

*Yevgeny Primakov*

## ZIONISM AND ISRAEL AGAINST THE ARAB PEOPLE OF PALESTINE\*

The Middle East conflict, one of the most protracted and serious conflicts of the 20th century, has its internal and external causes. Its internal causes lie in the antagonistic contradictions between Zionism, and later on Israel, pursuing an expansionist policy, on the one hand, and the Arab people of Palestine and the Arab states, on the other. The external causes lie in the policies of the imperialist states, and after World War II, that of the United States of America, giving direct support to the aggressive policy line of Israel and actively using the Middle East conflict to fight the national liberation forces in this area and world socialism.

Zionists' aspiration to establish a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine, then inhabited almost exclusively by Arabs, was revealed at their Basel Congress in 1897. Their leaders later described the substance of their movement as a striving to 'return a people without a land to a land without a people'. This formula was faulty in both parts. Persons of Jewish origin lived and live in many countries, and the bulk of Jews considered and consider, their homeland the country where not only they themselves lived but also their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers had lived.

Palestine in turn was by no means 'a land without a people'. Scores of generations of Arabs are counted in its history. Its Jewish population in 1919 was 57,000, or 9.7 per cent of the total; there were then 533,000 Arabs on the territory of Palestine, or 90.3 per cent. Only in the 1930s did active immigration of a Jewish population begin, which reached a maximum after the

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establishment of the State of Israel and in the first years of its existence.

Immigration led to a change in the ratio of Jews and Arabs in Palestine. That happened, however, not simply through an absolute increase in the number of immigrants but also—and this point needs special attention—through eviction of the native Palestinian Arab population.

Long before the establishment of the State of Israel, colonising funds—the Jewish National Fund, instituted in 1901, and the Palestine Foundation Fund set up in 1920—had begun to buy land from Arab landowners, mainly big feudal types. As a result of these deals, the tenant peasantry were driven off the land, and thousands of agricultural labourers were left without work. Only an insignificant part of them obtained work in the new settlements. The Charter of the Jewish Agency, signed in Zurich on 14 August 1925, is of interest in this connection. Article 3d reads as follows:

Land is to be acquired as Jewish property and to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund.

Article 3e adds: that

in all works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed.<sup>1</sup>

The text of the agreement on advances between the Fund and the settlers who got credit from it, provided (Article 7):

The settler hereby undertakes that he will during the continuance of any of the said advances reside upon the said agricultural holding and do all his farm work by himself or with the aid of his family, and that, if and whenever he may be obliged to hire help, he will hire Jewish workmen only.<sup>2</sup>

The author of the *Palestine Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development, 1930*, Sir John Simpson, wrote:

replacement of Arab labour by Jewish labour is a definite policy of the Zionist Organisation.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian Arabs deprived of land could not find permanent work providing them with the means of subsistence in the towns either.

Zionist leaders now display an extreme lack of interest in

discussing these aspects of their activity during the colonisation of Palestine, but that does not alter the heart of the matter.

The beginning of mass emigration of Palestinian Arabs dates from 1947.

On 29 November 1947 the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution on partitioning the British mandated territory of Palestine and forming two states—one Jewish and the other Arab—on it. The Jewish state was assigned an area of 14,100 sq. km. and the Arab state 11,100 sq. km. This resolution of the United Nations was never carried out, however. Armed fighting broke out in many areas of Palestine in December 1947. General Sir John Glubb, founder of the Arab Legion in Transjordan, and later its commander, recalls in his memoirs a conversation between a high-ranking officer of the Arab Legion and an officer of the Haganah (the irregular military organisation of the Palestinian Zionists that become the basis for building the Israeli army).

The British officer asked the Jewish officer whether the New Jewish State would not have many internal troubles in view of the fact that the Arab inhabitants of the Jewish State would be equal in number to the Jews.

'Oh, no!' replied the Jewish officer. 'That will be fixed. A few calculated massacres will soon get rid of them!'<sup>4</sup>

What happened in December 1947 and continued in 1948 looked like an illustration of these words. In January 1948 Zionists caused an explosion in a square in Jaffa as a result of which 22 Palestinian Arabs were killed and many more wounded. The next day Zionists blew up the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem and another 22 Palestinian Arabs were killed. Similar terroristic acts were committed in January, February, and March 1948. The most serious crime was committed in the Arab village of Deir Yassin. On the night of the 9-10th of April extremists from the Stern Gang and Irgun Zvai Leumi—two Zionist terrorist organisations—made a bloody attack on this village, which was on the outskirts of Jerusalem; 254 persons (men, women, and children) were killed. In April Zionist armed forces occupied Haifa, Jaffa, and the Arab quarter of Katamon in Jerusalem. In May Safad, Beisan, and other towns and settlements were seized. Up to May 1948, i.e., before the proclamation of the State of Israel,

around 400,000 Arabs were driven out of its future territory.

Expulsion of Palestinian Arabs continued intensively after the founding of Israel as well, especially during the armed clashes between Zionist hands and the armies of Arab states during the first Palestinian war of 1948-1949. After the end of that war another 340,000 refugees were added to the 400,000 Palestinians forced to quit their homes.

Why did this mass emigration of Palestinian Arabs take place? What were the real causes behind it?

Later the leaders of Israel were to say that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians quit their homes 'voluntarily', becoming 'victims of Arab governments' propaganda' that allegedly called on them directly to leave the territory of Palestine. The British publicist Erskine Childers, who investigated the archives of the BBC, which contained recordings of the broadcasts of Arab radio stations beamed at Palestine (he has been quoted by many, including Israeli, writers of a liberal trend), told Uri Avnery that he did not find a single order, or even suggestion by an Arab leader that could be interpreted as a call to the Arabs to leave their homes.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time there is much evidence that the emigration of Palestinians was a result of the Zionist leadership's policy. The point was not simply that Zionists organised this mass exodus of Palestinian Arabs. They did it to achieve an end. In 1957, General Yigal Allon, who was in command in the northern area during the first Palestinian war, said in addressing a conference, that prevention of an exodus of the Arab population had not been part of the intentions of the Zionist leadership in planning seizure of the Arab part of Safad. Those who did not belong to the Zionist leadership have expressed themselves much more definitely on this point, of course. Uri Avnery, a member of the Israeli parliament, for example, writes the following in his book *Israel Without Zionists*:

