

Palestine Focus

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50¢

U.S. Aid to Israel: Up for Debate

Robert Dole, the Senate Republican leader, suggested in January that U.S. aid to Israel and other countries be cut by 5 percent to free funds for aid to Eastern Europe and Panama. Dole's proposal has opened the door to a debate which has been building for a long time. The State Department described the Dole proposal as "well worth looking at," and Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* interpreted this reaction, "in part, as a reminder from the Bush administration to Israel that if it does not get more serious about its own peace plan, not only the administration's energies—but also some resources—may be directed elsewhere."

What was remarkable about the response to Dole's proposal is that he was not personally attacked or maligned. The pro-Israel lobby was in the unaccustomed role of being put on the defensive. Mobilized for action by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the official organ of Washington's Israel lobby, Congressional supporters of Israel, such as Democratic Senator Howard Metzenbaum, suggested that Israel needed more aid, rather than less, to pay for absorbing the expected influx of tens of thousands of Soviet Jews. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir told a Congressional group that Israel expected to be compensated for income it would lose if it cut off trade with South Africa. Indeed, in 1989 Congress "approved a record \$666.1 million in various forms of economic and military assistance for Israel in addition to the regular \$3 billion appropriation," according to the *Jerusalem Post*. Funds were included for the controversial "resettlement of Soviet Jewish 'refugees' in Israel."

Dole's reasons for cutting U.S. aid to Israel were primarily budgetary—trying to cope with the enormous deficit—and did not reflect expected changes in the military



Palestinian women demonstrate in Jerusalem, December 30, 1989.

SIPA/Benami

budget and foreign aid, the so-called Peace Dividend. And he did not raise the more compelling argument that U.S. aid to Israel is funding an occupation formally opposed by the U.S. government and contrary to U.S. law. Still, his proposal effectively initiates a debate on aid to Israel which cannot be kept within the bounds of narrow budgetary concerns, and from this vantage point,

we welcome Dole's initiative.

U.S. Aid to Israel is Against the Law

Indeed, decisions on U.S. aid to Israel should be based on foreign policy, not just on juggling the books and balancing the budget. To make the debate effective, it

must move from budgetary considerations to principles. The uninterrupted flow of U.S. aid reduces the pressure on Israel to join a genuine peace process. And that aid violates at least three important principles which are also embodied in existing U.S. law concerning nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and technology, arms trade with

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A Personal Account: "1990: Time for Peace" Conference

Hands Around Jerusalem

By Jill Hamburg

Jerusalem, December 30, 1989—The human chain or "Hands around the Old City of Jerusalem" was an unprecedented, peaceful, joint Israeli-Palestinian demonstration for peace. But moments after the symbolic chain was linked together, Israeli police and military forces pried it apart. The old were left collapsed on the sidewalk, while many children, choking on tear gas, were rushed away on stretchers.

The December 30 demonstration was festive when I began a circuit around the Old City walls. Walking from the enthusiastic groups clustered near Damascus Gate toward Jaffa Gate, I passed a truck piled with speakers, playing political pop songs from Tracy Chapman and Bob Dylan to Marcel Khalifé. The weather was sunny, and organizers said the turnout, an estimated 30,000, was quadruple their expectations. Some Israelis told me joining hands was a new step, if a small one, and a symbolic breakthrough. A few Palestinian participants told me they hoped the human chain would capture the world's imagina-

We all glimpsed the real face of Israeli rejectionism.

tion and renew international concern.

Passing by the Armenian and Jewish sections, I found picnics, balloons, and children and even dogs clothed in peace banners. Cheerful demonstrators were grouped twenty deep in places, awaiting the signal to join hands. Israelis and Palestinians of all ages were demonstrating together for the first time in Jerusalem's history, though the Israelis stood mainly on the Jewish West side, while Palestinians and their European supporters were gathered largely on the Arab East side.

When my circuit of the successful chain was complete, I joined the demonstrators near Herod's Gate in East Jerusalem's business area, feeling happy.

But within moments of my arrival, a palpable feeling of panic spread throughout the streets. Seconds later, noise bombs

began exploding. Water cannons and tear gas were fired from Damascus Gate. Formations of police and soldiers began run-

ning in waves up the street, shooting plastic-coated bullets, wielding clubs, and firing tear gas. Clusters of friends and families tumbled behind bushes or buildings. Young kids and old people tried in confusion to find shelter from the shooting, clubbing, and tear gas.

Fearful of being shot, I scrambled into a clump of bushes with a group of young women. Everyone suffered from the tear

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Bishop Tutu Backs Palestinian State

By Ron Daniels

During a recent five-day Christmas visit to the Holy land, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu strongly reiterated his support for Palestinian rights. Bishop Tutu asserted that until there is justice for the "native" people of Palestine, there will be no peace in the Middle East. Standing firm in the face of intense criticism from many Israeli leaders and citizens, Bishop Tutu endorsed the recognition of the Palestinian state as the principal ingredient for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Middle East.

In advocating recognition for the Palestinian state, Tutu also was unequivocal regarding the right of Israel to exist within safe and secure boundaries. However, the South African anti-apartheid leader assailed the Israeli government for its military and economic axis with South Africa. The Nobel Peace Prize winner also called the Israelis to task for past and present acts of terrorism against the Palestinian people.

Bishop Tutu's stand showed great courage and conviction. All too often, debate about Middle East policy has been severely stifled by fierce resistance by many Israelis and American Jews to any suggestion that Palestinians have a legitimate right to a homeland and a state. Deviations from the official policy of the Israeli government or the position of powerful pro-Israel American Jewish organizations have frequently been characterized as anti-Semitic.

Bishop Tutu proclaims that without a homeland for the Palestinian people, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

Bishop Tutu's position on the Middle East closely parallels the policy recommendations advanced by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson during the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. The historic Gary, Indiana, Black Political Convention in 1972 broke the silence on the subject of Palestinian rights by calling for self-determination for the Palestinian people. The Organization of African Unity is also on record in support of Palestinian self-determination.

The Jackson campaigns were major vehicles for the articulation of a more balanced U.S. policy in the Middle East. By 1988, largely due to the strength of the Jackson campaigns and an emerging new consensus on Middle East policy, the subject of Palestinian rights was openly debated at the Democratic National Convention. The subject would have been strictly taboo just a few short years ago.

People like Bishop Tutu who have had the courage to put forth a more truthful and balanced view of the Middle East conflict have often paid a heavy price. Under the Carter administration, UN Ambassador Andrew Young was forced to resign

because he dared to have secret contacts with a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization. These contacts were undoubtedly sanctioned by the State Department and the President. However, once the contacts were disclosed, the Israel lobby went after Andy Young's head and got it.

Jesse Jackson has never been forgiven by many in the Jewish community for his meeting with PLO leader Yasser Arafat and his call for a Palestinian state. And no matter how profusely Jackson has apologized for his 1984 "hymietown" remark and distanced himself from Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, Jackson is still a virtual pariah to the Jewish community because of his views on Palestinian rights. Indeed, David Dinkins, who does not share all of Jackson's views on the Middle East, was constantly hounded by members of the Jewish community about his friendship with Jesse Jackson during the recent New York mayoral campaign. In the end, despite incredible overtures to a traditionally Democratic Jewish community, 79 percent of the Jewish electorate voted against

Dinkins because of his association with Jesse Jackson.

Bishop Tutu, therefore, has boldly stepped forth on a court that can be extremely risky. During his Christmas pilgrimage, one outraged Israeli called him a "Black Nazi pig." Tutu is not likely to win a popularity contest in Israel or among American Jews from this point on. Fortunately, not all Israelis or American Jews are so intransigent. A sizeable minority now support a two-state policy and the concept of land for peace. Many Jews are also sharply critical of Israel's relations with South Africa.

