

# Palestine Focus

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## Editorial

# Israel and the Unraveling of U.S. Foreign Policy

The whole world is watching with shock the seemingly endless series of crimes, misadventures, and blunders coming to light in the Reagan administration's foreign policy. And the unusual public exposure of normally secretive machinations by government intelligence operatives, private arms dealers, and others has provided a rare look at one of the cornerstones of contemporary American foreign policy, the relationship with Israel.

The headline in the December 5 *Wall Street Journal*, however, told a familiar story, "Congress Doesn't Appear Ready Yet To Fault Israel in Contra-Aid Scandal." The article explains how Israel's congressional supporters will try to insulate it from any fallout from the unraveling of the Reagan administration's foreign policy from the "antiterrorism" campaign to aid to the Nicaraguan contras. But Israel will not so easily be allowed to slip off the hook.

Almost every day a news article reports Israeli denial of knowledge or complicity in the latest sordid affair; denial of involvement is Israel's characteristic way of admitting the truth of unpalatable charges. At the same time, the Israeli government itself contradicts the denials by claiming that the affairs show Israel to be the United States' best ally and, with some justification at least at first, that Israel was being made the scapegoat. The wall of American political protection around Israel has been rapidly and solidly repaired. But inadvertently, because the scandal raises a comprehensive indictment of the full range of U.S. foreign policy—from Afghanistan to South Africa to Angola, from Iran via Israel to Central America—and of Israel's broad involvement in it, Israel's role as a prime surrogate of U.S. global policy inevitably attracts attention.



New York Times

Palestinian youth fighting back against Israeli occupation troops in Bureij refugee camp, Gaza. Beginning on page 3 is a special Palestine Focus insert on 20 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

### The Collapse of the Terrorism Campaign

The campaign against "terrorism," for example, was born in Israel. Yet it is now revealed in the full glare of publicity that Israel and the United States have been supplying arms to the only regime which has been vilified even more than Libya or Syria: Iran. And Israel has been supplying arms to Khomeini's Iran for at least six years.

The Israeli and U.S. arms sales to Iran reveal that it matters little that a country is labeled "terrorist" if there is the slightest possibility that it will resume taking orders from the United States. Thus Reagan's operative definition of a terrorist is someone who refuses to do what Reagan tells him to do. One product of the international scandal of U.S. foreign policy should be the final burial of the hypocritical campaign against "terrorism."

The use of Israel to circumvent the congressional ban on shipments of arms to the contras reveals one of the inestimable services the Israeli government provides to U.S. policymakers impatient with the constraints of laws and the U.S. Constitution. The Reagan administration has systematically undermined democratic institutions in the United States to permit funding of those who would undermine democracy in Nicaragua in the name of "restoring it." And the irony is that the United States uses its close ally Israel, which itself has an undeserved reputation as a "democratic" country.

Nevertheless, the effort to "limit the damage" by those who are on the reluctant attack is already under way. Former National Security Advisor Admiral Poindexter and his accomplice, Colonel North, are praised as patriotic as they take the fifth amendment. It is obviously morally acceptable to violate the laws of the United States—and international law—if the purpose is to fund the pillage and massacre of the Nicaraguan people. Indeed, the exposures seem surgically targeted at only those Reagan aides viewed as reckless and ignorant, and therefore unacceptable, by the establishment. No efforts will be spared to protect unintended targets such as Israel from suffering from the revelations.

Thus it is up to critics of the fundamental objectives of U.S. policy to probe deeper, to pose and answer the more troubling questions. What, for example, was the United States

never more than an ineffective cover story for the Reagan administration's attempt to restore American influence in Iran. The days when the Shah ruled Iran with an iron hand haunt the shapers of U.S. policy. They remember the "good old days" when the United States held absolute control over this strategic oil-producing nation; they dream of gaining the slightest foothold there. Because Iran needs spare parts for its largely American-equipped armed forces, the plotters judged that arms sales would provide leverage to turn their dreams into reality. For their part, Iran's leaders, having gutted their economy and worn out their initial popular support, are now willing to take assistance from the United States.

Secondly, the Reagan administration and the Israeli government have blatantly encouraged the bloody war between Iran and Iraq. Israeli officials have been more forthright: they state openly that they find it useful to keep the two governments at one another's throats. And, indeed, the United States has been caught aiding both sides. While shipping arms to Iran, the CIA gave satellite photos to Iraq to guide their bombing missions. The war keeps the region unstable and interferes with unity against American and Israeli plans; for example, it prevented strong Arab opposition to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

### Not So Strange Bedfellows

The constellation of fellow conspirators in the affair is truly staggering: the Reagan administration seeking to impose American domination throughout the world; expansionist, militarist Israel bent on denying Palestinian rights; the ultraconservative, repressive Saudi monarchy betraying its neighbors, trying to "hedge all bets," and currying favor with the United States; a tyrannical, religious sectarian Iranian regime conniving with the "Great Satan" for arms to conduct its war against its own people and against Iraq; the dictatorial Iraqi regime itself; a mercenary band of "contra" bandits waging a fight to restore the Somoza era to Nicaragua. What links these conspirators together is disrespect for democracy, denial of self-determination, disregard for peace and justice, and fervent participation in Reagan's anti-Soviet hysteria. Despite the very real conflicts which separate certain of the parties, these underlying interests draw them together.

### Israel's Surrogate Role

Once again, Israel has demonstrated its key role as a surrogate for the United States, not only in the Middle East but around the world. Israel's role as an American "strategic asset" cries for greater attention. Israel has not only been sending arms to Iran and the contras on behalf of the United States; a long list of unsavory U.S. allies, which includes South Africa, Zaire, Chile, Guatemala, and El Salvador, to name a few, are grateful recipients of Israeli arms and military training. The alleged skimming of funds from the Iran-contra deal into 1986 congressional campaigns is patterned on the involvement of Israel and its supporters in domestic U.S. politics. Israeli officials lobbied for U.S. military aid to Zaire and South Africa in Washington; pro-Israeli political action committees target those who raise criticisms of Israeli behavior.

Israel is the fourth most powerful military power and the sixth nuclear power in the world. This Israeli power is principally a product of American economic and military largesse; it serves not only to suppress Palestinian aspirations, but also allows Israel to act as a gendarme in the Middle East region and a conduit for U.S. policy throughout the world. Israel is allowed to blatantly violate U.S. laws which forbid the transfer of American-made weapons, for example, to South Africa. The penalty prescribed by law is a cessation of all aid.

We, the public, must demand broad and open congressional investigations of all U.S. foreign policies. Congress must reject further aid to the contras and make a complete about-face in American interventionist policies against Nicaragua and throughout Central America.

U.S. foreign policy decisions in the Middle East also demand close scrutiny. U.S. support for Israel's invasion of Lebanon and continued occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan Heights heads the list. Other targets include the tragic misuse of U.S. Marines in Beirut, the well-publicized but nonexistent "Libyan Hit Squad," the now abandoned allegations against Libya in the Berlin disco bombing which was used as a pretext to bomb Tripoli, and the current disinformation campaign against Syria.

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## McCarthyism in the 1986 Elections

Anti-Arab racism reached a new high in the 1986 elections as it extended to allies and friends of the Palestinian people. Perhaps the most outrageous case has been the vicious harassment of Sacramento, California City Councilman Grantland Johnson in his campaign for election as county supervisor.

Johnson became a target after he spoke at a 1984 memorial for the victims of the Sabra-Shatila Massacre in Sacramento. The event, organized by the November 29th Committee for Palestine, was described as "a diatribe against Israel sponsored by an organization closely aligned with the PLO, a self-proclaimed terrorist group" in an advertisement placed by his opponent in the *Sacramento Bee* two days before the November 4, 1986 election.

Indeed, aside from attacks in the *Bee* early in the year before the primary election, Johnson's opponents held their fire until the last days of the election, ensuring that he would have no opportunity to respond. In addition to the *Bee* ad, the supervisorial district was blanketed with a slickly printed "hate" piece, featuring reprints of *Bee* articles attacking Johnson and several November 29th Committee for Palestine publications, including a *Palestine Focus* interview with Johnson in which he was prominently quoted saying, "The lives of the Palestinians lost in the massacre at Sabra and Shatila are of equal value to the lives of any other human beings."

In the context of the attack on Grantland Johnson, the *Bee* also attacked, and libeled, the November 29th Committee for Palestine. In an earlier attack on Johnson in April 1986, the *Bee* quoted former State Senator Albert Rodda charging "this group, as far as I know, has been involved in actions which have led to violence." The *Bee* made no effort to contact the committee's national office in San Francisco before running the article. In February 1986, the *Bee* ran an inaccurate and deceptive article on fundraising by the committee.

The campaign against Grantland Johnson was so outrageous that the Social Concerns Commission of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sacramento spoke out in his behalf, saying "The attack on Councilman Johnson is an attack on us, for we share similar positions on the Middle East. We are willing to face dissent and criticism, but we are repulsed at the smear tactics being used against Councilman Johnson." [See below for the full text of the church statement.] Johnson's campaign stayed off the unprincipled attacks, and Johnson won a narrow victory.

