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THE TRAGEDY



OF THE PALES- TINIAN PEOPLE

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Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter I. Brief Survey of Zionist Colonization of Palestine	6
Chapter II. What Are the Inalienable Legitimate National Rights of the Arab People of Palestine?	30
Chapter III. Anti-Palestinian Genocide by the Zionists	42
Chapter IV. Conditions for Victory of Palestinians' Just Cause. The Soviet Union's Position on the Palestinian Issue	69
Bibliography	77

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Introduction

People suffer many losses in a lifetime... They lose dear ones and friends, without whom life would seem impossible. Illness, hunger and the horrors of war can also disrupt the quiet flow of one's life. But whatever adversities they face, people know they have the most precious thing—their homeland, the land of their ancestors, where they were born and first uttered the word "mother". It is no accident that in many languages one's homeland is called "motherland".

Genuine internationalists understand the feelings of attachment to one's homeland whether it is snowy Lapland, the jungle of the Amazon River, the Caucasian valleys or the sandy Arabian steppes.

Genuine patriotism always inspires respect for those who love their own land. Attachment to one's homeland, the deep feeling of having a homeland of one's own is a sign of sincerity and thoughtfulness in a person.

The Soviet people, who experienced the horrors of the Second World War in which they lost 20 million fellow citizens, share the feelings of those who have been robbed of their homeland, which was bathed in the sweat of their ancestors and is now trodden by invaders.

What the more than four-million-strong Arab people of Palestine are experiencing is a real tragedy, a tragedy that has lasted for many years, is unending and ever growing. There is already a generation of Palestinians,

now living in tents, who have never seen the citrus gardens, the groves of Jericho and the holy places of Jerusalem. But it has become the difficult yet noble mission of this generation to assert the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of their own state. To this day this right is denied to them by the Zionists and their patrons and accomplices, who contend that the Palestinians as such do not exist and that, moreover, with the establishment of Israel the word "Palestine" disappeared from the geographical and political vocabularies.

This chauvinist approach has nothing in common with the real state of affairs. Palestinians do exist, they are struggling and will win. It is high time to realize that the just resolution of the Palestinian problem is the principal condition for normalizing the situation and eliminating the dangerous hotbed of international tension in the Middle East.

As a Soviet-Palestinian communique notes, "The Middle East settlement cannot be achieved... without resolving the Palestinian problem. And this problem cannot be solved without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."

The tragedy of a whole nation, the Arab people of Palestine, deprived by imperialists, Zionists and Arab reactionaries of their inalienable right to the establishment of their own state on their own land, must be ended. The Soviet Union is sparing no efforts to achieve these lofty and noble aims and this meets with the understanding, approval and gratitude of the broad masses of Palestinian people. Relations between the Soviet and Palestinian peoples and their leaders have been marked by a spirit of genuine comradeship and friendship.

* * *

The Palestinians are continuing to struggle for their rights. Their invincible combat spirit, readiness to sacrifice their lives and desire to continue the struggle guarantee that the time will come when a new geographical and political unit—a free, independent and democratic Arab Palestine, will appear on the political map of the Middle East along with the currently existing states.

Chapter I

Brief Survey of Zionist Colonization of Palestine

Palestine lies on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean in Asia. This area in the Near East has a centuries-old history. About 3500 B.C. a group of Semitic tribes—Arameans and Canaanites—began to migrate from the heart of the Arabian Peninsula to the territory which is now Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. Later they adopted Egyptian and Assyrian culture. Canaanites established themselves on the territory which is now Palestine and founded their own state.

In later years other Semitic tribes, which were to form the ancient Jewish nation, migrated to an area between Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea. In 1025 B.C., after partially ousting the local population, they founded the kingdom of Israel, which existed for only 72 years. The kings Saul, David and Solomon tried to create a strong centralized state, but after King Solomon's death the kingdom broke up into Israel in the north and Judea in the south. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians destroyed Israel. In 586 B.C. the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II defeated Judea, destroyed Jerusalem and deported the entire Judaic population to Babylon. But in 539 B.C. the Persians routed

the Babylonians and King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. About 50,000 Jews returned there.

After Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. conquered the whole of the Near and Middle East, including the territory which is now Palestine, and founded an empire, Jews began to migrate to various parts of the then civilized world. As a rule, they did so voluntarily. Being nomads and traders, they began to settle in the Mediterranean area and in the second century B.C. appeared even in Morocco. Thus in ancient times the bulk of the Jewish people lived along the entire Mediterranean coast, particularly in Alexandria, rather than in Judea and Palestine. In the period of Roman rule there were more Jews living in Alexandria and Rome than in Jerusalem. That was how the Jewish Diaspora, or dispersal, arose.

In the fourth century A.D. Christianity began to spread rapidly in Palestine. The mother of Roman Emperor Constantine I visited Palestine and gave money to build the Cathedral of the Ascension in Jerusalem and the Cathedral of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Jerusalem itself was becoming a Christian city. In his book *History of Jews* a leading orientalist, Prof. Heinrich Graetz, describing the situation in Palestine at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries, noted that in those days Jerusalem ceased to be a Jewish centre and was becoming a purely Christian city and the residence of the Archbishop. The law forbidding Jews to enter the Holy City was observed very strictly after Emperor Julian's death.

In 614 Palestine and Jerusalem were conquered by the Persians, and Jews actively sided with the invaders in killing thousands of Christians. In 621 Byzantine Emperor Heraclius launched a military campaign against the Persians which lasted for seven years and regained the lands earlier lost in Asia Minor, including what is now Palestine. The emperor confirmed the edicts promulgated by Hadrian and Constantine I, forbidding Jews to settle in Jerusalem.

In 637 the Arabs led by Caliph Omar I seized Jerusalem and Palestine, where the Jews were a mere five per cent of the total population. The Arameans, who formed the majority, became assimilated with the Arabs and adopted their language, which was close to Aramean, and their religion, Islam. From the seventh century Palestine can be regarded as an Arab country.

In 1099 the Crusaders seized Jerusalem and established the Kingdom of Jerusalem on part of Palestinian territory. Later, however, they were defeated and expelled by Arab forces led by Saladin.

The Jews in Palestine suffered much less under Arab caliphs than under Byzantine emperors and for many years Arabs and Jews lived side by side there. They cooperated in the economic and cultural spheres, were of common Semitic origin, many of their religious principles were similar, and they had suffered for many years from foreign oppression which they hated equally.

In 1516 the whole of the Near East, including Palestine, was occupied by the Turks, who held sway there for 400 years. In this period Palestine was divided into several *sanjaks* (regions)—Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, Sidon and Beirut. Under the Ottoman Empire Palestine was considered part of Great Syria and was predominantly inhabited by Arabs. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries the first Jewish settlements arose in Palestine, above all, in and around Jerusalem.

The point of this historical survey is to remind readers that the Jews have no exclusive rights to the territory of Palestine. The entire structure of Zionism, a militant and extremely nationalistic doctrine, and of the political practice of the Jewish capitalists, is founded on this thesis, as well as on the totally unscientific theory of the existence of a world Jewish nation. The Zionist thesis has become the official doctrine and guide to action of Israeli ruling circles and is being used to justify the policy of annexation, aggression and threats with regard to Israel's Arab neighbours. This policy has been creating

tension in the region for the past 35 years, causing many large-scale armed conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbours. These conflicts have adversely affected the entire international climate.

In November 1967 Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser said in an interview to the editor-in-chief of the French magazine *Evènements*:

"The Jews are our cousins. We have coexisted for centuries. Zionism has brought forth a problem and made it absolutely impossible for the Jews, Arabs and Christians to live together. We can all live in one house, but none of us must try to seize the whole house and expel the rest."

This critical and extremely tense situation did not arise all at once, it was preceded by a chain of interdependent events.

The Zionist movement emerged at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when Palestine became a target of British colonial expansion. Never a mass movement, Zionism emerged and gained momentum under the influence of two factors. First, the British sought to colonize Palestine as a territory situated at the crossroads of empire and, second, in 1897 the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, proclaimed Palestine the land of the Jewish ancestors and set the Zionist movement the task of resolving the Jewish question through resettling Jews in Palestine and restoring a Jewish state there. The aims of British imperialism and the Zionist movement fully coincided. This was the soil on which the seeds of discord and enmity grew. Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl, father of Zionism, cynically outlined for his followers the direct way to found a purely Jewish state on Palestinian territory:

"Supposing, for example, we were obliged to clear a country of wild beasts, we should not set about the task in the fashion of Europeans of the fifth century. We should not take spear and lance and go out singly in pursuit of bears; we would organize a large and active

hunting party, drive the animals together, and throw a melinite bomb into their midst."¹ This rather undiplomatic formulation embodies the Zionist programme of expelling the Palestine Arabs from their homeland.

Zionist colonialism had become possible in Palestine only thanks to all-round assistance and encouragement from imperialist powers and it was naturally opposed by the indigenous Arab population. Zionist theoreticians invented a theory of ingrained anti-Jewish sentiment among the Arabs. But what originally caused the Arab-Israeli conflict was the fact that Jewish colonialists had been seizing Arabs' lands or buying them dirt-cheap from Arab sheikhs who found it more profitable to sell their land to enterprising Jewish businessmen than to lease it to their poor countrymen.

The Anglo-Zionist alliance was finally consolidated by the well-known Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917. Justly regarded by Arab scholars as the cornerstone of anti-Arab imperialist policy in the 20th century, it reads:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..."²

That the Balfour Declaration was adopted at that time was no accident. The Entente needed allies in the Near East in order to achieve success in military operations against Turkey. Moreover, while Britain and France were increasingly running out of manpower and material resources and while the revolutionary wave was mounting in Russia, making the situation there uncertain, the Entente looked forward to the United States joining it in

¹ *The Israel-Arab Reader*. Edited by Walter Laqueur. Bantam Books, 1971, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

the war against Germany. To get the American President to do so, it was necessary to have the help of influential financial and industrial circles in the United States, among which Jews, who were rather pro-German during the First World War, predominated.

Samuel Landman, a leader of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) in the 1918-1922 period, noted that the only way to urge the US President to enter the war was to enlist Zionist Jews' support, which could be achieved by promising them Palestine. Eventually, this made it possible to mobilize the powerful forces of American Zionists in support of the Allies.

In May 1917 Chaim Weizmann, then President of the World Zionist Organization, who was to be the first President of Israel, publicly stated that Britain was ready to support Zionists who were not satisfied with the idea of setting up a kind of "Jewish home" in Palestine and intended to create a purely Jewish state there. In this speech at the Congress of British Zionists Weizmann said that Zionism strove to create a Jewish society and the road to it lay through several intermediate stages. He said under British protection the Jews would be able to develop and build an administrative machine making it possible to implement the Zionist plan without interfering in the affairs of the non-Jewish population.

In an effort to please his British patrons, Weizmann said that if Palestine fell within the sphere of British influence and Britain helped the Jews to settle it as a British domain, there would be about a million or perhaps even more Jews there in twenty or thirty years' time. The Jews could ensure fairly effective protection of the Suez Canal and form a strong barrier on the Egyptian flank against any probable threat from the north.

Z'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, one of the theorists of Zionism, frankly declared himself against any cooperation with Arabs until the Jews were their effective masters in Palestine.

Moreover, he insisted on founding a Jewish Legion with the aim of obtaining the territory promised by Britain and setting up a Jewish state there.

In order to "develop" Palestine, British imperialism needed manpower. The Zionist movement again came to the imperialists' aid. This movement would hardly have survived if it had not played such an important role in the imperialists' designs. Significantly, big and middle-sized Jewish capitalists have, from the outset, been trying to use Zionism to divert the broad masses of people, particularly Jews, from the revolutionary working-class movement, which was gaining momentum in Europe and America in the late 19th and early 20th century and becoming a serious factor of social and political development.

The primary task of the Zionist movement was to urge Jews to migrate to Palestine, especially because they were a very small portion of the total population there. In 1897 the First Zionist Congress in Basle pointed out that the primary aim of the Zionist movement was to ensure the return of Jews to Palestine. The Congress adopted a programme stating that "Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law". It should be noted that the word "home" was included in the Basle Programme to camouflage the main Zionist aim of establishing an independent Jewish state which would be, in the words of the father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, as Jewish as Britain was British.

At the end of the First World War British troops occupied Palestine. The San Remo Conference of the Allies gave Britain a mandate to administer Palestine. This mandate, made effective from September 1923, was granted to Britain largely thanks to the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which was officially backed by France in February 1918 and later by the United States.

It should be pointed out that the Balfour Declaration was also intended to divert the attention of Jewish

workers from the revolutionary movement, to turn them to nationalist rather than class struggle and, in particular, to prevent Jewish workers in Russia from supporting the October Revolution and the Bolsheviks.

The Palestinian Arabs rejected the Balfour Declaration, and in 1919 the General Syrian Congress declared: "We oppose the pretensions of the Zionists to create a Jewish commonwealth in the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, and oppose Zionist migration to any part of our country."¹

In furtherance of the Balfour Declaration and in defiance of the agreement with the ruler of Mecca, Husein ibn Ali, who was promised several independent Arab states in return for helping Britain in the struggle against Turkey, Britain immediately began to back Zionists in Palestine and encourage their efforts to create a purely Jewish state and promote Jewish immigration.

On February 3, 1919, the WZO submitted to the Paris Peace Conference a plan for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine and the neighbouring Arab countries. The WZO hoped that Britain would back the plan, according to which the Jewish state was to include, in addition to Palestine proper, the upper reaches of the Jordan in Syria and Lebanon, the south of Lebanon up to Sidon, the south of the Bekaa valley in Lebanon and the Hauran valley in Syria, as well as to have control of a portion of the Hejaz railway extending from Der'a to Ma'an and the Gulf of Aqaba. It is clear that the Zionists have long shown a thirst for annexation.

It should be noted that in preparing and implementing all their schemes and designs the British imperialists and their Zionist allies tended to take the wish for the reality. In actual fact, Palestine has never been a land without a people. But Zionists were not interested in whether the native population of Palestine might like their far-reaching designs.

¹ *The Israel-Arab Reader*. Op. cit., pp. 32-33.