African-Americans should applaud Bishop Tutu's conviction and courage, and we should add our voices to a growing chorus calling for the recognition of the state of Palestine. Bishop Tutu is absolutely right when he proclaims that without a homeland for the Palestinian people, there will be no peace in the Middle East. In supporting Tutu's stance, we will be on the right side of history. □

Ron Daniels served as director of the National Rainbow Coalition and as deputy campaign manager for Jesse Jackson's Presidential Campaign '88. He has also served as president of the National Black Assembly and as chairperson of the National Black Independent Political Party. Currently, he is president of the Institute for Community Organization and Development in Youngstown, Ohio.

FOCUS ON ACTION

By Ginny Kraus

Palestine Solidarity Committee Calls for Hearings on Aid to Israel

The Palestine Solidarity Committee has launched a national campaign calling for Congressional hearings to determine whether U.S. aid to Israel is in violation of Title 22 of the U.S. Code. Title 22 states that "No assistance may be provided ... to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, including torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges, or other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person." Both the U.S. State Department and independent organizations such as Amnesty International have cited gross human-rights violations by Israel against the Palestinians. Postcards including the text of Title 22 are available from the San Francisco PSC office and are to be addressed to your local Congressional representative. For copies of the postcard, contact the SF PSC office at P. O. Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127 (415) 861-1552.

Israel's Nuclear Ties to South Africa Draw Protest

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) has launched a postcard campaign protesting Israel's ties to South Africa. Thousands of postcards were sent to local Congressional representatives around the United States, who are beginning to recognize that their constituents are willing to speak out against Israel's ties to South Africa and the U.S. complicity. In San Francisco, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi responded to these protests by releasing a statement on the Congressional meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shamir to "discuss Israel's military relationship with South Africa"; the meeting included members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Congressional Black Caucus. The statement emphasizes America's opposition to any military cooperation with, or sales to, South Africa and states that "it is precisely because of what Israel is—a democracy, a champion against racism [sic]—that recent press reports are so disturbing." It goes on to say that "One thing is certain: it should not be for lack of such (military) support from the United States that Israel seeks the cooperation of the repugnant South African regime." A commitment was made by these Congressional representatives that "we



would do everything possible to make sure the United States provides Israel with whatever additional assistance is necessary in order to assure that Israel's security is in no way diminished by the termination of any military relationship to South Africa," implying that the U.S. government (and, of course, U.S. taxpayers) are willing to subsidize Israel's losses if it cuts military ties with South Africa.

AFSC Sponsors Tour of Palestinians in U.S.

The American Friends Service Committee Third World Coalition is organizing a U.S. tour of Palestinians. The Palestinian Women's Higher Council of the Occupied West Bank and Gaza is sending a representative who, along with a Palestinian youth, will tour more than 16 cities in March of this year. The goal of the tour is to reach third-world communities, including African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and others to make the connections with Palestinians living under occupation. For more information on the tour, contact AFSC's Third World Coalition headquarters in Philadelphia (215) 241-7178.

Chicago PSC Celebrates 2nd Anniversary of Intifada

The Chicago PSC chapter commemorated the anniversary of the intifada with two activities on December 9. Members joined with other solidarity and community organizations in a march for human rights, sponsored by the International Forum, a local network of peace and solidarity organizations including PSC. The focus of the march was to draw out U.S. complicity in the widespread viola-

tion of human rights by U.S.-backed regimes in the third world and to commemorate the UN-declared International Human Rights Day. Sponsors included CISPES, the Alliance for Philippine Concerns, Nicaragua Solidarity Committee, Casa Chile, Chicago Honduran Information Network, Irish Northern Aid, AFSC, PSC, and many more. The march went through Chicago's Loop, a commercial district where several third-world consulates are situated. The march stopped at some of the consulates and at El Al Airlines for brief presentations and memorial services. The march joined a group of 300 Palestinian community protesters outside the Israeli consulate,

where a joint rally was held. The same evening, PSC hosted a fundraising dinner dance with more than 300 people and guest speakers Alderman Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Maha Jarrad (both recently returned from the occupied territories), and Gladys Sibrian, a national representative of the FMLN-FDR of El Salvador.

Eugene PSC Chapter Features Heather Spears

Heather Spears is an artist who toured the West Bank and Gaza last year to draw pictures of hospitalized Palestinian children wounded by Israeli soldiers. She showed her slide show of her sketches, "Drawn from the Fire: Children of the Intifada," in a program jointly sponsored by Eugene PSC and the Arab Student Union of the University of Oregon.

On April 29, the same two organizations and others will hold a Palestine Festival at the University of Oregon. Among the featured speakers will be Marlene Eid, a psychology instructor from Portland State University, who will speak on the Palestinian women's role in the intifada. Also scheduled for the program are the GUPS band, dabke dance, and traditional Palestinian cuisine.

Pittsburgh PSC Features Israeli Peace Activist

Hundreds of listeners in Pittsburgh came to hear Moshe Ron, a senior lecturer at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a former Peace Now activist, and founder of 21st Year, an organization of Israelis opposing the illegal occupation of

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

December 5 The executive committee of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority decided to ban songs of two popular singers, calling them "PLOist." Nurit Galron's "After Me, the Flood," contains the line, "No, don't tell me about a girl who lost her eye / It makes me feel down, down, down." "Had Gadya," by Hava Alberstein, asks, "How long will the circle of horror continue / The persecutor and the persecuted?" and ends with the cry, "Today I don't know anymore who I am." The decision set off a dispute within the government. The Ministry of Education stated that it "regards with grave concern" the banning of "two of the best singers in the country," while Gad Ya'acobi, Minister of Communication, declared, "The executive committee of the broadcasting authority has lost its mind." A final decision on the legality of the action will be up to the Israeli Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, according to an October article in the *Los Angeles Times*, "the army has banned William Shakespeare's classic play 'Hamlet' from a detention camp for prisoners arrested during the Palestinian uprising.... The army bans books from Ketziot prison camp in the Negev Desert if it believes they could incite violence or contain a subversive message. In Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy, the Prince of Denmark weighs whether to take up arms or suffer in silence. But military sources said the decision to bar the play appeared to be an error in judgment and would be reviewed."

December 25 South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu spent the Christmas weekend meeting with Palestinian leaders, expressing support for statehood, and criticizing Israeli policy. At Al-Aqsa mosque, the Nobel Prize laureate told his hosts, "We support your struggle for justice, for peace, for statehood and independence, and we want to say that you will attain your goal." He added, "We also want to say that we bear no animosity toward the Jewish people, but we call into question the policies of the Israeli government. We say Israel has the right to exist, to territorial integrity, and to the security due to an independent state, but equally, Israel must recognize the legitimate aspirations of the native people of this country." Tutu visited the Wailing Wall, where he was greeted by Rabbi Yehuda Getz. He also visited the Yad Vashem memorial to the victims of the Nazis. He told the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, "I am a black South African, and if I were to change the names, a description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank could describe events in South Africa." And in an unprecedented salute, the intifada's underground leadership welcomed Tutu in its 50th communique, issued during his stay. Daoud Kuttub, reporting from East Jerusalem for *Middle East International*, described an evening of prayer at the Shepherds' Field Church in Beit Sahour this way: "Thousands of Palestinians from the town and surrounding areas shoved their way past Israeli security guards and greeted Tutu and Bishop Samir Kafity of Jerusalem with Palestinian national songs. Israeli security men, who were unable to stop this impromptu demonstration, reacted by taking pictures of all Palestinian participants."

December 30 A week of activities led by Palestinian and Israeli peace activists and including many representatives from international organizations culminated in the formation of a human chain around the walls of Jerusalem's old city. The mood at the 30,000-strong demonstration, entitled "1990: Time for Peace," was ebullient and peaceful, until a handful of provocateurs

Intifada Chronicle



Participants in hands around Jerusalem demonstration, December 30, 1989.