### Statement of the Social Concerns Commission of the Diocese of Sacramento

The Social Concerns Commission of the Diocese of Sacramento responds with grave concern to the attacks on the integrity of Councilman Grantland Johnson and the attempt to use tactics of McCarthyism to punish candidate Johnson for discussing the situation in the Middle East in a balanced manner. We note the recent and distasteful history of Black and Latino candidates for office being measured by a double standard, and we object to the insertion of such tactics into a campaign in Sacramento. In the campaign of Harold Washington for mayor of Chicago, of Jesse Jackson for president, of Joe Serna for mayor, of Bradley for governor, and now in the campaign of Grantland Johnson for supervisor, the minority candidates are held accountable to standards above and beyond those found required for other candidates. We find the use of these double standards to be morally reprehensible, and we urge the faithful of the Diocese to forcefully repudiate such campaign tactics.

Councilman Johnson is being condemned because he spoke at a memorial event for the victims of the massacres in Lebanon. The event was held in a Catholic Church. A representative of our commission was invited to participate in the same event and withdrew after receiving the pressure from the forces now attacking Councilman Johnson.

The attackers argue that the sponsoring organization has connections to the PLO and is, therefore, a terrorist organization. They have demanded that Councilman Johnson repudiate this appearance and that he pledge not to speak in events cosponsored by this or any other group which they consider "terrorist" in the future.

The persons using the unacceptable, racially biased forms of criticism represent only a small partisan cadre, not the recognized opinion leaders in this arena. It is important to examine the issues raised with a broad perspective rather than accept the characterization of the events offered by Johnson's critics. In this paper we examine the issue itself.

There is a crisis in the Middle East. Our task forces have long studied this crisis. Our studies indicate that a solution to the problems can only be found by respecting the rights of life and liberty to all sides in the conflict: Palestinian, Israeli, and others. Our government has consistently refused to meet with, talk with, and consider the Palestinian

position. By so doing our government has taken a position of unwavering support for the actions of Israel. This position has not produced progress toward peace, toward resolution of the conflict, nor toward respecting the human rights and dignity of Palestinians. It has only promoted the rights of the Israelis.

The policy of Israel in the area is a policy

**"Grantland Johnson is being asked to repudiate a speech made at a memorial service for victims of a massacre. What is he to say, that he does not reject the massacre?"**

**— Social Concerns Commission, Diocese of Sacramento**

of war. Israel has driven thousands of persons from their homes. They maintain an illegal occupation of the West Bank. In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon with full military force. That invasion killed hundreds of innocent civilians, mostly women and children. At the time of that invasion, this commission criticized the Israeli invasion and the use of airpower against civilians. We also noted with concern the blind obedience to Israeli war policy by the United States.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon greatly accelerated the disintegration of Lebanon. The chaos and anarchy of Lebanon today are a direct result of the Israeli invasion and the destruction of the balance of power in the region.

It was in the context of this invasion that the massacres of Sabra and Shatila occurred. Over eight hundred innocent civilians were massacred in refugee camps after the United States had guaranteed their safety. They were murdered by allies of the Israelis.

Following the massacres, the United States sent a "peace-keeping force" to the region. This ill-advised policy protected the Israeli position. The U.S. soldiers on duty in Lebanon came under attack. The United States responded with air strikes and naval

strikes against villages in the mountains. The U.S. strikes again killed numerous civilians: women and children. In pursuit of a failed policy, the Reagan administration used high-technology warfare against its opponents. They responded with low-technology warfare often called terrorism. It should be clear that high-technology warfare kills with the same certainty as low-technology warfare. High-level bombing, as we have seen in Tripoli, indiscriminately kills civilians.

It is inaccurate to call car bombing terrorism and call air attacks military responses. These are different forms of terrorism. Both wantonly kill innocent civilians; both are morally repugnant except in situations of self-defense.

The U.S. forces came under attack. A truck bomb killed some 252 U.S. Marines. This was an act of war, a tragedy. The tragedy was targeted against the United States because our government was participating in the civil war in Lebanon on the side of the Israelis. This commission deplores the attack on U.S. personnel. We further deplore the unwise and relatively unexamined policy of the Reagan administration which placed the Marines in the war zone.

### The Sacramento Situation

The position taken by Councilman Johnson is similar in most ways with the position of this commission. We find it is important to encourage a dialogue on the U.S. policy in the Middle East. The tragic events of the last two weeks in Berlin, Tripoli, and Beirut reveal the bankruptcy of the current policy. It is appropriate in a democratic society for the public to discuss public policy in order to instruct their representatives in Congress. It is also appropriate to memorialize the innocent victims of the continuing wars in the Middle East.

There are political forces in the United States who strongly support the state of Israel. They clearly have the majority in our Congress and our government. They maintain their dominance by campaigns of education and propaganda. A part of their strategy is to portray their opponents as being pro-terrorist. They seek to define the issues so that a person or a group is either pro-Israel or pro-terrorist. Their ability to win this definition of the issue has prevented an informed analysis of the U.S. role in the Middle East. The success of their campaigns keeps the media and both political parties blindly tied

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## FOCUS On Action

By Steve Goldfield

November 29th, the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, was marked by events throughout the United States and around the world. November 29th Committee for Palestine chapters and affiliated organizations held events in such cities as Houston, New York, San Francisco, Portland, Sacramento, Chicago, Detroit, Iowa City, Boston, Madison, and at Rutgers University in New Jersey. A demonstration was held in Austin to mark the date. The New York event featured Zehdi Terzi, PLO representative to the United Nations; Dr. Isack S. Mudenge, Zimbabwean Ambassador to the United Nations and chair of the Non-Aligned Movement; Leticia Peña, coordinator of the Latino task force of the November 29th Committee for Palestine; the African National Congress Sechaba Singers; actress Vinie Burrows; and Al-Watan Dabke Troupe. The event was also marked by controversy: the public school where it was held tried to cancel the event at the last minute; the JDL threatened the event; and a massive turnout of New York police

greeted those attending. These events also marked the beginning of the Year of Palestine, which will focus on 20 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

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Activists in many cities responded to Israeli and Amal attacks on Palestinian camps in Lebanon and to ferocious Israeli attacks on unarmed demonstrators in the West Bank recently. The November 29th Committee for Palestine helped organize pickets at Israeli consulates in San Francisco, Washington, and Los Angeles and a demonstration in Austin. The Palestine Women's Association held sit-ins at Red Cross offices. The General Union of Palestine Students sat in at offices of the League of Arab States.

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Arab-Americans, who greatly increased their participation in the electoral process in 1986, were snubbed in blatantly racist fashion by Joe Kennedy, whose staff at first rejected a \$100 contribution by former Senator James Abourezk, a friend of Kennedy's late father and Chairman of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (Kennedy backed down, but the damage was done). Arab-American Republicans wanted to work against California senatorial candidate Ed Zshau's opponent, Democrat Alan Cranston, who serves as Israel's point man in the Senate. Zshau's campaign refused their support. Instead, Zshau tried to outdo Cranston as a loyal supporter of Israel.

The viciousness of the "antiterrorism" campaign has, quite naturally, spilled over into attacks against individuals with Middle East ancestry and against those who dare to challenge uncritical United States support for Israel. But these "victims" are not cowed; Arab-Americans and their friends are on the move and will not be silent in the face of racist attacks.

Indeed, the most striking result of the 1986 elections is that most of the candidates backed by Arab-Americans won their races. A report published by the Arab American Institute, "Election '86: Arab Americans Making a Difference," notes that "Arab Americans with whom we were working raised and/or spent more than \$250,000 to support 53 candidates—winning in 40 races and losing in only 13." One of those winning candidates was Grantland Johnson [see article in this issue].

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The Palestine Human Rights Campaign and the Arab Womens Council have announced an International Conference on Palestinian Women, "Palestinian Women: A 40-Year Survival Story ... The Struggle Continues." The conference is scheduled for March 27-28, 1987 in Washington, D.C. and features a long list of prominent women speakers, including invited guests from the Middle East. For more information contact the PHRC at 220 S. State Street, Suite 1308, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 987-1985. □

# Special Supplement

# Palestine Focus

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE NOVEMBER 29th COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE

## End the Twenty Years of Occupation Now!

by Jeanne Butterfield

Imagine a lifetime of facing machine-gun equipped soldiers on your way to school. Imagine a lifetime of facing machine-gun equipped settlers patrolling the streets of your village. Imagine a lifetime of being forbidden to read poetry or books or newspapers which talk about your history. Imagine a lifetime of your father being locked up in a prison. Imagine a lifetime of all your brothers being locked up too. Imagine a lifetime of your mother being denied permission to add a cinder-block room to the two rooms you live in, while raw sewage runs down the alleys of the refugee camp you have been forced to call home.

Imagine a lifetime of your national symbols, organizations, elected officials, athletic clubs, sewing circles, charities, even the colors of your flag, being illegal. Imagine going to prison for painting a picture with the colors of your flag, the colors of your land, your blood-red, white, green, black. Imagine a lifetime of fighting back with words, with songs, with pictures, with sticks, with stones aimed at passing military patrols or settlers' cars filled with armed men. Imagine a lifetime of surviving.

