intifada on Israeli society?

AN: Israelis know that militarily, there can be no solution. The intifada has brought home to the Israelis one very important point: that the Palestinian people have woken up. It took a long time. Many people think that if the intifada was in 1967, today it would be history already. But the price the Palestinians are paying is very heavy. We Israelis know that the PLO is the only party to talk to. Almost 60 percent believe we should talk with the PLO. In that respect, the intifada—while it has brought a lot of bloodshed to its own people and to the Jews—has also created a step toward peace.

PF: What is your assessment of the attitudes of American Jewry toward the policies of Israel?

AN: More and more American Jews are beginning to question the policies of the Israeli government and are beginning to demand the right to speak and have their views heard. We do not want Americans to be silent on Israel; we want to hear them. They have the right to be heard. To say to people: "You are not here, do not talk" is wrong. We Israelis should listen because first of all, there are far more intellectuals among American Jewry who have been more successful in every field than the Israelis. So there is a lot we can learn from them if we take their advice and listen to them. Now we take their money, but we do not want to listen to them.

It is also not fair to tell the US government to give us money and then shut up. The United States has its own interests. This is a very big country, and Israel is not the center of the whole world. Whenever they criticize Israel, they are called anti-Semitic; this is wrong. We are living off other people and doing what we want. If the whole world says we are wrong, maybe we should admit we are wrong. But we do not ask ourselves those questions.

Today, the majority of the people of Israel criticize those policies; they are against them. So this minority that is for settlements and for kicking the Palestinians out of the country are a small minority. This is not the real Israel.

PF: Do you believe there should be a Palestinian state?

AN: What I want is not the question. I have to see what the other side wants and how far I can go. To me, the name Judea and Samaria: I never heard of it before 1967. Nobody every spoke of it; no article mentioned the name. Today people are settling there. I only go there when a Palestinian family invites me to their home. So I am against the creation of settlements. I am against the occupation because as a Jew, I do not consider it consistent with the laws of the Jewish people or the morals of the Jewish people. We were oppressed all our lives. We have no business being an occupying power. So I am for withdrawing from the territories. I am for the Palestinians having a state.

The Israeli public has been indoctrinated, night and day, that the Palestinian state, if it is created, will destroy Israel. But

Israel cannot tell the Palestinians who should represent them.

not one leader has given any example how it will destroy Israel. How can it destroy Israel without airplanes? Even if they had them, the moment they take off and cross the border, they'll be shot down. When we have an agreement, we will create not war but boundaries of peace.

So I say we can live with a Palestinian state. We can live in federation with them better than they will do with the Jordanians. Our borders will be open. We can control the borders, so the borders have to be open. Both our peoples need each other. There is a lot they can learn from us, and there is a lot we can benefit from the Palestinians. It is a two-way thing with open borders. We can make a certain area of Jerusalem to serve as the capital of the union of two countries so that the Israelis are there and the Palestinians are there. This is my dream, and that is what I would like to happen.

PF: What message would you send to the Palestinian people of the intifada?

AN: I understand the reasons why they are fighting. I understand the sense of frustration that has brought them to do what they are doing today. In my heart, I cannot believe that any solution can come from violence because I am a nonviolent man. I know that Israel has bullets to last for a long time, but I also know that the Palestinian children of the occupied territories have stones to last for generations. But all the stones and bullets will not solve the problem.

We must find a way for the two parties to talk. When they do, I am optimistic that we do not need to fire on any [Palestinian] child, and we do not need to have any soldier, any young Israeli boy of 18, to have to wear a uniform, to have a gun in his hand, to parade in the Casbah of Nablus and shoot at anybody. This has to be avoided if we decide to talk.

On the other hand, I want the Palestinian people to understand that the struggle is very holy. They also must be patient for the right time. They must not lose their patience. That is why I tell Arafat every time: please do not give up hope. We are both Semites; we are both very stubborn people. But once we do settle something between us, I think that it will be the garden of Eden. □

I am for withdrawing from the territories. I am for the Palestinians having a state.

sound they say that I also have the right to live here next to them, I packed my bag and went.

