

Palestine Focus

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Eyewitness Report

Palestinians Confront Israel's Iron Fist

By Steve Goldfield

A visit to the occupied West Bank and Gaza in 1986 leaves two very strong impressions: the Israeli policy of harassment and repression, the so-called Iron Fist, is gradually becoming harsher while at the same time Palestinian determination to remain and to resist has become as hard as steel.

The Israelis are debating what amounts essentially to two alternatives for the Palestinians. Labor, Likud, and the extreme right would all like to pressure Palestinians to leave: the growing rightwing movement epitomized by Meir Kahane and Moshe Levinger openly advocates rapid removal with military force.

The Iron Fist has failed in removing large numbers of Palestinians by the use of a range of forms of coercion short of mass expulsion. Thus the second Israeli alternative is to create what they would like to be a long-term stable solution: liquidation of the Palestinian issue in its national aspect, with King Hussein of Jordan recruiting Palestinians to abandon the PLO and take over local admin-



Beach Camp, Gaza Strip.

istrative functions, what one Palestinian derisively described as the police and the garbage.

George Bush's visit to Israel and Jordan and Moroccan King Hassan's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Peres are opening

gambits in this second strategy. Unable to persuade significant numbers of Palestinians to abandon the PLO for Israel and Jordan, a United States-financed "Marshall Plan," openly espoused by Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, will attempt to buy support for King Hussein.

The new Jordanian five-year plan earmarks \$1.29 billion to be funneled through Palestinians who swear allegiance to the Jordanian king. By offering the illusion of re-

lief from chronic economic depression and lack of basic services, Hussein is telling Palestinians to take the money and leave the PLO. The issue of Palestinian self-determination is not to be addressed at all.

Banks have been closed and the flow of money from outside has been shut off. Traditional sources of financial aid are to be replaced by a single flow under Hussein's complete control. The Israeli-approved proposed Jordanian development plan is to send in money in a crass attempt to buy political support for King Hussein through bribery.

King Hassan's public meeting with Peres was intended to make it easier for Hussein to do the same. And Bush's visit gave the U.S. blessing (and money) for the plan, despite the fact that the Bush delegation continually insulted the Jordanians, for instance by suggesting they borrow helicopters from the Israelis to transport the visiting American delegation.

The Situation "on the Ground"

During an eleven-day visit to the occupied West Bank and Gaza in August 1986, six members of the National Executive Committee of the November 29th Committee for Palestine met scores of Palestinians from all walks of life, heard the personal testimony of victims of systematic torture and prolonged imprisonment for political offenses, spoke to writers and editors of a magazine

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Editorial

1987: The Year of Palestine

Palestinians and their friends around the world commemorate November 29th as the Day of International Solidarity with the Palestinian people. On this day the world recognizes that the Palestinian people have accomplished much against formidable obstacles. The fact that people around the world now know that there is a Palestinian people is in itself a major accomplishment.

Twenty years ago, when Israel began its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the independent expression of Palestinian identity had only just begun to develop. Today the Palestine Liberation Organization represents that identity. The PLO has rebuilt the shattered social fabric of the Palestinian people. Not only has the PLO organized the armed defense of the Palestinian people's rights, it has also created national institutions such as schools, social programs, clinics, trade unions, and professional unions.

Today the demands of the Palestinian people are part of the agenda for all people seeking peace and justice around the world, including progressive Israelis and Jews. In fact, the PLO is recognized diplomatically by more countries than is Israel. The interna-

tional support that the PLO receives includes the United Nations declaration of November 29th—the day in 1947 when the partition of Palestine was voted by the world body—a day of international solidarity. Forty years after that vote, the continuing denial of Palestinian self-determination has risen to the top of the agenda of world opinion. A consensus now recognizes that the Palestinian people have chosen the PLO as their sole legitimate representative and that, if any genuine peace is to be achieved, it must be made with the movement and organization which—as a recent opinion poll of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza reaffirmed—over 90 percent of the Palestinian people declare as the voice of their aspirations.

All of this support has been achieved by a people who have been denied a homeland, who live under military occupation, and who face one of the mightiest military powers on earth.

November 29th, 1986 has an even greater significance than in years past because the date marks the start of *The Year of Palestine*, so designated by the nongovernmental organizations of the United Nations Committee on the Question of Palestine. With actions also expected by the UN General Assembly, the upcoming year will focus even greater attention on the Palestinian people, their aspirations for self-determination, and the hopes for peace in the Middle East, than ever before.

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Violence: Istanbul and Karachi

The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly condemned the recent attack on an Istanbul synagogue and the senseless hijacking in Karachi. The attack on the Istanbul Jewish community was a racist, anti-Jewish attack. It was not an attack on Zionists or the state of Israel, and it has no connection with Israel or its occupation of Palestine, except insofar as it is misused to attack genuine Palestinian resistance. The Turkish Jews have been living peacefully with Muslim and Christian fellow citizens of their country, and it is precisely *not* PLO policy to attack Jews as Jews.

Similarly the Karachi airplane hijacking served no other purpose than to fuel the Western campaign against "terrorism." Such acts do not serve the interests of the Palestinian people. Rather they serve those who try to paint over the clearcut and just national aspirations of the Palestinian people with the emotional but meaningless label of "terrorism." While the November 29th Committee for Palestine joins the PLO in condemning such actions, we do not confuse them with legitimate resistance, such as the recent attack on Israeli soldiers in occupied East Jerusalem.