Al Usbuh Aljadid

started a fight that signaled the police to attack marchers with clubs and tear gas. The *Jerusalem Post* reported that half the sixty people injured were "non-Israelis." They included Italian peace activist Marisa Manno, who lost an eye when she was hit by broken glass from a window smashed by a water cannon. Organizers lodged an official protest with the government. They said that though many were injured, the unprovoked attack could not dampen the determination of participants to continue demanding an end to the occupation. They

added that they were gratified with the worldwide media attention the demonstration garnered.

January 3 Amnesty International, in a special report in its January newsletter, accused the Israeli government of actively encouraging the killing of Palestinians by security forces in the West Bank and Gaza. The report calls for an urgent review of the guidelines under which troops are permitted to open fire and for a judicial inquiry into "extensive and serious" human-rights

violations committed by security forces since the beginning of the intifada. The report cites an "alarmingly high number" of cases in which Palestinians were killed when not engaged in violence and expresses doubt whether children throwing stones at troops are enough of a threat to justify shooting them. The Israeli government issued its customary denial, calling the charges "groundless and unsubstantiated." The U.S. State Department echoed the incredulity.

January 7 Only a few days after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir dismissed Science Minister Ezer Weizman from the Israeli inner cabinet for allegedly maintaining contact with the PLO, Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, of Shamir's Likud Party, called on the Israeli government to initiate talks with the PLO. Lahat told reporters, "Talking with the PLO is not an aim, but a means of making peace." He predicted Shamir would eventually have no alternative but to accept such an approach.

The *Jerusalem Daily Al-Fajr* reported January 15 that Lahat's call was widely greeted by residents of the occupied territories. Dr. Azmi Bishara, assistant professor of political science at Bir Zeit University, told the paper, "Lahat's statement reflects the view of the 50 percent of Tel Aviv citizens that elected him." He added that Lahat's openness to the PLO reflects the pressure exerted by the intifada.

January 10 The United States announced a sharp cut in its financial contribution to the United Nations Food and

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Interview with Chicago Alderman Jesus Garcia

Israel's "Democracy" and the Occupation

Alderman Jesus Garcia is a long-time labor and human-rights activist. He is one of the most progressive and respected elected officials in the state of Illinois and in the city of Chicago. Alderman Garcia was interviewed upon his return from a visit to Palestine and Israel by James Starks, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Palestine Solidarity Committee. This interview was first published in a special bilingual edition of Noticiero Palestino, the national newsletter of the Latino Task Force of the Palestine Solidarity Committee.

PF: Why did you travel to Israel and Palestine?

JG: Because I'm an immigrant to this country from Mexico, I have always been concerned about the question of human-rights and social-justice causes wherever they are taking place: in this country, Central America, or South Africa. In the Middle East, one of the main conflicts is the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. I have always been sympathetic to the Jewish cause against persecution and have spoken out against anti-Semitism. So it was difficult to understand how this conflict has lasted so long.

PF: What were your impressions of the conditions in Palestine?

JG: I was overwhelmed by the military occupation and control of the Israeli government of the Palestinians' land, cities, and villages. It is tragic to see so much deadly force against a people who have been displaced from their homes and who simply want to live as a people, as any nation, and be free.

PF: The mass media in this country

continues to say that Israel is practicing democracy in the Middle East. I understand that you have visited Central America: How do you compare the "democracy" of Israel to that of the Central American countries that you have visited?

JG: The United States admits that democracy has not been that prevalent in Central America, but the U.S. government and the mass media staunchly defend and showcase the so-called democracy of Israel. If Israel is a democracy, then how does it justify its military occupation of the Palestinians' territories when the level of violence by the military in the West Bank and Gaza during the intifada is the same or higher than the violence of El Salvador, in spite of the fact that the Palestinians are "armed" only with stones against the sophisticated military might of Israel? How long can a "democracy" justify this situation?

PF: There are Palestinians living in Israel. What was your observation of their lives as compared with those of their sisters and brothers in occupied Palestine?

JG: Within the state of Israel we learned how Arabs who are considered Israeli citizens do not enjoy the same freedoms, opportunities, or benefits that the rest of the population does. They are restricted by curfews, limited movement, special licenses for their vehicles, and identification. Like many Latinos in the United States, Arabs in Israel work in the least desirable and lowest-waged jobs. This tells me that discrimination exists.

PF: If Latinos had more information on Palestine, do you think they would identify with the struggle of the Palestinian people?

JG: I think Latinos would be very

touched by the Palestinian cause when they learn how the killings, imprisonment, and torture has affected just about every Palestinian family. The Palestinian people simply want to have a homeland, their history and culture respected, and want to govern themselves and not live under military occupation. I think Latinos, like any other freedom-loving people, want and respect this.

Furthermore, while Latin Americans in Central America are struggling for democracy and justice, Israel has been arming, training, and supporting repressive governments such as the Guatemalan. For instance, when the U.S. Congress cut aid to Guatemala because of its human-rights violations in 1977, Israel became the main provider of arms, training, and other military support such as building an arms factory in Guatemala.

PF: Do you think that elected officials in the United States can be a positive force for changing U.S. policy of funding the Israeli occupation in Palestine?

JG: I think we have a responsibility to break the silence about the Palestinian cause. Just because we are talking about a small nation of people does not mean their human rights are less important or urgent. Just as people spoke out against Nazi atrocities, as people speak out against apartheid, we must speak out against the occupation of the Palestinians' homeland and for the right of Palestinians to self-determination. As elected officials we have an urgent responsibility to respond to the cries for justice in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. This can be a major step forward for peace in the Middle East. □

Sabreen ("We are patient") is a Palestinian musical ensemble which belongs to the international movement of new song. Five of their members performed in concerts across the United States in 1989. All except one are from Jerusalem. Sabreen was interviewed for Palestine Focus by Steve Goldfield in San Francisco, October 1989.

Interview with Sabreen

"We want our songs to survive!"

PF: How did Sabreen begin?

S: Sabreen started in 1980. We used to play in different groups, mostly at dances and wedding parties. We all knew each other; we were friends. We used to play Western instruments like drums, guitars, and keyboards. We became bored playing the same songs with nothing that speaks about our reality and the life we are living.

So we started thinking about something new. We used the same instruments we used to play, but this time with different words, mostly the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and other Palestinian poets, but with the same kind of music. We wrote our own songs with new words and content. We were mostly influenced by Marcel Khalife and other Lebanese singers at that time, like Muhammed Qaboud.

Our tunes were Oriental but with Western instruments; we were not able to give full expression to our music. So we started using Oriental instruments which have quarter tones [the smallest unit in Western music is a half tone—ed.]. In 1982, the year we released our first cassette, we put away the electric instruments and introduced the 'oud, qanun, bouzouk (a Turkish instrument related to the Greek bouzouki), acoustic guitar, bass, and percussion—all natural instruments. We played these instruments in a new way and went beyond traditional methods.

Over eight or nine years of playing together, we were influenced by music like jazz, blues, African music. We listened to music from all over the world. We listened to Ravi Shankar, traditional Algerian music, and reggae, all of which enriched our music. Our third cassette, "The Death of the Prophet," shows the influence of world music on us.



Sabreen's lead singer performing at their San Francisco concert.

Steve Goldfield/Palestine Focus

roots. Our group has gone a little further. We have tried to develop our music more to be of the world rather than to be just folk on the local scale. That is what makes us unique.

PF: The year you changed to Oriental instruments was also the year Israel invaded Lebanon. Was your musical development affected by political events?

S: We usually do not sing or write about current

*"Our music is more of the world than just folk on the local scene. That is what makes us unique."
—Sabreen*

PF: Have other groups like yours developed?

S: There are other groups. We have a choir from Rameh. There is a group called Ghurbeh. They use acoustic guitars with the 'oud. They are closer to pop music. Both groups have a different style from ours. There were other groups before us. When we started, there was Baraem ("The Blooms") from the late seventies. There was another group of Jamil Saeh, Rahani. He uses mostly percussion and the 'oud in combination.