In 1920 the Second Comintern Congress adopted theses on the national and colonial question in which the Anglo-Zionist plans were very accurately described. In particular, the theses said: "A glaring example of the deception practised on the working classes of an oppressed nation by the combined efforts of Entente imperialism and the bourgeoisie of that same nation is offered by the Zionists' Palestine venture (and by Zionism as a whole, which, under the pretence of creating a Jewish state in Palestine, in fact surrenders the Arab working people of Palestine, where the Jewish workers form only a small minority, to exploitation by England)."¹

The native Arab population of Palestine opposed the Zionist plans in practice and compelled the British mandatories to search for roundabout ways and resort not only to threats and bribery but also to patent lies and demagoguery. In this connection, the well-known statement issued in June 1922 as a *White Paper* by Winston Churchill, then British Colonial Secretary, deserves mention. It particularly stressed that the Balfour Declaration essentially boiled down to founding a Jewish national home rather than a state in Palestine. The statement also noted that the level of Jewish immigration to Palestine would depend on the "economic capacity" of the country.

The Churchill statement showed Zionist leaders that Britain was not going passively to watch what was happening on its mandated territory. On the contrary, it was seeking to keep the Palestinians' activities under full control. In October 1930 another statement was issued by Colonial Secretary Passfield, which repeated Churchill's statement and also admitted that there was no more land in Palestine free for Jewish colonization.

Meanwhile Zionists began to implement an extensive programme with the aim of gradually colonizing Palestine.

¹ *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*. Selected and edited by Jane Degras, London, 1956, Vol. I (1919-1922), p. 144.

In the early 1920s Zionists set up the underground organization, Hagana, to which members of self-defence detachments of Jewish colonies were initially admitted. Hagana's principal aim was to pave the way for Zionist colonization through terror and intimidation of Arabs.

From 1920 to 1930 in a bid to win land and labour Zionists robbed Arab peasants of their land, while factories and plants owned by Jews refused to employ Arab workers.

Naturally, the Arab people of Palestine were indignant at the Zionists' policies, which for a time were backed by the British imperialists. Back in 1919 the King-Crane Commission sent by US President Woodrow Wilson to Palestine reported that "the non-Jewish population of Palestine—nearly nine-tenths of the whole—are emphatically against the entire Zionist programme" and that "the anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted".

Anti-Zionist feeling found expression in increasing Arab-Jewish clashes. The leadership of Palestinian Arabs took many steps at the League of Nations, but they all failed. The mandatory authorities' despotism and increasing Jewish colonization caused ever more riots and bursts of indignation on the part of Palestinian Arabs. Many of them flared up on religious grounds or were provoked by the British in order to sow enmity between Jews and Arabs. But even as far back as August-September 1929 the Palestinian Arabs put forward political demands, such as the withdrawal of the British mandate and the reduction of Jewish immigration.

Special mention should be made of the revolt in the autumn of 1933 and the general strike, demanding an end to Jewish immigration, which became a nationwide uprising in 1936. The strike was called by the Supreme Arab Committee on Palestine set up in the same year under the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.

It is noteworthy that in 1933 and 1936 Hagana units

were involved in punitive operations conducted by the British authorities.

Anglo-Zionist cooperation, on the one hand, compelled the mandatory authorities to make "gestures of gratitude" to the Zionists and, on the other, enabled Zionist organizations abroad to collect more money for Jewish settlers in Palestine, who were said to be struggling for "survival" against the Arabs—"agents of nazi Germany". From January to October 1936, for example, the United Jewish Appeal, a Jewish organization in the United States, collected 1,779,000 dollars to aid fellow Jews in Palestine.

Zionist propaganda alleged the leadership of Palestinian Arabs had close contacts with nazi Germany on the grounds that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem had fled to Germany in the late 1930s and stayed there to the end of the Second World War. He had set up SS National Guards and had even been received by Hitler. For the sake of the historical truth it should be noted that his main purpose was struggle against the British and in his efforts he was totally unscrupulous. Another aspect of the matter must be mentioned. Zionist propaganda used the alleged close contacts between the Palestinian leaders and nazi Germany, as well as of the widely known facts of the mass extermination of Jews by the nazis, in order to justify Israel's policy of genocide against the Palestinians. Haim Baram writes in this connection: "The holocaust of millions of European Jews allowed the leaders of the 'Yishuv', the pre-State Jewish community of Palestine, to adopt a 'moral' stand according to which they had the 'right' to cause harm to other peoples and particularly to the Palestinians."¹

It should also be noted that until now the "struggle for survival" thesis has been extensively used to justify Israel's unbridled militarization and anti-Arab policy.

In 1935 an extremist Jewish organization, Irgun Tz'vai

¹ Haim Baram. *Israel and Palestine*. 1979, No. 73, p. 28.

L'umi, was set up, from which a terrorist grouping called the Stern Gang soon emerged. The latter proclaimed its principal task to be the establishment of a purely Jewish state and the expulsion of Arabs from territories which the Zionists intended to colonize or, if need be, the extermination of the Arabs.

From 1920 to 1939 five nationwide revolts took place in Palestine. In the course of their suppression about 100,000 Arabs were imprisoned, 50,000 killed and hundreds sentenced to death and executed.

At the same time, in the period between the two World Wars Britain followed a dual policy regarding the Palestinian question and tried by every means to sit on two stools. While cruelly putting down Arab revolts, the British mandatory authorities tried, at least officially, to moderate Zionist appetites. The explanation is that before the Second World War the British colonial empire was on the verge of collapse and it strove to keep Palestine and developments there under its control. The facts show that the British preferred Zionist Jews to Palestinian Arabs.

In 1939 the British government issued a famous *White Paper* in which Britain's double-dealing with regard to the Palestinian problem found specific expression. The *White Paper* advanced the idea of founding an Arab-Jewish state. In particular, it said:

"His Majesty's Government are unable at present to foresee the exact constitutional forms which government in Palestine will eventually take, but their objective is self-government, and they desire to see established ultimately an independent Palestine State. It should be a State in which the two peoples in Palestine, Arabs and Jews, share authority in government in such a way that the essential interests of each are secured."¹

The Zionists found this approach totally unsuitable. They launched a broad campaign to bring pressure to

¹ *The Israel-Arab Reader*. Op. cit., p. 68.

bear on the British government and used their underground units in armed assaults against the British authorities and the Arab population.

According to official data, however, despite all the efforts made by international Zionist organizations with the virtual connivance of the British authorities, Jewish immigration to Palestine was increasing slowly. In 1918 there were 708,000 Arabs in Palestine, or 93 per cent of the total population, and they owned 97.5 per cent of the country's arable land. In 1922 there were about 84,000 Jews in the country, but by 1932 their number had increased by 100,000 and reached 414,000 by 1938—as a result of large immigration from nazi Germany.

The steps taken by the World Zionist Organization to make Palestine predominantly Jewish eventually brought about a change in its demographic structure. By the end of 1947 there were 650,000 Jews among the 1,970,000 residents of Palestine, or about a third of the total population.

Shortly before and especially during the Second World War it became clear that the mandatory state was unable to keep the development of events in Palestine under control and to prevent mounting Arab-Jewish antagonism which was undermining the fragile "stability" in the mandated territory. So international Zionist organizations still eager to create a purely Jewish state in Palestine began feverishly to pin their hopes on a new, stronger and more promising master—the United States of America. In the spring of 1941 a special political committee was set up which included 270 Congressmen. One of its tasks was to organize the moral support of the American people for the idea of founding a Jewish national home in Palestine.

That political forces in the United States encouraged Zionist aspirations was seen in the fact that during the 1944 election campaigns both Republican and Democratic parties committed themselves to support the

Biltmore Programme adopted at the Conference of American, European and Palestinian Zionists held in New York in 1942. The Biltmore Programme demanded of the British government that it immediately set up a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine as an inalienable part of the new postwar order, grant the Jewish Agency the right to control Jewish immigration to Palestine and the accommodation of immigrants, cancel the provisions of the *White Paper* of 1939 and recognize the right of Jewish military units to existence under their own flag.

That Zionist organizations in Palestine and abroad increased their anti-British activities in the 1939-1947 period was largely due to the Zionists' reliance on the United States. In November 1945 Zionist units damaged railways 153 times, attacked three British police stations, and attempted to blow up the oil refinery in Haifa. In 1944, in Cairo, Stern terrorists murdered Walter Moyne, British Secretary of State.

As a result of the Zionists' reliance on the United States, Jewish immigration to Palestine began to increase in the 1943-1946 period, while the Arab leaders grew worried by the real prospect of a Jewish commonwealth being established in the heart of the Arab world with direct US help.

In the spring of 1945 King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia and US President Roosevelt had a meeting on board a cruiser in Bitter Lakes, part of the Suez Canal, which was attended by representatives of Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. King Ibn Saud repeated his objections to the forming of a Jewish commonwealth, which he had earlier expressed in letters to the US President. In reply President Roosevelt promised that no steps would be taken on the Palestinian problem without consulting both sides—the Arabs and the Jews.

After Roosevelt's death in April 1945 Harry Truman became US President. He did not conceal his pro-Zionist views and already in August 1945 demanded that the British government permit 100,000 European Jews, dis-

placed during the war, to immigrate to Palestine. Britain refused to meet this ultimatum but in November 1945 agreed to set up a joint Anglo-American Committee to examine the Palestinian problem. Though this step ran counter to the Charter of the United Nations, the United States and Britain were not worried, knowing that in the United Nations at the time the American voting machine was functioning faultlessly.

The Committee's report was published on April 30, 1946. It said that Palestine was an armed camp where neither Jews nor Arabs held high administrative posts and that the British authorities ruled there, as in any other country where the majority of the population were at a primitive stage of civilization.

According to the report, however, the Palestinian problem was simply one of Jewish-Arab enmity. It did not explain that this situation had resulted from the British mandatory authorities' criminal policy of inciting national enmity among the peoples of Palestine. The main conclusion in the report was that the British mandate over Palestine had to be preserved.

Both Arabs and Jews found the report unsatisfactory. In the new Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry set up in June 1946, the United States proposed that Palestine should be divided into two—an Arab and a Jewish state. Britain showed no enthusiasm for this proposal and called for the establishment of a Palestinian federation consisting of four areas, two of which would be administered by the British and the other two by the Arabs and the Jews. Significantly, the British were to exercise the basic functions of government in all the four areas. The United States did not back the British proposal.

In June 1946 the Council of the League of Arab States met in extraordinary session in Bludan, Syria, to consider the Palestinian problem. Following the decisions taken at the session, the Arab states invited Britain to enter into negotiations with a view to solving the Palestinian problem in accordance with the will of the Palestinian people

and the UN Charter. This invitation was left unheeded and it was not until after Egypt and Iraq requested the United Nations to raise the Palestinian question at a session of the General Assembly that Britain agreed to hold talks with the Arab states.

However, these talks essentially failed, while Britain's new plans for founding a Palestine federation and in particular the idea of cantoning Palestine, put forward by Ernest Bevin, then British Foreign Secretary, were rejected by both Jews and Arabs.

Discussion of all these schemes took place against a background of growing chaos in Palestine, an extreme aggravation of Arab-Jewish relations and increasing anti-British Zionist activities. Although the Zionists tried to present their activities as a national-liberation movement, their struggle was neither anti-imperialist nor anti-colonial. Notwithstanding the fact that the Zionists opposed the imperialist colonialists, it was a revolt by colonists against their guardians, a struggle for the possibility of conducting independent colonial policies in a foreign land and the colonists suffered equally from the British imperialists and their Zionist accomplices.

It should be particularly emphasized that the Jewish and Arab peoples of Palestine had equal rights to self-determination and founding their own state.

Shortly before Britain's mandate for Palestine ended there were very few Arab and Jewish political leaders in the country who sought to join the efforts of the two peoples on a genuinely democratic basis and proceeded from the need to give equal consideration to the interests of Arabs and Jews. Yet there were several Arab political groupings which resolutely opposed the chauvinist concepts advocated even by some Arab bourgeois parties. Among them was the League of National Liberation, the forerunner of the Jordan Communist Party, which had a strong influence among the Palestinian Arab trade unions. It called on all progressive forces of the Arab and

Jewish peoples to join in the struggle for an independent Palestine.

Britain's failure to find a mutually acceptable solution of the Palestinian problem eventually led the British government, in February 1947, to request the United Nations to consider the future of Palestine.

The Palestinian problem entered a new, still more complex and contradictory stage of its development.

In submitting the Palestinian problem for UN consideration the British government hoped that the United Nations would be unable to resolve it and would automatically go back to the idea of administering Palestine under the British mandate.

The Zionists did not sit idly by, waiting for a UN decision. On the eve of the proclamation of the State of Israel they were working in three main directions.

First, the Zionists continued their anti-British activities and sometimes acted with marked cruelty, which made it possible for their leaders to mask themselves as "convinced anti-imperialist fighters". After three Jewish terrorists were executed, on August 31, 1947, two British soldiers were kidnapped from a cafe in Tel Aviv and hanged. Their bodies were found by a British patrol. The officer who led it did not notice, as he cut the rope, that a mine was attached to one of the corpses. The mine exploded, wounding the officer severely. Such acts of wanton cruelty aroused a wave of indignation in Britain and Jewish pogroms soon occurred. In London shops owned by Jews were plundered and synagogues were set on fire. Still earlier, in June 1946, Zionist units had in the course of two days blown up ten frontier bridges on roads linking Palestine with neighbouring Arab states. The Zionist terrorists also in broad daylight blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, the headquarters of the British Command in Palestine. In January 1948 Zionists carried out several acts of senseless cruelty, designed solely to draw world public attention to their anti-British character. On January 4 they blew up an asylum for

orphans and the aged in Jaffa, killing 17 people, as well as the premises of Barclays Bank Limited, the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem, and so on.

Secondly, the Zionists sought to create the impression that they were profoundly concerned about the life of the Arab population of Palestine. Their leaders demagogically tried to assure the Palestinian Arabs that they would be equal partners in a future independent Palestinian state and their rights would be respected. Chaim Weizmann declared that there could be no question of Jews dominating over Arabs, so far as the latter's natural rights and their language were concerned, or of Jewish interference in their cultural life. A similar statement was made by the father of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, the country's future Prime Minister. He said the Jews would treat their Arab and other non-Jewish neighbours like Jews and help them preserve their Arab character, their language, their Arab culture, their Arab religion and their Arab way of life, and at the same time gradually raise their living standards. Golda Meir spoke in the same spirit. In particular she said: "We do not want to expel or enslave Arabs. The state will not be Jewish in a sense that Jews will have more rights than non-Jews or that the Jewish community will enjoy a privileged status as compared with other communities."