The deaths of innocent people in Istanbul and Karachi is a tragedy. That tragedy is only compounded when Israel and the Reagan administration use such sad events to feed "terrorism" hysteria and divert attention from the real issues of the Middle East. And the victims will have suffered in vain if their tragedy is coldbloodedly used to perpetuate the tragedy of Palestinian dispossession. □

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TO OUR READERS: We apologize for the delay in producing this expanded issue of *Palestine Focus*. We believe you will find it worth the wait. If you are a subscriber, the number of issues you will receive will not be affected.

Israel's Second Decade in Central America

By Jane Hunter

It was not long before the story of the headless corpse of a famous guerrilla fighter, Dr. Hugo Spadafora, proved to have its Israeli angle. Spadafora, a Panamanian who had most recently attached himself to the ARDE contra forces in Costa Rica led by Eden Pastora, was murdered September 15, 1985 in Panama and dumped a short distance inside Costa Rican territory. In October, his attorney told a Costa Rican newspaper that Spadafora had quit ARDE because he did not like the control over the anti-Nicaraguan mercenaries exercised by Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega by virtue of his being ARDE's channel for arms from Israel.

Spadafora was murdered as he was preparing to make declarations charging Noriega with drug trafficking. Drug trafficking, intelligence peddling, the Spadafora murder, and election rigging are among the crimes recently credited to Noriega in a series of front-page stories, seemingly calculated to instigate his political demise. In the course of those charges, *Newsweek* reported that Noriega had been "peddling U.S. secrets to Israel," in meetings with "high-ranking Mossad—Israel's CIA—agents in Panama, Canada and Europe in recent years." *Newsweek* also reported that a multimillion-dollar Israeli "contribution" to the president of Panama might have been a payoff to Noriega.

Teodora Ducach, the Mexico City paper *Excelsior's* correspondent in Jerusalem,

writes of many instances of such payoffs by Israel "to suborn defense ministries with the sole object of nailing down arms sales." Last fall, Pesakh Ben-Or, the agent of a number of state-owned and private Israeli arms companies made a \$10,000 donation to Guatemalan presidential candidate Jorge Carpio Nicolle; the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, which reported the donation, said \$50,000 more had been promised.

More stories are bound to come to light as Israel heads into its second decade of involvement in Central America. Ben-Or, for instance, besides selling arms to Guatemala and the anti-Nicaragua contras, recruited Israeli trainers for Carpio Nicolle's bodyguards.

Carpio Nicolle was runner-up in both the first and second rounds of the election and,

as Guatemala's vice president, was among the dignitaries who turned out in early May to greet then Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir at a ceremony in a Guatemala City synagogue. Also present at the synagogue ceremony was Guatemala City Mayor Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen. In February Arzu admitted that the two Israeli thugs who had kidnapped and beaten up the financial secretary of the Guatemalan municipal workers union, were in his employ.

Shamir, on a three-nation swing through Central America, denied that he was hawking arms, but there are indications that Israel wants to continue as it has since 1977 as Guatemala's major arms supplier. In February, the Guatemalan defense minister reported an offer by the Israeli ambassador to the newly elected government of Guatemala

for "military cooperation." On March 26 a shipload of Israeli weapons was impounded by the Greek government; Guatemala was one of its scheduled destinations.

This year the now retired Guatemalan army chief of staff Benedicto Lucas Garcia told a reporter that Israel had provided two intelligence computers—not one as had been noted since 1981, when the Guatemalans began computerizing death squad lists and pinpointing insurgents' safe houses—to the regime of his brother Romeo Lucas Garcia (1978–1982). One of the computers was used by the G-4 tactical division, the other as the military's "nerve center." Lucas also confirmed previous reports that Israel had set up a munitions factory and that Israeli advisors had trained his officers in the use of the Israeli communications equipment they had purchased.



Soldier with Galil rifle in Guatemalan refugee camp.

Marcello Montecino/MERIP Reports

Honduras and El Salvador, also important Israeli arms customers during the seventies and early eighties, are now supplied by the United States. Yet from Panama in the south to Guatemala to the north, Israel remains a major player in the intelligence, counter-revolutionary, and counterinsurgency efforts backed by local rightists and the Reagan administration in Central America.

It is difficult to gauge the extent of Israel's activities because the Israeli government maintains blanket secrecy on its weapons deals with Central America and lies flagrantly about other areas of involvement.

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FOCUS On Action

By Steve Goldfield

In September 1986, twenty-two dancers, singers, and musicians from the *al-Fanun* (Justice) Palestinian folklore troupe performed in sixteen American cities before thirteen thousand people. The troupe, which is based at the Friends of Society charitable association in the Palestinian city of el-Bireh, near Ramallah, was the first such group from Palestine to perform in the United States. In addition to a performance of a combination opera/ballet/folkdance story of a Palestinian who fought with the British in World War I and then against them for independence, the group danced the traditional Palestinian dabkeh and sang both old and new songs to ecstatic audiences. Mayor Gus Newport of Berkeley, California, among others, was instrumental in helping the troupe to obtain U.S. visas.

The November 29th Committee for Palestine held its first National Council meeting in Chicago in September 1986. The council, held midway between national conventions, reviews the work of the entire organization and updates plans and programs. This year's meeting, which was addressed by Palestinian scholar and political analyst Naseer Aruri, focused on organizational consolidation and on plans for 1987.

With chapters now in twenty-seven cities, the committee must solve many problems posed by rapid growth. At the same time, the call by Palestine NGOs associated with the United Nations to make 1987 a Year of Palestine will be enthusiastically taken up by the November 29th Committee for Palestine. More details will be announced at events celebrating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, November 29th.