I believe that during this phase, the eviction of Arab civilians had become an aim of David Ben-Gurion and his government.<sup>6</sup>

And here is another view, which comes from the eminent English historian Arnold Toynbee:

The Palestinian Arabs did not leave their homes volun-

tarily or in obedience to instructions from the governments of the adjoining Arab states. They fled from fear of death.<sup>7</sup>

The justice of this conclusion has also been confirmed by the British military historian Edgar O'Ballance, who defined the substance of Zionist policy as follows:

It was the Jewish policy to encourage the Arabs to quit their homes, and they used psychological warfare in urging them to do so.<sup>8</sup>

The butchery of the peaceful Arab population of Deir Yassin and other similar crimes were used by Zionist propaganda to force the Arabs to quit their homes. Threats were broadcast by radio and loudspeaker van: 'Unless you leave your homes, the fate of Deir Yassin will be your fate',<sup>9</sup> 'The road to Jericho is still open! Fly from Jerusalem before you are all killed!'<sup>10</sup>

The Zionists' expansionist policy, spearheaded at that period against the Palestinian Arabs, evoked their resistance, which is why excesses took place whose victims were Jewish settlers. There is no question of justifying any of these actions directed against peaceful inhabitants, but it should be stressed, at the same time, that the Palestinian Arabs' actions then were mainly a spontaneous display of their disagreement with the establishing of a foreign state on territory they had inhabited from time immemorial. As for the terrorist actions against the Arab population, they were not spontaneous but an organised manifestation of the policy of the Zionist hierarchy aimed at establishing a one-nation state on the territory of Palestine.

The majority of the Palestinian refugees settled in Transjordan and the Gaza Strip (which had passed under administrative control of Egypt), and several hundred thousand moved to Lebanon and Syria, while some received asylum in Iraq. Since 1948 there has been a continuous struggle for the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the area they were forced to quit. From 1948 to 1967 the U.N. General Assembly passed 19 resolutions affirming the right of the refugees to repatriation or, should they not want to return, to compensation for property lost, but Israel continued to refuse to carry out these resolutions.

Thus, before the 1967 war, the Arab population of Palestine was divided into two parts. One—300,000 to 400,000 persons—

was in Israel, the other—around a million—in Arab countries bordering on Israel, living mainly in refugee camps.

The situation of the Palestinian Arabs was made worse by the Six Day War of 1967. Hundreds of thousands of new refugees were again forced to abandon their homes—now on the West Bank of the River Jordan, in Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula, occupied by Israeli troops. Many became refugees for the second time; they quit their camps, set up after 1948 and re-settled on the East Bank of the Jordan, in Syria, and some in Lebanon, Iraq, and other Arab countries. Mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs continued until 1968, when King Hussein of Jordan closed the bridges across the Jordan.

Even after that, however, hundreds and thousands of people were forcibly evicted from their homes—now selectively, mainly members of the intelligentsia, well-known individuals, influential people from the former administration, and so on.

The authorities came to a man's house in the middle of the night. They gave him a half-hour or an hour to pack up a few things, while making sure that neither he nor his family get in touch with the outside. A group of such people is taken to the Jordan Valley, and with the help of blows, shots ... they are forced to cross into Jordan. The majority of the expelled belong to the leadership of the Palestinian nation: mayors of towns, lawyers, engineers and intellectuals. Of course, they are not officially charged with anything, so that they have no possibility to defend themselves.<sup>11</sup>

That is how the Chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, Prof. Israel Shahak, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, an eminent organic chemist, described the mechanism of 'individual expulsions' of people from the occupied territories.

According to the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, set up by the United Nations, the total number of Palestinian refugees was 1,706,000 in 1977. They were distributed territorially as follows: more than half a million in eastern Jordan (more than 200,000 having been resettled there from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after Israel's June 1967 aggression); around 600,000 continued to live in the

occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip (around 300,000 in the latter); around 340,000 in Syria and Lebanon.

The Palestinians thus have proved to be without a homeland. That conclusion applies to the whole Palestinian nation—to the Palestinian Arabs who remained in Israel, to those who live in occupied territory, and to the hundreds of thousands of refugees who are in various Arab countries.

The Arab national minority in Israel is practically deprived of civil rights, suffers discrimination in regard to work and education, and for a long time has not enjoyed freedom of movement within the country. It is indicative that the Arabs, who constitute more than 14 per cent of the population of Israel are almost not represented in the country's leading governmental bodies. Of the 120 members of the Knesset in 1976, only six were Arabs. It is very characteristic that only 3 per cent of the students in Israel's universities are Arabs.

Discriminatory measures against the Arab minority in Israel are a matter of everyday occurrence. Prof. Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whom it is difficult to suspect of anti-Israel prejudices (he has written several articles in the past in which he extolled the way of life of Israelis) wrote as follows in the Parisian journal *Jeune Afrique* in March 1976:

Apart from the discrimination implicit in the spirit and letter of the law, semi-official organisations like the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund are given responsibility for the development programmes with the obvious intention of introducing a huge disparity between the Jewish and Arab colonies. Thus '90,000 Arab villagers in Galilee receive the same allocation of water as is the right of a single Jewish village ... and 60 per cent of the Arab villages still have no electricity.' These facts are the natural consequence of control of electrification and of the distribution of water by organisations devoted in principle to the well-being of Jewish citizens.<sup>12</sup>

Discrimination against Arabs also exists in the allocation of housing and in the field of education (not only higher) and municipal services. Shulamit Aloni, member of the Knesset, wrote in the Israel newspaper *Ediot Ahronot* that comparison of the budgets of local municipalities in the Arab and Jewish sectors

very clearly indicated that the Arab sector was suffering severe discrimination.<sup>13</sup>

Many progressive or liberal-minded Israelis have often expressed their indignation at the rules existing in their country in relation to the Arab national minority. Israeli Communists have conducted a day-by-day struggle to change the Arabs' living conditions in Israel and for their equal rights, and are still fighting. Certain changes were won after several years under the impact of the fight of the progressive forces in Israel and the international movement of solidarity with them, but they are very insignificant and cannot in any way cancel out the fact that the Palestinian Arabs remain in the position of an oppressed national minority in Israel that does not enjoy equality with the Jewish part of the population.