Twenty years of occupation is a lifetime for the generation of Palestinian youth who have grown up under Israeli military rule. June 1987 will mark the twentieth year of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. 1987 will also mark the fortieth anniversary of the 1947 partition of Palestine, the seventieth anniversary of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, and the fifth anniversary of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

"Anniversaries" are not particularly significant in and of themselves. To the Palestinian people living under brutal military occupation, 20 years of repression is not significantly different from 19 years or 21 years. But such "anniversary" dates allow us to refocus public attention in the United States on the ongoing denial of Palestinian human and national rights under Israeli occupation, and they give us the opportunity to organize broader and deeper opposition to that occupation.

### All Out for June 6

The international Palestine solidarity movement and the nongovernment organizations (NGOs) which do work in support of Palestinian rights are mobilizing broad international public opinion to oppose the occupation, culminating in public demonstrations, rallies, and cultural events in June 1987. The North American and international NGOs have called for 1987 to be observed as the "Year of Palestine."

"The Twenty Years of Occupation Committee" has come together in the United States to organize a series of activities to highlight our opposition to the occupation. Dozens of peace, solidarity, religious, and human rights groups are participating, including among others, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Mobilization for Survival, International Jewish Peace Union, New Jewish



Palestinian boy being interrogated by Israeli troops.

Agenda, November 29th Committee for Palestine, U.S. Peace Council, Palestine Aid Society, Church World Service, and American Friends Service Committee. They have come together to plan and implement four activities:

- a national petition/postcard campaign which will send 20,000 signatures to the U.S. government calling for an end to the occupation and calling on the United States to support efforts to convene an international peace conference under U.N. auspices;
- a national speaking tour of Palestinians and Israelis speaking out in opposition to the occupation and describing the impact of occupation on their daily lives;
- a national political/cultural event in New York City on June 6, 1987, with simultaneous events around the country, voicing in speeches, poems, and song broad opposition to the occupation and support for Palestinian rights;
- a national clearinghouse/calendar which will publicize all of these activities and the many more being planned by many organizations, under the banner "End the Occupation Now!"

There will be dozens of other conferences, events, special publications, religious services, and cultural work happening over the next several months, focusing on the theme "End the 20 Years of Occupation."

We urge you to come together with others in your local community to begin planning now how you will raise your voice, along with thousands of others nationally and internationally, to say "Twenty Years is Too Long; End the Occupation Now!" □

## The Goal of Israel's Occupation

By Steve Goldfield

Israel took the Palestinian lands of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, along with the Syrian Golan Heights and Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, in the June 1967 war launched by Israel against the surrounding Arab countries. With the exception of the Sinai, which was returned to Egypt under the 1979 Camp David agreement, Israel has unequivocally demonstrated that it plans to keep all the conquered territory for as long as it can.

Indeed, Israel outright annexed the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, though these annexations are not recognized internationally. And the fact that it is politically impossible in Israel to advocate surrendering the West Bank and Gaza for a peace agreement combined with the extensive settlement program in the West Bank and Gaza make it clear that Israel believes it is in the occupied territories to stay.

Unlike pre-1967 Israeli territory which, with the exception of the Galilee triangle, was emptied of its Palestinian population with brutal efficiency, the West Bank and Gaza are both heavily populated—Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the entire world. Approximately 1.5 million Palestinians live under Israeli control in these areas.

Having taken the land, the Israeli au-

thorities need to suppress resistance to their rule, especially when it takes nationalist form, such as waving flags, painting inflammatory pictures, publishing patriotic newspaper articles, or establishing viable national institutions such as universities or hospitals. Since they rule over an overwhelmingly hostile population, the Israeli military authorities need a reliable system of repression; that system is the military occupation.

Israel's occupation thus has several goals: suppress all forms of resistance, stamp out visible manifestations of national feelings, and, if possible, make things so harsh that large numbers of Palestinians will emigrate. To accomplish the last objective Israel took more than half the territory of the West Bank, though in 1986 it still was only able to make use of approximately 7 percent. Thousands of Palestinian community leaders were expelled to Jordan and Lebanon—a clear violation of Geneva accords governing occupation. These accords were drawn up after the experience of Nazi occupation of Europe and accepted by Israel. The Geneva accords recognize no justification whatsoever for removing people from an occupied territory.

More than half the male Palestinian population has spent time in prison, many under administrative detention where no charges are placed. Virtually all prisoners have been tortured in an attempt to extract confessions

in lieu of evidence. Since administrative detention is generally accompanied by torture and is often used repeatedly against the same individuals, many Palestinians have been tortured close to death time and time again. More than one thousand new military orders were imposed—in violation of the Geneva accords which bar the occupier from changing laws in an occupied land.

In 1967, five hundred thousand new refugees were driven from their homes. Immediately after the war, segregated Jews-only settlements were built in the occupied territories. Palestinian cities and villages became surrounded and hemmed in by rings of hostile settlements, themselves protected by double layers of barbed-wire fences. By 1986, about sixty thousand settlers lived in the West Bank, most within commuting distance of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Armed settler vigilantes patrol Palestinian villages, cities, and refugee camps and organize attacks on Palestinian leaders and university students, many of whom have been "disappeared" and murdered.

Much of the water in the West Bank is taken into Israel; strict limits are placed on the use of water by Palestinian farmers. A grid of colonial roads connect Israeli settlements with Israel; these roads bypass Palestinian towns and cities and cut directly across Palestinian farms, irrigation systems,

and other facilities. In addition, military orders restrict Palestinians from planting crops without permits and bar the export of Palestinian produce into Israel. Israeli goods not only flow freely into the West Bank and Gaza—Israel's largest foreign export market—their prices are subsidized and drive Palestinian produce off the market to rot unpicked in the fields.

With the Palestinian economy strangled by the Israeli occupation, more and more Palestinians are forced to commute to work inside Israel where they get the dirtiest jobs with the lowest pay and no union protection. The bitter irony of the occupation can create a situation in which a Palestinian finds himself working for an Israeli construction company building modern segregated housing in what used to be his own olive grove. Unemployment is rampant, and thousands of Palestinians gather on street corners in the early mornings. At these "slave markets," as they are called, Palestinians hope to be chosen for illegal day labor inside the pre-1967 borders of Israel. They are forbidden by law to sleep overnight there and must return to the West Bank or Gaza.

The Israeli military occupation also severely restricts the operations of such Palestinian institutions as hospitals and schools.

Continued on page 5

The group of Americans climbs up the path behind the settlement of Gilo. The word "settlement" conjures up images of log cabins, but Gilo, like many of the settlements around Jerusalem and the West Bank, is a huge housing project surrounded by thick walls—a fortress condominium. Behind Gilo's power station, literally shoved against the wall, sits the tent of Mohana al-Arab and his elderly father, Salim. Mohana holds his arms out to the olive trees and fields stretching down the hill. "This is my land! I will die before they make me move!" A small heap of rubble marks the spot where their house once stood, torn down by an Israeli real estate magnate. Now they live in a tent and an old bus with the mass of Gilo behind them.

Suddenly a chubby man in civilian clothes with a skullcap starts puffing up the path. An automatic rifle swings on his shoulder. "What are you doing here?" he demands.

"We're visiting these people," we reply. "They are my guests. This is my land," Mohana adds.

"This is not your land!" the armed settler snaps. He tells the Americans to leave, as several continue to snap photos. "This is a sensitive area. Would you come and take pictures of a military base in the U.S.?"

"This is not a military base," we remind him. "By whose authority do you tell us to leave?"

"By authority of municipal defense," he answers, casually waving his weapon from side to side.

We begin to leave, not wishing to tempt the armed settler, as he trots down the path to summon a policeman who then takes our Palestinian driver's identification card.

What did we do wrong? We visit a man who clings to his land despite harrassment, despite his house torn down around his head, and we face thick walls of grey rock and an unnamed man without a uniform who acts as lord and master because he holds a gun. I got a little feeling for what it is like to live under occupation.

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We drive through the West Bank. Every inch of the hills is cultivated with terraces and olive trees hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of years old. A laborious, old style of agriculture, but well-tended nonetheless, with land dotted by villages and isolated farmhouses. Then we cross the 1948 borders of Israel, and I feel as if I'm in California's Central Valley. Acre after acre of crops with hardly a soul to be seen. Such a modern agriculture, most certainly an accomplishment of the Israelis. But at what price?

Mohammed Batrawi, Palestinian poet and journalist, sits in the car, describing the invisible. "See, that hill over there? That used to be a village. That palm tree was where I would meet my friends to go to school. Over there was the house of my friend. I can still see his grandmother standing at the door. Notice how the road twists and turns for no apparent reason. That's because the road used to pass through a village." Nothing can be seen today but rows of crops.

"They say they made the desert bloom. But there used to be people here, villages, an old man riding a donkey, someone playing a flute—and now they are gone, gone to the refugee camps. I think it is more correct to say that they have turned a garden of people into a desert." Not a person disturbs the agribusiness landscape. In the distance, a tractor throws up a cloud of dust.

***"They say they made the desert bloom. I think it is more correct to say that they have turned a garden of people into a desert."  
—Mohammed Batrawi***

Then we pass the checkpoint into Gaza, the most densely populated strip of land on earth, crowded with refugees. Meron Benvenisti, the former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, has documented some stark facts about Gaza. "525,000 Palestinians live on 96 square miles," he says. "One-third of the territory, 46 square miles, has been reserved exclusively for Jewish settlements which have a population of only 2,200." Some 45,000 Gaza laborers work in Israel, pay local taxes as well as income tax and national insurance in Israel, but receive no benefits. The Israeli government considers the "services" of the military occupation to be a benefit. Benvenisti calls it an "occupation tax" which amounts to

# Life under Israel

\$35 million a year. Not only must they suffer the occupation, but they must pay for it as well! Benvenisti calls Gaza the "Soweto of the Middle East."