Thirdly, and most significantly, the Zionists attempted to purchase large quantities of arms from other countries and actively trained Jewish military units, which were assigned two basic tasks. They were to attempt before the proclamation of the Jewish state to expand Jewish-controlled territories by forced deportation of Arabs therefrom and to prepare for large-scale military operations, if the necessity arose.

At that time the Palestinian problem was being considered by a UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), set up by the first extraordinary session of the UN General Assembly.

The Committee heard representatives of the Jewish

Agency and the Supreme Arab Committee on Palestine, but failed to come to an agreement. After holding 16 plenary and 86 working meetings the Committee prepared a report in which a majority plan and a minority plan were formulated. The latter was drawn up by the representatives of India, Iran and Yugoslavia.

The majority plan provided for the creation of two states—Arab and Jewish—in Palestine, forming an economic union. After a period of two years each state was to become fully independent.

The plan also stipulated that the two states would bring into effect constitutions where the rights of religious and national minorities would be clearly defined and guaranteed and measures to protect holy places would be worked out. Under the majority plan, Jerusalem was to be singled out as an independent administrative unit—"corpus separatum"—with an international regime established there under UN control, exercised through the Trusteeship Council.

The minority plan provided for the founding, after a short transition period, of an independent federal state in Palestine composed of two parts—Arab and Jewish, with a federal parliament composed of two chambers, the lower one being elected by all citizens of the future state and the upper one composed of Arabs and Jews in proportion to their population in the new federation.

Of course, it would have been logical to found a dual Arab-Jewish state in Palestine inasmuch as Arabs and Jews were the two leading ethnical groups there. In 1947 the Soviet Union put forward such a proposal. But in the circumstances it could not be realized. Therefore, proceeding from the right of all nations to self-determination, the Soviet Union backed the idea of establishing two independent states—Arab and Jewish—on the territory of Palestine.

The United States was guided by totally opposite motives. Washington believed it necessary to found a

Jewish state on the territory of Palestine, which was what the Zionist leaders were striving for.

The UN Special Committee on Palestine set up two sub-committees, which separately considered the pros and cons of the majority and minority plans. On November 25 UNSCOP by a majority vote approved the plan of dividing Palestine and submitted this issue to a session of the General Assembly.

On November 29, 1947, a vote was taken on the Palestinian question and the plan of dividing Palestine was approved by a majority of 33 votes to 13, with ten abstaining and one failing to vote.

In accordance with Resolution 181/11 of November 29, 1947, a Jewish state, an Arab state and an international zone of Jerusalem and environs were to be created in Palestine. The Jewish state was to occupy an area of 14,100 square kilometres, or 56 per cent of the entire territory. The total population there was 509,780 Arabs, including nomadic Bedouin tribes, and 499,020 Jews. The Arab state was to occupy an area of 11,100 square kilometres, or 43 per cent of the total, and its population included 749,000 Arabs and 9,520 Jews. The international zone of Jerusalem and environs accounted for one per cent of the total area and its population included 105,540 Arabs and 99,690 Jews. Resolution 181/11 also provided for an alliance of the two states in the economic sphere and for uniform customs formalities. They were also to have a common currency, a single transport and communications system and were jointly to use the irrigation system. In accordance with the resolution British troops were to be withdrawn from Palestine by August 1, 1948, the date of the ending of Britain's mandate for Palestine. It was intended to proclaim the independence of both states not later than October 1, 1948.

Before the two states were formally proclaimed independent, the Zionists began to use their military units to "clear" Arabs from the territory to be incorporated into

the Jewish state. Moreover, they tried to seize Arab lands. Immediately after the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181/11 Zionists launched an undeclared war in Palestine. Note should be taken of the bloody raid carried out by Hagana against the defenceless civilian population in the villages of Qwazza in December 1947, Salama in March 1948, Biyer Abbas and Kastel in April 1948, and the siege of the towns of Jaffa and Acre. On the night of April 9 and 10, 1948, thugs from Irgun and the Stern Gang, led by Menachem Begin, massacred 254 Arabs in the small village of Deir Yassin. In April 1948 Hagana units virtually occupied the western part of Jerusalem, entered West Galilee and established control over the corridor between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Zionists advertised their outrageous actions in order to create panic among Arabs, who had already heard of the tragedy in Deir Yassin, and to force them to leave their homeland for fear of being murdered. Pictures were taken of those murdered and then printed in many copies and distributed in Arab villages with the caption "This is what will happen to you if you don't leave."

Here is what Nathan Chofshi, one of the original Jewish settlers in Palestine, who witnessed the events of the spring of 1948, wrote in a letter to the Chief American Rabbi:

"If Rabbi Kaplan really wanted to know what happened, we old Jewish settlers in Palestine who witnessed the fight could tell him how and in what manner we Jews forced the Arabs to leave cities and villages... Some of them were driven out by force of arms, others were made to leave by deceit, lying and false promises. It is enough to cite the cities of Jaffa, Lydda, Ramle, Beersheba, Acre among numberless others."¹

Even before the state of Israel was proclaimed 250,000 Palestinian Arabs were forced to leave their homeland.

¹ *The Spectator*, May 12, 1961.

Facts refute another story invented by Zionists alleging that the Arabs were ordered to leave their homeland by their own leaders. In fact no such "orders" were issued. British journalist Erskine B. Childers checked all the BBC recordings of Middle Eastern broadcasts in 1948 and concluded that the Cairo and Damascus radio stations had appealed to the Palestinians not to yield to any provocations and to stay where they were.

Below is a brief account of the military operations conducted by Zionists against the Arabs of Palestine from April 27 to May 15, 1948, that is, on the eve of the Palestine war, which Zionist propagandists called a war of independence.

On April 27 Zionist units seized villages in the neighbourhood of Jaffa and drove out 5,000 Arabs. On the same day they occupied several districts of Jerusalem and environs and expelled 30,000 Arabs.

On April 28 Zionists seized several villages in Galilee and deported all the residents.

On May 3, 5 and 6 Zionist units again attacked Arab villages in Galilee and the Beisan area.

On May 7 they attacked Safad and forced 25,000 Arabs to leave the Safad area and its neighbourhood.

On May 11 Zionist units seized Jaffa, which was later to form a part of Tel Aviv, and Beisan and environs, expelling 67,000 and 15,000 Arabs respectively from there.

On May 12 and 13 Zionist units carried out purges in the south of Palestine and drove 25,000 Arabs from there.

On May 14 Zionists carried out the Ben Ami operation, seized Acre and its neighbouring villages and forcibly deported 30,000 Arabs.

On the same day Zionists seized several districts of Jerusalem and drove 15,000 Arabs from there.

These facts refute allegations by Zionist and pro-Zionist propaganda to the effect that the Palestine war of 1948-1949 broke out as a result of the Arab states'

attacking Israel after it was proclaimed independent on May 14, 1948. Incidentally, when Ben-Gurion proclaimed Israel independent, he made no mention of its future borders. For Zionists this strange "absent-mindedness" on the part of the father of Israel was quite explicable and not accidental, because they intended to expand the territory of the Jewish state at the expense of the Arab state to be established in accordance with the UN decision.

This is exactly what happened. As a result of the Palestine war the territory meant for the Arab state was divided between Israel, which seized the larger part of it (6,700 square kilometres), Jordan and Egypt. Jordan and Egypt gained control of the West Bank of the Jordan, including the eastern part of Jerusalem—the old City, and the Gaza Strip. Jerusalem was not given international status and the territorial problem was aggravated to the extreme: whereas the relevant UN documents pointed to the temporary nature of the Arab-Israeli borders and stressed the need to achieve a final settlement, the bilateral agreements signed between Israel and its four Arab neighbours—Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon—as a result of the Palestine war affirmed a temporary cessation of hostilities rather than state borders.

The Israeli press cited statements made during a public discussion by Ben-Gurion and Y. Alon, Commander-in-Chief of the Israeli armed forces in 1948 and 1949. Ben-Gurion said: "If Moshe Dayan was Commander-in-Chief in 1948, the territory of the Jewish state would be greater." In reply to such accusations which showed what the Zionists' "love of mankind" was really worth, Alon said: "If Ben-Gurion had not ordered a cease-fire, our troops could have crossed the Litani River in the north and occupied the Sinai Desert belonging to Egypt in the south, thus liberating the larger part of our homeland." There is no need to comment on this statement.

As was noted by Ben-Gurion's biographer, M. Bar-Zohar, the lands seized during the war were quite sufficient. In other words, the Zionists virtually achieved their main aim of creating a purely Jewish state and eradicating all gentiles, that is to say, Palestinian Arabs. The Israeli leadership set itself the task of further expanding the new Israeli state. How far was it to be expanded? This has not yet been clarified since the Israeli leadership stubbornly refuses to define its state's borders and merely describes them as "safe" and "recognized". Moreover, Israeli leaders state that the notion of the "national rights" of the Arab people of Palestine is a non-existent one and there is no need to found yet another Arab state—a Palestinian one, because there are already "too many" Arab states. At the same time they allege that the Palestinians have equal rights with the Jews in Israel. Is it really so?

Chapter II

What Are the Inalienable Legitimate National Rights of the Arab People of Palestine?

There is nothing exceptional about the inalienable national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, which people throughout the world justly desire to see protected and respected. These rights do not relate to the Arab people of Palestine alone, all the more because, contrary to some Western and Israeli opinion, the Palestinian Arabs are not a "mythical" ethnic community.

According to the 1971 census the total number of Palestinian Arabs was 3,270,000, who resided in the following countries of the world:

Israel	— 370,000
West Bank of the Jordan, occupied by Israel in 1967	— 705,000
Gaza Strip, occupied by Israel in 1967	— 370,000
Lebanon	— 260,000
Jordan	— 960,000
Syria	— 170,000
Egypt	— 35,000
Saudi Arabia	— 25,000
Kuwait	— 170,000
Persian Gulf sheikdoms	— 18,000
Libya	— 7,000
Latin America	— 105,000
United States	— 45,000
West Germany	— 15,000

According to US data published in early 1978 the total number of Palestinian Arabs in the 1971-1978 period reached four million people, who resided in the following countries of the world:

Israel	—	500,000
West Bank of the Jordan, occupied by Israel in 1967	—	700,000
Gaza Strip, occupied by Israel in 1967	—	450,000
Jordan (East Bank of the Jordan)	—	1,150,000
Lebanon	—	400,000
Syria	—	250,000
Kuwait	—	250,000
Persian Gulf sheikdoms	—	50,000
Saudi Arabia	—	50,000
Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Algeria	—	80,000
Western Europe	—	50,000
United States and Latin America	—	70,000

The increase in the Palestinian population is obvious, with the Palestinian communities abroad increasing not only in the Arab world.

Here are some other data on the dispersion of Palestinian Arabs, based on a total figure of 3,500,000 people:

	US data	French data
Jordan	900,000	1,000,000
Israel	500,000	420,000
West Bank of the Jordan, occupied by Israel	760,000	700,000
Gaza Strip, occupied by Israel	430,000	350,000
Lebanon	400,000	270,000
Kuwait	250,000	150,000
Syria	150,000	170,000
Egypt	15,000	25,000

According to the data cited by the French magazine *L'Express* in September 1982 the total number of Palestinian Arabs was 4,500,000. They resided in the following countries (excluding Western Europe):

Israel	—	600,000
Lebanon	—	400,000
West Bank of the Jordan	—	800,000
Gaza Strip	—	450,000

Egypt	—	47,000
Libya	—	23,000
Syria	—	220,000
Jordan	—	1,150,000
Iraq	—	20,000
Kuwait	—	290,000
Saudi Arabia	—	130,000
United Arab Emirates	—	35,000
Bahrein	—	2,000
Qatar	—	23,000
Oman	—	50,000
United States	—	105,000
Canada	—	8,000
Brazil	—	40,000
Colombia	—	10,000

Clearly, even if the above figures are not quite accurate, the general picture of the dispersion of Palestinian Arabs is fairly impressive. It is important that the world community take immediate steps to secure the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. There is another essential point to mention. Recently the Israeli press has been calling for limiting the Arab population in Israel and has been warning of the danger of a demographic explosion in the country. For example, Professor Meir Hartman, of Tel Aviv University, believes that to maintain the existing proportion of Jews and Arabs in Israel at 64:36 with the current birth rate, it is necessary to increase the annual rate of Jewish immigration from the 25,000, registered in recent years, to 125,000. The Zionists are pursuing another, poorly camouflaged aim of using economic and demographic considerations to justify Israel's expansion at the expense of its Arab neighbours, its policy of integrating the native Arab territories occupied in 1967.

Like any other people in the world, the Arab people of Palestine have inalienable rights proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and in various conventions, declarations and resolutions, including those adopted by the United Nations. In other words, the Palestinians have rights envisaged in the UN Charter and recognized by international law.