The Israeli leaders have not thought about solving the national question of the Arab minority living in the country, and do not dream of doing so. On the contrary, they are pursuing a course of maintaining the one-nation character of their state, and are following a policy, moreover, serving the end either of gradually ousting the Arab population or abolishing its national identity.

On that plane their land policy is typical. Before Israel was established a clearly expressed course of depriving the Arab part of the Palestinian population of land was pursued, which served as a means for pushing them out after its foundation. In this state's first years the government created closed zones utilising Article 125 of legislation introduced under the Mandate (1945)—of all things—to fight the terrorism of Zionist organisations against the British administration. Arab landowners, whose lands were located in these zones were not permitted to return to their homes after the 1948 war. Significantly, the Knesset's decision of May 1951 to empower the juridical commission to draft a bill within two weeks, annulling former orders-in-council 'that contradicted democratic principles' was immediately consigned to oblivion, while the lands 'made fallow' under Article 125 began to be worked by Israelis.

In October 1948 a law was enacted empowering the Ministry of Agriculture to confiscate plots that had not been cultivated and sown with seed for a year, and to 'transfer them to third

persons'. Then a law on 'absentee landowners' emerged. Not only those persons who had quit the territory of Israel came under this category but also around 20,000 Palestinian Arabs living in Israel and having Israeli identity cards. They were counted as 'absentees' on the grounds that in the period between 29 November 1947 (the date of the U.N. decision on partitioning Palestine) and 1 September 1948 they were either outside Israel or in areas controlled by Arabs.

In 1949 'security zones' were created in Israel by legislation. The Ministry of Defence was authorised to evict Arab residents from populated places located in a border zone ten kilometres wide. The impression was created at first that the law on 'security zones' did not deprive the Arab residents of these zones of their property rights—it merely hindered their access to their lands. But in 1953 the Knesset passed a new law on the basis of which the government became the owner of all lands that were not *de facto* occupied by their owners on 1 April 1952.

At the same time another law was enacted empowering the government to confiscate land 'for purposes of defence and settling new immigrants'. This law was also utilised to expropriate Arab landowners. All plots seized from Arabs under this act automatically passed to ownership by the state after 1 August 1958. A whole series of other laws and orders-in-council helped to seize Arab lands: 'On Forests', on the basis of which many woods and copses were confiscated belonging to Arab villagers; 'On the Statute of Limitations', 'On the Acquisition of Lands in the Interests of the Public' (used to create or extend towns and communities with a Jewish population), and so on.

According to a report in *Le Monde*:

As a result of the expropriations of land made since the creation of the State of Israel, the Arab villages have only around 50,000 hectares. This figure does not include the Negev, where the settled Bedouins are demanding confirmation of their property rights over 190,000 hectares.<sup>14</sup>

According to a study of the situation in Arab villages made by the Israel Ministry of Agriculture, the land property of an Arab peasant family had fallen to less than one-third, from 1.5 hectares before proclamation of the State of Israel to 0.46 hectare in 1963. According to Amnon Kapeliouk, the Jerusalem

**Landownership and Population in Palestine**  
(by membership of the Arab and Jewish communities)

	1919	1923	1928	1933	1938	1943	1946
Land owned by members of the Jewish community (in dunums) * as a percentage of the total area	650.0 2.04	798.7 3.0	1099.1 4.2	1257.4 4.7	1467.2 5.6	1568.1 5.9	1585.4 7.0
Arab population (thous.)	533	572.5	727.5	829.1	957.5	1107.1	1237.3
as a percentage of the total population	90.3	86.5	82.7	79.8	70.0	68.8	64.9
Jewish population (thous.)	57	89.5	152.1	209.2	411.2	502.9	608.2
as a percentage of the total population	9.7	13.5	17.3	20.2	30.0	31.2	35.1

Source: John Chapple, *Jewish Land Settlement in Palestine*, (Unpublished Paper, 1964). Reprinted by permission in Walid Khalidi (Ed.), *From Haven to Conquest* (The Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1971), pp. 841-843.

\* One dunum = 1000 square metres.

correspondent of *Le Monde*, the average holding of an Arab peasant family has since been considerably reduced. He cites as an example the biggest Arab village in Israel, Ummal-Fahem. In 1976 the inhabitants of this village owned only 1,200 hectares of the 14,000 they had owned before the founding of Israel, with a considerable growth of population (an average of 700 births a year).<sup>15</sup>

The deliberate policy of redistributing land on a national basis was reinforced by discrimination against Arabs as regards renting. Arab farmers are not permitted to rent land from Jewish communities. The Minister of Agriculture, as the newspaper *Ha'aretz* has reported, threatened to cut off water to and confiscate the land of those Jewish owners who agreed to let land to Arabs.<sup>16</sup> Arabs could not become members of a kibbutz (agricultural cooperative).

Since the creation of Israel the bulk of the land has gradually come into the hands of the state and Jewish communities. In the mid-1960s, when the institution of military governors was done away with in the Arab areas of Israel, Israeli officials proclaimed 'the end of the epoch of confiscation of Arab lands'. In the middle of the 1970s, however, such confiscation was renewed.

The newspaper *Davar* reported that the new decisions on expropriating Arab lands were taken to put an end to the fall in the proportion of the Jewish population in Galilee,<sup>17</sup> in other words, did not hide the link between official policy as regards landownership and the authorities' line on creating conditions to strengthen the one-nation character of the state and discriminate against the Arab national minority. At the same time, while, before the creation of Israel and in the first years of its existence, the change in the character of landowning along national lines served to oust the expropriated petty Arab landowners and the Arab tenants who were deprived of the possibility of renting land from the country, now the Israeli leadership pursued other aims as well. One of them was to 'redistribute' the population, not to let the Arab minority consolidate itself in separate areas of Israel, and to 'dilute' it with Jewish settlers. All that was quite unequivocally aimed against any forms of self-determination of the Arab minority in Israel.