My feeling is that any Palestinian who says that to me, I am not only going to grab his hand, I will also embrace him and talk to him. In Israel, unfortunately, all the remarks have been made by the PLO and so many concessions have been made and declared; Israel has not responded with anything. The only thing she has said is what Shamir has said to Arafat: If you



U.S. Blocks ...

Continued from Page 1

into the United States. The result was to direct the flow of immigrants to Israel. This Bush administration decision is eerily reminiscent of the refusal of the US government to permit Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution into the United States during and after the second world war.

Despite the rise in overt anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, there is no comparison between conditions for Soviet Jews and for Jews in Nazi-ruled Europe. Still, the US government decision reeks of anti-Semitism. Where was the established leadership of the Jewish community when that decision was announced? Why did they not denounce the Bush administration for an act of official anti-Semitism? There is a strong undercurrent of American Jewish opposition to Israeli government policies—including dismay at the failure of Israel to pursue its own negotiation proposal—but

Letter to the Editors

I would like three copies of the postcard. They will go to U.S. Rep. Ron Wyden (impossible), Sen. Packwood (hardcore), and Sen. Hatfield (antioccupation and catching flak).

I belong to the Portland Central American Solidarity Committee (PCASC), and within this organization there has been a rising consciousness of the Palestinian cause in the past year. Some leaders in PCASC have gone to the West Bank and brought back slides (and tear-gas cannisters and "nonlethal" rubber and plastic bullets), and tales of woe and suffering. And in the last issue of PCASC's newsletter, *ACTIVISTA*, there was an article stating that solidarity with Central American peoples must also include solidarity with Palestinians. Slowly, but steadily, things are beginning to turn around up here, I think.

M. P. Hallman
Portland, Oregon

the restriction of Soviet Jewish immigration to the United States has yet to become an issue.

In fact, many supporters of Israel backed the lowering of immigration quotas for Soviet Jews because they knew full well that these immigrants would have no alternative but to go to Israel if they chose to leave the Soviet Union. Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel has reportedly given a new lease on life to Zionists who had believed that massive Jewish immigration into Israel was only a thing of the past. The flow of tens of thousands of potential settlers was channeled to Israel by a conscious decision of the US government, which nevertheless claims to oppose settlement in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. In this case, it is less relevant to read Mr. Bush's lips than to watch both his hands.

If the Bush administration were sincere about its announced opposition to expanded settlement, it would take two acts which are well within its authority. It would restore the previous immigration rights for Soviet Jews, and it would link US aid to Israel to the cessation of settlement activity. To date, the Bush administration has verbally conditioned additional aid to settle the Soviet immigrants on a guarantee of a stop to settlement activity, but the remainder of US aid to Israel is considered untouchable.

In fact, these two acts would do much to create an atmosphere in which a genuine peace process can be advanced.

The Disappearing Peace Process

In terms of the peace process, the collapse of the Israeli government appears to have much less significance than the massive media coverage—which continues to ignore the ongoing intifada—implies. The crucial difference between Labor and Likud is that of whether Palestinians from East Jerusalem may be represented in a delegation selected to discuss elections in the West Bank and Gaza with Israel. And all the Israelis have so far been asked to do is to meet with their allies from Egypt and the United States to discuss the precise composition of the Palestinian delegation and the terms of discussion. This modest proposal is what they call the "peace process."

While the right to political representation of Palestinian Jerusalem residents is not insignificant, it represents a small dif-

ference compared to the areas on which Likud and Labor agree: no role for the PLO, no Palestinian state, no discussion of the status of East Jerusalem—which has been occupied since 1967 along with the rest of the West Bank and Gaza. And whereas they defend the right of the Soviet Jews to "return" to Israel and occupied Palestine, they staunchly oppose the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland.

Palestinians are understandably not excited about a process which promises no more than elections: In 1976 the Israelis allowed similar elections and then deposed the victors, who were overwhelmingly pro-PLO. Indeed, from the Palestinian view, a very reasonable proposal for an international peace conference and a Palestinian state—in line with the international consensus—was put forward by the 1988 Palestine National Council. That proposal was ignored. The PLO leadership has been tremendously flexible in agreeing to participate in the Baker proposal, which the Israeli government publicly initiated but cannot bring itself to accept.