In the streets of Gaza City: crowded market stalls, hubbub of falafel stands, shoe stands, merchandise, and food-stuff. In the midst of it a patrol of Israeli soldiers walks single-file, one with a radio pack, the others with Galil rifles in their hands, as if they were a group of GIs slogging through the swamps of Vietnam. These invaders, however, are surrounded by a jungle of humanity as they walk in deadly silence through the noisy crowd.

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Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem in the West Bank: 12,000 people crammed in small houses. Most of the people in Dheisheh work in Israeli factories or businesses. There is a cloud of dust in the air. Along the road hi-tech spotlights and up the stony hill across the road a large tent for the Israeli soldiers. They watch us with their binoculars. We walk into a small grocery and ask for Hamdi Farraj. A small boy looks for him. As we wait, an Israeli patrol passes silently on the street outside.

The boy takes us to Hamdi Farraj's house. A journalist for *Al-Mithaq*, Farraj is under "town arrest" (more accurately "camp arrest"). He cannot leave Dheisheh, and can no longer be an editor at his newspaper in Jerusalem. The Israelis have just shut down *Al-Mithaq* anyway. For "security reasons." No other reason is ever given. When Farraj was put under town arrest he asked the soldier why. Again, "security," but no charge. "If I'm guilty of a crime put me in jail," he said. "You have more jails than schools and hospitals."

Life under occupation is more than one man living under a form of "banning." Dheisheh itself is regularly put under curfew. Once it was put under 24-hour curfew for twenty days! No one could leave, and the people of the camp could only go outside their homes for an hour or two a day to buy food. To "protect" the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba—filled with followers of the fanatic Rabbi Levinger—the Israeli army closed off entrances to the camp, filling oil drums with concrete to block the roads. Busy shopping streets became dusty small business ghost towns, strangled by the oil drum barricades. Basically, the Israelis put 12,000 people under mass arrest!

## U.S. Funds Occupation The Buck Starts Here

By Douglas Franks

On September 13, 1986 the United Nations Security Council voted on a resolution to condemn "the repressive measures taken by Israel since 4 August 1985 against the civilian Palestinian population in the Israeli-occupied territories." Of the fifteen countries voting, only the United States voted against the resolution.

On November 20 the U.N. General Assembly voted on a resolution condemning Israeli practices against Palestinian students and universities. Again, the United States voted against it. In the latest U.N. Security Council vote to protest the recent Israeli killings of Palestinian students in the West Bank, the United States abstained. Even the worst sort of Israeli crime against Palestinians evokes only the mildest response from the Reagan administration.

The reason behind the continuing pattern of U.S. indulgence of Israel is just as familiar as the pattern itself: the United States government is Israel's steadfast and consummate ally. All U.S. Middle East foreign policy decisions and actions flow from this fact.

Although U.S. officials would tend to deny it, this staunch alliance inevitably poses the United States as an adversary of the Palestinians and their quest for fundamental rights and self-determination. While the U.S. government has formally repudiated Israel's occupation and de facto annexation of the occupied territories and even called the building of Israeli settle-

ments an obstacle to peace, hard evidence proves just the opposite. With all the forms of U.S. aid it receives—economic, military and political—Israel is able to inflict every form of repression against the Palestinian people.

The largest single consequence of Israel's privileged-client status is its military occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. The sweepingly destructive effects of occupation on the lives of one and a half million Palestinians living there are stated in their broadest dimensions by the 1985 U.N. report, *Living Conditions of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Territories*. The occupation has

had a tremendously negative impact on the political and socio-economic life of the Palestinian population. It has resulted in the overall stagnation of the Palestinian economy, dismantling of the Palestinian communities, violations of the fundamental human rights and exploitation and depletion of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories.

In a more recent assessment of the consequences of occupation, the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories painted a still bleaker picture, at the same time appealing for greater public concern:

The Special Committee is concerned at the escalation of violence caused by the implementation by the Government of Israel of a revived "iron fist"

policy, as announced by the authorities themselves.... The situation created by this policy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip together with the severe regime applied in the Golan Heights have served to cancel any hope of improvement in the situation of human rights in the occupied territories.... The gravity and constant deterioration of this situation calls for renewed efforts of the international community ... for an amelioration of the lot of the civilian population in the occupied territories.

As a gesture of conciliation to Israel's victims, U.S. abstention in the United Nations is an empty one. It must be measured against the concrete resources the United States annually invests in promoting Israel's stranglehold over all aspects of Palestinian life. Massive U.S. aid to Israel, the lack of

***Israel's occupation could not continue without U.S. money.***

congressional oversight to regulate Israel's use of that aid, generous loan forgiveness by the U.S. government, the tax-exempt status of cash contributions to the state of Israel, special grants like the \$1.3 billion for Israeli development of its Lavi jet fighter, special trade incentives like the free-trade agreement, all coalesce into a powerful arm

of U.S. Middle East policy, enforced with an "iron fist" by the Israeli government.

One U.S. administration after another grants Israel a staggering amount of aid without a whisper of official opposition. Private donations to Israel once outshone government grants and although they remain considerable, "the present average of \$700 million per year in tax-exempt contributions by Americans to Israeli institutions is now dwarfed ...." writes Richard Curtiss of *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, "by direct U.S. government economic and military aid to Israel, which will total \$38,634,000,000 by the end of the 1987 fiscal year." The amount in 1986 alone was \$4.5 billion. A figure approaching that amount is on tap for fiscal 1987.

The August 5 *Washington Post* put U.S. aid to Israel in global perspective:

Israel gets one-fifth of total U.S. development, economic, and military aid; 45 African countries share one-fifteenth of the aid package. This disparity is more apparent in terms of wealth and population. Israel, with 4.2 million people and a per capita income of \$5,300 a year, gets more than \$700 per person [up to \$1,500 per person according to some sources] in U.S. aid. [17 percent of those 4.2 million are Palestinians who do not enjoy the benefits such statistics infer.] Egypt, with 50 million people and a per capita income of less than \$700 a year, gets about \$50 per person. Forty-five African nations, with a combined population of 460 million and average per capita income of \$646, receive \$2.13 per person in U.S. aid.

(Palestinians under occupation receive on the average \$10 per capita annually from

# eli Occupation

Hamdi Farraj shows us the refugee camp and the blocked-up streets. The people we meet are friendly and determined. A woman and her sons are mixing concrete to expand their house. Her husband was deported to Jordan, and every year for ten years she would visit him there. Every year she would return pregnant and bore ten children. Now the Israelis say if she leaves again to visit her husband they will not let her come back. So she smiles and builds her house. She will stay in Palestine.

Dheisheh is a "resistance" camp, a sore spot for the Israelis. Even the children boldly throw rocks at the armed settlers. Another woman passes with a tray of steaming hot bread balanced on her head. Hamdi says a few words and takes a round loaf, sharing the bread of the camp with us.

After we leave we drive further down the road and see a large Israeli-owned sand quarry with conveyer belts hauling off gravel in huge clouds of dust. This is the source of the dust of Dheisheh, a gravel pit digging out the building materials for more fortress condominiums for the settlers. If you live in Dheisheh you can work in an Israeli factory, and come home to the dust.

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Images of occupation: Bassam Shaka'a, the popular, elected mayor of Nablus deposed by the Israelis, leaning in his wheelchair on the patio of his hilltop home, tells us of the latest plans to improve the "quality of life" of Palestinians by the Reagan administration with great animation. Shaka'a had his legs blown off after a settler gang set a bomb in his car, along with bombs in the cars of two other nationalist mayors. He may have lost his legs, but he hasn't lost his backbone.

Now Reagan wants to send billions of dollars to King Hussein so that the King can send money to improve the "quality of life" of Palestinians. Another attempt to undermine the fact which a recent opinion poll has reconfirmed: Over 90 percent of the Palestinians support the PLO as their representative. Shaka'a has the same opinion of King Hussein as most Palestinians in the West Bank. Hussein is not a true friend, and his "development" schemes are just one more ploy, a collaboration between the United States and Jordan to achieve "peace" by accepting continual Israeli rule over the West Bank, nothing more than an exercise in acquiescence. "No matter what

they try, no matter what tactics, the Israelis are after one thing: they want to take the land!"

As we eat knafi, the famous pastry of Nablus, Mayor Shaka'a points to a large new building down the hill. "That's our new school. We had to struggle many years to build it. When it was built the people wanted to name it after me, the Bassam Shaka'a School. I told them no, but they insisted. The Israelis, however, would not allow my name. The people refused to change it. So now it is the school without a name." The "No Name School"—the sign in front of the building is still blank. But the people insist that they will name their own school.