Another important result of the National Council was the formation of a Latino Task Force to build links between the Palestine solidarity movement and Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. The task force will begin by producing materials on Palestine in Spanish.

The American bombing of Libya, stepped-up CIA attacks on Nicaragua, and Reagan's rejection of nuclear disarmament in Iceland have increased the urgency for the broad peace and nonintervention movement to find channels to express protest. One such channel is the mass demonstration; nationwide protests were held in cities across the United States on October 25, 1986. The na-

tional "Actions for Peace, Jobs & Justice" called for abolition of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000, stopping the U.S. war in Central America and ending intervention in the Middle East, redirecting resources from the military to meet human needs and defend human rights, and cutting all ties with South Africa and ending racism at home. Rallies in many cities had Palestinian speakers and speakers representing the November 29th Committee for Palestine.

A six-member delegation from the National Executive Committee of the November 29th Committee for Palestine spent three weeks in the Middle East in August 1986. In Palestine, the delegation visited refugee camps, clinics and hospitals, charitable societies, and many other Palestinian institutions and discussed the current situation with Palestinians from many walks of life. Aside from gathering information and firsthand experience, the purpose of the delegation was to strengthen relations with groups and individuals, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza, and to prepare groundwork for future delegations and material aid projects.

Hartford, Connecticut was the location for a broadside attack against the Puerto Rican independence movement in the United States and for an August 1986 rally to demonstrate broad support for the independistas. One year before, thirteen Puerto Rican independence activists were arrested and brought illegally to Hartford for trials isolated from their community. November 29th Committee for Palestine National Executive Committee member Rabab Hadi spoke at the rally.

General Yaron, the Israeli officer in charge of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982, was censured by the Israeli government's Kahan Commission and removed from active command for three years. Now he has been rewarded with a recent appointment as Israeli military attache in Washington. The U.S. government found nothing improper about Yaron's appointment. Given the recent revelations about Israeli espionage against the United States, perhaps the Reagan administration found it only natural for someone like Yaron to be given responsibility to oversee Israeli military activities in the United States.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, however, has launched a campaign to focus the outrage many Americans feel toward General Yaron's role as a principal author of the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. ADC has produced postcards to protest Yaron's appointment and organized demonstrations in cities across the country.

November 29th Committee for Palestine National

Executive Committee member Leticia Pena spoke in Houston in September at the first activity of the committee's new chapter there. Leticia, a member of the delegation to the Middle East, reported on her trip. The program also featured speakers from Central America and South Africa solidarity organizations.

Ann Arbor, Michigan was the site of a mid-October conference entitled "Policy of Oppression: U.S. Intervention in South Africa, Central America, and the Middle East," sponsored by the Free South Africa Coordinating Committee, November 29th Committee for Palestine, Latin America Solidarity Committee, and Center for Afro-American and African Studies. Keynote speakers for the conference were Manning Marable and Alexander Cockburn. November 29th Committee for Palestine National Director Jeanne Butterfield spoke on current crises and media "miscoverage" of the Middle East. Julia Petry, from the committee's Lansing chapter, spoke on Mideast history and possible solutions. Butterfield also spoke at an event in East Lansing on "Politics of Racism: Israel to South Africa."

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign held its annual conference in Chicago in September with the theme, "Palestine and Justice: The Next Phase." The very impressive roster of speakers included South African anti-Apartheid leader Rev. Allan Boesak, Noam Chomsky, former Attorney-General Ramsey Clark, Palestine National Council Member Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Israeli peace activist Gideon Spiro, Eqbal Ahmad, Palestinian artist Kamal Boulata, and many others.

The Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) invited an equally impressive list of speakers to its nineteenth annual convention in Boston in November under the theme, "Whither the Arab World?" Among those participating in panels were Salim Tamari from Bir Zeit University, Noam Chomsky, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Edward Said, Naseer Aruri, Fred Dube of the African National Congress of South Africa, and Adrien Wing and Benjamin Currence of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. November 29th Committee for Palestine National Chair Dr. Steve Goldfield joined Currence, Wing, and Dube on a panel on the United States, South Africa, and Israel.

Rev. Frederick Douglas Kirkpatrick, who died recently in New York, was an active and long-time supporter of justice for the Palestinian people. Kirk, as he was known by friends, sang at meetings and organized not only for the Palestinian people but for all the oppressed. His loss is great; we mourn his passing; but we dedicate ourselves to continue the work for which he stood. □

Chicanos and Palestinians

By Leticia Peña

People ask me all the time, "Why are you, as a Chicana, interested in the Palestinian issue and why are you involved with the November 29th Committee for Palestine?" I would like to answer that question as a Chicana, as someone who has been involved in the Chicano movement and in Palestine solidarity work, and as someone who recently traveled to occupied Palestine and witnessed firsthand the repression being carried out against Palestinians.

My experience in the Chicano movement and Palestine solidarity movement has led me to the conclusion that, objectively, there is no question that the more recent colonial experience of the Palestinian people is historically analogous to the experience of Chicanos in the southwestern United States. Chicanos, as well as Palestinians, have both been the victims of colonialism and U.S. policies at different times in history.