The political measures of the Israel authorities also served

similar aims, namely the ban on the founding of Arab parties, Arab trade unions, sports and cultural clubs, and so on. Such is the position of the Arab minority.

The situation is even worse as regards the Palestinian Arabs in the territories occupied by Israel in June 1967. This part of the Palestinian Arab population has experienced the whole burden of the occupation regime, viz., arrests, terror, persecution, searches, forced evictions, suppression of demonstrations and strikes by force, and destruction of the houses not only of those who are involved in the resistance movement but also of those who simply sympathise with its fighters. From 1967 to 1976 the Israel military authorities destroyed around 20,000 Arab houses on the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Thousands of people were imprisoned. The conditions of their confinement evoke vigorous protests from international democratic organisations.

Here is the evidence of Prof. Israel Shahak, taken from an article he originally sent to *Ha'aretz*, which rejected it, and which was published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

The Israeli occupation regime in the conquered territories is not only not a liberal one; it is in fact one of the most cruel and repressive regimes in modern times. . .

Let us take as an example the blowing up of houses and other collective punishments. The facts are well known: when the occupation authorities arrest a suspect, even before he is put on trial, sometimes even before he is 'officially' indicted, an order is issued to destroy the house in which the suspect lived. Sometimes it is the house of his family, sometimes not. Sometimes "refinements" are introduced. All the inhabitants of the village are forcibly concentrated on a nearby hill, so as to watch the 'educative show'. It must be stressed that such an act is fundamentally barbaric . . . Children, old people, women, sick, cripples, and all of them together are thrown into the streets, regardless of weather.<sup>18</sup>

As for other means of 'collective punishment' employed by the Israeli authorities, Prof. Shahak wrote:

Does one want to punish the area of Hebron? Grapes are not allowed to be transported on the roads during harvest

time, until the 'notables' finally fall on the knees before the military governor. Does one want to punish the city of Ramallah? The sale of mutton is forbidden in that town for two months, or the municipality is not allowed to receive contributions coming from natives of Ramallah abroad and sent for purposes of municipal development.<sup>19</sup>

The policy of building Jewish settlements in the occupied territories is of special importance. Its object boils down to this: to ensure territorial expansion; to create outposts for combating the resistance of Palestinian Arabs; to prevent real self-determination of the Palestinians, and to try and create forms of quasi-autonomy that in fact deprive the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights; to retain the 'controlling positions' in the hands of Israel in case it should ultimately be forced all the same to agree to Palestinians' realising their right to form their own state.

In spite of the protests of the Arab residents and world opinion, and completely ignoring the decisions of the United Nations and the Geneva Convention, the Israeli authorities founded more than 100 such settlements after the 1967 war, up to the beginning of 1979.

At the end of January 1979 General Ariel Sharon, the Israel Minister of Agriculture, who (the *International Herald Tribune* reported) had been ordered by Begin to concern himself with the acute issue of Jewish settlements, publicly set out Israel's long-term plan. The process of establishing Israeli control and absorbing the Arab lands on the Right Bank would take many years. This period, he said, envisaged the creation of belts of Israeli settlements on the Right Bank, the building of many roads and highways that would link up these settlements and the new Israeli towns, and the formation of an extensive infrastructure with army camps, testing grounds, and ranges for practice shooting.

The areas for these settlements were selected for their strategic importance. Prof. Shahak wrote:

The Gaza Strip constitutes a concentration camp . . . 'guarded' by the settlements of the Rafah area, and the 'Jewish fingers'—those are the kibbutzim which Moshe Dayan and Arik Sharon have planted in the Strip. The function of those settlements, clear to anyone who consents to look

at the map, is territorial expansion, it is enslavement of the Palestinian population on the occupied territories.<sup>20</sup> The building of such settlements would not only serve to control the areas occupied as a result of the 1967 war but would have a direct bearing on the line of the Israeli leadership on depriving the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination. In the opinion of the Israeli leadership, the area of these settlements is, above all, a net removal from the territory which might one day pass, in one form or another, under the sovereignty of the Arab people of Palestine.

Arabs are convinced that once an Israeli enclave is set up, the land will never be returned to them for inclusion in a Palestinian state. 'Creeping annexation' it is called, the American magazine *U.S. New & World Report* wrote.<sup>21</sup>

This conviction of the Arabs', we would add, has very weighty grounds behind it.

Furthermore, the Israeli leaders are trying, by means of these settlements, to bring out the dependence on them of Palestinian 'self-government' in the territories occupied in 1967, should they be forced in the course of a peace settlement to agree to the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

In this respect the whole system of Israel's plans connected with the future of the Right Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip are of special interests. Several such projects are widely known, e.g. the Allon Plan, the Dayan Plan, and the Begin Plan. Though differing somewhat in details, they all have a common idea, aimed at depriving the Palestinian people of the right to self-determination and retention in practice of the present occupied territories under Israeli control. Acquaintance with them makes it possible to illustrate this conclusion.

The Allon Plan arose at the end of the 1960s when its author was Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Up to the middle of the 1970s it was considered the most developed variant of a decision of the Palestinian problem in Israel's interests. Under this plan, which was supported as a matter of fact by the Labour Party government, Israel proposed to permanently build 'security zones' in certain key areas of the occupied territories, with the retention of Israeli settlements and armed forces in them.

One of these zones was to stretch for 12 to 18 kilometres in depth along the River Jordan, its purpose being to cut off the rest of the West Bank from the Arab world by means of a sort of cordon.

Other zones with Israeli settlements and soldiers were to surround the towns. Corridors would lead to them, also with a permanent Israeli guard. The Allon Plan left open the fate of the remaining Palestinian lands physically cut off from Jordan. It already, however, recorded disagreement with the idea of creating a Palestinian state, even on the cut-off territory. The Allon Plan could not, of course, be considered in any way a solution of the Palestinian issue.