What the Bush administration cannot bring itself to do is to carry out the policies it says it believes in. President Bush him-

self was asked at a press conference whether he might "tie aid to resettle the Soviet Jews to an Israeli willingness to not settle the West Bank and to withdraw some of the settlements from the West Bank and Gaza." His response: "My position is that the foreign policy of the United States says we do not believe there should be new settlements in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem." In the same press conference, however, he expressed his true position: "I'm not tying those two subjects [US aid to Israel and the quest for peace]. But Israel has some big economic problems ... facing them that require a very generous apportionment of aid money, and they are getting that."

In both instances—Soviet Jews and the peace process—the Bush administration should be judged by the old adage: Watch what they do, not what they say. So long as the United States plays an active role in shunting Soviet Jews to Israel, nobody can take seriously US opposition to settlements. So long as the United States continues to send billions to Israel without restrictions, nobody can take seriously a US government commitment to peace or justice. □

Focus On ...

Continued from Page 2

Union-campus chapter; Committee for Academic Freedom in the Israeli Occupied Territories; Progressive Muslim Alliance; Network of Arab-American Students) introduced a bill in the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC, Berkeley's student government) to establish a sister-university relationship with Bethlehem University in the West Bank. The bill was passed on March 14 with little opposition. Plans are being formulated to promote support for Bethlehem University (which is currently closed), to arrange for student exchanges, and to get various kinds of database access for Bethlehem students for research purposes. For more information, write to Network of Arab-American Students, Third Floor, Eshleman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

AFSC Third-World Coalition Tours Palestinian Women from the West Bank

Iman Salah Hammoury and Nadia Nasser of the West Bank recently toured the United States as part of an 11-city tour sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition. Hammoury is a student at Bir Zeit University, a representative of the Palestinian Students' Higher Coordinating Council and of the Palestinian Women's Higher Council, a trade unionist, and a dancer with the Popular Folkloric Dance Troupe. She is also a former prisoner whose trial is still pending. Nasser is a Bir Zeit University graduate in English, a member of the Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees, and currently studying in the United States to work with the visually handicapped. She was also arrested and detained during the intifada. □

Join Palestine Solidarity Committee

We invite you to join us to work for Middle East peace and Palestinian rights.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) is a national grassroots organization working to change U.S. government policy to support steps toward a just resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. The tremendous upsurge of the Palestinian intifada has struck a responsive chord with many Americans.

You can help reach these potential supporters and to press our government to sup-

port self-determination for the Palestinian people through the United Nations international peace conference and an independent Palestinian state.

You can help build a grassroots, activist movement which can organize for a just peace. Your political commitment, in the form of membership in PSC, will help achieve this goal. As a member, you will receive *Palestine Focus* and our bimonthly *Members Update* with reports on the latest PSC activities across the United States.

Intifada Chronicle ...

Continued from page 3

closed their shops to protest a raid by Israeli tax collectors on the area.

March 8 Large demonstrations were held throughout Palestine in celebration of International Women's Day. In Jerusalem, more than 150 women carrying Palestinian flags and chanting nationalist slogans marched in the Old City. They were attacked by Israeli police and border guards with rubber bullets and tear gas. In Nablus, the army attacked a group of women marching with Palestinian flags and placards condemning Soviet Jewish immigration to the West Bank and calling for an end to the expulsion of Palestinian families from the occupied territories. Soldiers also attacked demonstrations of women and schoolgirls in Ramallah, Jenin, and Tulka-

rim. Marches were also reported in Bethlehem, Hebron, and Halhoul.

March 21 Namibia officially became an independent state and longtime nationalist leader Sam Nujoma was inaugurated as its first president. Among the dignitaries on hand to witness the ceremony were US Secretary of State James Baker and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. The day before, the *New York Times* reported that, although they would share the reviewing stand, aides to Baker said he "had no intention of making eye contact, let alone engaging in discussion." The only state not invited to send a representative was Israel.

The *Times* later reported that Baker found himself almost face-to-face with Arafat at the independence ceremony. Baker turned away and found himself looking at the Rev. Jesse Jackson, whom he engaged in animated conversation. □

PLO Peace Initiative ...