Geographically, Chicanos and Palestinians are miles apart. Despite that distance, however, there are many parallels in their histories. For example, military force was used to gain and maintain control against Mexicans and Palestinians. The Palestinians—like the Mexicans in the southwestern United States—the original inhabitants of Palestine, were reduced to second-class status in their own lands. As a result of the process of colonization, both Chicanos and Palestinians have had an alien culture and government imposed on them. Additionally, both peoples have become the victims of racism: Palestinians in the form of Zionism. Both peoples have been and continue to be discriminated against in education, employment, land ownership, etc. Both peoples have been rendered politically and economically powerless. Because of the parallels in our histories, we must take up work around Palestine. However, that is not the only reason why we have to link our struggles with those of the Palestinian people.

Given the many struggles presently facing our community, it is sometimes difficult for us, as Chicanos, to commit ourselves to provide the kind of support and solidarity needed by the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination. But we can no longer sit back and argue that our time and efforts should be exclusively devoted to issues in this country. Our struggles here are directly affected by the policies of the U.S. government and Israel in the Middle East, policies that are not in our own interest to support.

We must take up work around Palestine, not because it is charity work or because our only desire is to support Palestinians, but because it is critical to our own struggles here. The threat of war in the Middle East affects all people in the United States. The enormous amount of money spent by the United States as part of the Pentagon budget and in Israel has a particular effect on third-world communities in this country.

As military aid to Israel escalates to \$4 billion per year, social programs here continue to be cut. We feel the effect of these cuts in particular as Chicanos. It is no coincidence that social programs in this country have been drastically cut or eliminated while Israel has become the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world.

My recent trip to the Middle East made it clear to me that we must support the struggle of Palestinians for self-determination. It made it clear to me why we have to support that struggle and why we have to link it up to what is happening in our communities here. So, when people ask me why I support the Palestinian people and why I am involved

in the November 29th Committee for Palestine, I respond that I support it because:

It is no accident that the state of Israel was established in 1948 by stealing Palestinian land when one hundred years before, in 1948, the United States expanded by stealing the land of the southwest United States from Mexico. Both acts, although one hundred years apart and in different continents, were acts of colonialism and they continue to this day.

When I saw Palestinians waiting at the "slave markets" to get illegal day work at slave wages, I saw Mexican workers sneaking into the United States to get jobs and also to be exploited at slave wages. Similar immigration policies are practiced against both peoples. Much like Mexican undocumented workers in this country, in Israel the lowest-paid and hardest-worked workers are Palestinians. They are employed as agricultural workers and laborers. Many Palestinians from the occupied territories are denied papers to work in Israel, much like undocumented workers from Mexico are not permitted to work in this country. It is illegal for Palestinians from the West Bank to spend a night in Israel. It is also illegal for Mexican undocumented workers to spend a night in the United States. However, both governments often turn their faces the other way because a cheap labor force is needed.

When I saw how the Israelis are attempting to destroy Palestinian culture, I thought about this country's attempts to destroy my own people's culture.

When I heard about how people are getting deported from their own land, I thought about undocumented workers.

When I went into Gaza, what I saw was a Mexican barrio. The poverty, the disease, the unemployment were the same.

When I saw Zionism in action, its racist practice, I saw racism against Chicanos in this country.

When I saw the Israeli military, I saw the Texas Rangers and the Migra.

When I saw the Israeli settlers with their Uzis, I saw the Ku Klux Klan and the death squads of Latin America.

When I saw the Israeli settlements, I saw the whites-only neighborhoods of this country.

When I saw the settlers with their Uzis, I saw the Ku Klux Klan and the death squads of Latin America.

When I spoke to Palestinians who have been deported from their land and are unable to see their families, I think about how I would feel if I was denied the opportunity to travel to Mexico to see my relatives.

What I saw in occupied Palestine and what convinced me more than anything that I, as a Chicana, have to speak out against what is going on there was the role of the United States. Because when I saw how the United States supports Israel and all the repression perpetrated against the Palestinian people and all Arab people, I saw how the United States supports Duarte, Pinochet, the contras, everything that is repressive in Latin America. I became convinced that the armed settlers of Israel, with our aid, are the death squads of Chile, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

Chicano-Palestinian Parallels

In *Occupied America*, a leading book on Chicano history, Rodolfo Acuña writes that the "parallels between the Chicanos' experience in the United States and the colonization of other third-world peoples are too similar to dismiss." He then proceeds to define "colonization" by setting forth conditions which generally accompany it:

- (1) The land of one people is invaded by people from another country, who later use military force to gain and maintain control.

(2) The original inhabitants become subjects of the conquerors involuntarily.

(3) The conquered have an alien culture and government imposed upon them.

(4) The conquered become the victims of racism and cultural genocide and are relegated to a submerged status.

(5) The conquered are rendered politically and economically powerless.

(6) The conquerors feel they have a "mission" in occupying the area in question and believe that they have undeniable privileges by virtue of their conquest.

History shows us that each of these conditions is applicable to the experiences of both Chicanos and Palestinians.

In the 1840s, the United States embarked on a campaign of colonialist expansionism aimed at expropriating land from Mexico. As a result, in 1846 the United States invaded Mexico. This act precipitated a war that was to last for almost two years and which resulted in the deaths of almost 1 million Mexicans.

The "Yankee" colonizers, motivated by greed and economic forces, rationalized their actions with the concept of "manifest destiny" and the racist dehumanization of the Mexican people. Such attitudes are rampant in writings of that period.

For example, in 1847, the *American Review* stated that Mexicans were yielding to "a superior population, insensibly oozing into her territories, changing her customs and outliving, out-trading, exterminating her weaker blood." Similar racist attitudes appeared in the *New York Herald*, which stated in the same year that the "universal Yankee nation can regenerate and disenfranchise the people of Mexico in a few years; and we believe it is part of our destiny to civilize that beautiful country."