The striving for annexation, or for its covert form, i.e. retention of Israel's 'direct links' with the occupied lands of the West Bank and Gaza, predetermined the substance also of the Dayan Plan, whose author was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Begin Government from 1977 to 1979. In development of the Allon Plan, the Dayan Plan envisaged retention by the Israelis of the function of military control and security *in the whole* area of the Right Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The most outspoken idea of liquidating the Palestinian issue by a Zionist solution and uniting the occupied territories with Israel was the Begin Plan approved by the Israeli government on 21 May 1979. This plan calls for more detailed consideration, because it defined the Israeli leadership's position and provided a basis for the negotiations with the Egyptian President Sadat on the future of the West Bank and Gaza which began after the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty in March 1979.

The Begin Plan consists of 18 points, one of which proclaims that autonomy for the West Bank of the Jordan and Gaza is envisaged only as regards the population and not the territory. This idea, it must be said, was put into political circulation by Moshe Dayan, and Begin simply developed this expansionist postulate 'in a creative manner'. By introducing it Israel in practice declared its intention to annex the Arab lands seized in 1967. There is a direct reference in the plan to the transfer of a whole series of territories of the Right Bank and Gaza to Israeli hands. In other words, a considerable part of the Right Bank of the River Jordan and of the Gaza Strip is to be directly annexed



to Israel under this plan, even without any juridical cover-up.

According to the Begin Plan, Israel will endeavour to make its position on the West Bank unshakeable. This has not only taken the form of attempts to maintain Israeli troops perpetually in this area and in Israelis' exercise of the so-called security function, but has also found expression in the establishment of full control over the creation and activity of the Palestinian 'self-government body', the 'administrative council'. The idea of this council itself emerged in the middle of the 1970s in the form of a plan to introduce a 'civilian administration'. Under the Israeli military administration, which conducted all affairs in the occupied territories, it has been proposed to set up an Arab civilian machinery with very limited functions and in a very limited sphere (agriculture, education, and the health service). Later it was proposed to grant the mayors of towns wider powers, including power over neighbouring villages. The concluding stage was the creation of a more complicated system embracing the mayors of towns and Arab officials who came under the Israeli military administration. At present it is proposed to pass this system off as Arab 'self-government' on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Under the Begin Plan the Israeli government intends to control the economic affairs of the West Bank as well, as the point on 'Israel's responsibility for planning the water economy' attests.

The Begin Autonomy Plan is thus a plan to absorb Arab territories into Israel, and there is every ground for thinking that the Israeli leadership—independent of its membership of any one Zionist party—is not changing the positions set out in the Begin Plan in any cardinal way. They are dictated by Zionist ideology and the expansionist nature of Israeli policy.

The continuity of the anti-Palestinian policy of all Israel's governments is also expressed in an unaltered practice that has as its aim integration of the occupied West Bank and Gaza into the Israeli economy. The Israel taxation system has been extended to the occupied territories. A tying up of their agricultural production with the Israeli market has been encouraged. In the drive for cheap labour, especially with mass service of Israelis in the army, Israeli employers have begun to import Arab work-

ers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Taking advantage of the relatively short distances, the employers transport them in lorries, usually in the morning, and send them back at night. The number of such Arab workers has now reached several tens of thousands.

This practice, which has absolutely nothing in common with philanthropy, nevertheless, gives a certain number of Arabs earnings, and on that basis Israeli and pro-Israeli journalists have proclaimed an 'era of prosperity' for the inhabitants of the occupied lands and an 'idyllic peace' between them and Israel. The Israeli administration is also putting to its own use the holding of municipal elections on the West Bank, which are represented as very nearly like the 'introduction of democratic principles' in the occupied territories. The holding of elections in a number of towns and rural municipalities both in 1972 and 1976, nevertheless, also mainly served the aim of depriving Palestinian Arabs of real rights to self-determination. The elections were connected with the idea of self-government for the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

After the Begin Plan was published the complete opposition of the concepts of self-government and self-determination finally became clear. Meanwhile, in spite of all their measures, the Israeli authorities have not succeeded in saddling the population of the occupied territories with a political leadership suitable to themselves. After the municipal elections in April 1976, in spite of Israeli policy and not as a result of it, patriots and progressive persons came into several town councils on the West Bank, who proclaimed their support for the idea not of a ludicrous, 'pocket' self-determination but of genuine self-determination for the Palestinian people.

With the exception of those of Bethlehem, Jenin, and Beit Jala the newly elected councillors, reputed to be close to the National Front, make no secret of their allegiance to the PLO,

a special correspondent of *Jeune Afrique* wrote.<sup>22</sup> This is a stable trend, moreover, which has developed further since. In August 1977 the mayors of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip sent a memorandum to the U.S. Secretary of State in which they said that the Palestinians took a united stand and could not

be divided geographically. The PLO, led by Yassir Arafat, was the sole organisation empowered to speak in their name.

The 'Palestinian self-government' scheme, it must be said, from the very beginning came close to, and even sometimes bordered on, plans for a new expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from part of, or even all, the Arab lands occupied in 1967.

The proponents of a new expulsion of Arabs put forward the following argument: the Arabs' natural increase is proceeding much faster than that of the Jewish population of Israel. The way out is to intensify immigration, for which 'additional land' is needed, 'at the very least' the Arab territories seized in 1967. Consequently it is necessary to annex them. These territories, however, are inhabited; hence it is necessary to drive the native population out of them. Not only individuals champion this openly racist theory but also whole political parties that enjoy considerable influence in Israel.

This 'theory' has acquired practical embodiment in the movement to settle the occupied territories, that is led by the extreme nationalist religious group Gush Emunim (the Union of Believers). Members of this group, acting without formal sanction of the government, are founding settlements on the West Bank with the aim of a future persistent extension of the zones seized for these settlements.

The governments led by the Israel Labour Party formally disassociated themselves from the actions of Gush Emunim but in fact little by little supported them. Separate measures, allegedly intended to prevent illegal settlement of the occupied territories but in fact dictated by a desire to neutralise the Arabs' violent protests, had a rather demonstrative character. At the same time these governments themselves, but secretly, implemented Gush Emunim's practice by getting a state grip on the Arab lands in the territories occupied in 1967.

In the opinion of *U.S. News and World Report*, Israel's state holdings on the West Bank were tending to increase.