Most of us originated from the same

events. Every stage, of course, has its feelings and oppressions which come from the political situation. We try to talk more about wider human feelings and dreams we experience at each political stage. It is not something direct, for example, now there is an occupation of Lebanon so we talk about this.

But people in Lebanon suffer and we talk about suffering. People in different countries suffer. We use the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, who lived in Lebanon and talked about the suffering of people there. We have been influenced by his poetry and by his songs on it. But they're not so spe-

cific as to geographical place; they talk about wider human emotions.

PF: How does your audience react to your music?

S: We've played all over the country, in universities like Bir Zeit, Bethlehem, Hebrew University in Jerusalem; in cities in the north of the country, Nazareth, Haifa, Akka. Villages also. We are readily accepted because people are interested in songs that talk about their lives and everyday experiences, especially our generation. Our parents' generation listens to folk music and traditional Arabic music. But our generation is looking for things to talk about our experience. But we can't just say it is the younger generation; people of all ages listen to this music.

Before ours, and other recent music, most music was folk, simple easy-to-sing songs that everyone knows. Compared with folkloric songs, our songs are not sung by everybody. They are difficult tunes mostly suitable for listening. We work to make people understand that there is music for dancing, music for singing, and another kind for listening. Our music is mostly for listening. Some parts of our songs are easy to repeat and people can sing them easily, but not all of the songs. Even in the Arabic tradition, the songs of Um-Qulthum for example, there are difficult songs. Not just anybody can sing these songs. Whether people can sing along or not has nothing to do with whether music is popular.

It has been a very hard experience to express ourselves through our music and to get our people used to it and to accept it. We worked on that through concerts, especially through certain phrases that they can repeat.

PF: How do the Israeli authorities react to your music?

S: Mostly we don't have problems because our songs are not direct songs against the government. They are more human songs; maybe they don't care about such songs. We are able to distribute our cassettes on a small scale with the help of friends and people interested in our music.

PF: Describe the conditions in which you perform.

S: We are mostly restricted to Jerusalem. It is very difficult to perform in the West Bank. No place is open for such activities, except in the north of the country, in Nazareth. The only place we can play in the West Bank and Gaza is the Hakawati Theater in Jerusalem. We have no place to practice. We have no financial support for recording. It is harder to distribute our cassettes now.

PF: What is the role of your music in the intifada?

S: The uprising started a long time ago with the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qassem, and other poets and with our music and other Palestinian musicians. People were struggling everywhere in different spheres: music, politically, and so on. What is unique about the intifada now is that it is popular; most of the people are sharing in it. But all the things people are asking for—like independence and liberty—people were struggling for a long time ago.

Our songs and poetry speak about oppression and misery and all the things that people are sharing. Our music hasn't changed because we don't deal with direct events. The big difference is with the people and how they react to our songs.

We have songs based on poems of Mahmoud Darwish which talk about arrest and how people are tortured, their love for the country, and all of these feelings, also about how Palestinian people react to revolutions of other peoples. Now, with the intifada and all the more intense feelings, they understand our work and look at it from a different point of view and see some new things that they couldn't see before in our songs. That is the value of this poetry and these songs. People have been influenced by them and are willing to listen to them. This is something we are working for. It is really important for us not just to make songs for particular occasions and then they are dead. We want our songs to survive.

PF: Would you tell us about some of your songs?

S: We have a new song by a friend of ours, a teacher from Bir Zeit, about a person who is deported. If it were a direct song, it would mostly talk about how soldiers took him and shoved him and left him at the border. But the song focuses on the feelings of this person, his relation to his wife and family, and how he felt about being deported. He said that "we will meet some day." It focuses more on feelings—what is going on inside of him, his love and eagerness to be reunited with his wife and family—than on a direct description of what happened to him.

Our friend wrote us another song, "Ramallah '89," describing the city during the intifada. It is in the same style as the other song. It is about somebody walking the streets alone. Nobody is there, only wind and lights. Everything is closed. You can hear just the sound of soldiers around you. He talks about the feelings of anxiety of this person. He describes the state of mind of the people living under occupation.

We have songs which take stories from folktales of the past but with a new idea. For example, there is a song called "Jabani." It is about a very beautiful girl, like Snow White. She is taken by a wolf to the mountains and left there alone. All she could do was send messages with a bird to her family telling them she was all right. So the story is used to talk about Jerusalem, comparing it to the girl, taken away by soldiers, eager to be free.

We also have a famous love story in Arabic tradition, "Antar and Abla," two lovers like Romeo and Juliet. It is used as a metaphor. Abla is the most beautiful girl in her tribe, and she was locked away in a castle. Nobody could get to her. Antar is defenseless; he has nothing but his sword to free her. He tries his best to free her. The song describes us: we don't have arms, but there is always a willingness to be free and to work for freedom. □

Pete Seeger, Marcel Khalifé, Ronnie Gilbert, and Holly Near

Progressive Musicians Sing Out for Middle East Peace

By Hilton Obenzinger

"It's terrible to be denied each other's cultures," singer Holly Near said after the January 12 benefit concert for the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA). "When any culture is denied because of fear—that's when the troubadour steps in."

The concert, produced by Redwood Cultural Work to aid MECA's medical and educational help for Palestinian children, attracted a sellout crowd of 3400 in Berkeley, California. Introduced by former Berkeley School Board President and MECA Director Barbara Lubin and President of the MECA Board of Advisors and former Berkeley Mayor Gus Newport, Pete Seeger, Ronnie Gilbert, and Holly Near joined Marcel Khalifé, one of the most outstanding composer/singers of Lebanon and the Arab world, in an exhibition of how the gentle power of "the troubadours" can change the world.

When the legendary Pete Seeger and Marcel Khalifé sat together swapping songs, something electric was in the air—and it was not just the unique blending of the American banjo with the Arabic 'oud. When Seeger and Khalifé were joined by Near and Gilbert at the end of the concert to sing American folk songs, the electricity grew into a sense that this moment was indeed historic. "Oceans of misunderstanding" separate Arab culture from Americans, Pete Seeger remarked—and this ocean, the fear that divides people, keeps people apart, is now getting bridged.

Even as the performers sang civil-rights classics, American folk songs, and Marcel Khalifé's intricately orchestrated anthems of the intifada, the sense of the difficulties involved in overcoming this "ocean of misunderstanding" was palpable. One impressive bridge was the work of a talented group of local musicians who learned to perform Khalifé's music with less than a week to rehearse.

When Khalifé began his performance, he told of his airport encounter with a U.S. customs agent who regarded Marcel suspiciously, not believing that he brought only music from Lebanon instead of "terrorist" bombs. When asked, "Why are you here?" Marcel responded, "I come to sing for peace and freedom." Finally allowed into the country, Marcel dedicated his first song to the chauvinist customs agent.

When Ronnie Gilbert, one of the original Weavers, performed, she spoke of her anguish as a Jewish person, seeking "peace for all the children of the Middle East." She asked local performer and cantor Linda Hirschhorn to sing a song about the biblical Sarah and Hagar, mothers of Isaac and Ishmael, seeking peace between the Jewish and Arab peoples. Then Gilbert pleaded for "Jews to come out of their places of fear" and "come to our senses."

Holly Near noted the historic moment, recalling all the turmoil encountered in the peace movement when controversial issues such as the Middle East were raised. "Everyone got along in the peace movement until the lesbians and the Palestinians showed up," she wryly quipped. But when she sang her classic "No More Genocide in My Name," the chorus of "That's just a lie / One of the many and we've had plenty / No more genocide in my name" took on an expanded meaning which now clearly included Palestinians and Lebanese.