Throughout the war, the "colonizers"

spread a reign of terror which they themselves chronicled. Samuel E. Chamberlain, an army recruit, in *My Confessions* wrote about the atrocities that the Anglos, and in particular the Texas Rangers, perpetrated against the Mexican population. He describes one such incident:

Most of the butchered Mexicans had been scalped; only three men were found unharmed. A rough crucifix was fastened to a rock, and some irreverent wretch had crowned the image with a bloody scalp. A sickening smell filled the place. The surviving women and children sent up loud screams on seeing us, thinking we had returned to finish the work!

Chamberlain also wrote about the brutality of the Texas Rangers in an incident at Rancho de San Francisco:

The place was surrounded, the doors forced in, and all the males capable of bearing arms were dragged out, tied to a post, and shot! ... Thirty-six Mexicans were shot at this place, a half hour given for the horrified survivors, women and children, to remove their little household goods, then the torch was applied to the houses, and by the light of the conflagration, the ferocious Tejanos rode off to fresh scenes of blood.

The war with Mexico ended in 1848 with the surrender of Mexico to the militarily superior United States and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which essentially acknowledged



Maria Varela/450 Years of Chicano History

the annexation by the United States of half of the Mexican national territory. The land which Mexico lost to the United States included what is known today as the states of California, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, and portions of Colorado. Texas, which had also belonged to Mexico, had been annexed by the United States a few years earlier.

Under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the United States promised that the inhabitants of the stolen lands would enjoy "all the rights of citizens of the United States, according to the principles of the Constitution." They shall, it said, "be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property." Besides the rights of citizenship, Chicanos were also to have the right to maintain and keep their culture and language.

The treaty also guaranteed ownership of grants of land to Mexicans living in the colonized area. It specifically provided that their property would be "inviolably respected." Nevertheless, with U.S. occupancy came the stealing of millions of acres of land from the real owners. The struggle to regain those lands continues to this day in New Mexico and southern Colorado.

Despite all the guarantees set forth in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, Chicanos nevertheless have been subjected to violations of even their most basic human rights. Instead of the concessions promised by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, they have been relegated to second-class citizenship and subjected to exploitation and racism. This experience is tragically described in *A Documentary of the Mexican Americans*:

As the only minority, apart from Indians ever acquired by conquest, the [Chicanos] have been subjected to economic, social, and political discrimination, as well as a great deal of violence at the hands of their Anglo conquerors. During the period from 1865 to 1920, there were more lynchings of [Chicanos] in the Southwest. But the worst violence has been the unrelenting discrimination against the cultural heritage—the language and customs—of the [Chicanos], coupled with the economic exploitation of the entire group. Property rights were guaranteed, but not protected, by either the federal or state governments. Equal protection under law has consistently been a mockery in the [Chicano] communities.

Exactly one hundred years later in 1948, with the economic and military support of the same government that expropriated almost half the Mexican nation—the United States—the Zionist movement succeeded in invading and stealing Palestine from its rightful owners. Three-quarters of Palestinians were kicked out of their homeland so that the state of Israel could be established.

The establishment of the state of Israel was no mere accident. Jews, severely perse-

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As a Palestinian newspaper published in Jerusalem under Israeli occupation, we have to abide by certain legal restrictions and other general guidelines set by Israeli authorities, individuals, soldiers, and police. These barriers restrict our work and our ability to report everything we would like to report.

Our work falls under two different legal systems. In Jerusalem, which the Israelis annexed to the state of Israel, we live under Israeli civil law. When we want to publish a newspaper, we apply for a permit from civil officials or the interior ministry and they give us licenses.

In the occupied territories, except for Jerusalem, there is military law or what is commonly known as martial law. The army is in charge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. If we want to sell our paper anywhere outside Jerusalem, that is, the rest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, we need to get permission from the military authorities. Our paper does not have a license from the military authorities in the West Bank and Gaza to distribute the paper. So the paper we sell here in Jerusalem cannot be vended in Ramallah or Bethlehem or Gaza.

Without a permit to sell, it is illegal to sell the paper, put it in a newsstand, or distribute it. The law says you are not allowed to *have* it. Many people do carry papers and the authorities do not really check every person. Usually when they want to nab somebody, they go to his house, search it, and if they see any "illegal" publications, they take them and interrogate the person to try and get him to admit to some kind of crime. If they cannot force him to "confess," they will use the newspaper as an excuse to arrest him. A number of people have been arrested, fined or imprisoned for possessing *Al-Fajr* or other restricted papers.

The two sets of laws our newspaper operates under are completely different. Military law is very clear and one-sided: they say "yes" or they say "no." That's it. No argument, no discussion, no recourse to the courts.

Censorship

Under civil law which grants us a license to publish a newspaper, we are expected to present all the materials we intend to publish to a military censor. The censorship regulation is part of the body of laws Israel is supposed to use against all newspapers. Israeli censorship is officially applicable to both Palestinian and Israeli newspapers.

Reality is different, however. There is discrimination in the way the law is applied. For example, there is a special agreement existing only between Israeli editors and military authorities. They have set up a joint committee which discusses items the military wants to censor and debate takes place.

In the Palestinian press, any subject or material regarding military secrets, army maneuvers or any army situation, is banned. Censorship also often includes political ideas, thoughts and information, anything regarding the feelings, aspirations and sympathies of the people in the occupied territories. Israel attempts to bar any kind of message or opinion on Palestinian nationalism. Any time we speak of our political aspirations and desires or about what represents us politically, we get into a struggle with the censor.