One of the concentration camps into which thousands of Palestinians have been thrown by the Israeli invaders



Israeli invaders



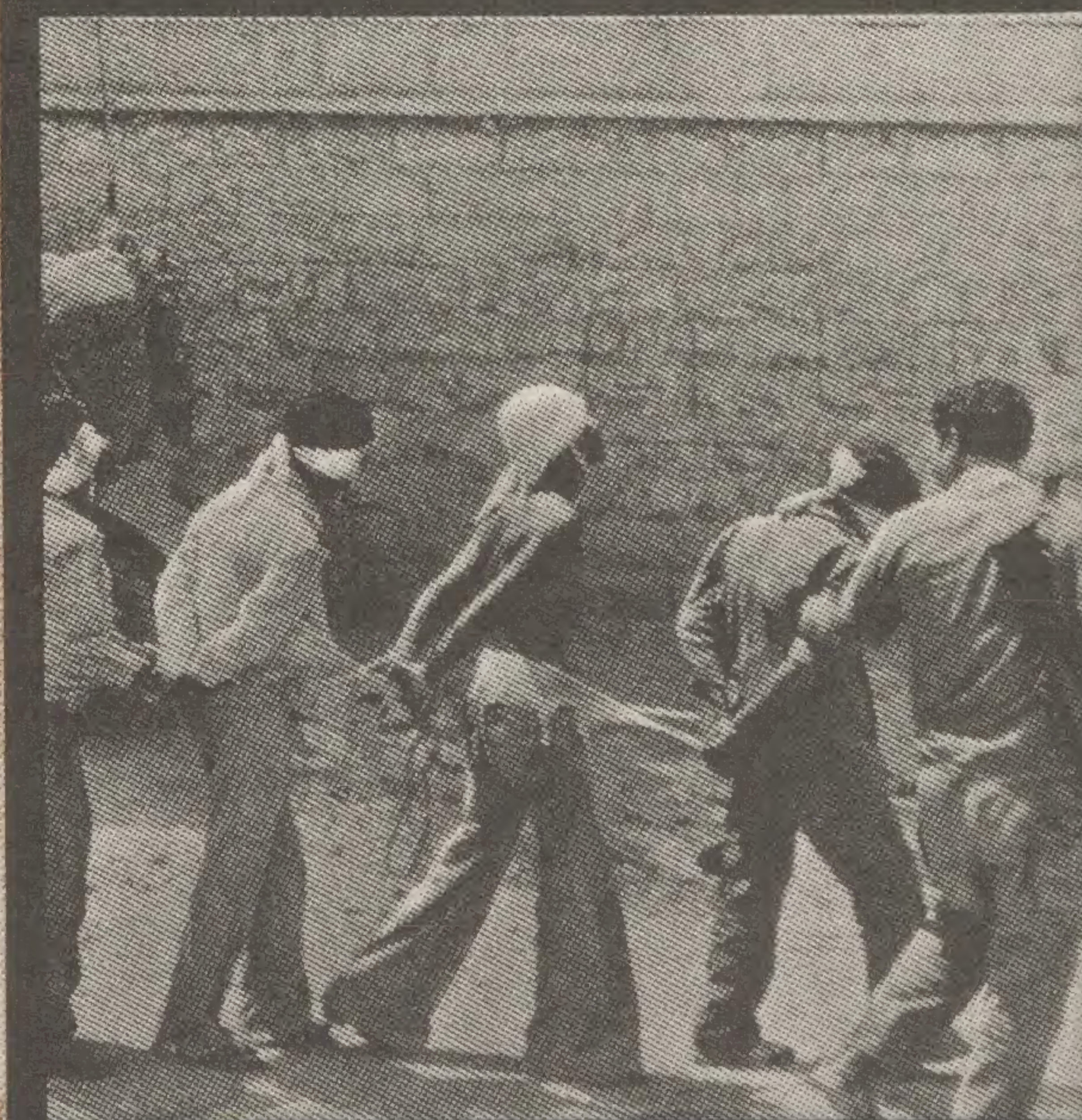
Bombing of Western Beirut, where
Palestinian refugee camps are
▼ located

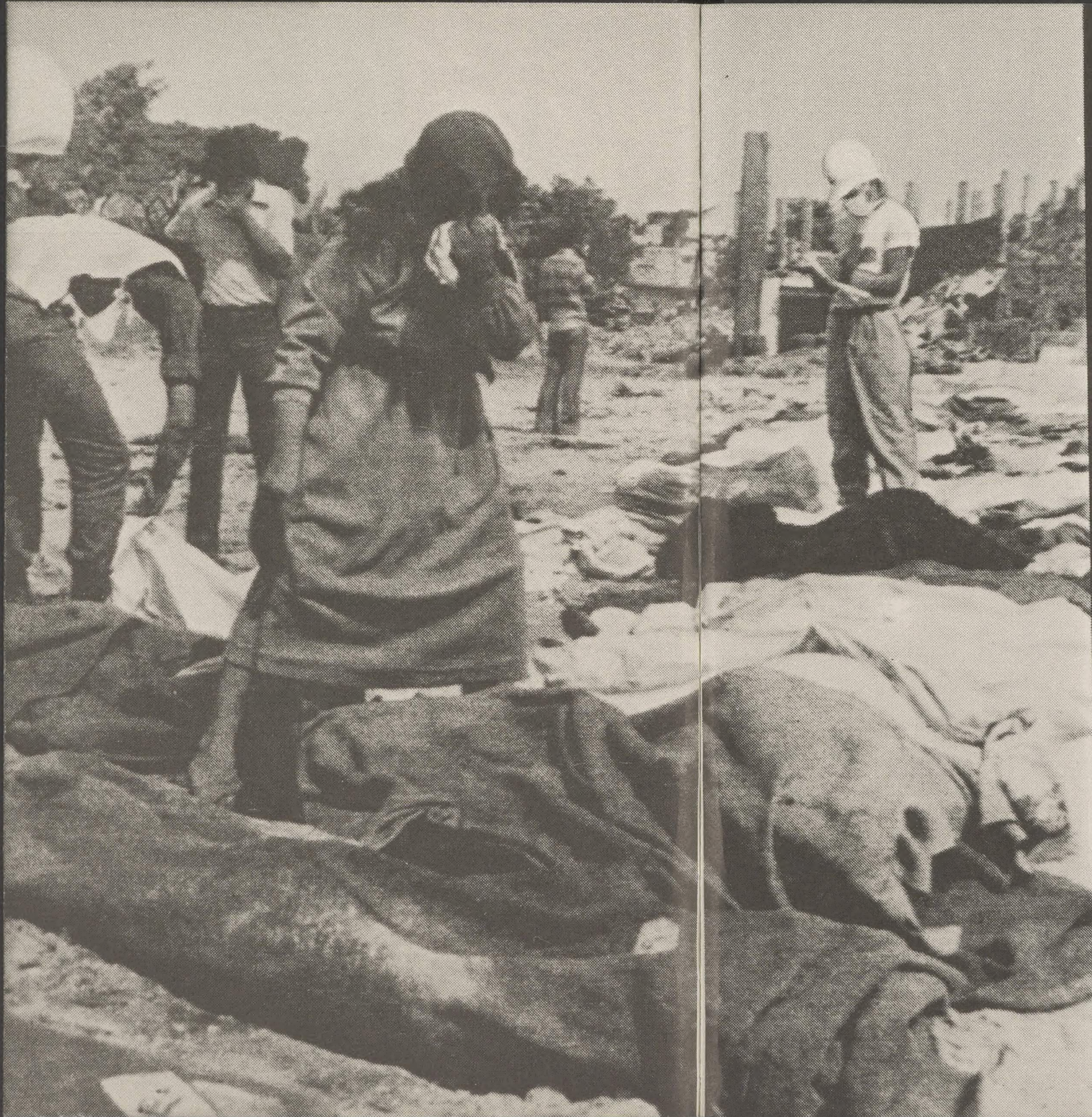


An Israeli soldier, one of those whom Tel Aviv's ruling circles use for their criminal actions

A Palestinian left homeless after an Israeli air raid

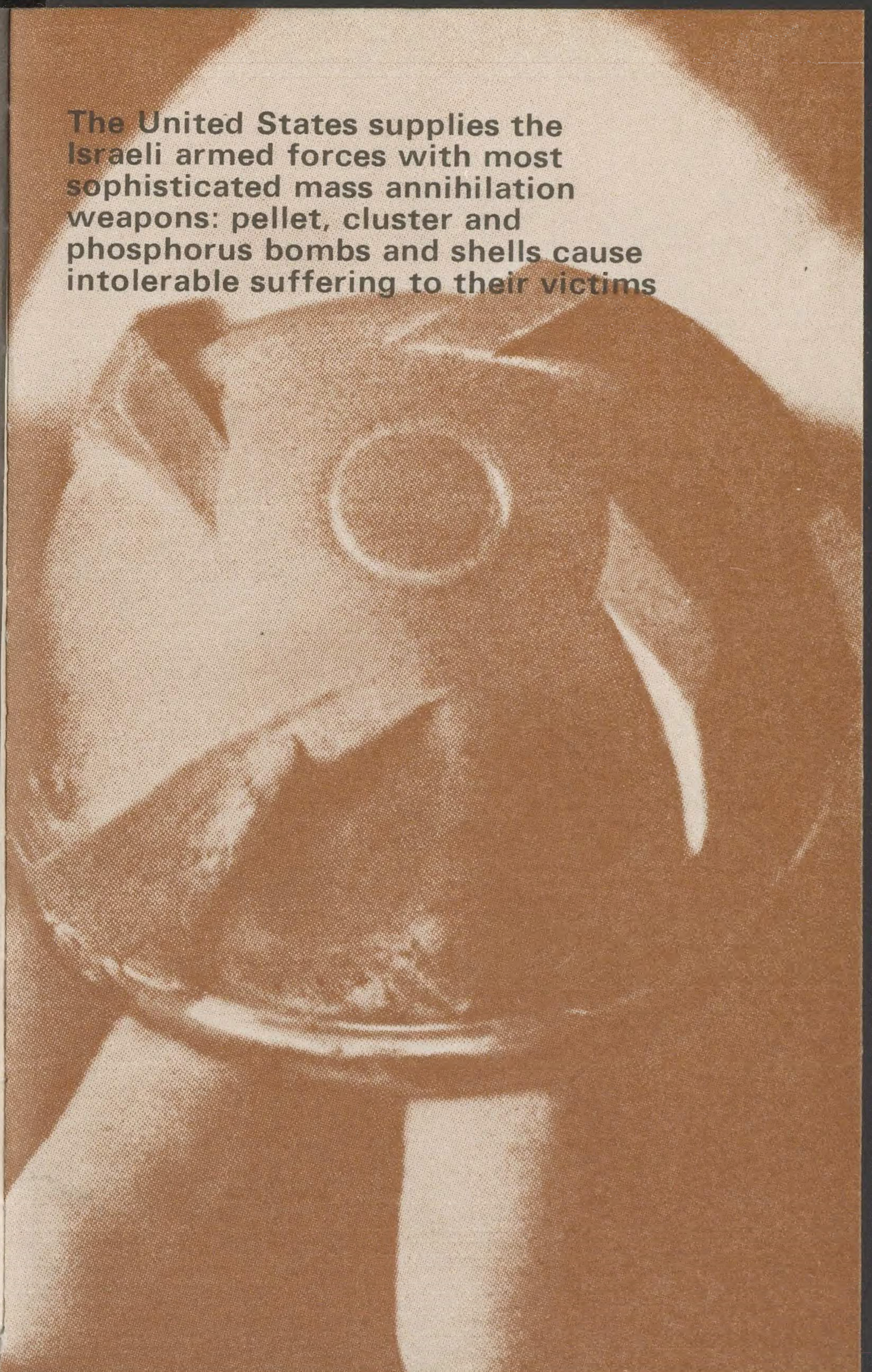
Palestinian youths in a concentration camp





Palestinian women look for their relatives among the murdered in the camps of Sabra and Shatila where hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese became victims of a massacre; sick and wounded were killed in the Beirut hospitals of Gaza and Akka.

The United States supplies the Israeli armed forces with most sophisticated mass annihilation weapons: pellet, cluster and phosphorus bombs and shells cause intolerable suffering to their victims





A gun position of joint detachments of the PLO and Lebanese national patriotic forces in Western Beirut

Fighters of the PLO and Lebanese national patriotic forces after a successful night operation





**Unvanquished Palestinian
fighters leave Western
Beirut with arms in their
hands.**





A meeting of protest against Israeli aggression at the Moscow *Krasny proletari* engineering works



Demonstration of protest against Israeli aggression in Lebanon in Frankfurt-am-Main, West Germany

The inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine cannot be denied or usurped. These include the right to self-determination, freedom and national emancipation, the right to national independence and the right to return to one's national home. These include basic human rights—civil, political, religious, economic, social and cultural. The Arab people of Palestine have the right to self-expression that belongs to any nationality and the right to personal freedom and compensation for property seized or expropriated by force. Like all other nations earlier oppressed by imperialism and colonialism, they have the right to struggle in order to implement their right to self-determination, including establishment of their own independent state.

What lies at the root of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the denial of these rights to Palestinians, Zionist colonization and Israel's numerous acts of aggression against neighbouring Arab states. Resolution 2535 adopted at the 24th Session of the UN General Assembly shows how the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees had arisen and acquired a political character. It states that "the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The long and untiring struggle waged by the Palestinians is a decisive factor in the recognition of their inalienable rights. That this struggle and its methods are legitimate and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations is beyond all doubt. Moreover, the 26th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2787 confirming the legitimate character of the struggle of the Arab people of Palestine, as well as that of the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, for the restoration of their rights. The resolution also called upon all states dedicated to the ideals of freedom and peace to render all necessary political, moral and material assistance to

peoples struggling for their freedom, self-determination and independence.

As Israeli leaders themselves admit, Israel's policy towards its Arab neighbours and the Palestinians is a policy of presenting the world with accomplished facts. But it is common knowledge that no fact can ever be a precedent in international law if its victims refuse to recognize it. The Israeli leadership, attempting to deprive Palestinian Arabs of their legitimate rights, can never abolish these rights. Full respect for and realization of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinians is an essential and, perhaps, decisive factor in bringing about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, considering the fact that the Palestinians are directly interested in such a peace.

From the time of the birth of Israel the Arab people of Palestine have been encountering increasing difficulties. In fact the Israeli annexationists have set themselves the aim of exterminating a whole nation—the Arab people of Palestine. They are stubbornly seeking to achieve this aim, using military, political, economic and all other means.

The tragedy of the Arab people of Palestine began long before 1948. Now let's take a look at recent history.

The difficulties encountered by the Arab people of Palestine after the proclamation of the independence of Israel increased as a result of the Palestine war, which forced thousands of Palestinian Arabs to leave their homeland for fear of persecution by the Israeli authorities. The expulsion of Palestinians continued after the war ended. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,*

* The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was set up in accordance with the decision of the Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly in 1949. It was to aid Palestine refugees, in cooperation with the local authorities, to study their economic situation and hold consultations with the Near East governments concerned on steps to be taken when international assistance to the relief and works programme should end.

by the beginning of the six-day war in June 1967, the number of officially registered Palestine refugees reached 1,344,576.

As a result of the Palestine war, thousands of Palestinian Arabs found themselves not only in Arab but in various other countries of the world away from their homeland; their political parties had disintegrated. The Arab people of Palestine were put in a state of confusion and consternation by the flagrant violation of their legitimate rights by the Israeli authorities. In the late 1940s Arab leaders were unable not only to set up a united front of Arab states to oppose Zionist aggression but also to work out a serious and realistic programme of political action. Social and, of course, economic backwardness was a feature of all the Arab countries in the 1940s.