Pete Seeger opened the concert with a song commenting on his own age, "My Get Up and Go Got Up and Went" (by Malvina Reynolds) and showed that not only his whimsical humor was still fully intact, but his humanitarian vision as well. Seeger recalled traveling to Israel and Lebanon in



Rehearsal scene: (from left to right) Pete Seeger, John Bucchino, Holly Near, Ronnie Gilbert, Marcel Khalifé.

Carolyn Cole/Examiner

"We are all exiles from a world to come of peace and justice. Sooner or later we'll get home again."

— Pete Seeger



Marcel Khalifé performing at the benefit concert for MECA in Berkeley.

Steve Goldfield/Palestine Focus

the sixties and visiting Palestinian refugee camps. He commented that "we are all exiles to a world to come of peace and justice. Sooner or later we'll get home again."

The historic poignancy was also shaped by the history of the performers. Pete Seeger and Ronnie Gilbert sang with the Weavers in the early fifties; the group was blacklisted as a result of McCarthyism. Holly Near began her career in the movement against the war in Vietnam and in the women's movement. Other progressive artists have also sung on behalf of Palestinian rights—notably Gil Scott-Heron, who per-

formed at a Palestine Solidarity Committee benefit in Chicago in 1988. But the Berkeley concert was the first to bring together so many musicians with an Arab artist of equivalent stature. Backstage, I asked Marcel Khalifé if he worried about acceptance of his music by an American audience.

"I have no apprehension of American audiences," Marcel responded. "No matter where you are, when you go on stage, there is a tremor, a fear coming from respect, from how your creation will be received. But if an artist is honest, the message will get through and I am confident it will reach

the audience. It will be a joy to get to know each other.

"I understand how difficult it has been for Americans," he continued, "but I come with messages, messages of peace, freedom, and democracy, of the right to be a people, a message that freedom does not always come peacefully, that even if it takes the rocks of the children, even if that is what they have to go through, despite all the massacres, they will achieve their freedom. The epic of heroism may not be accepted by all the audience, but more and more, they will realize that the Arabs and the Palestinians are not terrorists but people like everyone else.

"There is something common to all peoples, this soil, these principles of peace and freedom, that holds all humanity together. To us, the U.S. government represents terror, power, the historic support for the Zionist state against our people; but we can meet as people on a clear point of view to achieve freedom and peace, yearning for freedom through poetry and music, through the media, through travel—all this becomes the same message, a common ground, in Africa, in Latin America, in the United States."

We sipped our coffee, and I asked Marcel how the intifada had affected his music. "I cannot isolate any song from 15 years ago to today," he said. "Everything is linked from the beginning of my journey to today, and it all confirms the truth of what I sing: We used to sing of dreams of revolution and peace—and that is what is happening today; the intifada gives me the lightning of hope to go on, since it confirms what I have been doing all along. People will definitely reach the truth. It may be a painful, angry journey, but we are bound to reach our goal. What is important is that it is happening, and we can only move forward."

So, without apprehension, Marcel sang his songs, his "Anthem of the Rock," and other compositions of the intifada. The audience was enthusiastic, clapping along, feeling the driving rhythms and plaintive melodic lines, many responding for the first time to the "new song" of the Arab world with surprising pleasure. Backstage, Marcel held on to his 'oud and smiled, "You see, I think they understand." □

U.S. Aid ...

Continued from Page 1

South Africa, and human rights.

The blatant violation of law is one of the vulnerabilities of U.S. aid to Israel. Perhaps the clearest violation is in the area of human rights. Title 22 of the US Code, Section 2151N, states:

No assistance may be provided under subchapter 1 of this chapter to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, including torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges, or other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, and the security of person, unless such assistance will directly benefit the needy people in such country.

U.S. law prohibits aid to a country which violates human rights. The law makes it plain that detention without charges or trial and torture are such human-rights violations. Amnesty International reports that the Israeli government systematically violates human rights, including systematic torture of prisoners to extract false confessions and administrative detention, which is without charges or trial. The U.S. State Department's annual report on human rights reaches the same conclusions. Even the Landau Commission, created by the Israeli government, concluded that "physical pressure"—a euphemism for torture—is routinely used by Israeli security operatives. And the Israeli government makes no attempt to hide its use of administrative detention against thousands of Palestinians, who are held for up to twelve months without charge or trial; that period can be extended again and again by a judge. Torture and administrative detention are only two of the many forms of human-rights violations systematically practiced by the Israeli government.

Every year the Congress appropriates funds—currently about \$3 billion—in aid for Israel. No hearings are held to question whether this appropriation violates the law cited above. No procedures are in place to account for the use of the funds and weapons granted to Israel. More than one hundred U.S. officials, for example, monitor every phase of U.S. aid to Egypt. Not even

a single U.S. representative reports back to the government of the United States on how aid to Israel is used. This lack of oversight is unique to Israel as a recipient of U.S. aid. Other countries also violate human rights and receive U.S. aid, but at least there is Congressional debate and the administration is required to certify to Congress improvement in human-rights practices.

Is it not certainly legitimate to demand that hearings be held and reports prepared? Can it be that the Congress does not hold such hearings and commission such reports because our representatives do not wish to be confronted with the shameful facts?

When U.S. sanctions against South Africa first went into effect, the bill enacting them contained a provision that a report should be written for the Congress about

which countries were aiding South Africa and supplying it with weapons. The embarrassing report which resulted showed conclusively that Israel was South Africa's closest ally and greatest weapons procurer. When the sanctions bill was renewed the following year, Israel's Congressional friends successfully forced the removal of the reporting provision.

The U.S. government also claims to oppose the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, which U.S. tax dollars are funding. Torture, imprisonment without trial, and collective punishment are part of the inevitable "logic" of occupation. The objective in challenging the legality of U.S. aid to Israel is not only to end blatant and systematic Israeli human-rights violations but to end the occupation itself. Such a step

would pave the way for an independent state of Palestine which can protect Palestinian human rights and assure peace in the region.

For those who claim that restricting or suspending aid to Israel would only harden Israeli intransigence, we can point to any number of examples of the use of suspension of U.S. aid as leverage. Without massive U.S. aid, Israel could not afford to maintain a garrison state and would have to make peace with its neighbors. The cycle of Congressional hearings on foreign aid began in February. Senator Dole has introduced the level of U.S. aid to Israel as a legitimate topic for debate. It is high time for the debate to continue to rise from the grassroots into the hearing rooms of Congress. □

Intifada ...

Continued from Page 3

Agriculture Organization, making good on a threat during a dispute over the agency's passage last fall of a plan to study farming needs of Palestinians under occupation. The United States will pay only \$18 million of its budget assessment of \$61.4 million—just enough to keep its arrears under the amount which would lead to the automatic suspension of its right to vote in the FAO's governing General Conference.

January 14 The Israeli military suspended two border guards for violating open-fire regulations and providing misleading information to army investigators in connection with the killing of 18-year-old Fadi Zabakli in Bethlehem on Decem-

ber 28. The decision came after ABC News aired a videotape of the shooting that contradicted the army's official version of the incident, which involved a confrontation between soldiers and a group of Palestinian youths. The footage revealed the Palestinian youths were unarmed and were running away when the soldiers opened fire without warning. The army had originally stated that the youths were armed with axes and metal bars and that the soldiers took aim only after firing warning shots.

January 22 Following strong protests from the U.S. and other governments, Israeli police released on bond Palestinian nationalist leader Faisal Hussein, head of the Jerusalem-based Arab Studies Society, who had been arrested January 19 on charges he cooperated with a group planning attacks against Israeli targets. Since

the beginning of the intifada, few arrestees have been released on bond.

Husseini's arrest came after a long defamatory campaign by the Israeli right, which was aimed at goading the government into prosecuting him. Earlier in the month, Hussein and eight other activists were banned from traveling abroad by Israeli authorities for alleged "security reasons." They included Bir Zeit University Professor Sari Nusseibeh, Zahira Kamal, head of the Federation of Women's Work Committees, and four leading Palestinian trade unionists who had been planning to attend a conference of Arab trade unions in Cairo.