Israeli ownership also is growing on the West Bank. The precise total is a closely guarded state secret, but a radio commentator reported recently that the Government spent 6.6 million dollars to buy land from Arab owners in occupied territory last year.<sup>23</sup>

The extremists were also encouraged by open statements of members of the government, one of whom, Shimon Peres, a former Minister of Defence and leader of MAPAI, said that the building of every new Jewish farm settlement—be it in Israel or in the occupied areas—would strengthen Israel's defence. While expressing disagreement with Gush Emunim's methods Peres at the same time then and there emphasised that he liked it members as individuals, adding that he was much more disquieted by the youth who joined the Communist Party of Israel, remarking that he had discussed this matter with American leaders who had expressed understanding.

The position adopted by the Begin Government encourages right-wing extremists even more; its whole practice serves the aim of building a further vast number of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. Israel's rulers' annexationist aspirations were confirmed by the Knesset decision on annexing Eastern Jerusalem, completely ignoring the U.N. resolutions and stimulating the activity of ultra-right nationalist groups in Israel, Gush Emunim included, even more.

It is typical that Gush Emunim itself is also trying to become an adjunct of the government's line in occupied territory.

How can we expect the world to accept the idea that our army has the right to be present in an area, that we say doesn't belong to us?<sup>24</sup>

In those words the Israeli industrialist E. F. Wodak, one of the main financiers of Gush Emunim, not only noted the 'incomplete openness' of the Israel government programmes, but also showed the place that the extremist Israeli trend could occupy in implementing the Israel government line on the Palestine issue.

This line, which is trying to 'reconcile' the aim of territorial expansion at the expense of the occupied territories with maintenance of a one-nation composition of the Israel state, leaves it 'open' to unite with the most extreme Israel groups, which is happening.

At the same time, after the 1973 war, a group of persons emerged in Israel, no longer simply Communists or people close to communism, who had always supported the right of Palestinians to self-determination, but also members of the capitalist liberal intelligentsia who were beginning to realise that unless

the Palestinians were granted the right to set up their own state it was impossible to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the long run to guarantee Israel's safe existence. The emergence of this group was very symptomatic, though some of its members were very far from being the 'legislators of fashion' on the Palestinian issue in Israel. Such views, however, and a certain growth in their popularity stemmed directly from the collapse of Zionist calculations of the possibility of a 'long peaceful existence' of the occupation regime on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip.

Zionist propaganda often uses the permitting of thousands of Arabs to visit the territory of Israel as an illustration of the 'idyllic situation' allegedly existing in the occupied territories. This measure is known by the soubriquet 'flying visits'. The Arab visitors are permitted to see their relatives but as for the uniting of families, that is done, as a rule, only on the basis of departure of the relatives from Israel and not vice versa.

The apologists for Israel policy in the occupied territories also use as an argument the absence of mass armed struggle of the Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. In fact, there was no broad armed resistance to the occupation authorities in the lands seized by Israel in 1967. One reason for that lies in the policy of intimidation, arrests, deportation, and harsh reprisals against even those who display sympathy with those who join the resistance, as well as against the latter. The absence of a broad guerilla struggle against the occupation authorities is also linked with the natural conditions of the areas seized by Israel in June 1967—a densely populated area, a desert landscape, no large forests and inaccessible mountain areas. At the same time the leaders of the Palestinian resistance movement themselves have more than once admitted that it had ignored work among the population of the occupied territories, especially in the first years after the Six Day War and had concentrated almost completely on consolidating its positions in the Arab countries bordering on Israel.

But all that in no way reinforces the version that the population of the occupied territories is 'satisfied' with its lot. It is very characteristic that the waves of actions against the occupation authorities rose every time when any measures were taken in

connection with the Palestinian issue either internally or on the international plane, as, for example, in November 1974 during the debates in the U.N. General Assembly, or during the discussion of the situation in the Middle East in the Security Council in January 1976 with participation of representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. 'The national awakening of the Cisjordanians is enriching the Palestinian resistance with a second front. In the end the main one'.<sup>25</sup>

Israel's policy could not thus, quite naturally, propose a solution to the question of self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs living both in Israel and in the occupied lands. It is Israel's policy, preventing return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes, that rules out the possibility of a settlement of this issue as well in relation to the Palestinians forced to quit their homes and settled in various Arab countries.

All the years since their exile a considerable part of the refugees has lived in the Palestinian camps. After 1967 new camps arose in addition to the old ones. Overcrowding, insanitary conditions, permanent life in tents, cold in winter, sickness among the children, and an absence of elementary conveniences have all become the norm of life for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Only a few of them ultimately got an education and left for jobs in the oil-rich emirates of the Persian Gulf. The Palestinian capitalists in Trans Jordan, and later in Jordan, are in a special position, but around 40 per cent of the Palestinian refugees continue to live in the camps.

Israeli politicians like to say that the Palestinians are being artificially detained in these 'reservations'. They even have an 'explanation': the stable level of the population in the camps is maintained thanks to the monthly subsidies paid by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It is not mentioned, of course, that the assistance is meagre and quite insufficient for any kind of normal existence.

'Why don't the Arab countries absorb these few hundred thousand people?' Israeli leaders often exclaim.

Here we come right up against a very important issue that is of fundamental importance for defining the character of the confrontation between Israel and the Arab population of Palestine. Who is Israel resisting? Is it a question of the conflict's being

determined and limited by the character of the relations between this state and hundreds of thousands of refugees? Or did the conflict come about between Zionists and the Palestinian people, i.e. the mass of the Palestinians who were consolidated in a definite historical community of people?

So, are they Palestinian refugees or the Palestinian nation deprived of their national rights?

The Israeli leaders are striving to reduce the issue to the problem of refugees.<sup>26</sup> The facts confirm the opposite: it is a matter of the problem of a historical community of people who have come to be called the Arab Palestinian nation.