This backwardness was the main cause for the failure of the Arabs in the Palestine war. At the same time the war helped the advanced part of the Arab nation to see things clearly in the sphere of politics. It was the Palestine war that helped Gamal Abdel Nasser, son of the Arab nation, and his followers in the Egyptian political organization, Free Officers, who were to head the republican government in Egypt, to understand that the situation in Egypt was an abnormal one and should be changed. The rotten and entirely corrupt monarchy headed by the playboy, King Farouk, was the main obstacle to the country's social and political development. Later Nasser recalled: "The political circumstances prevailing in the capital from which we received our orders threw round us all a siege more effective and paralyzed us more than anything the enemy could do to us as we lay in Falouga*."¹

Palestinian writer I. Shammout noted that even in

* Falouga is the place in Palestine where Nasser's unit was encircled and he was severely wounded during the Palestine war.

¹ G. A. Nasser. *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. Mondiale Press, Cairo, p. 60.

those conditions the voice of the Palestinian people would inevitably be heard in the world after the latter had been deaf to their entreaties since the 1948 tragedy.

The first organizations of the Palestine liberation movement came into being on the eve of and during the war of 1948. These were the Al-Jihad al-Mukaddas (Sacred Struggle) and Abtal al-Auda (Come-Back Heroes) organizations. Initially, members of these organizations opposed Zionist terrorist actions, but after the war their tasks changed. In the early 1950s the first small groups of Palestinian partisans—fedayins, ready to lay down their lives for their native land, emerged.

The nucleus of the leading Palestine national-liberation organization Fatah (Victory) was also formed in the early 1950s.

In 1958 an underground Palestine organization, called Al-Ard (Land), was set up on Arab territory seized by Israel during the Palestine war. It set itself the task of resolving the Palestinian problem on the basis of the striving of the Arab people of Palestine to protect and guarantee their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

In its early stage the Palestine liberation movement was weak, its detachments were disunited and it relied on various Arab countries whose mutual relations were at times complicated and where the political regimes and main political trends differed considerably. As a result, in the 1950s the Palestinian Arabs overestimated the amount of moral, political and material support they could expect from the Arab countries. This overestimation, in its turn, led to the virtual, though temporary, absorption of the Palestine liberation movement into the common struggle of the Arab countries and peoples. At that time Nayef Hawatmeh, an outstanding leader of the Palestine liberation movement, said: "When the Palestinian national movement confronted the post-1948 conditions, it lost its momentum and force at the same time. Consequently, it joined the ranks of the Arab

national-liberation movement ideologically, politically and organizationally. This involved a total denial of the specific independent national character of the Palestinian people."¹

The narrow approach displayed by some Palestinian leaders to the tasks of the Palestine liberation movement in the first stage of its development led to the Palestinian problem initially being considered as a problem of refugees rather than that of the existence and future of a whole people deprived of their legitimate rights by the Zionists.

On December 11, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution 194/111, drawn up in this spirit. It stated that the refugees wishing to return home and live in peace with their neighbours should be given such an opportunity in the near future, and that those not wishing to return should be paid compensation for loss of and damage to their property, in accordance with international law and the principles of justice, by the governments or authorities responsible.

The Soviet Union and the Arab countries voted against this resolution, which showed that in considering any aspect of the Palestinian problem the USSR proceeded from the need to take an approach that would be based on recognition, respect and protection of the inalienable national rights of the people of Palestine, in particular the right to self-determination, and did not view the Palestinian problem as the problem of refugees. At the same time the Soviet Union supported the thesis of Resolution 194/111 relating to the Palestinians' right to return to their national home or to receive compensation for lost property and believed that this aspect should be considered in close connection with other essential aspects of the Palestinian problem.

The right of Palestinian refugees to return to their

¹ *Palestinian Leaders Discuss the New Challenges for the Resistance*. Palestine Research Centre, Beirut, p. 46.

homeland or to receive compensation has been confirmed in many documents of the UN General Assembly.

The Palestinian problem is being regarded as a problem of refugees by those who seek as much as possible to depoliticize the Palestinian factor and to exclude it from decisive aspects of a Middle East settlement as a whole.

From the very beginning the UN decisions on the Palestinian refugees were opposed by the Israeli authorities, who hoped to increase the Jewish population in the country by stimulating immigration. In July 1950 the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, passed a law providing favourable conditions not for expelled Palestinian Arabs but for Jewish immigrants. As a result, Jewish immigration to Palestine sharply increased. From 1948 to 1952 711,000 people immigrated to Israel, or 1.5 times more than in the 1881-1948 period.

The early 1960s saw a new upsurge of the national-liberation movement of the Arab people of Palestine. This was determined by growing anti-imperialist feeling among Arabs after Egypt had repulsed the British-French-Israeli aggression of 1956 and by a better understanding by the Palestinians of their tasks in the struggle against Israel and the imperialist forces backing it. Two significant events deserve mention in this connection. The United Arab Republic, consisting of Egypt and Syria, ended three and a half years after it was established, making the Palestinian leaders realize the need for independent action in the struggle for Palestinian interests and to abandon the idea of joining all Arab forces in order to liberate Palestine. Another significant event was the triumph of the heroic people of Algeria in their long hard-fought struggle for independence. The Algerian people themselves made a decisive contribution to the victorious completion of their struggle, which was actively supported by the socialist countries, Arab states and all peace-loving forces of the world. This led the Palestinian Arabs and their leaders to realize the need to

organize an independent Palestine national-liberation movement and to put forward political demands not only in support of the common Arab struggle against imperialism and the domestic forces of reaction, but also in support of the national interests of the Arab people of Palestine.

In this connection Abu Aiyad, a prominent figure of the Palestine liberation movement, pointed out:

"If we wish to solve our problems, we must weigh two considerations: firstly, the Arab struggle can take any form, from class struggle to the struggle for social needs arising every day; secondly, the joint character of the Arab struggle at the same time promotes the cause of Palestine liberation..., which continues to carry high the banner of national (i.e., Palestinian—*Auth.*) liberation... The struggle of Palestinians and Arabs is—or should be—one whole in the name of the Arab revolution."

The upsurge of the Palestine national-liberation movement was also largely due to the striving of some Arab statesmen for joint Arab action on an anti-imperialist basis. They rightly believed that the Palestinian factor might serve as a linking rod in the actions of Arab countries. In this connection N. Hawatmeh noted: "We can consider Nasser's attempt to form the PLO in 1964 not as a move to dissociate himself from the nationalist role and commitment, but rather as the embodiment of the concept of the dialectic and dynamic marriage between the special role of the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israel and their role within the nationalist framework."¹

In January 1964 the first conference of heads of Arab states held in Cairo gave the Arab people of Palestine the right and obligation to undertake responsibility for the national cause and the liberation of Palestine. It was also decided to set up a Palestine Liberation Organization.

¹ *Palestinian Leaders Discuss the New Challenges for the Resistance.* Op. cit, p. 47.

On May 28, 1964, the First Arab Palestine Congress was convened in the Jordan sector of Jerusalem. It was attended by 388 delegates (242 from Jordan, 146 from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the Persian Gulf sheikdoms and the Gaza Strip), elected by Palestine committees and associations of fellow-countrymen. The Congress set up the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and adopted a Palestinian National Charter, which became the PLO's programme document. Article 4 of the Charter declared: "All Palestinians are natural members of the PLO..., and the Palestinian people are the broad base for this organization." Article 26 of the Charter stated: "This organization (the PLO—*Auth.*) will be responsible for the movement of the Palestinian people in their struggle to liberate their country, in all fields of liberation—political, organizational and financial—and in whatever the Palestinian cause requires at Arab and international levels."¹

The Palestine Liberation Organization was officially recognized by the Arab states in September 1964 at the second Arab summit meeting in Alexandria, which "welcomed the establishment of the PLO as the basis of the Palestinian entity". The first Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Ahmed Shukairi, took part in the work of the meeting. In subsequent years the PLO began to participate in the work of the League of Arab States, in which the Arab people of Palestine had been represented rather symbolically prior to 1964, since the Arab states had regarded them as a large mass of isolated groups of refugees rather than as a single ethnic community.

In September 1964 recruiting to the Palestine Liberation Army began simultaneously in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, from among Palestinians residing in those countries. This process demonstrated the gradual growth

¹ *The Palestine Liberation Organization: The Sole Legitimate Representative of the Palestinian People*. Beirut, 1974, p. 8.

of the Palestine liberation movement as a whole and of the PLO as the direct leader and genuine representative of the Palestinian people.

Despite the truce concluded between Israel and the Arab states in 1949, the situation in the Middle East tended to worsen as a result of Tel Aviv's annexationist policy.

The desire of the Israeli leadership to expand its state at the expense of its Arab neighbours manifested itself in regular deliberate border incidents, described by the Israelis as "acts of retribution".

The Israeli leadership showed no intention of concluding a just peace in the Middle East, it continued to ignore the problem of the Palestinian refugees and planned to annex new territories. Since 1948 Israel has been following an extremely chauvinist and openly anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian policy. Suffice it to dwell on some of the most typical trends of this policy.

Chapter III

Anti-Palestinian Genocide by the Zionists

The Israeli leadership's attitude towards the Palestinian problem, its total passivity in the search for constructive solutions and its torpedoing of any, however minimal, efforts aimed at making progress in solving the problem strikingly contrast with the world public's desire for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its central part—the Palestinian problem.

The statements by Israeli officials and the mass media controlled by Zionist organizations and the government of Israel to the effect that the Palestinians are irresponsible terrorists display the Zionists' striving to brush aside the Palestinian problem and pretend it doesn't exist.

But how can one claim that with the creation of Israel the problem of Palestine has ceased to exist, if the struggle of the Arab people of Palestine for their inalienable national rights has been growing in scale and scope, accompanied by political demands and calls for an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories seized in 1967.

The Arab people of Palestine have not reconciled themselves to the occupation of their lands and to the usurpation of their

rights and will never do so. This is axiomatic. Resistance to the Israeli invaders is growing and taking on new forms on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip. From passive refusal to submit to the occupation authorities the Palestinian Arabs are passing to armed revolts.

It is a just and legitimate struggle. The Palestinians oppose the occupation authorities who resort to terror and acts of repression in order to make them recognize Israel's occupation as legitimate and to suppress the slightest manifestation of disobedience. The Israeli authorities do not stop even at committing crimes and violating not only the rights of individuals but also the generally recognized norms of international law.

The 30th Session of the United Nations General Assembly passed a special resolution on the violation of human rights by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories, listing the following violations:

- partial annexation of occupied territories;
- the setting up of new settlements and the settling of Jews there;
- the demolition and destruction of houses owned by Arabs;
- the confiscation and expropriation of property owned by Arabs, as well as the acquisition of land from local residents and organizations in occupied territories;
- the evacuation, deportation, expulsion, displacement and banishment of the Arab population from occupied territories and depriving them of the right to return;
- mass arrests, detention and maltreatment of Arabs;
- the plundering of archeological and cultural treasures;
- interference in religious liberty and the performance of religious rites, as well as in family rights and customs; and
- the illegal exploitation of the natural resources and the population in occupied territories.

The above brief list of crimes committed by the Israeli authorities and sanctified by racist Zionist theories shows that the 30th Session of the United Nations General Assembly's decision to declare Zionism a form of racism and racial discrimination was quite justified and appropriate. Diehard anti-Arab chauvinism, which permeates all Israel's political institutions and springs from Zionist brainwashing of ordinary citizens by talk about the innate superiority of Jews over Arabs and about ingrained Arab anti-Semitism, is an open manifestation of racism, which the Israeli leaders are trying to dissociate themselves from.

The Israeli occupation authorities resort to various methods of exerting pressure on those residing in occupied Arab territories, methods which essentially violate the existing and universally recognized norms of international law as set out in the relevant documents.

Several international commissions have expressed their utmost concern over the virtually legalized use of torture against prisoners, over their maltreatment and the inhuman conditions in Israeli prisons. The newspaper *Al-Ittihad*, organ of the Communist Party of Israel, published in Arabic in Israel, cited examples of the barbarous treatment of Palestinian prisoners in the prison of Askelon.

In particular, the newspaper noted that:

1. The guards are empowered to beat the prisoners.
2. Many of the prisoners spend most of their time in solitary cells.
3. Most prisoners are beaten as soon as they arrive.
4. The prisoners are not allowed to raise their heads while speaking to the warder.
5. The prisoners sleep on the ground without a mattress, they are given only a straw mat and one blanket.
6. The use of blankets is not allowed during the day.

The 21st Conference of the International Red Cross in Istanbul (September 1969) cited facts of the sophisticated torture to which Palestinian Arabs were subjected

in Israeli prisons in the towns of Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm and Nablus. The conference noted that some prisoners were tortured in the course of interrogation carried out by the military police. According to their evidence, the following tortures were applied:

— hanging a prisoner by his arms with weights attached to his legs for several hours until he lost consciousness;

— inflicting cigarette burns;

— striking prisoners on the genitals with a stick;

— fastening a blindfolded prisoner to the wall for several days;

— setting dogs on prisoners; and

— applying the electric rod to a prisoner's temples, mouth, chest and testicles.

The above facts confirm the just conclusion drawn by the Commission of the United Nations, resolutely condemning "Israel's actions aimed at creating a general atmosphere of reprisals, terror and disaster for the population in the occupied territories".

The Israeli press calmly reports frequent and undisguised instances of the collective punishment, intimidation and arrest of Palestinian Arabs.

Collective punishment is what the Israeli occupation authorities practise most frequently as a measure of oppression and coercion with regard to the Arab population. For instance, when disturbances occurred on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip in the spring of 1976, a curfew was introduced in the towns of Ramallah and Bira as a measure of punishment of all the residents of those towns, irrespective of whether or not they had taken part in the demonstrations against the despotism of the occupation authorities. This was an obvious threat to residents of other towns. The US press remarked: "The complaint about harsh personal treatment comes up time and again in conversations with West Bankers. In the name of security, they are continually subjected to sudden searches of their home and

person. Midnight arrests of suspected trouble-makers are frequent and it is often weeks before charges are lodged. Such measures have been in use by the Israeli authorities since 1967, but the intensity has been stepped up in recent months."¹

During the disturbances Israeli soldiers burst into students' hostels in Bir-Zeita, beat up students, and damaged personal and university property.

Among the forms of collective punishment used is also the blocking of all roads leading to the Gaza Strip with the aim of preventing tens of thousands of Palestinians, specializing in growing oranges, the basic agricultural crop in the region, from selling their produce. At the height of the harvest the Israeli occupation authorities blocked all the roads leading from Hebron, making it impossible for local peasants to sell their produce.