Even within the Palestinian press, censorship varies. Censorship is much harsher towards the Arabic press than with the English-language press.

As for the mechanics of censorship, the law requires that we submit every article, news story, advertisement, picture, cartoon and headline we intend to publish to military censors before it is actually published. The censor then has four choices: he can reject an article; he can pass the whole article; he can reject parts of an article and pass other parts; or he can postpone making a decision. He can say he doesn't want to make a decision yet and wait twenty-four hours before deciding what to do with the article during which time the article cannot be used.

At the same time, the law forbids us to leave an empty space where an article was censored. If an article is cen-

sored, we have to find another story to put in its place so that it doesn't appear to the average reader there has been any problem. Naturally, we have to prepare more text than there is room for.

The fact that there are no real guidelines as to what is allowed causes us many problems. When we have a story or a tip for a story and want to send out a reporter to cover it, I as an editor have to think twice before sending someone on an assignment I think has a very good chance of being censored. The reporter himself is going to ask to be given a different assignment because every reporter wants to be published and will choose the kind of story that will ensure the appearance of his byline.

Other Restrictions

There are often other restrictions placed on journalists, sometimes official, sometimes unofficial. Whenever there is a demonstration or a curfew or any kind of problem in the occupied territories, the army normally declares that area a closed military zone and journalists are not allowed to get inside to find out what is going on. Sometimes the army lets in a foreign or an Israeli journalist but Palestinian journalists are the least likely to be able to enter a closed military zone or a place where some sort of action

Anything regarding the feelings, aspirations, and sympathies of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories is censored.

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This "sword over our head" causes self-censorship. We become tools in the hands of the authorities, choosing one story over another, choosing one area of coverage over another. We accomplish what the

is taking place.

We are not included in the distribution of information by the official Israeli organs either. If we hear about the confiscation of land, we are unable to call up a spokesperson to confirm the information. The Israelis never present us with the information in a direct way. Sometimes literature is distributed to all journalists and we pick it up. But we are unable to form contacts and get into the information infrastructure.

Consequently our news is often secondhand unless we have a Palestinian source for the news. For example, if a soldier hits somebody, the person who was victimized can talk to us. But it is very difficult for us to get official information from the military. And it frequently happens that the victims are afraid to talk to us, to give their name or any of the details. We are left in a vacuum, unable to get news firsthand. We are forced against our will to depend on secondhand or Israeli press sources which might distort the story or bias it in a certain direction.

Israel Closes *Al-Mithaq* and *Al-Ahd*

By Douglas Franks

The Israeli authorities recently shut down two Palestinian publications, the daily newspaper *Al-Mithaq* and the weekly magazine *Al-Ahd*. The final closure order was handed down on August 22. It was read aloud in a court session lasting barely one minute, according to Mahmoud al-Khatib, editor-in-chief of *Al-Mithaq*.

On July 6 the Jerusalem district commissioner Rafael Levy issued the first order against the two publications on the grounds that they were funded by an illegal political organization, charges refuted by *Al-Mithaq's* lawyer, Elias Khouri. Khouri and his client maintain that while the paper has a particular Palestinian position, it is politically and financially independent. "We challenged the Israeli authorities to show one item of evidence proving their allegations," Khouri said. As in other cases against Palestinians in Israeli courts, Khouri and the *Al-Mithaq* defendants were not permitted to even see the evidence, if any.

Citing Israel's reliance on the pretext of "security," Khouri said that "the Israeli government hides behind the security immunity and the emergency regulations of 1945, against which the Israelis themselves were the first to raise a cry during the British mandate, in order to carry out political decisions."

Radwan Abu Ayyash, head of the Arab Journalists Association, identified Israel's political motivation behind the closures: "The real reason for the decision to close the two papers is not secret evidence, but the intention to implement the American-Israeli-Jordanian plan against the will of the Palestinian people."

Stifling Palestinian political expression by shutting down their newspapers is nothing new. In 1983 the magazine *Al-Shira* was ordered closed, as was the daily *Al-Darb* in 1985 not long after it began publishing. Back in 1974, editor al-Khatib's father, who was then editor of *Al-Sha'ab* newspaper, was expelled when his paper criticized Israeli courting of Jordan.

Israel's actions against *Al-Mithaq* brought many protests. Soon after the first closure order was issued, the Committee Confront-

ing the Iron Fist organized a demonstration at Damascus Gate in Jerusalem to condemn the measure. Numerous delegations from the occupied territories visited the offices of the publications during the closure proceedings to offer and show support.

Radwan Abu Ayyash condemned the closures and vowed the Arab Journalists Association would challenge the Israeli actions. The association held a sit-in strike at the *Al-Mithaq* offices on August 15. Some one hundred journalists representing foreign and Israeli media participated, as well as representatives of local Palestinian media, women's organizations, cultural work committees, and workers unions. The journalists association also planned a one-day strike by all newspapers in support of *Al-Mithaq*.

Incisive statements of protest and support



Fit to Print

Our journalists face other problems as well. We have journalists who are placed under house arrest and not allowed to leave the village or town they live in during the day and not allowed to leave their home at night. If a journalist lives in Ramallah and works in Jerusalem and the Israelis place him under town arrest, he is restricted to his town and can't come to work.

Town arrest orders are placed without the army having to give a reason. They do not have to show a judge any evidence of why they chose this person or that person. The law gives the military governor wide-ranging powers to carry out town arrests against individuals.