Continued from page 4

reach a dead end, at least concerning Baker's plan. There is a red line we cannot cross over. Despite what the Israelis are doing, the intifada will continue. The intifada will not use weapons, but there are other means which we have to consider if the Israeli refusal continues, if the situation continues as it is now."

"For example," stated Um Jihad, member of the PLO Executive Committee and widow of PLO leader Abu Jihad, who was assassinated in Tunis by Israeli commandos, "we are considering the tactic of hunger strikes on a mass level inside the

occupied territories, in the mosques and churches. This would be one tactic to bring international public opinion to bear on ending the occupation."

"The U.S. administration is not yet convinced that the international peace conference is necessary for establishing peace in the area and, more importantly, that the establishment of a Palestinian state would be a factor of stability in the area," concluded Abu Iyad. "This is a problem which must be solved by American public opinion. This is a problem which we would like to convey to you. The United States has to make up its mind. Is the establishment of a Palestinian state part of stability in the region or not?" □

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Send your check or money order to:
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GETTING IT ALL IN Focus

By Hilton Obenzinger

Haj-Mohammad. One more name in the casualty lists—but now Americans can share the anguish of his death, and we can hear the simple, basic statement of his father: “We need our rights, our own state; the Jews can live in their state also. We want to live in peace here, with the Jews. I hope Ziya will be the last martyr of our two nations, of Arabs and Jews. Then we can reach peace.”

With a foreword by Palestinian scholar and Palestine

On January 26, 1987, federal agents supported by paramilitary LAPD officers, arrested Palestinian immigrants and the Kenyan wife of one of them on the McCarran-Walter “charges” of distributing pro-PLO literature already available in bookstores and in universities. “War on Terrorism Hits LA!” blasted the headlines, as the shackled defendants were held in maximum security cells while President Reagan maneuvered the US Navy off Lebanon’s coast and threatened to launch another military intervention. Fears that the LA arrests might be a part of an anti-Arab hysteria campaign were confirmed when copies of a secret INS plan were leaked to the press. The plan was a blueprint for rounding up thousands of Arab immigrants into detention camps for mass deportation.

The Arab-American community, civil libertarians, immigrant rights groups—thousands of people of all backgrounds rallied to the defense of the Los Angeles 8. The threat against immigrant rights and against freedom of speech elicited support from throughout American society—and resulted in historic victories: The defendants were all soon released; portions of the McCarran-Walter Act have been declared unconstitutional by the courts;

Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation erupted in a rebellion that still amazes the world—and they named their rebellion “intifada.” In a just-released book, *From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising* (Olive Branch Press, Interlink Publishing, New York, \$14.95), Phyllis Bennis explores the power of naming. At the beginning of her unique and insightful examination of the intifada, Bennis examines the intifada, this word which has now been added to the lexicon of liberation around the world.

“The Arabic root for ‘intifada,’ the word ‘nafada,’ focuses more on the internal aspects of the process than on its impact on the external world—Palestinian scholar Shukri Abed writes that nafada means to shudder or tremble, to shake off or shake out, to recover or jump to one’s feet.

“Knowing the importance of what something is called to determine how it is viewed, Palestinians chose ‘uprising’ as the closest English equivalent for intifada. And though it pinpoints direct resistance to Israeli occupation as the key characteristic, ‘uprising’ still misses some of the layers of meaning. In part, this might be attributable to the rich complexity of Arabic compared to the more precise and linear English. But, whatever word is used, the internal consequences of the intifada within Palestinian public and private life may well prove to be as revolutionary and long-lasting as its task of ending the occupation. The ‘shaking off’ of passivity, of old ideas constrained by feudal traditions, or the ‘jumping to their feet’ of newly mobilized sectors of society, all are part of the coming intifada.”