Demolishing houses is another form of collective punishment. As a rule, houses are demolished if one or several of its tenants have links with the national-liberation movement in the occupied territories. Thousands of houses belonging to Arabs have already been demolished on the West Bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip. The Arab villages of Jala, Beit Nuba and Emmaus have been razed to the ground, although none of their inhabitants had any relation whatsoever to the liberation movement. All of the 4,000 inhabitants of those villages were expelled and some killed during the demolition of their houses.

Preventive administrative arrest and detention is another indisputable violation of human rights in the territories occupied by Israel. Hundreds of Palestinians have been illegally arrested and detained without investigation and trial.

Forced deportation and arrest on insufficient grounds are other examples of the violation of human rights in the occupied territories.

¹ *The New York Times*, March 25, 1976, p. 3.

According to official data, since June 1967 more than 2,500 officials from among the Palestinian Arabs—Christian and Muslim priests, mayors, teachers, doctors and lawyers—have been forcibly deported from the occupied territories. As a rule, those to be deported are blindfolded, their hands are tied and they are not allowed to take leave of their relatives. The Israeli authorities take away their documents and under threat of arms force them to cross the Jordanian or the Lebanese border.

The Israeli authorities try to justify their acts of violence by accusing the deported persons of activities harmful to the security of Israel. But these accusations are generally laid *after* the deportation takes place, making it impossible for the accused to refute them. Acts of deportation testify to the fact that the occupation authorities have no proof of the guilt of the deported and fear trials which would inevitably boomerang against their organizers.

Protests by the world public compelled the Israeli occupation authorities to hold occasional farcical trials. On March 27, 1976, Dr. Abdel Aziz al-Haj Ahmed, general secretary of the dentists' society on the West Bank of the Jordan, and Dr. Ahmed Hamza al-Natshi, head of a hospital in the suburbs of Bethlehem were brought to trial. The judges said they had been ordered by the military governor to expel the two doctors from the territory controlled by Israel and so the entire proceedings lasted a few minutes.

Naturally, the Israeli authorities are going out of their way to refute all these facts and refer to the unscrupulousness of witnesses. In this connection Professor Israel Shanak, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, remarked: "Most Jews in Israel and outside it believe they alone are human beings and therefore the only ones to be believed, while gentiles usually lie, to which the laws of the Talmud point. Thus, if a Jew says he has been tortured by Syrians, his word should be taken for it, his evidence is enough. But if a Palestinian says he has

been tortured by Jews, he should never be believed because he is a gentile."

Of course, the act of occupation itself is the worst violation of human rights in the occupied territories. The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of Israel rightly noted that the cruel oppression of the population in the occupied territories and the whole history of the Israeli occupation was a serious accusation against the Israeli government. It stressed that such a thing as a "liberal" and "humane" occupation could not exist, that any occupation gave rise to resistance and, as a result, the occupying force sought to crush the resistance by terror...

The general situation in the Arab territories occupied by Israel strikingly shows that the Israeli colonization of these territories is a most serious obstacle in the way for attaining peace in the Middle East. Israel's system of apartheid, which distinguishes not only between the powers that be and the common people but also between the common people that have property and those deprived of it and is based on racial discrimination, had previously confined its application to the Arabs in Israel. Now this system underlies Israeli-Palestinian relations in the "colonial empire" which Israel has created through its occupation of Arab territories in 1967. There are features common to all regimes of occupation and colonization and one cannot regard Israel's methods as less barbarous than those practised by the nazi occupying forces during the Second World War. Sometimes they are exactly identical. But the fact that Israel has long been regarded in the West as an exemplary state, free of any of the shortcomings inherent in all colonial powers, and that many political experts have long refused to see that there is essentially no difference between Israeli and any other occupation clearly demonstrates that the rulers of Israel are colonialists with a greater stock of demagoguery to mask their real face.

From the first days of their occupation the Israeli

authorities began to colonize the Arab territories they had seized. The economic and strategic aims of occupation are inseparable and only supplement one another. It is fairly obvious that the Israeli authorities are reluctant to return to their legitimate owners the territories they have seized. Even the US representative in the Security Council had to admit this fact.

The building of Jewish settlements in the territories seized by Israel in 1967 is a very striking manifestation of anti-Palestinian action on the part of the Israeli authorities and is illegitimate both juridically and politically. The first Jewish settlement came into existence in July 1967 in the Golan Heights immediately after the end of the six-day war. In September of the same year children of Jewish settlers who had come to Palestine before 1948 set up an Etzion Block near Hebron. In the spring of 1968 during Passover a group of religious fanatics demanded that the Israeli government permit them to build a settlement in the Arab part of Hebron. Though no permission was given, a Jewish settlement—Kiryat Arba—soon came into being on the north-eastern outskirts of the city. From the first days of the occupation the Israeli government began to treat Arabs in the seized territories with marked cruelty. Already in June 1967, 160 houses owned by Arabs were destroyed in Eastern Jerusalem on the pretext that they blocked access to the Wailing Wall—the western wall of the Temple of Solomon destroyed by the Romans. It should be remembered that between 1967 and 1970, the first period of colonization of the seized territories, Israeli barrack-type rural settlements came into existence primarily in the south of the Golan Heights in Syria and north of the eastern (Arab) part of Jerusalem. The location of the settlements was not accidental: the Israeli leadership thereby warned Syria that the latter should not claim the Golan Heights and at the same time gave Washington to understand that the large-scale construction that was getting under way in Eastern Jerusalem

would continue, despite possible pressure from the United States.

When the Likud coalition came to power in Israel in May 1977 the building of settlements proceeded at considerably faster rates. At present they are more than a hundred. The general plan for the development of settlements in Judea and Samaria for the 1979-1983 period, approved by the World Zionist Organization, provided for building 46 settlements to accommodate 16,000 families in those regions. In accordance with the principles of Israeli expansionist policy in those five years an additional 22 settlements have been built and a total of 27,000 Jewish families, that is to say, 100,000 people, have been accommodated on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip (Judea and Samaria).

The manner in which the advocates of the Israeli policy of the occupation of the territories seized in 1967 build their arguments is surprisingly crude. These arguments boil down to the following. If the Arab territories "under Israeli administrative control" (note the mild terminology used by Tel Aviv annexionists) are returned to their legitimate masters, the Arabs, their economic development will inevitably be retarded because they have become part of the Israeli economy after the six-day war. For example, Professor Elisha Efrat, of Tel Aviv University, notes: "A return to the 1949 armistice line boundary would bring about a situation in which many existing elements would be cut off from their ties with Israel and from their continuity with the state."¹ This argument is a fairly well-known one. It was none other than the nazi Rosenberg, hanged after the trial of war criminals in Nuremberg, who said that the Ukraine formed one whole with the Third Reich.

The number of Israeli settlements in occupied Arab territories is constantly increasing. In November 1982

¹ *Judea, Samaria and Gaza: Views on the Present and Future*. Edited by Daniel J. Elazar, Washington and London, 1982, p. 30.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture Dekel reported that in addition to the 103 Israeli settlements already in existence on the West Bank with a population of 25,000, 37 new settlements would be built by 1985. By then their total population would reach 70,000. According to the newspaper *Ha'aretz*, Drobliss, co-chairman of the department for settlement of the World Zionist Organization, called for increasing the number of Israeli (Jewish) settlers on the West Bank to 400,000 by 1990 and to 1,400,000 by the year 2000.

There is a plan drawn up by Menachem Begin, which contains definite instructions on this score. First, the Israeli leadership believes it necessary to continue in one form or another the occupation of the Arab lands seized in 1967. Second, it does not intend to meet the Palestinians' demands relating to their legitimate national rights. Third, it is determined to continue to build Israeli settlements. After the Camp David accords were reached, Begin stressed that Israel's right to build settlements would be retained, its security guaranteed by a permanent military presence and Jewish villages would be administratively dependent on Israel.

In September 1978 the United States, Israel and Egypt signed the notorious Camp David agreements, whose authors tried to present them to the world public as the framework for a comprehensive Middle East settlement, including the solution of the Palestinian problem. The past five years have made it clear that not only have the Camp David agreements failed to relax military and political tension in the Middle East, but they have caused it to worsen. The original assessment of the Camp David agreements as a deal behind the Palestinians' back and contrary to their interests has proved correct. There is substantial evidence that the references to the need to resolve the Palestinian problem contained in the Camp David agreements, as well as the deadlocked Egyptian-US-Israeli talks, started in May 1979 with the aim of achieving so-called "autonomy" for the Palestinians, are

attempts to camouflage the separate Egypt-Israeli deal on the Sinai Peninsula.

In fact, the Camp David "framework for peace" totally denies the Palestinians their legitimate rights. According to the Camp David deal, there are three categories of Palestinians: residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, those displaced from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, and refugees. Yet three other categories of Palestinians have not been mentioned. These are the Palestinians who fled from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or were deported from there by the Israeli occupation authorities since 1967; Palestinians who had fled from those areas since 1948 (during and after the Palestine war) but refused to register as refugees; and, finally, the Palestinians residing in Israel.

The arbitrary division of Palestinians into categories in the Camp David deal is an obvious attempt to split the Arab people of Palestine by resorting to legal casuistry. In fact, it is a manifestation of the tragedy which the Palestinians are experiencing.

All the Camp David agreements on the Palestinian problem were achieved without any representative of the Palestinian people present. Moreover, these agreements are silent about the Palestinians' rights, which are officially recognized by the world community. As rightly noted by Dr. Fayez A. Sayegh, an outstanding Palestinian scientist: "Once again, then, the Palestinian people is now being confronted—as it was confronted on many occasions in the past sixty years—with fundamental decisions about its own destiny reached without its participation, knowledge or consent."¹

The anti-Palestinian character of the Camp David agreements is particularly striking against the background of the well-known statement made a year and a half before the talks by Anwar Sadat, one of the organizers of and participants in the Camp David talks, at

¹ Dr. Fayez A. Sayegh. *Camp David and Palestine*. Kuwait, 1979, p. 2.

the 13th Session of the Palestine National Council in March 1977. Sadat then said: "The Palestinian people is the only force that can solve everything concerning its future and its cause. No one, whoever he is, can be trustee for them and impose his will on them."

That the Camp David agreements are hostile to the Palestinian cause is clear to everyone. The treacherous attitude to the Palestinians made itself felt very strikingly in April 1982 when Israeli troops left the Sinai Peninsula, while *no* progress had been reached in tripartite negotiations on the Palestinian problem and the whole negotiations had proved to be empty talk. But back in September 1978 the smiling faces of Carter, Begin and Sadat on TV screens already made it clear that the pseudo-peace-making verbosity of the authors of the deal was designed to conceal its anti-Palestinian character. Firstly, all the discussion of Palestinian autonomy was vague and unsubstantiated. It was only said that the "parameters" of this autonomy were to be discussed by Egypt, Israel and Jordan, who were expected to find a common viewpoint as to the authority and responsibility of the future autonomy. In other words, if the Israeli government disagreed with some aspects of the proposed Palestinian autonomy, no agreement could be reached. This was what actually happened. But this is not the main point. When the authors of the Camp David deal formulated their view of the forms of participation of the Palestinians in the peace-making process, they totally disregarded the latter's rights and designed the whole process to suit American and Israeli interests.

The Egyptian and Jordanian governments were to give their consent to Palestinians being included in their delegations at the tripartite talks on Palestinian autonomy. Palestinian delegates were to be selected from among those recommended by the Arab governments, rather than by the Palestinians themselves. Moreover, Israel's approval of the candidates was necessary. During the talks any proposal by a Palestinian delegate

was first to be approved by the Arab and Israeli delegations. The Palestinians could not reject any proposal they found unsuitable if an Arab delegation gave its consent to it. In this context Sadat's assurances to the effect that no one was entitled to be trustee for the Palestinians had a cynical ring. But the late Egyptian President went even further. In a letter to President Carter, dated September 17, 1978, the day of the signing of the Camp David agreements, he advanced the idea of the Palestinians' possible participation in the peace-making process upon agreement being reached. The letter read:

"To ensure the implementation of the provisions related to the West Bank and Gaza and in order to safeguard the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, Egypt will be prepared to assume the Arab role emanating from those provisions, following consultations with Jordan and the representatives of the Palestinian people."¹

The Camp David agreements provided for the holding of free elections on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip under Israeli occupation in conditions where the Israeli military authorities were the only political institution in the region in possession of real authority. It is sheer cynicism to speak of free elections in such conditions. Dr. F. Sayegh, cited earlier, was absolutely right when he remarked that "thanks to the Camp David 'Framework for Peace', an Israeli occupation—which the entire international community has for eleven years been declaring illegal—will now be enabled to maintain itself in the Palestinian territories concerned as a 'legitimate' occupation for several more years, if not permanently!"²

In the course of discussion of the Camp David agreements, in late September 1978 Menachem Begin himself confirmed the correctness of those words in his state-

¹ Dr. Fayez A. Sayegh. *Camp David and Palestine*. Kuwait, 1979, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

ment to the Knesset. He stated his adherence to three "no's" on the Palestinian problem: no—to a Palestinian state, no—to a referendum on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, and no—to negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

This openly obstructionist course of the Israeli leadership is accompanied by the steadily increasing anti-Palestinian campaign and the desire to weaken in every way possible the Palestine liberation movement militarily, politically and ideologically, since it has remained one of the main obstacles in the way of implementing far-reaching American and Israeli plans in the region.

As for the US stand on the Palestinian problem, it should be pointed out that the well-known statements by Carter and other high-ranking officials of the Democratic Administration on the need to give a national home to the Palestinians were merely the tactical zigzags of experienced politicians, who never renounced their plans to weaken and split the Palestine liberation movement and its leadership. In other words, the US position on the Palestinian problem has been hostile from a class point of view. The methods of pressure, especially characteristic of the Reagan Republican Administration, found expression in growing anti-Palestinian actions undertaken by the American leadership.

In this context the Israeli aggression launched in the summer of 1982 with the purpose of annihilating the Palestinians' armed detachments and destroying the political structure of the Palestine liberation movement very well served long-term US interests in the region. Numerous reports have been published in the West, including in the United States, of Reagan's giving the green light to Israeli aggression and of American-Israeli contacts, including top-level ones, in the first half of 1982, directed, in particular, to specifying the details of the planned Israeli operation and distributing the roles in advance.