Supporters of Hussein and other outspoken activists see the latest restrictions as acts of desperation from a government that had tried unsuccessfully to cultivate a local Palestinian leadership that would not support the positions of the PLO. □

Focus On ...

Continued from Page 2

the West Bank and Gaza. Moshe Ron is among the many Israelis who refuse to serve in the Israeli Defence Forces because the army is responsible for the brutality toward Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

San Francisco PSC Hosts Events with AAUG and ADC

The San Francisco PSC chapter is jointly hosting a discussion series featuring prominent Palestinian-Americans with the local chapters of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) and the ADC. Entitled "The Intifada and the Prospects for Peace in the 90s," the series features Naseer Aruru, Professor of Political Science, Southeastern Massachusetts University, executive board member of Amnesty International USA, and author of *Occupation: Israel over Palestine*; Kamal Boulatta, Palestinian artist and writer, member of the editorial board of

Middle East Report, who showed his slide show, "Faithful Witnesses: Art by Palestinian Children"; and Muhammad Hallaj, editor of *Palestine Perspectives*.

Senator Bob Dole's Proposal to Cut Aid Meets Broad Support

On January 16, an Op-Ed article appeared in the (New York Times) by Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole in which he proposed cutting 5 percent in aid allocations to the five top recipients of U.S. aid (Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, and the Philippines) to raise funds to supply foreign aid to emerging democracies in Eastern Europe

Continued on Page 7

Join Palestine Solidarity Committee

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

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

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

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

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

Yes! I Want to Join The Palestine Solidarity Committee!

Name _____

Street or Box # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Enclosed is a check for:

- \$30/year, Regular
- \$15/year, Student/Low-income
- \$50
- \$75
- \$100 Sustaining Member
- I wish to be a monthly sustainer and will contribute \$_____ monthly for the next year. (Make checks payable to Palestine Solidarity Committee or PSC.)
- I wish to send material aid directly to Palestinians under occupation. Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of \$_____. (Make checks payable to Middle East Cultural and Educational Foundation or MECEF.)

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

Letters to the Editors

Dear Ms. Butterfield,

I read your fair account of the shameful silence by much of the U.S. peace and justice movement about the plight of the Palestinian people.

One of the main reasons seems to be that U.S. foreign policy in regard to the Palestinians has been utterly lopsided in favor of the Israeli government since the birth of Israel because Israel was a brainchild of the United States. Every U.S. administration—except the Eisenhower administration and the Carter administration—has been fully negligent of the human rights of the Palestinians and conspired with the Israeli government to follow a basically genocidal policy toward the Palestinians.

But no other administration has gone as far as the Reagan/Bush administration. One reason for this illegal and pathological behavior seems to be their hostility toward the Central American liberation movements. In this hostility, they have not shied away from breaking international laws of behavior. Since the Israeli government has been an eager and willing accomplice, it has been able to blackmail these two U.S. administrations. And the so-called free U.S. media has completely supported them.

I am sure you are aware of all that, but my purpose in writing is to ask you an important question: You wrote of NGOs planning to arrange a nonviolent peace march in Jerusalem. How did it turn out? Our "free press" did not mention it naturally. Please let me know what you could

accomplish. Very much interested. Thank you for your efforts!

Mir Nisam
Fountain Valley, California

Editors' Note: See article in this issue on the Jerusalem peace march.

To the organizers of the candlelight vigil at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacramento, December 24, 1989:

I am a regular parishioner at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. I had read about the planned event in the (Sacramento Bee), so I was expecting it when I arrived for Midnight Mass. I would like to personally thank you for being there out in the cold. It was a singularly effective and poignant way to remind the Sacramento Catholic community what the conditions are in the real Bethlehem of today.

I have visited Bethlehem and Beit Sahour several times over the last 18 years during visits to the Holy Land. My heart aches for the people of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour but also Tulkarim, Nablus, Jenin, Gaza, Jericho, and all the rest of the Palestinian communities under occupation. You have every legitimate right and in fact a duty to request our prayers as well solidarity with your struggle for justice. Thank you for making my Christmas complete.

Dennis R. Ybarra
Rancho Cordova, California

Several color videocassettes introduced last year on the Palestine issue warrant investigation by anyone or any group wanting to further their knowledge on the subject.

Well-described by its title, "Truth, Justice, and Peace" is a 30-minute video made by Lois Penneo and George Konklin and produced by the Episcopal Radio and TV Network. Interviews with many Palestinians—particularly religious leaders, but also teachers, lawyers, mothers, doctors, journalists, and other community leaders—lead one through a history of injustice against the Palestinian people beginning in 1948. Lack of truthful or complete media coverage about that injustice for over four decades, we are reminded, is part and parcel of that injustice.

First, we hear from exiled religious and educational figures whose expulsions without charges or trial date back to 1967. Sheikh Abdul Hamid Sayeh, for example, a member of the Palestine National Council, was expelled in 1967 for refusing to cooperate with the newly installed occupation authorities. A former mayor of Jerusalem was expelled in 1968. His family only learned of his expulsion from a radio broadcast!

Firsthand accounts or testimony give the viewer a vivid sense of the wide range of prohibitions Palestinians face in everyday life under military occupation. Part of that everyday experience is the medical catastrophe of hundreds of Palestinians killed and many thousands wounded by Israeli truncheons or bullets. The Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Samir Kafity, describes his visit to the Anglican Hospital in Jerusalem to see and talk with victims young and old whose bones had been broken by Israeli soldiers.

"Truth, Justice, and Peace" places the many accounts of injustice piled upon injustice in the broader context of the inexorable momentum toward and imperative need for Palestinian statehood. The video clearly explains the function, structure, and institutions of the Palestine Liberation Organization and notes in unmistakable terms the PLO's incontestable role as representative of the Palestinian people. Doris Salah, YWCA Director in Jerusalem, defines the intifada as a crucial moment in history when the Palestinian people are boldly saying to the Israelis and to the world that they will no longer endure occupation and the deprivation of their human rights.

"Truth, Justice, and Peace" is an urgent appeal to the Christian community in the United States to pay attention to what is going on in Palestine, the crucible of Christianity, and to do something about it. Indeed, specific suggestions for actions are given, such as writing letters to government officials and newspapers.

GETTING IT ALL IN FOCUS

By Douglas Franks

The appeal is also meant to strike a responsive chord in any viewer who is concerned with "truth, justice, and peace." Again and again, the connection is made in universal terms that peace in the Holy Land can only be the result of justice, the fundamental missing ingredient. For information regarding rental or purchase of "Truth, Justice, and Peace," contact Morehouse-Barlow in Wilton, Connecticut (800) 877-0012.

For an inside look at the Israeli peace movement, another 30-minute video, "A State of Danger," is just the ticket. Produced by Haim Bresheeth and the Committee for Freedom of Expression for Palestinians and Israelis in 1989 and directed by Jenny Morgan, the video outlines the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in broad strokes and paints a detailed and riveting picture of the Israeli peace movement's response to the occupation. It shows women's organizations within the larger Israeli peace movement and joint efforts of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists.

"A State of Danger" familiarizes us with the objectives of a number of Israeli organizations, including Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, Women in Black, Down with Occupation, Women's Organization for Political Prisoners, and Peace Now. Highlighted activities involving these organizations include a meeting of Palestinian residents of Beit Sahour with Israeli peace activists, among whom were two Knesset members, both advocates of Palestinian statehood; a visit by two Israeli women to Jenin to investigate human-rights abuses by the Israeli army against villagers; an Israeli woman's visit to Megiddo Prison to meet with family members of Palestinian prisoners; the December 10, 1988, demonstration in Tel Aviv organized by Peace Now;

and Women in Black holding a vigil and enduring the venomous taunts of other Israelis.