It is this sense of intifada—the resistance to occupation joined to the creation of a new society—that forms the center of *From Stones to Statehood*. Bennis digs deeply into the reality of the intifada, examining the transformations amongst women, trade unionists, medical workers, merchants, teachers, etc., transformations that are shaping new social relations and the infrastructure of the Palestinian state out of the resistance to Israeli occupation. She offers firsthand insights on how the popular committees organize and how the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising keeps its fingers on the pulse of the people, how demonstrations are organized, and how marriages, funerals, and other social customs have been radically molded to fit the new reality. And we can literally see these transformations in the dramatic photographs by photojournalist Neal Cassidy, which comprise a major aspect of this collaborative effort.

From Stones to Statehood is a rare book, one informed by all aspects of the Palestinian resistance—from the grassroots organizers of all the different political groupings of the PLO in the refugee camps and cities of the West Bank and Gaza to Yasser Arafat, George Habash, and other leaders of the PLO in exile. The breadth of firsthand experience encapsulated in this book is stunning—and not surprising. As a radio and newspaper journalist (see her article in this issue of *Palestine Focus*), Bennis is a writer who knows very well how to “jump to her feet” herself. Teamed with Neal Cassidy, Bennis literally “jumped” into the center of the intifada to gather information and interviews firsthand.

One of the book’s unforgettable moments is when Cassidy himself was shot by Israeli soldiers (the first foreign journalist wounded in the intifada). When Bennis accompanied him to the Palestinian hospital—helping him to ward off the “hospitality” of Israeli troops wishing to move him to an Israeli facility—a five-year-old boy also shot by soldiers was brought in. Bennis grabbed Cassidy’s camera and recorded the six-hour attempt by surgeons to save his life—an attempt which proved unsuccessful. We read the little news reports in the *New York Times* or *Boston Globe*, the daily “body counts,” but it is a rare thing indeed for readers to feel the long-drawn-out agony, the moment-to-moment struggle, the tedium and stress and irrationality of it all—and we feel it along with Bennis as she watches the doctors desperately try to save the life of Ziya Jihad Fayed



Palestinian youth dance in Sa'ir, December 1988.

Neal Cassidy/From *Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising*

National Council member Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising* is a must read for everyone wishing to really understand the name of this new reality, the intifada. Buy copies from your local bookstores or order from Interlink Publishing Group, 99 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215 (718) 797-4292.

“After three years of government allegations and hearings concerning the conduct and ideas of the Los Angeles 8, the tables are about to be turned,” announces *Call for Justice*, the newsletter for the Committee of Justice to Stop the McCarran Act Deportations. “Los Angeles Judge Stephan Wilson has approved a defense request to take sworn statements from INS officials concerning defense allegations of conflicts of interest by the INS in the case.... Last year, Judge Wilson ruled that the sections of the

Congress has deleted many of the most obnoxious sections of the McCarthy-era act; the Committee for Justice and others have brought the federal government into court; and the Palestinian and Kenyan defendants continue to speak out loudly and eloquently for Palestinian rights and Middle East peace.

But still the case continues. Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh still face McCarran-Walter charges of “advocacy of property destruction” despite Judge Wilson’s ruling that the law is unconstitutional. The Bush administration still seems determined to continue its attempt to gag free speech for immigrants and keep all Americans from hearing pro-Palestinian views on the conflict.

Now *Palestine Focus* readers can learn about this critical case from a recently released video entitled “Voices in Exile: Immigrants and the First Amendment” produced by Joan Mandell, Laura Hayes, and Fred Samia. Narrated by radio and television personality Casey Kasem, this documentary takes viewers through every step of the case while focusing on the devastating impact the arrests had on the personal lives of the defendants. The filmmakers followed the case from the moment the arrests occurred, so viewers can get a very keen sense of how intensely fear gripped the entire Arab-American community in the Los Angeles area.

For information on renting “Voices in Exile” or obtaining *Call for Justice*, contact the Committee for Justice to Stop the McCarran Act Deportations, P. O. Box 4631, Los Angeles, CA 90051 (213) 413-2935. □

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Palestine Focus is the national newspaper of the Palestine Solidarity Committee. 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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New Trends in the Israeli Peace Movement

By Jill Hamburg

As the intifada continues, Peace Now, Israel's largest peace group, works to push the Israeli majority over the line to "peace." But outside the mainstream, a small collection of activists on the cutting edge of the Israeli peace movement are crossing a different line. By building solidarity with the intifada, rejecting occupation authority, and cooperating on the ground, these activists are beginning to create a future of cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis.