The French magazine *Paris Match* frankly wrote that at the end of January and beginning of February 1982 everything had been prepared for a broad-scale punitive raid. Furthermore, the magazine *Middle East International* noted that the arrival of two US ships in the region before the invasion was evidence that the United States had known in advance of the blow being planned by Israel. The US warship *Kennedy* was stationed close to the Lebanese-Israeli coastline, while the *Eisenhower* was in the area of Crete to keep watch on the movements of Soviet naval vessels. Both ships left their permanent bases on June 1 to arrive there on time. Strangely, ubiquitous journalists remained silent about the departure of a large group of American diplomats and members of their families from Beirut several days before the Israeli invasion.

Ariel Sharon made everything clear in an interview to the Italian *Europeo*. He said relations between Israel and the United States were not deteriorating. "The Americans... share our goals and agree with our programme. Our alliance with the United States is based on mutual interest, and the United States knows it perfectly well." He also mentioned that he had made his plans of aggression known to Haig and Weinberger back in September 1981. During his visit to Washington at that time he told his high-ranking colleagues: "Don't pretend to be shocked when we do it" (meaning the planned Israeli invasion of Lebanon).

In this connection it is interesting to analyze another aspect of the preparation of the Israeli act of aggression—the distribution of roles in the American-Israeli anti-Palestinian play. It is not accidental that Begin decided on the date of launching aggression at a time when President Reagan and the then Secretary of State Haig were attending a meeting in Versailles, while Vice-President Bush and National Security Adviser Clark were away from Washington on a short vacation. This precaution was designed to show that Washington was

not implicated in assisting its strategic ally and it was important for the Republican Party in view of the preparations for elections to Congress then under way in the United States. Begin wished to show the whole world that Israel was solely responsible for the aggression and the United States was therefore free to engage in big-scale political manoeuvring. *The Washington Post* frankly remarked that the success of the intervention offered the Reagan Administration a unique opportunity to increase its influence in the region. The *International Herald Tribune* reported Henry Kissinger as saying that the events in Lebanon opened up "extraordinary opportunities for a dynamic American diplomacy throughout the Middle East".¹

The American-Israeli "allocation of tasks" manifested itself in the events in Lebanon. With virtually unlimited US military and political support Israel has been trying to crush the Palestine liberation movement by force of arms, doing all the rough work for Washington, while the latter has been engaged in active political manoeuvring in an effort to split and oppose various Palestinian organizations and leaders and set the Arab countries at loggerheads on the Palestinian issue. At the beginning of the Israeli aggression in Lebanon the US mass media unanimously spoke of "serious warnings" allegedly addressed by President Reagan in his messages to Begin from a meeting of the Big Seven in Versailles. The warning had no effect, but this was not Begin's or Sharon's fault. The Israeli leadership was perfectly aware of the US attitude to the Palestinian problem. Washington can only welcome Israel's anti-Palestinian actions, not only because they are aimed at removing the Palestinian issue from among the urgent problems of US foreign policy, but also because by launching aggression against Lebanon Israel is striking a blow at all the Arab countries in an effort with US support and tacit approval

¹ *International Herald Tribune*, June 17, 1982, p. 4.

to arrest the social and political development of the Arab world and keep the Arab countries within the orbit of Western, and above all American, imperialism.

Of course, the United States cannot openly admit that its global military and political plans include a refusal to recognize the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, and a desire to weaken the Palestine liberation movement, to annihilate its troops and its leadership. So Washington is bringing to the fore actions that might create among naive people an impression that the United States is ready to act as a disinterested mediator in the Lebanon events and to restrain both the Palestinians and Israel from taking extreme steps.

It is noteworthy that Washington volunteered to play the role of "disinterested mediator" in the Middle East after the October 1973 war. It is well known that the American-Israeli tactics of separate deals imposed on Egypt under Sadat, as well as Kissinger's notorious shuttle diplomacy, have led to a split in the front of the Arab countries, have withdrawn Egypt from among the states really able to oppose Israel's expansionist course and have helped Israel virtually to secure the sizeable Arab territories it seized as a result of the June 1967 aggression.

In order to camouflage its real aims, Washington organized the mission by Philip Habib, the President's special emissary to the Middle East. His activities have been lauded to the skies by official US propaganda, though his mission is actually intended to meet the constant US desire to establish peace in the Middle East on American conditions—Pax Americana. What Washington is actually trying to achieve is to localize the Palestinian factor and considerably to reduce its influence on the Middle East situation as a whole. In other words, Habib's "peace-making" mission is merely another attempt to mislead world and Arab public opinion as to the openly anti-Palestinian essence of US policy in the Middle East. The US Administration is obviously

striving to continue the policy of foisting on the Arab world the sort of peace already known from the Camp David agreements, one that has nothing in common with genuine constructive peace in the Middle East and the solution of the Palestinian problem.

In order to prevent the Palestine liberation movement from growing radical and in consideration of the conservative position of some Arab countries, the United States put forward a new initiative. It was announced by Reagan in his TV speech on September 1, 1982, when the last armed Palestinian detachments were leaving long-suffering Beirut. The US magazine *U.S. News and World Report* revealed why such hasty measures had been taken, noting that "moderate Arabs, Egyptians and Saudis, in particular, fear that radicals will regain the initiative if the US fails to act soon and forcefully to get a settlement of the Palestinian problem".¹

In general outline the American-Israeli position is as follows. The United States importunately offers the old goods—administrative autonomy—to the Palestinians. Israel, on its part, rejects even the slightest attempt to mention the need to solve the Palestinian problem. In other words, Washington tells Arabs and, in particular, Palestinians, to agree to administrative autonomy under Israeli occupation before Israeli opposition makes it impossible.

At present the US course in the Middle East is primarily that Washington considers it normal for Israeli troops to be still in Lebanon. Judging by the statements of Israeli officials, they are not going to withdraw in the near future, which is in defiance of Resolutions 506 and 509 of the Security Council. These resolutions, to which the US representative raised no objections, called upon Israel to withdraw its troops to outside the internationally recognized borders of Lebanon and to cease all military operations in that country. Along with this, the

¹ *U. S. News and World Report*, Sept. 6, 1982, p. 16.

presence of Syrian troops on Lebanese territory, as part of the inter-Arab forces in accordance with the mandate of the League of Arab States, is declared to be almost the chief obstacle to a settlement in Lebanon. Washington is making efforts to eliminate the Syrian-Palestinian presence in Lebanon, regarding this as a guarantee of the implementation of the plans formulated by Reagan in his speech on September 1, 1982.

Nor does Washington conceal its hopes that the Lebanese government will agree to sign a peace treaty with Israel, following the example of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of March 26, 1979. Many political observers have noted that Bashir Gemayel, elected the country's President and murdered before his official taking of office, categorically rejected the possibility of signing such a treaty and openly expressed his opinion to Begin and Sharon. It is not difficult to see who stood to gain by his elimination from the political scene.

The United States still hopes to involve the moderate Arab regimes in the Camp David process, although the process has long since faded and become obsolete. If these moderate states are ready to recognize Israel's right to existence, even without the latter's recognizing the national rights of the Palestinians, Washington believes this approach will enable the achievement of a Pax-Americana in the region. In this connection, the United States expected that the results of the second stage of the Arab summit meeting in Fez in September 6-9, 1982, would facilitate the attainment of the aims of US policy in the Middle East. But this did not happen, even though, according to the Western and Arab press, the Fez meeting revealed, as is only natural, the serious contradictions between the participants in the meeting. The peace plan adopted at the meeting and based on the plan of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, dated August 7, 1981, considerably limits US diplomatic activity to promote the Reagan plan. Consisting of eight points, the plan adopted in Fez seriously complicates US manoeuvres in the Middle East.

The points of the plan are:

- The withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem;
- The dismantling of settlements established by Israel in the occupied Arab territories after 1967;
- Guarantees for worship and the exercise of religious rites for all religions in the holy places;
- Affirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the exercise of their inalienable national rights, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole legitimate representative. Compensation to be paid to those who do not wish to return;
- The West Bank and the Gaza Strip shall undergo a transition period under the supervision of the United Nations for a period not exceeding a few months;
- The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem (eastern part) as its capital;
- The UN Security Council shall guarantee the peace of all the states in the region, including the Palestine state;
- The Security Council shall guarantee the implementation of these principles.

The differences between the Arab plan approved in Fez and the Reagan plan are evident and stem from different approaches to the solution of the Palestinian problem. The Reagan plan completely rejects the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their own state, whereas the Fez plan affirms this right. The Reagan plan ignores the PLO, whereas the Fez plan affirms the role of the PLO as the sole representative of the Arab people of Palestine. The Fez plan demands the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories, while the Reagan plan merely speaks of the need to freeze the building of such settlements. It is clear that the Reagan plan denies the Palestinians their legitimate national rights, while the plan approved in Fez proceeds from the need to secure

these rights as an indispensable condition for normalizing the conflict situation in the Middle East.

It is noteworthy that the Arab plan approved in Fez coincides in many respects with the Soviet position on a Middle East settlement. This was directly stated in an official report on the talks between King Husein of Jordan and Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. The report gave a clear assessment of the Reagan plan as aimed at "disuniting the Arab countries, foisting on them decisions suiting only Israel and the United States and, above all, preventing the establishment of an independent Palestinian State".

The Reagan plan is fully assessed in the final declaration of the 16th Session of the Arab Palestine Congress, held in February 1983 in Algeria. It stated, in particular:

"The Reagan plan does not satisfy the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people either in orientation or in essence, since it denies the Palestinians the right to return and establish an independent Palestinian state, ignores the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and runs counter to international law. Therefore the present session of the Arab Palestine Congress declares its refusal to consider it as an acceptable basis for a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian problem and of Arab-Zionist contradictions."

Many Western publications pointed to the lack of prospects in the Reagan plan. For example, *Middle East International* noted that "if Reagan is not prepared to move further towards the PLO than as was stated in his plan, then this could be the end of the road".

At the same time it is known that Israel categorically rejects the provisions of the Reagan plan as contradictory to the Camp David agreements and designed to limit Israel's control over the occupied Palestinian (Arab) territories. The Israeli government stated that "President Reagan's peace proposals made an early resumption of

talks on Palestinian autonomy impossible."¹ In actual fact, these talks have long been brought to a deadlock through Israel's efforts.

It is on the basis of the openly anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian Camp David deal that the launching of Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the putting forward of the Reagan plan became possible. Behind the Camp David "Framework for Peace" Washington and Tel Aviv have strengthened their essentially anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian alliance, which is the main obstacle in the way to a just solution of the Palestinian problem. The Camp David deal has also demonstrated that the Palestinian problem cannot be solved through the use of force, by destroying the Palestinian liberation movement militarily and politically, which is what Israel has attempted to do with Washington's approval and support.

It is true that with Washington's approval and support Israel is ignoring and essentially trampling under foot the United Nations decisions concerning the securing of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians. It is also true that the Palestinians find themselves in a difficult, tragic situation. But their struggle is continuing. It will not stop as long as the Israeli annexionists and their patrons continue to refuse to meet the Palestinians' just national demands. Unable to deny that the satisfaction of their national aspirations is an important factor of a Middle East settlement, Washington is actively trying to leave the Palestinians homeless forever and to doom them to a life away from their homeland.

The tragedy of the Palestinian people, seriously aggravated by Israel's aggression in Lebanon, the massacres in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila and acts of anti-Palestinian genocide in the occupied Arab territories, as well as in Lebanon, are a reminder to the entire world that the Palestinian factor is a permanent one in the Middle East situation and that events in the region

¹ *The Guardian*, Sept. 7, 1982, p. 6.

will develop contrary to the expectations of the Israeli annexionists and their patrons.

Finally, there is yet another significant aspect of the patently anti-Palestinian activities of the Israeli authorities, which is often overlooked by writers on Palestinian problems. This is the status of the Palestinian Arabs residing in Israel. It is common knowledge that Israeli officialdom regards them as "second-class" citizens. What is meant here is not only the manifestations of "moral schizophrenia" with regard to Palestinian Arabs living in Israel, to which many prominent Israeli scholars have referred, such as Professor Saul Friedlaender of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Let me show and prove by facts and figures that Israel's entire state machinery is designed to oppress Palestinian Arabs as much as possible and to deprive them of generally recognized rights.

The Israeli Zionist leaders are constantly concerned with a problem of the lower birth rate among the Jews, as compared with the Arabs. In order to maintain the Jewish-Arab ratio in favour of the Jews, it is first of all necessary to secure larger Jewish immigration. But in recent years immigrating Jews have preferred not to settle in Israel. There is also Jewish emigration under way in Israel, even among those born there (*sabra*). That is why the Israeli authorities are putting increasing pressure on Palestinian Arabs residing in Israel and creating for them extra obstacles as regards their employment, access to education, allocation of housing, and so on. According to official Israeli data, Jewish families have an average of 2.9 children, whereas the figure for Arab families is 5. Though the birth rate is higher among the Arabs than among the Jews in Israel, the growth of population (3.4 and 2.8 per 100, respectively) also depends on the child mortality rate, which is twice as high among Arab families living in Israel than among Jewish families. It is also noteworthy that the child mortality rate is higher among Arabs in towns and country areas with

mixed, not purely Arab, populations. This is quite understandable, since medical institutions, including those rendering first aid, are under the authority of the local Israeli municipalities and give medical assistance in the first place to Jews.

The Israeli leadership believes that by the end of the 20th century the Jewish population in the country will reach a total of about 4,700,000, while the Arab population will be not more than 800,000, despite the higher birth rate in Arab families. But to achieve this proportion, two conditions are to be fulfilled. First, the Israeli authorities must continue in every way possible to deny young Arabs access to education, thus prodding them to emigrate and, second, must continue to employ more Arab women in the national economy, but on arduous jobs, such as in agriculture and construction, where there are almost no Jewish women workers.

It is also worthy of note that in Israel Arab farmers are increasingly losing their plots of land, falling into the category of hired workers, especially in spheres which are unpopular among the Jewish population, such as road building, civil construction, car service and agriculture. Whereas in 1963, 75 per cent of all Arabs in Israel lived in the countryside, by 1973 this figure had fallen to 56 per cent. Now it is even lower. The social composition of the Arab population is under constant change in Israel and the demand for cheap labour is growing, which brings about irreversible changes in the living conditions of the Arab minority in Israel. There is a process under way in Israel, referred to as the emergence of "domestic refugees".