Facts of occupation: An ex-prisoner in a very quiet, calm voice describes how he was tortured. They tied him up standing outside naked in cold weather for nine days and nights with maggots and worms in a bag over his head. The occupation is arrest with no charges, a repression so severe that the occupiers proudly call it the "Iron Fist." It is houses torn down in the middle of the night because someone in the family was arrested—because of "security" the entire home is blown up as a punishment even before a trial is held. It is confiscation of land, uprooting ancient olive trees. The occupation is the guard tower and heavy caliber machine-guns in the center of Hebron, trained on the afternoon shoppers. It is settlers in civilian clothes walking with rifles, pistols stuck in their belts. It is Reagan talking about the "quality of life" of Palestinians as \$4 billion of U.S. aid pours in to the Israeli government so some 18 year-old Israeli kids can



Palestinian family in refugee camp near Hebron.

learn to brutalize in the name of "security."

Occupiers always have to worry about "security," because they are stealing someone else's future. Because the fact of occupation means the corresponding fact of resistance. It is the resistance of women building day care centers, doctors volunteering to go to villages on their day off to provide much-needed care, of university professors and students who continue to build their schools despite repeated shutdowns by the soldiers. It is the resistance of Fathi Gabin, an artist who spent six months in jail because a painting of his used the colors of green, red, black, and white—the forbidden colors of the Palestinian flag. It is the trade unionist in Gaza who faces intimidation and a maze of "laws" meant to prevent him from organizing his union, yet he still does not give up. It is kids throwing rocks at armed settlers driving by, kids who demand a future and are regarded by the Israelis as "terrorists."

This resistance takes many forms, but the main one is very simple: Stay on the land, survive! When the racist fanatics like Meir Kahane or Rabbi Levinger come to drive them from their homes, backed by one of the strongest armies in the world, they know that if they do not budge, that in itself is a victory.

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I walk to the Wailing Wall, the most sacred shrine for Jews. It is the one remaining wall of the ancient temple destroyed by the Romans two thousand years ago. It is the evidence of and witness to so many invasions. Grass and weeds poke through the cracks. I put my hands against the wall, as is the custom, and begin to cry. I'm not weeping for the destruction of the temple, but for the destruction that goes on today, the distortions that have led to that armed settler who came running up to us at Gilo, to the idea of colonizing a land at the expense of the native people. I remember that the prime minister of South Africa was escorted to this very wall by Israeli leaders in 1976. Prime Minister Vorster paid his respects, he who was jailed for collaborating with the Nazis and who carried the "white man's burden" of apartheid.

There have been so many betrayals, the desecration of so many memories and hopes in the service of occupation and racism. But peace is something for Israelis as well. When Palestinians are free the burden of becoming brutalizers will be lifted and there can be a real future for Israelis too.

The Jewish custom is to write a prayer on a slip of paper and to push it into the cracks of the wall. The cracks are bulging with crumbling notes to God. I wipe my face and scrawl on a shred of paper, "Free Palestine," and press it into the rock. □

U.S. private voluntary organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, AMIDEAST, and ANERA.)

U.S. economic aid comes in many shapes and sizes but ultimately serves the same purpose. For example, a \$500 million "development" plan for the occupied territories has been in the works now for over two and a half years. To be funded by the United States, approved by Israel, and implemented by the Jordanian government, the plan purportedly will "improve the quality of life" for Palestinians under occupation.

Its political motivation, however, is to do away with independent Palestinian national leadership and create a "replacement" for that leadership, one acceptable to Jordan, Israel, and the United States. Part of the \$500 million the United States has pledged would be used to pay Palestinian individuals in exchange for their loyalty to the authors of the plan. Commenting on the five-year plan, Israeli journalist Odeed Tamrnout wrote, "The main idea [of the plan] was that by creating economic stability in the West Bank, it is possible to encourage the development of a local leadership ... to weaken the influence of the PLO and strengthen the circles that support Jordan."

In addition to the political benefits, Israel foresees commercial dividends for itself. U.S. funds channeled into the West Bank would relieve the Israeli government of some of its already miniscule financial responsibility there, enabling it to more profitably enjoy the considerable benefits of a captive Palestinian market for Israeli goods and services.

Israeli reliance on large infusions of aid and the potential leverage over Israeli policies the United States wields as provider of that aid were noted by former Congressman Paul McCloskey in his address to the Third United Nations International Meet-

ing of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine in Vienna:

I do not think that anyone questions that if the United States were to say to Israel: "We will cut off \$4.5 billion in aid next year unless you cease building your settlements on the West Bank, unless you allow free and fair elections of mayors on the West Bank, unless you honor resolution 242 and leave the occupied territories with your military forces," I do not think there is any question but that in Israel's current circumstances, Israel would sooner or later take those steps.

McCloskey assumes, however, that the very Israeli belligerence which ought to prompt the U.S. government to withhold aid is contrary to Washington's wishes. Damage-control experts in the Reagan administration would certainly prefer Israeli aggression to assume the lowest possible profile so as to minimize embarrassment or diplomatic squabbles over human-rights matters. But Israel is doing precisely what the United States pays it to do in the region. As long as Israel does that job well, the United States will reward it not punish it.

In a November interview, Noam Chomsky described Israel's role as the government sees it:

What the U.S. wants is a Sparta ... a highly militarized state, technologically advanced, a pariah state. That is very crucial so that it will be dependent on the U.S. for survival and available to carry out missions for the U.S. in the region as a threat to several radical nations and also throughout the world. So it is an agency of U.S. power throughout a good deal of the world. If the U.S. wants to evade a blockade, as it did against Rhodesia, it (can) use Israel as an intermediary. As a "Sparta," "intermediary," "agency

of U.S. power," and extension of U.S. foreign policy, Israel has thus far been a real bargain. It can export arms, its own or U.S.-made, legally or illegally, military advisors and technology, and the technology of occupation, to wherever is of strategic value to but technically out of bounds for the United States.

The Israeli peace movement has cautioned that virtually unlimited and unconditional aid to Israel has long insulated the Israeli government and Israelis themselves from economic damage that normally would have resulted from the expensive burden of oppressing another people and occupying their land. Their message is that as long as such aid flows freely, the Israeli government will have no pressing reason to change its ways. In other words, it will see no reason to do its part to release the Palestinian people from occupation, dispossession and statelessness.

The *Christian Science Monitor* echoed this view when it stated on August 5, "Israel has little incentive to move along the peace road now. So long as Washington will support Israel with its 1967 conquests, Israel might as well rock along with things as they are." Since Israel's war against the Palestinians and neighboring countries has been financed with U.S. dollars, the incentive to build a "peace road" can only come by reining in U.S. aid to Israel. □

## Goal of Occupation...

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The latest outbreak of repression in which Israeli roadblocks sparked massive violence against Palestinians and an equally massive wave of protest is only part of a long series of university and hospital closings, temporary or permanent. The only hospital in the old city of Jerusalem was closed, leaving

only a single understaffed and under-supplied facility to handle all the difficult cases in the West Bank.

The Palestinian press, which is permitted only in East Jerusalem, faces constant and often arbitrary censorship. Periodically the Israeli authorities have shut down newspapers, such as the recent closure of *Al-Mithaq* newspaper and *Al-Ahad* magazine. Newspaper reporters and editors have been muzzled under town arrest orders or expelled; Akram Haniyeh, editor of *Al-Sha'ab* newspaper, is the most recent victim of expulsion, apparently at the request of King Hussein.

Houses of families of those accused of resistance activities are immediately blown up without waiting for the results of criminal trials. Sometimes rooms or apartments are sealed when the accused did not inhabit the entire building. Collective punishment is also meted out to entire towns and refugee camps, including forcing people to perform humiliating acts at the whim of soldiers.

These "Iron Fist" policies are propelled by growing anti-Arab racism among Israeli Jews. The fanatic settler movement invokes the name of God to "justify" the seizure of land and denial of Palestinian rights, but extremist Meir Kahane's program to drive all Palestinians out of the West Bank and Gaza is only a cruder, and more honest, way of stating what has become Israeli government policy.

Twenty years of sending Israeli youth to patrol the streets of Palestinian cities, villages, and refugee camps has brutalized an entire generation of Israelis with the arrogance and viciousness that inevitably corrupts occupiers.

While many Israelis regard their colonization of the West Bank and Gaza as a "divine" mission, international law thinks otherwise.

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# In Occupied Palestine and in Lebanon: Palestinians Fight for Their Rights

Once again, the "War of the Camps" erupted in Lebanon, with Palestinians throughout Lebanon under attack by Amal and elements of the Lebanese army. Also again, Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza rose up against Israeli military domination in scores of demonstrations that cost the lives of several Palestinian youths.

Is there a connection between these two apparently separate conflicts? We think so. In both situations, Palestinians are fighting for their very survival, not only the survival of individuals and families, but the survival of the Palestinians as a people.

In Lebanon, Amal's attacks are coordinated with Israeli air raids on Palestinian positions. This grave situation is not just a military battle but one which targets Palestinian civilians and produces numerous atrocities. Amal continues to assert the rationale that it merely wants to prevent the Palestinians from re-establishing their pre-1982 military presence in Lebanon. But the nature of the recent attacks belies such motives. And some leaders of Amal have openly stated that their objective is to drive a large part of the Palestinian population out of Lebanon entirely. Amal, which is based in the disenfranchised Lebanese Shi'ite community, is pursuing a sectarian policy for Lebanon as a whole, a policy which is openly encouraged by Israel. Amal wants to dominate the Moslem sector of Lebanese society in order to broker a new power-sharing arrangement with the Phalangists, who dominate the Christian sector. This arrangement would maintain the existing, and inherently discriminatory, confessional state.