Before the intifada, peace meant a "compromise" position. But today, these cutting edge activists take a firm stand for Palestinian nationhood. They have crossed the "Green Line" (the border between Israel and the territories occupied in 1967) to stand with Palestine.

These new groups "are against the occupation, with no conditions," says Tikvah Parnass of the Alternative Information Center (AIC). "What's most dangerous to Israeli society," she says, "is that they are in full solidarity with the intifada. And this is new."

Some are groups of students and professors in solidarity with shut-down Bir Zeit University. Others are doctors or women coordinating with the Palestinian women's committees. These Israelis at the forefront of the peace camp are transgressing the border to a place where "it is possible to meet, talk, and act jointly" with their Palestinian counterparts. They are simultaneously recognizing the legitimacy of the new governing structures of the people. And they are finding ways to support them. "It's clearly a new phenomenon," Parnass says.

Emblematic of this new "border crossing" is the eloquent, longtime peace activist Michel Warschawski, who coined the "border" metaphor. Warschawski was sentenced on November 7 to twenty months in prison because his AIC office typeset a booklet for an "illegal organization." The booklet gave advice for withstanding torture. "If there is torture," Warschawski said, "publishing [the booklet] is a duty."

Warschawski is the son of an orthodox chief rabbi from France, and veteran of the anti-Zionist Matzpen party. But his recent prosecution has garnered him wide Israeli support. Citing his socialist ideals as well as his yeshiva (seminary) background, Warschawski refused to inform on the pamphlet's author.

Many concluded that Warschawski's severe, nearly two-year sentence is an attempt to intimidate and silence others in the Israeli opposition. The harsh treatment of other Israelis at the "border" confirms this analysis: Three Israeli and one Palestinian journalists who published the bilingual *Derech Hanitzotz/Tariq al-Sharara* newspaper also had "illegal" Palestinian contacts and were imprisoned. One, Yacov Ben Efrat, remains in solitary confinement.

The sentence "may be interpreted to mean that any kind of dialogue with a Palestinian is equivalent to a violation of the law ... but the only way to cope with this is ... to continue forward," Warschawski explained, "as close to the limit as possible, and intentionally ignoring the threat."

Employing his chosen metaphor of "border," Warschawski said at the time of his sentencing, "There are borders that I refuse to cross. The Lebanon border, for example, which, along with my friends

from Yesh Gvul ("There is a Limit" an Israeli military refusers' organization), I refused to cross three times. [And I refuse] to serve in the heart of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories and participate in an immoral war."

Warschawski continued, "There is another border, maybe the most significant

auction, and we stopped it," says Ziad, founder of Green Line and a publisher and writer in East Jerusalem. It has not been rescheduled to date.

Women's Activism

In the same way, the Israeli Women's

"The new Israeli groups are in full solidarity with the intifada."

—Tikvah Parnass



Michel Warschawski confronts Israeli police and border guards in front of Hakawati Cultural Center, East Jerusalem as a women's march is being attacked, December 30, 1989. Jill Hamburg

for me: the border that separates the two peoples of this land. This is a border of friction, of war, and of confrontation, but also the meeting place of the two peoples. You ought to stand on it and extend your hand, in return for the one extended to you.... We should begin building the 'togetherness' today—in dialogues, in cooperation, in solidarity. All these are impossible to do from a safe place in the middle of the national consensus, or from the center of the Israeli left. You build the Israeli-Palestinian partnership on the border, and only on the border."

Solidarity Campaigns

Today, as Warschawski's sentence is being appealed, new organizations are building this partnership. Hala HaKibush (Down with Occupation) is bringing food convoys to refugee camps under siege. Twenty-First Year, another peace group, is trying to prevent the growing illegal expulsion of Palestinian women born after 1967 (and their children) who missed the first Israeli census. With their Family Reunification Project, Twenty-First Year hopes to call attention to this human rights violation, which has already resulted in as many as a thousand deportations of vulnerable young people.

The Green Line for Peace, which has 400 members from the West Bank and Israel, holds legal demonstrations, to protect its Palestinian membership. They insist on democratic rights for Palestinians inside Israel and the occupied territories, the declared state of Palestine.