One such journalist is Hamdi Farraj. He has been under almost two and a half years of consecutive town arrests. He was just released a few months ago but placed under town arrest again two weeks ago. He is unable to leave his town. He lives in a refugee camp so he can't even leave the overcrowded, ghetto-like refugee camp to come to work.

Another problem lately has been administrative detention. The authorities can pick up any person and put him in jail for six months without giving a reason, without charging him with any crime. He is kept off the street because the Israeli military governor feels his presence is a danger to the security of the state. No reason or proof is given.

Newspaper Closures

More dangerous than everything else is the latest attempt by the Israelis to close down a newspaper. The civil authorities give a newspaper a license to publish and the West Bank [occupation] authorities dispense licenses to distribute the newspaper. Now some of the licenses previously issued are being withdrawn.

One such case is the newspaper *Al-Mithaq* and the magazine *Al-Ahd*. *Al-Mithaq* has been published for seven years during which time the authorities said nothing. Both publications follow all the laws; they submit all their articles to the censor. Now, within the last two months, the authorities are saying they want them closed because they are a "security threat."

Who knows why for seven years they weren't a security threat. The paper has not changed its political line. It has stayed exactly the same editorially. Its editors have not changed. Yet now seven years later it is a threat. Both were closed down a few days ago and the owner has gone to the Israeli court and gotten an extension to publish for another ten days until the Israeli high court has a chance to hear the evidence. [They have since been permanently closed—ed.]

One of the dangers facing *Al-Mithaq*—and many other court cases as well—is that the authorities can present what they call "secret evidence." Secret evidence allows

them to show the judge a file (against an organization or person) in the absence of the defendant and his lawyer. The newspaper has no opportunity to question the evidence—gathered by intelligence or security officials—or to cross-examine the witnesses. The judge has the choice of accepting the evidence or rejecting it. Usually it is accepted.

tect Journalists, based in New York and whose honorary chair is Walter Cronkite, has taken a very active role and consistently kept abreast of our situation. It has regularly complained to the Israeli government about every infringement on journalists' rights. They are doing a good job.

The International Federation of Journalists has done

Most dangerous is the latest Israeli attempt to close a newspaper.

Why Israel Tolerates Any Palestinian Press

Despite all these problems, the press has survived. Many of our critics say that we nevertheless are still allowed a certain measure of saying what we want and expressing our points of view, and that there is a degree of democracy. But one has to look at Israel's motives in allowing the press to operate at all.

There are at least three reasons why the Israelis let the Palestinian press exist. The first is that with a public press, the people under occupation have a route to release their tensions. They can express themselves in a fairly harmless way. All their tensions are released on the pages of the newspaper. The Israelis feel physically safe because the Palestinian people's energies are being channeled into the press.

A second more important reason is that the authorities feel the moment they close the legally available press, an underground press will develop. An underground press in the eyes of the authorities is much more dangerous than a public press. They can restrict a public press; they can censor it, deny it distribution licenses, put people under town arrest, or close it down. The moment the press goes underground, they cannot keep an eye on it. The press can do what it wants and thus becomes a very "dangerous" and "subversive" tool for the people.

The authorities can also keep an eye on the Palestinian population through our own press. They get an idea of who is doing what and where. For example, last week there was a folklore group who was supposed to have a show at El-Hakawati theater. The group advertised in one of the newspapers and the next day the authorities, cued by the advertisement, closed the theater for twenty-four hours. The press plays a role for the Israelis as "informant."

Regarding what can be done to protest Israeli actions against the Palestinian press, we have seen a remarkable increase of interest in the last few years among European and American journalists associations towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Committee to Pro-

considerable work as well. Their contact with the Israeli Journalists Association is what caused the Israeli Journalists Association to oppose the closure of *Al-Mithaq*, the first time Israeli journalists took such steps. Just the same, much more can be done.



Hamdi Farraj.

The challenge to us as newspaper people is to try to maximize the profits of the press and minimize the liabilities, to try to take advantage of the opportunities given us without giving the authorities a chance to maximize its reasons for letting the press exist. For the most part, the Palestinian people and the Palestinian press have proven that they have gained more in this difficult battle than they have given up. □

This article is based on a meeting with Daoud Kuttab of Al-Fajr newspaper in August 1986 when the November 29th Committee delegation to the Middle East and the Friends of Nazareth Work Camp delegation met jointly with him in Jerusalem.

"How can a newspaper be killed so easily without relying on factual proof?"
— French journalist **Dominique Vidal**

said, "I cannot understand how a newspaper came from other sources as well. The U.S. Committee to Protect Journalists (whose honorary chair is Walter Cronkite) sent a telegram to Prime Minister Shimon Peres reading: "We view the official unelaborated explanation of security reasons as unsatisfactory and join Palestinian and Israeli journalists' associations in condemning the attack on the press." The Foreign Journalists Association sent a similar message to Israel's interior minister.

Speaking on behalf of a group of French journalists at a press conference in Jerusalem who likewise cabled the Israeli government, journalist Dominique Vidal

could be killed so easily without relying on factual proof." She echoed the international consensus of outrage by calling the closures a flagrant violation of freedom, democracy and human rights.

Palestine Focus urges its readers to join the wave of international protest against Israel's suppression of the Palestinian press. Send telegrams or write to: Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, The Knesset, Tel Aviv, Israel; and Ambassador Meir Rosenne, Embassy of Israel, 3514 International Dr., NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. Copies of messages should be sent to: Committee to Protect Journalists, 36 W. 44th St., Room No. 911, New York, NY 10036. □

Eyewitness...