Israel went into Lebanon in 1982 precisely to inflame such sectarian fragmentation. Israel's proxy in the south, the South Lebanese Army led by Colonel Lahad, however, has failed in its mission of dominating southern Lebanon for Israel.

Thus the stage was set for an intersection of interests between Amal and Israel. Israeli objectives in Lebanon include the further dispersal and fragmentation of the Palestinian civilian population and its social and political institutions. With its strong base in the south and in Beirut, Amal is the only party to the conflict which is both willing and able to attempt to crush the Palestinians.

Amal also wants to prevent Israel from attacking the south. Israel has agreed to that condition in exchange for Amal's policing the region and preventing Palestinian operations of self-defense and resistance. The PLO continues to assert, in accordance with well-established agreements in the Arab world, that it has the right to defend Palestinian rights in Lebanon. The PLO is defending the very existence of Palestinians in Lebanon.

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 for other reasons, as well. One strong motivating factor for that invasion was the notion that if the PLO were destroyed in Lebanon, Palestinian opposition to Israel's annexationist plans for the West Bank and Gaza would collapse in political disarray. This proved to be a wrong judgment in 1982—and again today. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were aroused by the current fighting in Lebanon with this awareness. Yet, while Amal has been continuing Israel's plan of destroying the PLO, the Palestinian resistance has, once again, rebuffed the onslaught. Palestinian students in the West Bank and Gaza rose up with their compatriots in Lebanon to show solidarity with the plight and demands of their embattled people but also to show that their own resistance has been encouraged by the brave—and successful—fight in Lebanon. Despite all claims by the Israeli authorities that soldiers aim for the feet of teenaged youth, the many who continue to die from head wounds expose the ugly hand of the occupiers. The fact that this uprising has continued despite the loss of many lives underscores the determination to resist of the Palestinians living under Israeli rule.

The message of both battles should be clear: The Palestinian people refuse to be destroyed. They continue to demand their rights, whether it is their right to live in peace and security in refuge in Lebanon and to pursue their resistance against Israeli aggression without constraints, or whether it is their right to say NO! to the Israeli occupation and to seek self-determination and independence in their homeland. The uprising indicates that Palestinians reject all the schemes of occupation and annexation, whether they are carried out by the violence of the "Iron Fist" or by the sweet talk and bribes of the King Hussein-Israeli-U.S. plan to "improve the quality of life" for Palestinians in an effort to sugarcoat the brutal realities of occupation.

While the internal strife of Lebanon has many causes, one cause—the intervention by Israel—has heightened all the rest. And so, when we examine the situation in Lebanon along with that of the West Bank and Gaza, we see one dominant factor: the expansionist ambitions of the Israeli government. Behind the hand of Israeli policies lies the responsibility of our own government's uncritical support for Israel, despite all its violations of international law and human rights. Certainly, our government can play a crucial role in stopping the violence—but only when public opinion is so aroused that long-held assumptions of U.S. policies in the Middle East are effectively challenged. In 1987, with Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan Heights reaching its twentieth year, we have the opportunity to launch just such a challenge. □

## Goal of Occupation...

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Land confiscation, annexation of territory, the settlement of an occupier's population in an occupied land, expulsion of Palestinians—all the abuses of the Israeli occupation are expressly forbidden according to the Geneva conventions which aimed at outlawing the kind of behavior engaged in by Nazi Germany during World War II. International law, embodied in the United Nations charter, also recognizes that a people living

under occupation have an absolute right to resist their occupiers.

Meron Benvenisti, formerly vice mayor of Jerusalem, heads the West Bank Data Project which examines Israeli practices. After studying the Israeli role in Gaza, he called it the "Soweto of the Middle East." Michigan Congressman George Crockett returned from a recent trip to the West Bank to declare that Apartheid was what he had seen there. And members of a delegation from the National Conference of Black Lawyers entitled their report, "Bantustans in the Promised Land." The comparison with South Africa is inescapable, and the

comparison holds true in terms of the stamina of the people to stand up and assert their basic rights against overwhelming military might.

Instead of pressuring Israel to withdraw, the Reagan administration now speaks about "improving the quality of life" of Palestinians living under military occupation. Reagan's "solution" is to place Palestinians under the double burden of Israeli and Jordanian authority. King Hussein's assignment is to smother Palestinian national aspirations under "development" schemes. By funneling money into the West Bank and Gaza through King Hussein, the Reagan adminis-

tration and Israeli government hope to pry the Palestinians loose from their overwhelming support for the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But surrender to a crime against humanity—and that is what the Israeli occupation amounts to—is no solution. An international consensus recognizes that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that the people of the West Bank and Gaza must be free to exercise their self-determination in an independent state. The only solution to the occupation is to end it. After twenty years, the time has come. □

By Hilton Obenzinger

The news reports that refugee camps are under attack in Lebanon or that Palestinian students demonstrating in the West Bank are shot dead. Who are these people, in flesh and blood, not just the flicker on TV news? One way to find out is to get *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* by Edward Said, with photographs by Jean Mohr (\$14.95, Pantheon Books). It delves into the daily reality and souls of the Palestinian people, poignantly expressed by the lines of poet Mahmoud Darwish from which the book takes its title: "Where should we go after the last frontiers, where should the birds fly after the last sky?" In an exciting artistic collaboration, both author and photographer play off each other's perceptions, giving the reader a unique insight into the experience of occupation and exile, the memories and all the difficulties Palestinians have endured as they faced the growth of the Zionist project. Edward Said uses the work of Belgian photographer Mohr to write a moving meditative description of Palestinian identity.

For example, in a group wedding portrait in Badawi camp in Tripoli, Lebanon, taken beside a car, Said sees a deeper significance to the whole scene, particularly the car, a Mercedes with its D sticker identifying it as German. He sees "the paradox of mobility and insecurity."

Wherever we Palestinians are, we are not in our Palestine, which no longer exists. You travel from one end of the Arab world to the other, in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Australia, and there you find Palestinians like yourself who, like yourself, are subject to special laws, a special status, the markings of a force and violence not yours. Exiles at home as well as abroad, Palestinians also still inhabit the territory of former Palestine (Israel, the West Bank, Gaza), in sadly reduced circumstances. They are either 'the Arabs of Judea and Samaria,' or, in Israel, 'non-Jews.' Some are referred to as

## Getting It All In FOCUS

'present absentees.' In Arab countries, except for Jordan, they are given special cards identifying them as 'Palestinian refugees,' and even where they are respectable engineers, teachers, business people, or technicians, they know that in the eyes of their host country they will always be aliens. Inevitably, photographs of Palestinians today include this fact and make it visible.

A truly remarkable book. It describes the Palestinian condition of existence in powerful terms, from such a "paradox of mobility and insecurity" to the assertions of identity and determination.

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The whole issue of Soviet Jews—made much of as a "human rights" issue by the Reagan administration, Congress, and the Zionist movement—is one that demands serious investigation. At the very least, a certain amount of consistency is called for, as revealed by the recent actions of Natan (originally Anatoly) Shcharansky (recently allowed to leave the Soviet Union to join his wife in Israel). Shcharansky was approached by Palestinians to raise his voice in opposition to human rights violations by the Israeli government (particularly the case of Akram Haniyeh, editor of *Al-Sha'ab*, recently deported by the Israeli authorities). After the meeting, in which Shcharansky expressed sympathy, he received a storm of abuse for meeting with representatives of the PLO, "terrorists," etc., etc. All of which elicited a statement condemning the PLO and "terrorism" by Shcharansky, and not a peep on Israeli human rights' violations. Hypocrisy, double standards, intellectual dishonesty, and cowardice. Is this the stamp of a hero, or a chauvinist pawn?

Perhaps we should be thankful for small things. At least the little affair caused one of the few times that the media even mentioned the expulsions of journalists, doctors, trade unionists, and others by the Israeli occupation. Imagine if such goings-on occurred in the Soviet Union? We wouldn't be able to ignore the barrage against the "Evil Empire."

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June 6th, 1987. The twentieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights, we'd like to briefly note some books available for anyone interested in learning about the occupation:

*Occupation: Israel Over Palestine*, edited by Naseer Aruri (Zed Books), details the transformation of Palestinian society as a result of the Israeli occupation. *This Is Our Land: The West Bank Under Israeli Occupation*, by Jan Metzger, Martin Orth, and Christian Sterzing (Zed Books), presents a view of Israel's treatment of Palestinians by German journalists. *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank* (also published as *Samed*), by Raja Shehadeh (Quartet Books), is an examination of the occupation by a West Bank lawyer. *Bantustan Gaza*, by Richard Locke and Anthony Stewart (Zed Books), offers a succinct survey of conditions on the Gaza Strip.

Also, for background, some "classics" in the field are invaluable. *Our Roots Are Still Alive: The Story of the Palestinian People*, by People's Press (Institute for Independent Social Journalism), still presents the best introduction to the Palestinian/Zionist conflict. And *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*, by Rosemary Sayegh (Zed Books), provides a scientific examination of the destruction of the traditional Palestinian class structure and the transformation of Palestinian society under the impact of the Zionist project.