Discrimination against Palestinians living in Israel has found reflection in the country's legislation on citizenship. Israeli citizenship is determined by a law of 1952 and granted to all Jews who were living in Israel when the law came into force on July 14, 1952. Jews, who came to Israel or were born there before May 14, 1948, when the state of Israel was established, are considered

Israeli citizens from that date. Jews who arrived in the country or were born there after May 14, 1948, are granted citizenship from their date of arrival or birth.

Israeli legislation has a fundamentally different approach to Palestinian Arabs residing in Israel. Non-Jews (mostly Palestinian Arabs) born in Israel are considered stateless and can be granted citizenship only if they prove by documentary evidence that they were Palestinian citizens at the time of the British mandate and did not leave their place of residence between the outbreak of the Palestine war on May 14, 1948, and the signing of the armistice agreement in 1949. Needless to say, it was quite natural for many Arabs to leave Palestine when the war was being waged there.

There are a number of laws in Israel accompanied by "explanations" which make living conditions extremely difficult for the Palestinian minority. Israeli historian Aharon Cohen writes:

"From the point of view *of the law*, the Arab citizens are equal to all citizens of the State; they participate in parliamentary elections and enjoy many rights of a democratic state. However no such statement can obscure the fact that the Arab minority in Israel lives in conditions of painful discrimination."¹

The legal basis for discrimination against the Palestinian Arabs are the Defence (Emergency) Regulations issued by the British mandatory authorities in 1945. These regulations, described by Zionist leaders as "fascist" at the time of the British mandate, stipulate that the military governor can deprive an Israeli citizen of his civil rights, including the right to defence in court, the right to reside in and move to certain areas in the country and even property rights. At present the whole existence of the Palestinian national minority is determined by these regulations. No appeals against decisions passed on the basis of these regulations are grant-

¹ *Israeli Racism*, Beirut, 1975, p. 8.

ed because elastic "security considerations" automatically come into force and the Israeli authorities can declare any area in the country "restricted" or "closed".

About a month and a half after the proclamation of the state of Israel the Abandoned Area Ordinance was enacted, which gave the authorities the right to declare "abandoned" any area "conquered by or surrendered to armed forces or deserted by all or part of its inhabitants". The Ordinance allowed authorities to carry out "expropriation and confiscation of movable and immovable property within any abandoned area". This provision was also formulated in the Absentees' Property Law of 1950 and in the Law on Land Acquisition of 1953.

If one were to sum up in one word the many deliberately complicated laws regulating the life and everyday activities of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, that word would be "despotism". Despotism, methodical plunder, humiliation and the reduction of the Palestinian Arabs to "second-class" citizens, direct colonization of their lands and so far unsuccessful attempts to set up an administration of local turncoats in Palestinian territories constitute the "accomplished facts" policy of the Israeli authorities.

Zionism treats the Arab people of Palestine without any mask of decency or liberalism, and the long-standing Palestinian tragedy is the result of the Zionist racist policy of Israeli ruling circles. This policy makes the situation in the Middle East extremely dangerous.

Genuine peace cannot be secured in the Middle East unless the national rights and interests of all the peoples and states in the region, including those of the Arab people of Palestine, are heeded and satisfied. The realities of the present situation in the Middle East and the outstanding Arab-Israeli conflict compel all the forces involved in the conflict not only to engage in political manoeuvring but also to search for the main link in the chain of events in the region. Beyond any doubt, this is

the settlement of the Palestinian problem on the basis of justice and obligatory heeding of and respect for the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs. No variant of a Middle East settlement will survive for long if it avoids in one way or another a constructive approach to the Palestinian problem. The examples of Dr. Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy and the Camp David deal confirm this. The Reagan plan is also doomed.

Another aspect of the problem is also significant. Regardless of their social status, Palestinian Arabs regularly encounter striking manifestations of rabid anti-Arab Zionist chauvinism. They are put in a situation when only the long-term slogans of national and social emancipation—today these being the right to self-determination up to and including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state—can inspire them to struggle. No half-way reforms, no attempts to give Palestinians "autonomy" can solve the Palestinian problem. In this connection, Dr. Anis Sayegh has rightly remarked:

"For the Arabs, then, the moral drawn from the establishment of Israel is that the solution of the Palestine problem will not only be the end of the tragedy of a million and a quarter of displaced people now living in the lands of their brethren, but also the guarantee of a happy, free and progressive life for an additional one hundred million Arabs."¹

¹ Dr. Anis Sayegh. *Palestine and Arab Nationalism*, Beirut, 1970, p. 68.

Chapter IV

Conditions for Victory of Palestinians' Just Cause. The Soviet Union's Position on the Palestinian Issue

The *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel* attempts to persuade its readers that "on May 14, 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel, the name Palestine ceased to exist as a politico-legal term". The aim of such statements by official Israeli propaganda and Israeli politicians is obvious—to prove the unprovable and throw doubt on the legality of Palestinians' demands. But the real and potential effect of the Palestinian factor on the arrangement of class and political forces in the Arab world, as well as on the policies of individual Arab countries and political parties, is obvious.

At present, paradoxically, the United States and Israel pretend that Israeli aggression in Lebanon has made the Palestinian problem non-existent. In fact, there are real prerequisites for convening a representative international conference on the future of the Palestinian people and on ways of solving the Palestinian problem on a constructive basis. These are the decisions of the Arab summit in Fez, six points of the Soviet position announced on October 16, 1982, and the numerous resolution of the UN General Assembly.

It should be recalled that the second point of the Soviet proposal clearly and unambiguously speaks of the need for a constructive solution of the Palestinian problem through satisfying the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own state in territories freed from Israeli occupation. This means that a Palestinian state should exist along with the state of Israel and not instead of it. The same point of the Soviet proposal repeats the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolution on the right of the Palestinians to return to their national home or to receive compensation for property lost as a result of forcible deportation or many years of living away from home.

At present it is becoming particularly important to continue consistent and purposeful efforts to rally all Palestinian organizations, to invigorate their struggle for national and social emancipation and to strengthen the alliance between the Palestinians and the forefront detachments of the Arab national-liberation movement and all political forces in Arab countries and elsewhere, which support the Palestinians' just cause.

If one is to characterize briefly the general situation in the Middle East, it is apparent that the unending tragedy of the Arab people of Palestine, deprived of the possibility to exercise their national legitimate rights as a result of the aggressive actions of Israeli Zionist rulers, is a serious source of extreme tension in the Middle East. To find a realistic and concrete approach to the problem of the future of the Palestinian people within the framework of a just and lasting settlement, it is above all necessary to secure the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and establishment of their own state. To dissociate a Middle East settlement from its core—the Palestinian problem—means to undermine and discredit the very idea of attaining a balanced and just peace in the Middle East.

Arab patriots see the Soviet position on the Middle

East settlement and, specifically, on the Palestinian problem, as a constructive and realistic programme for establishing a genuine peace in the region.

There is no need to repeat in detail the Soviet position on the Palestinian problem. It will be recalled that during discussion of the Palestinian problem at the United Nations in 1947 the Soviet Union proposed founding a dual Arab-Jewish democratic state in Palestine. But the Soviet proposal met with no support. Today it is clear that it was a profoundly fair and far-sighted proposal, whose implementation could have saved the Arab people of Palestine from many sufferings and hardships. Eventually, in order to secure the legitimate rights of the Arab and Jewish peoples to self-determination, the Soviet Union proposed that two states—Arab and Jewish—be established in Palestine. The Soviet Union proposed the following measures:

1. The British mandate for Palestine must be withdrawn as from January 1, 1948.

2. The British troops must be withdrawn from Palestine within the shortest possible time, but not later than three or four months after the withdrawal of the mandate.

3. A transition period should be established in Palestine from the time of withdrawal of the mandate to the time of the proclamation of independent Jewish and Arab states, this period being as short as possible—not longer than one year from the withdrawal of the mandate.

4. During the transition period, following the withdrawal of the British mandate, Palestine would be governed by the United Nations represented by the Security Council through a special commission composed of representatives of states members of the Security Council who would be working in Palestine.

5. Upon arrival in Palestine the special commission must carry out measures to define the frontiers of the Jewish and Arab states in accordance with the General Assembly resolution on the division of Palestine.

6. Upon consultation with the democratic parties and public organizations in the Jewish and Arab states, the special commission would elect in each state a provisional government council. The councils in both states would function under the special commission's general guidance.

7. The provisional government council in each state would hold elections to a constituent assembly on a democratic basis, not later than six months after it is set up. Election regulations would be worked out in each state by the provisional government council and approved by the special commission of the Security Council.

8. The constituent assembly in each state would work out a democratic constitution and elect a government.

9. The provisional government councils in both states would undertake, under the special commission's supervision, the setting-up of administrative bodies of authority—central and local.

10. The provisional government councils in both states must form, within the shortest possible time, an armed militia numerically sufficient to maintain internal order and prevent border incidents. The armed militia in each state would be under the operative command of the national authority, with general military and political control being exercised by the special commission.

During the Palestine war the Soviet Union consistently demanded an end to the bloodshed and a solution that could bring peace back to the region. It should be noted that up to the 1967 Zionist aggression practically nothing was said in the Arab world about the right of the Palestinian Arabs to their own independent statehood. Their rights were interpreted rather broadly, with emphasis on the Palestinians' right to return to their national home.

The Soviet Union has always heeded the position of the Arab states on the Palestinian problem, but it has always viewed the question of the Palestinians' rights as

a broader one than merely the problem of refugees. Thus, a Soviet-Yemeni communique (March 1964) spoke of the need to solve the Palestinian problem in accordance with the relevant UN resolution and with due regard for the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arabs. A joint Soviet-Syrian communique on the results of talks between the Soviet Union and Syria in April 1966 said that "both states confirm their solidarity with the Palestinian Arabs, support their legitimate rights in the just struggle against Zionism used by imperialist forces to heighten tension in the Near and Middle East". A joint Soviet-Iraqi communique on the results of the visit of the Iraqi government delegation to the Soviet Union in August 1966 said: "The Soviet side fully supports the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine. It supports the just struggle and efforts of the Arab states against aggressive schemes aimed at using the Palestinian problem to increase tension in the Middle East." A joint Soviet-Moroccan communique, published as a result of the visit of King Hassan to Moscow in October 1966, expressed confidence that "the movement of the Arab peoples for unity on an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial basis promotes the success of their joint struggle to secure the legitimate rights and interests of the Arabs". A communique on the visit of the Syrian Arab Socialist Renaissance Party to the Soviet Union, published on February 12, 1967, noted:

"Both parties resolutely condemn Zionism's aggressive policy, as well as the schemes of imperialists and reactionary forces in the Arab world, plots and other subversive actions against progressive Arab states. They declare their full support for the struggle of the Palestinian Arabs for their inalienable and legitimate rights."

Qualitative changes in the position of the Palestinians themselves and their better realization of their rights correspondingly affected the formulations on the es-

sence of the Palestinian problem after the war of June 1967.

The Soviet foreign-policy course aimed at all-round support for the Palestinians' just cause, their right to the establishment of an independent state, found reflection in all the official documents on the Middle East situation which the Soviet Union has put forward and which have resulted from the exchange of views with other governments. The concluding official report on the visit of the Egyptian delegation, led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Fahmi, to Moscow in October 1974 was the first such document clearly to define that the right of the Arab people of Palestine to their own national home must be secured among their legitimate rights. During an official visit to Cairo in February 1975, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko spoke of the need to secure the "legitimate right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination and their own statehood". Several days earlier, the Soviet Foreign Minister had remarked in Damascus that the national aspirations of the Arab people of Palestine must include the establishment of their own state.

After the war of June 1967, when the Palestine liberation movement realized the significance of political methods of anti-Israeli struggle, favourable conditions emerged for the development of contacts between the Soviet Union and the Palestine liberation movement, as well as between Soviet organizations and the PLO. That these relations rose to a qualitatively higher stage was largely due to the emergence of new realistic tendencies in the approach of the Palestine liberation movement and its chief detachments to the problem of a Middle East settlement.

In recent years Soviet-Palestinian relations have been strengthened and markedly improved thanks to the anti-imperialist, uncompromising course of the leadership of the Palestine liberation movement, in particular its assessment of the separate Egyptian-Israeli agreements on

the disengagement of troops, and opposition to the US-Israeli attempts to split the front of Arab states and to foist on them a settlement favoured by Israel.

The very first Soviet-Palestinian document contained the Soviet public's assessment of the Palestine liberation movement. The communique on the visit of a PLO delegation to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1972 said:

"Representatives of the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with the Countries of Asia and Africa... highly appreciated the just struggle of the Arab people of Palestine against the invaders, pointed to the anti-imperialist, liberating character of the Palestine liberation movement, winning the solidarity and support of all anti-imperialist, progressive forces in the world..., and stressed that the Soviet people would continue to aid the Palestine liberation movement in its struggle against imperialism, reaction and Israeli aggression, for the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine."

As a result of the visit of a PLO delegation to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1974 an agreement was reached on the opening of a PLO bureau in Moscow. The bureau began to function in the summer of 1976, and since 1979 it has enjoyed a diplomatic status.

The many visits by top-level Palestinian delegations to Moscow have demonstrated the two sides' full accord on a comprehensive Middle East settlement, including the need to solve the Palestinian problem. Congresses of the CPSU have spoken of this on many occasions. The political, military and economic assistance given by the Soviet Union to the Palestinians' just cause is broad and varied. It began a long time ago and has been growing. This support and assistance is enjoyed by Palestinian representatives at the United Nations and other international forums, by Palestinian students studying at Soviet universities, colleges, vocational schools and military academies, by Palestinian women and children.

Palestinian soldiers are also aware of Soviet aid—they are fighting with Soviet arms.

The significant contribution made by the Soviet Union to the resolution of the Palestinian problem on a just basis, along with its moral, political and military support for the Palestine liberation movement, is serious, real and tangible help to the Palestinians in their struggle for the noble aims of national and social emancipation.

The Soviet Union's confidence that there are real possibilities for eliminating the causes of the Middle East conflict, for reaching an agreement on a comprehensive settlement within the framework of a special conference, as well as the need to make immediate efforts on a world scale to ensure a turn from war to peace in the Middle East and to solve the Palestinian problem on a just basis form a favourable environment for settling the entire Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a settlement is urgently demanded by life itself, the interests of international peace and security.

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Yevgeni DMITRIEV



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