"State of Danger" leaves you with the distinct impression that the Israeli peace movement is a rather embattled minority within Israeli society as a whole but that their views and basis for organizing and mobilizing are compelling and inescapable. The best outlet for Israelis who advocate Palestinian rights seems to be to concentrate on very specific campaigns or actions, usually having to do with Palestinian prisoners or injured victims of Israeli attacks.

Perhaps the most powerful theme from "A State of Danger" is that a key ingredient to peace is contact and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. The strength and efficacy of the Israeli peace movement lies largely in the formation of such ties, something the Israeli government fears most of all, according to Michel Warschawsky of the Alternative Information Center. He should know: he has been sentenced to prison precisely for having made such contact.

For rental or purchase information, contact Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette Street, Suite 211, New York, NY 10012 (212) 925-0606.

"Intifada: Speaking for Oneself" by Elia Sulieman and Jayce Salloum is stream-of-consciousness in style, a roller-coaster ride through images of life under occupation in present-day Palestine juxtaposed with stereotyped images—of Arabs and Israelis depicted in American film, television, and cartoons. This avant garde video is not a traditional documentary; it pulses with relentless and rapid montage. For rental, purchase, or screening information, call Jayce Salloum (212) 982-8967.

Palestine Focus readers are probably already familiar with Jo Franklin Trout's fine documentary, "Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians." The video is an extended examination of the conditions which gave rise to the intifada and of the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian participants. "Days of Rage" appeared on many PBS stations across the country a few months ago amidst a storm of controversy. The entire episode of its broadcast proved that a majority of television viewers prefer to have the opportunity to learn more about the Palestinian people.

"Days of Rage" is now available for purchase from the Arab American Cultural Foundation, 1204 - 31st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007 (202) 337-9670. □

Hands Around...

Continued from Page 1

gas. We watched ambulances arrive and carry away victims of the gas and an old man who had been shot in the neck. Someone collected the marble-size plastic-coated bullets from the ground. We were handed pieces of onion as tear gas first aid.

The attack had begun for no clear reason, and it continued for hours until the streets were cleared. I observed things with an American friend I'd met while a powerful water cannon, mounted on a truck, was fired continuously, shattering windows and knocking people about. The demonstration gradually dissipated as increasingly impatient soldiers threatened, beat, or made arrests from among those who remained. Dispersal took hours. Many Europeans stayed to witness the military's actions and to try to prevent the beating of their Palestinian hosts and companions.

My American friend was helping me

walk, as I was dizzy and nauseous. But hearing the police announce, "Go home!" on megaphones, he turned to them, and responded, "Why don't you go home!" Several minutes later he was dragged off by two soldiers who clubbed him repeatedly between the legs. I set off to phone his family.

I spent much of the night with his mother at the Moscoviyeh detention center, trying to give testimony in his defense. Meanwhile, the National Palace Hotel, housing conference delegates, was being gas bombed. When my friend was released, he described the dozens of Palestinians in his cell, many wounded, and how he had written each name down and covertly tossed the information to attorney Lea Tsemel so family could at least be notified.

In all more than 50 demonstrators were hospitalized and nearly 80 arrested. The Palestinian organizers would be quietly rounded up in the following weeks. Israel would have trouble with the Italian government and other European parliaments as well; some of their members were injured

and imprisoned. Later the European parliament announced it was considering suspending scientific cooperation with the Israeli government.

I had expected the protest to be pleasant and benign, believing Peace Now's control (i.e., its ban on nationalist slogans in favor of "peace"), would temper things. With dozens of crews filming it, I thought it unlikely that Israel would meet the human chain with violent suppression. In truth, I was naive, blind to all the indications that there would be a crackdown.

From the start of the three-day "1990: Time for Peace" conference, the main European organizers were denied entry into the country. Tour buses of delegates were routinely prohibited from visiting the West Bank. A feminist peace march on December 29 was gassed, and a Palestinian family and some Europeans were beaten and about ten jailed. The morning of the human chain, while two thousand police took up positions in Jerusalem, army roadblocks prevented any West Bank access to Jerusalem, and thousands were turned away. A few nights before, the National Palace Hotel had been raided.

The human chain was meant to cap off an international peace gathering, initiated by European antinuclear, trade-union, and NGO activists. The Europeans had come to Jerusalem to announce their entry into the Middle East peace movement, speaking often of taking responsibility for Europe's historic role in shaping the conflict. With

the chain, the Israeli peace movement tried to "loan" their freedom of expression to the Palestinian national leadership, with a cooperative effort, so protest might be achieved legally. Instead, everyone tasted, to differing degrees, Israeli suppression of any Palestinian political expression. Some Europeans sustained permanent injuries, such as the young Italian woman who lost her eye. We all, in a variety of ways, glimpsed the real face of Israeli rejectionism. □

Focus On ...

Continued from Page 6

and Panama (see editorial this issue). Both ADC and the Middle East Justice Network (MEJN) have launched campaigns supporting Dole's position. ADC forwarded postcards to its membership to send to their senators and representatives. In addition, ADC listed key subcommittees and their members who should receive letters in support of Dole's initiative. MEJN is urging people to call Dole's office and the State Department to let them know that you support his proposal to cut aid to the big five. MEJN is also suggesting that their members write to Dole and send a copy to their own senator. Senate Foreign Affairs Committee members are listed as key people to contact. □

PALESTINE FOCUS (415) 861-1552 P.O. Box 27462 San Francisco, CA 94127

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

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

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

Editorial Board: Douglas Franks, Steve Goldfield, Riyad Khoury, Ginny Kraus, Hilton Obenzinger, Sharon Rose.

Contributing Editors: Jeanne Butterfield, Rabab Hadi.

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PSC Regional Addresses

West Coast: P.O. Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127 (415) 861-1552.
Midwest: 1608 N. Milwaukee, #404, Chicago, IL 60647.
East Coast: P.O. Box 372, Peck Slip Station, New York, NY 10272 (212) 964-7299.
South: P.O. Box 6582, Houston, TX 77265.

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Israeli Advocates for Palestinian Women

By Jill Hamburg

Israeli law professor Josepha Pick comes from Hasharon prison every Thursday night bringing news from inside. This week, some of the news is good. One political prisoner who is pregnant has started to get fruit and vegetables—something the Tel Aviv-based Women's Organization for Political Prisoners had been fighting for. Yael Oran (WOFPP activist who recently toured North America) greets Josepha with another development: two high-school girls, recently freed after ten months, were finally taken back into school. The public school was claiming there was "no place, or their license would not allow it, or that she must first apologize." WOFPP went to Jerusalem and "bullied the Minister of Education. We did all we could."

"We have been able to follow each case and her immediate needs," says Hagith Shlonsky of the Jerusalem chapter. For Palestinian women in Israeli prisons, these needs are often specifically feminine. Population control, a necessity of Israeli military occupation, is easily acted out upon women's bodies: rape and sexual torture or harassment; the prohibition of nursing; induced miscarriage or the denial of prenatal medical care; preventing mothers from contact with their young children; taking the grandmother, wife, and children hostage to pressure a man in a family; or degradations during a woman's menstrual period.

Prisons touch every life under the intifada, affecting individuals, their families and communities. Israeli prisons also provide a unique opportunity for political education. But anger at the special techniques used specifically against women political prisoners moved a few dozen Israeli women to see a role for themselves as prisoners' advocates.

The military's tortures strike at women's traditional roles as mothers and caretakers, at young girls' vulnerability, and at female physiology generally. They are used to force confessions from the women in prison (typically 30 to 60 years-old), who include both those sentenced and those detained without trial. Military acts against women are also committed on the streets during patrols or when demonstrations are being dispersed. Women community leaders are also singled out at their homes and at work.