All of these books, plus many others, are available by mail from the Arabic Book Center, P.O. Box 6678, San Francisco, CA 94101-6678 or from Medialink International, 191 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Write for complete catalogs. □

## Unraveling...

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We need to know why U.S. Middle East policy seems calculated to maximize bloodshed and to frustrate justice and peace. We need to refocus the attention of American public opinion on the true source of conflict in the Middle East: Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian land and the blocking of any manifestation of Palestinian self-determination, all backed by a growing direct U.S. military presence in the region.

A full investigation of U.S. aid to Israel is mandatory. How have U.S. arms and aid monies ended up in the hands of the Iranian government, the contras, and the South African armed forces? There is no oversight over U.S. aid to Israel. While we believe all U.S. aid to Israel hinders peace, a reasonable first step would be to demand a detailed and public accounting to Congress of how it is spent.

Currently, funds are turned over to the Israeli government with no followup or reporting. Other governments receiving aid are required to explain every expenditure, and U.S. aid officials monitor every penny. Only Israel is given a free hand, a certain formula for the kind of covert cash flows revealed in the Iran-contra deal.

Along with the Pollard espionage case, Israel's enthusiastic support for Star Wars, and Israel's role as a middleman in myriad deals, the case is strong that Israel is a U.S. ally that

## McCarthyism...

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to the policies of Israel, even when Israel uses invasion and high-technology terrorism against civilians. The U.S. government remains totally dominated by this pro-Israel position even as the Israeli government maintains an occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan River.

Our commission disagrees with significant parts of Reagan administration policy in the Middle East. We find that he has handled terrorism badly. We disagree with significant parts of Israeli policy in the Middle East. Their war policy has been ruthless and their occupation policy and methods abhorrent.

We hope to advance toward peace in the Middle East by encouraging dialogue and negotiations among all of the involved parties.

The attack on Councilman Johnson is an extension of the practice of preventing an open analysis of the crisis in the Middle East. The attack on Councilman Johnson is an attack on us, for we share similar positions on the Middle East. We are willing to face dissent and criticism, but we are repulsed at the smear tactics being used against Councilman Johnson.

In the 1984 presidential election, Jesse Jackson promoted a policy of respect for both the Palestinians and the Israelis. For

this policy he was ruthlessly attacked. Offensive remarks by Rev. Farrakhan added to the problem, but the attack on Jackson occurred before the Farrakhan remarks and continued long after the remarks had been repudiated. The attacks on Rev. Jackson were mounted because he dared to assert that Palestinians, too, have human rights. Black American political discussion is one

***"Black political leaders have been almost alone in recognizing that the Palestinians are the victims of high-technology terror, wars, and displacement." — Social Concerns Commission, Diocese of Sacramento***

of a few arenas where the pro-Israeli position does not have complete domination.

We have seen similar campaigns in this state with the extended attempt to embarrass

Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles because of the appearance of the Rev. Farrakhan in that city. The pro-Israel forces insist that a Black politician be 200 percent pro-Israel in order not to be attacked. Black politicians are not allowed the latitude to search for a new U.S. policy in the Middle East, even though the present policy is clearly failing to promote even a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

This same discriminatory process has now emerged in the Sacramento County race for county supervisor. Candidate Johnson is being asked to repudiate a speech made at a memorial service for victims of a massacre. What is he to say, that he does not reject the massacre? Raising the issue now of a speech made two years ago is a cynical attempt to seek personal political advantage from the present crisis in the Middle East. The smear campaign discourages understanding and analysis.

The pressure to blindly follow the Israeli policy without analysis of human rights, moral obligations, or the national interests of the United States is strong. It affects most U.S. political figures. That pressure is the right of a pressure group.

The pressure is applied with an extra strength against Black political figures. That is inappropriate and has no place in U.S. electoral processes. Perhaps it focuses on Blacks because they, almost alone, have been willing to reject the oversimplified analysis of the Middle East being pushed by this pressure group. Black political leaders have been almost alone in recognizing that the Palestinians are the victims of high-technology terror, wars, and displacement.

the right to raise questions when violations of human rights take place. Israel is asking for world support for Russian Jewry claiming that this is a human problem for which every human being should raise his voice. They are asking well-known gentiles to raise their voice. They cannot the next day support the same violations when they are committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians and deny the rights of people to raise their voice.

It is legitimate to criticize Israel. Criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitism. The best proof is that if these critics will join hands with the Israeli peace movement, this is the best indication that there is no anti-Semitism. American public opinion especially has the right to criticize because of the heavy support. If America is paying \$4 billion for Israel so Israel can continue to do

what she is doing and Israel is ready to be a part of the East-West conflict, which I think is a bad mistake, you as Americans have the right to ask questions. This topic should be the subject of a public, open debate. It is very disturbing that so many Jews are blindly supporting Israel: regardless what they are doing, they are always right. This should be changed. Representatives in Congress should be asked about this. There should be debate in the press. I would like to encourage this.

Such a debate must go on because it is a question of survival—everyone's survival. In the Middle East there are only two choices: Either we continue the conflict eternally or we live together in peace and mutual respect. And if we continue the present course, we will kill each other to the end, and there will be no winners. □

Responsible representatives of the pro-Israel position do not engage in such tactics.

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We reject and abhor the tactics being used against Councilman Johnson. Although we seek to remain nonpartisan in political races whenever possible, we find the injection of racial politics morally reprehensible, and we urge the faithful to reject those who seek to benefit from such campaign strategies.

The statement is not a statement of endorsement of the event or the organizations supporting the event. We support the process of Americans holding public discussions in search of a new policy for the United States in the Middle East. We oppose the ability of the pro-Israel lobby to keep Americans from discussing U.S. policy in the region when Americans are dying there. The United States is the primary military and financial supporter of Israel. We are paying the price for Israel's policies. We have a right to discuss these issues to decide if we would rather spend 4 billion dollars on aid to U.S. farmers, to feed the hungry in our cities, or to continue to blindly support Israeli foreign and war policy.

We resent the irresponsible assertion that open discussions of Israeli activities are necessarily anti-Semitic as implied by Johnson's critics. We respect and cooperate with our Jewish brethren on a number of issues. We join with the four hundred thousand members of the Peace Now movement in Israel in searching for a peace based upon justice for all.

Passed by Executive Committee, April 21, 1986 □

## Spiro...

Continued from page 8

The same mistake is made by many Palestinians who make the equation that Zionism is equal to Nazism, which is the same mistake of demonization of the enemy which prevents dialogue. I am also disturbed at this easy use of the term "Nazism," which I believe is a unique phenomenon, which should be kept unique and not brought into the banal, day-to-day rhetoric. No Palestinian ever suggested a plan to exterminate all Jews around the world as the Nazis did. And I do not know any Jew who did the same with the Palestinians. Things are bad enough without it.

So one of my themes is to humanize each other's enemy. I say to the Israelis, "This is the enemy. But he is a human being. Because he is the enemy, we have to talk to him." On the other side, I think it is very important not to feed the Israeli fears that there are certain Arab views to eliminate the state of Israel.

These two people have similar rights. The solution has to be based on mutual recognition. There should be no double language about the right of Israel to exist and the right of Palestinians to exist. This dual approach is very important.

There should be a distinction between the right of Israel to exist and the right to criticize the Israeli government. While I do not question the right of Israel to exist, I question very much the policy of the Israeli government. People around the world have

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

The November 29th Committee for Palestine takes its name from the date declared by the United Nations as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Our task is to spark and support consistent, far-reaching, and effective activity which brings the issue of Palestine before the American people and builds a growing and deepening base of understanding. Our committee organizes to stop U.S. intervention in the Middle East and to cut off U.S. aid to Israel. We educate Americans on the need to support the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to oppose Israeli policies of discrimination which deny the Palestinian people their rights.

Signed articles are not necessarily the opinion of the November 29th Committee for Palestine. Letters, opinions, and other contributions are welcome.

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# Committee to Confront the Iron Fist

Gideon Spiro is a long-time activist for peace and Palestinian rights; he was a spokesperson for the Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University and the Committee Against the War in Lebanon. Currently, he is one of two spokespersons for the Committee to Confront the Iron Fist, which is based in Jerusalem. Spiro is also a former paratrooper and a member of Yesh Gvul ("There is a Limit"), a group of Israeli soldiers who refused to fight in Lebanon.

Spiro is also the first Israeli government employee to be punished under a law which prohibits public criticism of government policy because of nine letters to newspapers written between 1981 and 1984. The court dismissed him from his post, barred him from working for the government for five years, and took away all his pension rights.

Palestine Focus interviewed Spiro while he was touring the United States in October 1986.

PF: What is the Committee to Confront the Iron Fist?

GS: The Committee to Confront the Iron Fist (CCIF) is a reaction to the "Iron Fist" policy declared by Israeli Defense Minister (Yitzhak) Rabin a little more than a year ago when demonstrations took place in the West Bank and there was a lot of unrest, in Hebrew referred to as "riots." Rabin decided to deploy many military units of the regular army, youngsters, in (Palestinian) cities to

cal views and do not lump them all together. I even developed a personal relationship with one of them.

PF: How have the Israeli authorities treated the committee?