Even some Israeli leaders have come to the conclusion that the Palestinians are a national community. The former Israeli general Ye. Harkabi said in a lecture at Tel-Aviv University on 18 May 1968:

Their self-definition as Palestinians gives them a strong sense of common identity. The overwhelming majority have preserved their identity and attachment to Palestine despite the passage of time, hardships, and dispersion, and this was also true before the Six-Day War. Children who were born to Palestinian parents in other countries have not identified themselves to foreigners in terms of the country where they were born; rather they have said, 'I am from Haifa' or 'I am from Jaffa', thus demonstrating their Palestinianism in a special, concrete way.<sup>27</sup>

The Social-Zionist Arie L. Eliav wrote in an article in the newspaper *Davar*:

The Palestinian nation is identifiable as a national entity by a national consciousness, by continuous territory where most of the Palestinians live, by a history of several decades replete with battles and wars, and a diaspora which maintains a link with the Palestinian homeland. At the same time it is conscious of a common national catastrophe, sacrifice, suffering, and heroes. It has dreams and the start of a national literature and poetry.<sup>28</sup>

The former Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, Nahum Goldmann, said that

One fact is essential: the existence of a Palestinian people

is recognised by the whole world and now even by the majority of Israelis.<sup>29</sup>

The fact of the existence of the Palestinians as a historical community of people, a nation, and not entities dispersed in various Arab countries, has become widely recognised. As a result of the Soviet Union's active policy, the situation with regard to the interests of the Palestinian people has found reflection in the joint Soviet-American documents signed by L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Richard Nixon, President of the United States, in 1973 and President Gerald Ford in 1974.<sup>30</sup> This was the first time that such a statement was officially recorded by the United States.

In fact, in the mid-1970s, only the Israeli hierarchy, only the Zionist leadership, who also influenced part of the Israeli population on this issue, opposed the idea of the existence of a Palestinian nation. The Zionist leadership, moreover, rely on the political support of the United States, which took on itself during the negotiations with Israel on the second withdrawal of troops on the Sinai Peninsula an obligation not to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation and not to have official contacts with it. The United States has persistently resisted including this organisation in the participants of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East.

For tactical considerations American representatives, it must be said, have sometimes sought to make contact with certain representatives of the PLO, for the purpose of strengthening American positions in the Middle East. These instances, no less than certain half-addresses toward the Palestinians by the United States, have become widely known. But not the U.S. President's thanks to the Palestinians for help in evacuating personnel of the American embassy from Lebanon in 1976, nor contacts with the Palestinians in order to guarantee the safety of the American representative Dean Brown in Lebanon in the same year, nor the 'Sanders memorandum'\* calling for a solution of the Palestinian problem, nor even President Carter's vague statement in 1977 about the need for a 'Palestinian homeland', determined

\* Former U. S. Assistant Secretary of State.

the USA's real stand on the Palestinian issue at the end of the 1970s.

In that period U.S. policy retained all the tough attributes of a line aimed at, in effect, depriving Palestinians of their inalienable rights. Washington, mainly in connection with the campaign for the presidency, curtailed attempts to establish unofficial contacts with the PLO. In fact, with the exception of one or two soundings, like Congressman Paul Findley's meetings with Arafat in 1978-1980, one can hardly speak seriously of U.S. attempts to begin a constructive dialogue of any kind with the PLO. The scandal around Andrew Young, the American representative at the United Nations, who was forced to resign after his meeting with Terzi, the PLO's observer at the U.N., was subjected to unprecedented attacks by the pro-Israeli lobby, was characteristic.

The United States abstained from voting on 21 August 1980 for the Security Council resolution condemning Israel's illegal annexation of the eastern part of Jerusalem and affirming that the acquisition of territory by force is impermissible in international relations.

All that created conditions conducive to the Israeli hierarchy's ignoring, and continuing to ignore, the existence of the Palestinian people and its legitimate rights, in spite of life, logic, the aims of a peaceful settlement, and even of the interests of the people of Israel themselves.

The consolidating of the Palestinian Arabs into a national entity has its own objective basis, viz., compact residence in one territory for thousands of years, a dialect of the Arabic literary language common to all Palestinians, a single, distinctive culture, a psychic stamp characteristic of the Palestinians as a historically moulded people. At the same time a subjective factor, the national liberation struggle that the Palestinians have been and are waging, plays a big role in the life of the Palestinian Arab nation. The movement to resist the Israel policy that is depriving the Palestinians of their right to self-determination has played an enormous role in consolidating them as a nation.

This movement had developed in various forms both before and after creation of the State of Israel; anti-Zionist groups and

organisations were formed and spontaneous actions occurred. Some of these groups, however, were known for their links with reactionary Arab elements and to some extent with Britain rather than for their national liberation character.

The transition to an active phase of struggle for liberation began to show at the end of the 1950s and was fully displayed after the Israeli aggression in June 1967.

One of the strongest and most authoritative Palestinian organisations, the Al-Fatah, was founded in 1958. It carried out the first military operation on Israeli territory on 31 December 1964. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was officially founded after June 1967. The Palestine Democratic Liberation Front separated off as an independent organisation in 1969. The Sa'iqah was formed in 1967.

These organisations, or at least the overwhelming majority of them, arose on the basis of political parties in different Arab countries. The PFLP, for example, was founded on the basis of the Arab Nationalist Movement, a party that operated up to 1968 in several Arab countries, mainly in Syria. Sa'iqah was formed by a direct decision of the 9th Congress of the Syrian Party of Arab Socialist Renaissance. The founding of the Arab Liberation Front was associated with a decision of the Iraqi Ba'ath party. All this put its stamp on the activity of these organisations. The fact that the Palestinian organisations were financed (and still are) by various Arab countries also had no little significance.

All the same, the Western writers are absolutely wrong who represent the Palestinian resistance movement as a whole, even before 1967 (after the Six Day War there are no grounds at all for such conclusions), as a direct extension of the policy of various Arab countries. The resistance movement developed under the influence of the political lines of these countries, but not entirely in line with their course. This conclusion, moreover, is not refuted by the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organisation which unites the majority of Palestinian organisations was formed in 1964 by decision of the meeting of heads of state of Arab countries in Alexandria, while the military formation of the PLO—the Palestine Liberation Army—was not only formed from Palestinian officers and soldiers serving in the armies of

Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, but its constituent brigades formed part of the armed forces of these three Arab countries.