The Green Line found out where the Israeli government was going to auction off the confiscated goods of Beit Sahur, and demonstrated there. "We tried to stop the

Organization for Political Prisoners keeps a close watch on the prisons. They locate and follow each case, throughout the labyrinthine and secretive Israeli detention system. They publicize abuses, such as breaking the story of sexual torture during interrogation, a taboo to both Israelis and Palestinians. They also lobby, bring cases to the Supreme (High) Court, support families, and bring frequently denied necessities such as blankets, sanitary pads, and vegetables. They are especially staunch defenders of pregnant women and adolescents. "For women, there is special hardship," an activist explains. "The situations are quite grave."

Their work keeps them in close contact with the women's committees throughout Palestine. The organization also goes to the military court. "The judge needs to know there's somebody watching," says Hagith Shlonsky. "And we go to support the family and so the detainees can see us."

To many observers, the women activists "are the most continuous, regular and militant." As an organizer of the Women's Peace Coalition, and one who works with the prisoners, explains, "What's also new is tactics. We believed at one time that education had to come first, to lead to accepting the PLO and mutual recognition." But things have changed with the intifada. "Now we say, start with action. The WOFPP is about rage, fury, and the need to do something with it."

"Hundreds are at the Russian Compound detention center in Jerusalem, demonstrating against interrogation and torture," says Tikvah Parnass. "The guards say, 'Until the Israelis go, there will be no visits'—for hundreds of families. And the families said, 'Don't go.' In this way, soli-

arity is being made on the ground against Israeli authority."

Citizen Diplomacy

Diplomatic gestures being made by ordinary citizens toward the PLO also involve crossing the border between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

One thousand citizens have signed up for a "Peace Caravan" going to Cairo to talk with the PLO—which has agreed to meet them. Frustration with the government's intransigence has led citizens from the left end of the Labor party to join the "Peace Caravan," organized by kibbutz members Danny Gal and Sarah Ozacky-Lazar.

The convoy of tour buses will go to Cairo for a weekend of discussions and cultural activities with the Palestinian representatives, accompanied by a symbolic international presence. They are waiting only for permission from the Egyptian government.

A number of other Israelis have been convicted of meeting with the PLO, including Abie Nathan, a former Israeli Defense Forces pilot, and the "Romanian Four." The four include: Reuven Kaminer, Latif Dori, Eliezer Feiler, and Yael Lotan. All of them were arrested upon returning, charged with violating the 1986 Anti-Terrorism Law, which prohibits any contact between Israelis and PLO officials. The crime is punishable by up to three years imprisonment.

Anti-Terrorism Ordinance

In fact, "Every activity is covered by a special act of the Anti-Terrorism law: Any consulting, publishing, any activity of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation is covered by a clause" of the amendment, the AIC's Parnass explains.

And this law may soon be expanded, threatening the survival of any group or charity whose funding is suspected of coming from "terrorist" sources. The bill, says Haifa feminist activist Fiona McKay, "contains extremely vague definitions ... opening the way for censorship of legitimate political ideas." Property may be seized and held until the end of all legal proceedings on the mere suspicion that a group has received an "illegal" donation.

Such threats may inhibit the growth of the front-line forces of the Israeli peace movement. Certainly, these groups have not matched Peace Now's numbers. But many predict steady growth ahead.

One sign of a shift in Israeli opinion was Peace Now's call for negotiation with the PLO. Another indicator was the broad spectrum of Israelis who have taken up the Warschawski cause.

"What was taboo five years ago has now become legitimate," Asher Benyamini wrote in *News from Within* about Warschawski and the peace movement. "The dividing line between the moderate peace camp and the more radical one begins to blur. This phenomenon is a direct outcome of the dissolution of the national consensus."

Warschawski hopes he will be a bridge, leading to more cooperation, and believes the process has already begun. "Israel is determined to fortify the border between Israelis and Palestinians and to stop any process that blurs the border and proves on the ground that Palestinians can be partners to a dialogue and to the struggle for peace," Warschawski said at his sentencing. "But they are too late." □