GS: Generally, we are allowed to function. The fact that we are based in Jerusalem makes it difficult for the Israeli authorities to implement the measures in force in the West Bank against us. We demonstrated twice with police authorization in East Jerusalem which is annexed; they gave us a license.

However, the masses do not come, not even from the Palestinian side. People are very cautious. We were demonstrating against administrative detention and expulsions from the country of Palestinians. We also demonstrated in front of the central headquarters of the Israeli army in Jerusalem; one hundred people came: fifty Palestinians and fifty Israelis. I thought this was very meager considering that one hundred thousand Palestinians live in Jerusalem.

I spoke to Faisal Hussein (a leading Palestinian member of the committee) about it and expressed disappointment that so few Palestinians came. He said I should never forget that they are under occupation. Even in East Jerusalem, everyone is subject to police harassment. But he also thought that our publicity was poor; we did not give out

cause it still works. The average Israeli is not bothered with it on a daily basis.

The occupation, from the official Israeli point of view, is a success to date. So those people who are motivated by democratic and humanistic values, who are disturbed at the injustice inflicted on the Palestinians, and who are willing to take an active part in struggling against it are not very many. I think it would be similar in other countries around the world. The people who are working are only those who are motivated on a political, moral level without motivation by immediate, material needs; such people are always only a small part of society.

You could see it in the Vietnam war in the United States; the masses started to join the opposition when it was not a success. The same thing happened in Lebanon. In the beginning, most Israelis supported it. When the war was a failure, the opposition grew. People were finally ready to hear us.

In the West Bank, the occupation still works. There are many people who will tell you they are not comfortable with it, but it is not enough to bring them into the streets or play an active role. I am sure that the number of Americans who are unhappy with the American intervention in Nicaragua is much larger than the number who are really active in the field. It is far away and does not really disturb you in your daily life.

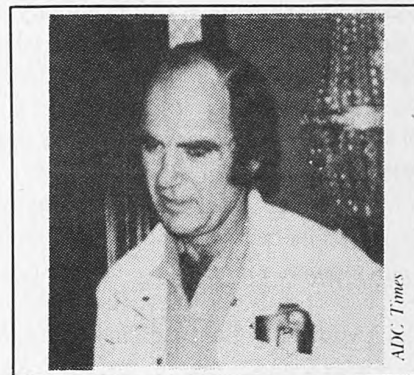
The peace movement in Israel is now in a period of decline. The Palestinian problem has faced us for the last twenty years, and we do not see any changes which would bring people out into the streets. Twenty years of occupation did a lot of damage even to peace groups in Israel in the sense that they are not ready to follow the same course that they would endorse in similar situations in other countries.

They cross the border into the West Bank without high security. Thousands of Israelis going every weekend to buy in the markets of the West Bank gives many the feeling that it is already a part of us. The fact that one and one-half million Palestinians do not have civil rights does not bother them enough to go out into the streets. We are now a kind of small watchdog, trying to be a beacon reminding the Israelis that things are not normal.

PF: How would the peace movement and the Israeli people respond to an attack against Syria?

GS: The Lebanon war taught a lesson. I do not know how long the lesson will be valid, but they should be very careful before launching a war. If they want to preserve democracy, at least for Jews inside the 1967 borders, then they have to take into consideration the support for the war after the first six days. If they do not have a war which is successfully completed in six days, they will have to think very carefully. This is one of the lessons the Israeli leaders learned.

But I believe that the present Israeli course must bring us into the next war. I



This scares me very much because there is a tremendous buildup on both sides. Already Syria has the capacity to destroy parts of Haifa and Tel Aviv with missiles. I am afraid that the next war will be the first war with many Israeli civilian casualties. In reprisal, Israel may try to wipe out Damascus. Then we would never know when and how Israel would make use of its nuclear capacity, which is a terrible danger because Israel is a nuclear power which has not signed the nonproliferation treaty. So under the present circumstances, a war with Syria is inevitable because of the Israel refusal to negotiate on the Golan Heights or on the Palestinian question.

If Israel initiates a war with Syria in similar conditions as in Lebanon, there will be very strong resistance to the war, especially if there are many civilian casualties. But if they are able to maneuver the Syrians into starting the war, most Israelis will stand behind the government. In the Yom Kippur War there were no refusals. "First we have to fight," they will say, "and then later we will discuss it." Because if an Arab country attacks Israel, 95 percent will say first we have to fight back to defeat the military danger, then we will discuss politics. So it makes a very big difference who formally starts the war. Nobody can predict how things will take place except to say that certainly we are on a collision course.

PF: How do you describe your own view in general?

GS: I am motivated by democratic and humanistic values. These values are only valid if they are implemented universally. I consider myself an Israeli patriot committed to the state of Israel but to a peaceful, democratic state. Because I believe that human rights are universal, we cannot exclude the Palestinians from these rights. I believe they have the same rights as I have: the right to self-determination and the right to national sovereignty. That is why I support a two-state solution.

There should be a withdrawal to the borders of 1967. A Palestinian state will be established in those areas. A peace treaty will be signed between those two parties after negotiation between Israel and the PLO, which represents the Palestinian people as I recognize it.

I think it is important to emphasize that today there is an attempt to demonize the enemy on both sides: the Israelis are trying

## It is legitimate to criticize Israel. Criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitism.

show a strong (Israeli) presence. They patrolled the streets 24 hours a day. Almost every Palestinian was subject to some kind of harassment or humiliation, searches. This policy was followed by a lot of arrests, some of them administrative detentions, and expelling people from the country.

This policy was connected with many Israeli officials. Israelis and Palestinians who knew each other before thought about forming the first joint committee in which Israelis and Palestinians would work together to raise a voice against the violation of human rights in the West Bank.

We knew in advance that we couldn't agree on the total solution for the Middle East, so the committee never adopted a comprehensive solution. We agreed to disagree. This enables us to avoid a lot of internal discussion because we agreed that regardless of the final solution, the Palestinians should enjoy civil rights. They cannot be denied these rights. Violations of human rights are taking place daily.

We decided to monitor these violations, to protest, to write letters, to issue press releases, to hold sit-ins, and to influence world public opinion—there is a foreign press in Israel. That is what we've been doing for a year. We can't say that we've changed the course of history yet. But our committee is living proof of the possibility of working together and having a dialogue. That is important in the present circumstances.

PF: Are there other joint Israeli-Palestinian committees?

GS: Ours is the only one. It is still very young. There are a lot of problems, and it is not easy. We handle things with much care. The Palestinians in the committee have shown wisdom by not confronting the impossible.

From working together, I've met a lot of Palestinians I didn't know before. Some of them show a lot of political maturity which I was surprised to find given the circumstances in which they are living. It was most surprising for me to get to know some of the prisoners who were released in the exchange. Some people spent seventeen or twenty years in Israeli jails and came out as people who do not hate. They are very remarkable and politically very mature and eager for cooperation. They know how to distinguish between Israelis and their politi-

cal views and announce it widely enough.

So our demonstrations are generally sit-ins which have the advantage that you do not have to request a license for fewer than fifty people. If there are one hundred, you must ask the police who can say no. Under the present guidelines, the Israeli state prosecutor views demonstrations of fewer than fifty as a protest group which does not need a license. You only have to notify the police in advance. We are using it to our advantage. So far this strategy has worked. The police come and surround us; we sit with our placards. We protested the closure of the newspaper, *Al-Mithaq*.

So, through the committee I met new Palestinians I did not know before, additional to those I knew from my earlier position as spokesman for the Israeli Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University. I am very encouraged about a possible solution when I meet people like Faisal Hussein because he is a Palestinian nationalist with all his commitment. He is one of the people who give hope that democracy and secularism can be a possibility within the framework of a Palestinian state.

Faisal never gave up his secular and democratic solution, but he understands that at the present time it is not realistic. But one is allowed to believe that one day it will come true. In the meantime, he will accept a two-state solution without giving up the long-range aim. And I can live with it from a Palestinian. I do not expect him to become a Zionist.

PF: What is the state of the Israeli peace movement in general?

GS: The invasion of Lebanon was the high-water mark of the Israeli peace movement. And the crest within it was the 400,000-strong demonstration in response to Sabra and Shatila. It was one of the few moments since 1967 when I was proud to be an Israeli.

Since the withdrawal of the main Israeli forces from Lebanon—the total withdrawal never took place—and because there are almost no casualties in Lebanon any more, there is a sharp decline of the peace movement. Peace Now is in a kind of slippery period, and there is not much activity vis a vis the West Bank because it is much more difficult to mobilize Israelis against the occupation of the West Bank. Partly it is be-

cannot say how it will start. Inevitably it will take place for two reasons. First, as long as we are ruling another people, the source of the continuation of the conflict exists. Certainly as long as Israel is not ready to negotiate about the annexation of the Golan Heights, they have clearly notified Syria that the only way to regain the Golan is through military means. It is clear that the whole buildup is about the fight for the Golan. There is Assad's concept of strategic balance. Israel gave the incentive for it by its refusal to negotiate over the Golan Heights.

to paint the Palestinians as a collective bunch of terrorists and Jew killers. And Begin once compared Arafat to Hitler in the Knesset and called Palestinians, "two-legged animals." I find it intolerable that this brings the emotions to such a level that no dialogue is possible. Because if they are Nazis, the logical conclusion is to eliminate them.

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