At the same time a purely Palestinian trend that came to be recognised as the Palestinian Revolution emerged and grew stronger within the Palestinian resistance movement. The logical result of this was a change in the character of the PLO after the end of the Six Day War. In December 1967 the former leader of the PLO Ahmad Shoukairi, notorious for his intriguing and unrestrained extremist slogans and irresponsible statements, was removed from office. Bureaucracy had developed within the Organisation under him and also corruption, a source of which was the 'contributions' from various Arab countries. After the dismissal of Shoukairi the main force in the PLO became the Al-Fatah. The leader of the Al-Fatah, Yasser Arafat, was elected Chairman of the Executive of the PLO in February 1969. From then on the Palestinian resistance movement began an active fight against Israel, carrying out operations in the main from its own bases located on the borders of Arab countries with Israel.

The picture of the evolution of the Palestinian resistance movement would be incomplete if we omitted the matter of the change of attitude of the Palestinian resistance movement to left-wing Israeli forces—a change from complete rejection of any elements or organisations created in Israel, irrespective of their character, to the decision of the Palestine National Council in March 1977 on contacts with left-wing Israeli forces and the first official meeting of delegations of the PLO and the Communist Party of Israel in the spring of 1977. This reflected a strengthening of the class element in the Palestinian resistance movement and also emphasised the independent character of this movement.

The communique on the first meeting of delegations of the PLO and Communist Party of Israel evoked sharp criticism from reaction. The General Secretary of the Palestine Democratic Liberation Front, Naif Hawatmah, repudiating this criticism, said that the meeting was a great victory for the democratic forces in the Palestinian resistance movement over various kinds of chauvinistic reactionary ideas.

Hawatmah noted that the meeting was evidence of the PLO's

readiness to maintain broad contacts with anti-Zionist forces in Israel with the aim of a truly democratic settlement of the Palestinian problem. He firmly repudiated the statements of the Western press and the press of certain Arab countries that there was not, and could not be, anything in common between the Communist Party of Israel and the PLO. The two organisations, he stressed, had a firm common basis for joint struggle, and their decision to hold these talks was evidence of the correctness and maturity of the Palestine resistance movement's ideological and political line.

One of the objectives the PLO set itself was to consolidate the Palestinian resistance movement on a basis of Palestinians' own interests. But it did not succeed in achieving this goal in all respects and not in respect of all organisations, as the events in Lebanon in particular attest. On the whole, however, the Palestinian resistance movement was converted into an independent factor in the Arab-Israeli conflict, defending the interests of the Palestinian people.

What connection is there between the process of the forming of a Palestinian people and tendencies to establish a Pan-Arab nation? For several decades, as we know, a striving for unity and consolidation of the Arabs on a national basis have been manifested in the Arab world. This tendency will also develop in the future, because it is encouraged by a whole number of objective circumstances. Its development will also undoubtedly be encouraged by the general leftward shift in the Arab world and the establishment of new and consolidation of existing revolutionary-democratic regimes, and ultimately by the triumph of socialism in Arab countries.

At the same time there are already completed processes of the formation of several Arab peoples, and in some cases of separate Arab nations, in addition to tendencies to the moulding a common Arab nation. This process is being largely furthered (often decisively) by the formation of different Arab states. The state factor, whose emergence is considerably the result of the imperialist policy of dividing the Arab world after World War I, artificially prevented unification of the Arabs and their consolidation on a national basis. At the same time the acquisition of statehood considerably activated the forming of one people or

another, who sometimes differed significantly from one another. This factor has continued to operate in this direction in the new circumstances, i.e., of sovereign development of separate Arab countries. In the absence of statehood the Palestinian people's resistance movement to Israel's expansionist policy has taken on the function of speeding the process of national formation for Palestinians.

We can thus conclude that consolidation of the Palestinian Arabs into a Palestinian people is a historical reality. From that it follows that the Palestinian people have the right to national self-determination up to and including the founding of their own sovereign state. Marxism-Leninism, of course, considers that this right by far not necessarily belongs only to peoples that are already consolidated into a nation. The creation of a national state occurs historically, as a rule, in an early stage of the forming of a nation and at any rate does not necessarily complete this process.

At the same time it must be stressed that the Palestinian people's right to statehood is far from simply a theoretical matter, and in the circumstances of the Middle Eastern crisis it is even more a political question on whose solution hangs a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict as is recognised by all unprejudiced observers.

How can this issue be settled? The Palestinian resistance movement in general demands the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip. In the late 1970s this stand was supported by a considerable part of the PLO and certain Arab states. There are also plans to create a Jordan-Palestine or Syria-Jordan-Palestine federation (or confederation). There is the idea of returning to the U.N. General Assembly's resolution of 1947 on the boundaries of the two states on the territory of Palestine, viz. Israel and an Arab-Palestinian state. The rigid, uncompromising stand of the Israeli leaders in relation to the right of the Palestinians to statehood, it must be said, is extending the circle of the supporters of restoring the map proposed by the United Nations more than 30 years ago. There are also ideas on the part of separate groups of Palestinians calling for the creation of a two-nation Palestinian state instead of Israel rather than alongside it. The emergence and re-

lative spread of these ideas is nothing else than a direct result of the many years' suppression of the national rights of the Arab people of Palestine by Israel.

The Israeli leadership conceals the whole spectrum of plans for settling the issue of Palestinian statehood. In trying to reinforce its negative stand it reduces all the ideas of creating a Palestinian state current among the Palestinians, including the Palestinian resistance movement, to the elimination of Israel. But time is demolishing this smokescreen that camouflages Israel's imperialist stand on the Palestine question. Without undertaking a detailed examination of concrete models of the future Palestinian state, we can at the same time say the following:

- (i) that the Palestinians are a distinctive people;
- (ii) that they possess a legitimate and inalienable right to national self-determination;
- (iii) that the form of this self-determination can be the founding of a sovereign national state, and that no one has any right to prevent that;
- (iv) that a just solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees is also necessary for a settlement of the Palestinian issue;
- (v) that the generally recognised representatives of the Palestinian Arab people is the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and that the USA's and Israel's complete ignoring of this fact, and their refusal to draw the PLO into a political settlement of the Middle Eastern conflict is blocking the search for a fair and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Time has put solution of the Palestinian issue on the agenda, and without it there can be no settlement of the Middle East conflict, one of the very main causes of which was and is the stand and policy of Israel, and of the USA which is supporting it, in relation to the Arab people of Palestine.

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