Mariam, 27, from a village near Bethlehem, is secretary-general of the area Palestinian Women's Committee. After being stopped at a roadblock, Mariam was subjected to five weeks of Shin Bet torture. At first she was handcuffed, blindfolded, kicked all over by several soldiers, and placed in solitary confinement at the Russian compound. For a week she was hooded under a sack, hands cuffed behind her and tied to a pole, drenched with water or chained in a "coffin" structure full of feces. Evenings she was interrogated. Mariam spent the next week in regular solitary confinement. Then a military court extended her detention by 20 days. She received the sack, pole, and water torture again, followed by periods of varied physical tortures. After five weeks Mariam learned she would be detained six months on the suspicion that she had leafletted and raised flags. Nothing was ever proven against her.

"For a long time, Israeli sexual harassment and threats of rape were not reported. Palestinian women from traditional society would not speak about it," Hagith says. "That is why we have a woman lawyer." WOFPP brought information about this practice to the press and "the reaction was huge. There have been several horrible stories of torture, but they are afraid we will make a lot of noise. It happens now, but much less."

An 18-year-old high-school student in Khan Yunis is running from school after a teargassing. She is thrown to the ground by ten border police, stomped on, and hit. They drag her to their car and tear open her clothes. One takes down his pants and underwear. He tries to remove her pants. Then, laughing, they abandon the rape attempt. They throw her out, unconscious now, and drive off. She is rescued by the Red Cross.



Aisha Al-Kurd from Gaza gave birth to her youngest son while in Neveh Tirzah prison.

WOFPP

In Ein Beytelma camp near Nabius, three soldiers chase a woman home. One opens his trousers before the woman and her two teenage daughters. He throws the woman to the ground. The other soldiers watch and curse her. Her screams eventually bring help and the soldiers leave. The district military governor later apologizes, subtly threatening trouble if she publicizes the event.

With branches in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the division of labor for WOPFF is geographic: Haifa-area activists work on Jalame prison, Tel Aviv on Ashkelon and Hasharon (aka Tel Mond), and Jerusalem residents on the Russian compound (aka Moscobiyyeh), the infamous detention center for all West Bank women. "We are lucky; we do not have to locate women detainees all over the country [right after arrest] as is the case for men and children," Jerusalem activist Hagith Shlonsky explains. But once they are inside the prison system, Palestinians may be transferred arbitrarily and held incommunicado and without legal representation or family notification anywhere in Israel or the occupied territories.

WOFPP's work also includes attending court hearings "to support the family, sometimes to mediate, and so the judge can see us. He needs to know somebody is watching," says Hagith. Publicity is another aspect of their work, and sometimes, bringing cases to the Supreme Court. The group also cooperates with Amnesty International, Israeli and Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights, the Association for Civil Liberties in Israel, and others. They contact members of the Knesset, ministers or VIPs on certain occasions, organize specific campaigns, publish notices, organize demonstrations, raise bail, and try to raise public awareness around the world.

When Israelis cross the Green Line to join Palestinians, they take a controversial

political stand. Some in the peace camp have accused WOFPP of interfering, but they are unwavering. "We do not deal much with ideology," Hagith says. "It does not hang over us. The victims of arrest are Palestinians, so we work with Palestinians.... I did not want to demonstrate once a week; I wanted to be involved in a more practical way," she says, "to give a supporting feeling."

"We work with Palestinian women's

cellmates were outraged at her condition and demanded she be hospitalized.

Simultaneously, her house was demolished; nothing could be salvaged. At her trial, the fifteenth day of her detention, prosecutors accused Aisha of "participation in a sabotage mission." The judge extended her detention 30 days. WOFPP heard of her case and got a lawyer, who immediately arranged for release on \$4,000 bail. Another accusation—hiding explosives on her body—was then added to her charges. Shackled hand and foot, she gave birth to a healthy child two days later.

Finally released, her only shelter was a tent, providing no protection from tear gas. Aisha fled the hazardous CN fumes with her baby when a gas bomb landed nearby. Authorities accused her of breaking curfew and destroyed her tent. The Red Cross put up a second tent, which was also destroyed.

The women in prison for political reasons range in age from 14 to 75. School girls are taken from school or from the street on the way to school if something is happening a few blocks away. Many young girls are also indicted for stone throwing or for trying to build a roadblock. One girl got a year and a half for throwing stones at a settler—"I'm sure about this girl," says Josepha. "She is totally unpolitical, she is not involved in anything in jail. She took no part in the intifada."

Older women are prosecuted for being organizers of cooperatives or of daycare centers. One woman was accused of buying cloth to make a Palestinian flag. Old women's "crimes" are usually connected with protecting children, intervening during beatings, or defending the young.

But WOFPP's policy is not to pay too much attention to the particular reason a woman has been detained. "We are not a court," says Hagith. "We are there to support, to see she will not be abused and that her human rights are respected."

After being brought in, most women are interrogated for some time, then sent to a cell to await a charge sheet. The most serious abuse of rights takes place after police interrogation, when women are sent to the special SHABAK (secret police) area of the Russian compound. "They do whatever they want there," says Hagith. Interrogation can last hours or weeks.

For West Bank residents, eighteen days can "legally" pass without meeting a lawyer, according to Israeli law for the territories (it is two days for Jerusalem residents). WOFPP goes daily to some prisons, weekly and biweekly to others, trying to get parcels of necessities inside: warm clothes, soap, sanitary napkins, a towel, a blanket. Their role is "to tide her over until her family comes," Hagith explains. Often her area is under curfew. But it is also a way to find out if a woman is there. The list of arrestees is censored and "can only be learned by guesswork."

Palestinian women are highly organized, and WOFPP has linked up with their struggle in a critical way. A recently released detainee, 16-years-old and now under house arrest, calls Josepha's house to report arrests she has just heard about. They chat for a while and then Yael gets on the phone to a lawyer heading for the Russian compound. The work continues. □

committees," Josepha says. "And it is not easy for them to trust Israelis. But we are very faithful. In the long run," she adds, "we hope we are supporting Palestinian women working for women's rights through the intifada. We hope Palestine will be a democratic state with equal rights for women. But we cannot tell them what to do. They will decide for themselves in the end."

A look at the Israeli peace movement reveals that women and women's groups like WOFPP (which is made up of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis), Shani (Women against the Occupation), and Women in Black today are consistently expanding the borders of Israeli solidarity work with Palestinians. Perhaps their understanding of Israeli women's oppression, in a religious-military state which propagates pronatalist and other regressive policies has sharpened their understanding of the Palestinians' situation.

WOFPP was organized shortly after the intifada, in May 1988, beginning with one woman prisoner. "First there was [political prisoner] Aisha al-Kurd. It is a horrible story," says Josepha. "They did all they could to make her miscarry." WOFPP collected \$4,000 bail in two days to free her. Unfortunately, it came too late, and she still gave birth in prison.

Aisha al-Kurd was arrested eight months pregnant. Her husband was in prison. Police handcuffed her, bundled her in a urine-soaked sack, and locked her in a Gaza prison cell. Her four children were alone in their Rafah camp home. Told it would protect Aisha, her husband confessed to Fateh membership, and she, too, was induced to sign a confession she could not read. Two days later, Aisha was forced to lie on her stomach on the floor of a military jeep while soldiers drove it on unpaved roads for two hours. Aisha was taken to Ashkelon prison hemorrhaging. Her Jewish

Jill Hamburg is a freelance writer who recently returned from a six-week trip to Israel and Palestine. Support for WOPFF can be sent to: WOPFF Account #260643, Bank Hapoalim Branch 532, 3 Daniel Frisch Street, Tel Aviv Israel for the Tel Aviv Branch or, for the Jerusalem branch, earmarked for WOFPP c/o American-Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition, 275 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1776, New York, NY 10001 (tax-deductible). For more information, contact WOFPP, P. O. Box 8537, Jerusalem, Israel 91083 or WOFPP, P. O. Box 31811, Tel Aviv 61318 Israel.