Continued from page 1

and newspaper closed by the Israeli government even though it had been produced under total censorship by the Israelis, visited people under town arrest, watched gangs of armed settlers and Israeli soldiers roam Palestinian villages and cities with their fingers on the triggers, met with doctors arrested for illegally providing free medical care—a comprehensive list would easily fill this entire newspaper.

Everywhere the Israeli genius for making things difficult for Palestinians is evident.

At an interview conducted by the November 29th Committee for Palestine delegation to the Middle East in August, Mahmoud al-Khatib, editor of *Al-Mithaq*, reflected on *Al-Mithaq*'s beginnings. "After the deportation of my father [in 1974], we [his sons] continued what he started. We carried on the same ideas as my father. All my brothers are highly skilled in other professions but insist on following in my father's footsteps."

"My father turned over all his facilities to us, very limited though they were, and we three brothers started a small newspaper. Our newspaper was a family affair. We found our work to be necessary because of the shortage of information for our people.

"*Al-Mithaq* started in 1979. For two years it came out weekly. In 1982 we started coming out twice a week and continued at this rate for another two years. By 1984 we had enough experience to become a daily. We grew little by little and became the second largest newspaper in terms of distribution and were read by the majority of our people.

"The name *Al-Mithaq* means 'the oath' or 'the pledge.' It means a very strong promise to continue something for the people. The emblem on *Al-Mithaq* is three brothers hand-in-hand, all together. Our newspaper—or any other newspaper in the West Bank—reflects the hopes and ambitions of the Palestinian people, the search for self-determination."

Take the Jerusalem Electric Company, for instance, which has a concession to supply electricity to East Jerusalem and surrounding areas until 1987. Unable to legally take it over, the Israeli authorities approved the expenditure of millions of dollars to replace generators but then did not allow them to be installed and put into operation. When the company was forced to purchase electric power from the Israeli power network, the company was overcharged for the electricity supplied but not allowed to raise its rates to cover the cost. As the resultant debt grew, the Israeli government appeared at the company's Jerusalem offices one day in August 1986 and proceeded to break in to seize its records. The electric company's story is all too typical.

More than half the Palestinian adult male population has been in prison, many under administrative detention where no charge is ever made and which can last for up to six months if a judge approves. We found from our discussions with prisoners that torture is routine; since they rarely have evidence of any offense, the Israeli military authorities rely on torture-produced confessions for convictions. Palestinian lawyers and prisoners have, of necessity, become experts in the requirements of international human rights laws and agreements. The Israeli authorities violate them as a matter of practice, whether it be forcing prisoners to work in Israeli industries or denying them basic facilities

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Eyewitness...

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and services guaranteed to prisoners under the international codes.

One of the rules governing occupation under international law is that the occupier is not permitted to tamper with the existing legal system. The Israeli occupation has not only outright violated these provisions with over one thousand military orders; they also try to manipulate Ottoman, Jordanian, Egyptian, and British Mandate laws to increase the suffering of Palestinians.

In Gaza, the Israelis say that because of this international legal restriction, no new societies or associations may be formed. Thus doctors who form a committee to provide free voluntary medical services to Palestinians in Gaza are said to be breaking the Ottoman law on societies and associations and their group is illegal—according to the Israeli military authorities. The doctors are, therefore, arrested.

Trade unions which did not already exist in 1967 are deemed illegal, and those that did exist are not allowed to elect new leaders or change their constitutions.

Nevertheless, despite these conditions, Palestinians are organizing voluntary committees, trade unions, women's aid

1985, greeted with a massive outpouring of joyous celebration, they have been among their people once again.

Some have been rearrested and the jails were quickly refilled to overflowing with even more prisoners. But the product the Israeli occupation did not bargain for is a larger number of people committed to resistance. As one former prisoner stressed, when you can be imprisoned arbitrarily, without any reason at all, you might as well be as active as you can while you are out of prison.

Another impression emerged from this trip. Refusing to cooperate in one's own destruction is another form of resistance. As deposed Mayor Bassam Shaka'a told us in Nablus, what can the Palestinians do right now but work to prevent the sort of "settlement" which will set their movement back ten or twenty years.

The U.S./Jordanian/Israeli plans will be wrapped in the language of peace and sealed with pious slogans about improving the conditions of the Palestinian people. Just as the Thatchers and Reagans presume to protect the South African people from the effects of sanctions, the United States, Israel, and Jordan will protect the Palestinian people from the leadership they have chosen and the aspirations they share.

What I want from our friends outside is to help us to achieve our rights, not just human rights, to reach our independent state. If we are to have anything, we want our independent state. We are patient to stay with all these difficulties for hundreds of years.

I advise the American government, the European governments, and the Israeli government, that if they will not solve it now, our children will not accept an independent state: they will want all of Palestine.

Bassam Shaka'a:

Now they talk about 242 after they built settlements, after they annexed Jerusalem,

after Jordan failed, Egypt failed, and we have our independent struggle, they return to speak about 242. And I can ask what is the meaning of 242 without withdrawing, without taking back the settlers, without returning Jerusalem. What does it mean—242? They speak about 242. Now Arafat and King Hussein fight against the others [to support 242], and no one asks Peres if he accepts 242 or not?

I am not struggling alone. I saw in the United States, there are some steps to support us. It's very small but I know. Americans suffer through the regime which follows international imperialist interests.

1987...

Continued from page 1

1987 has been designated *The Year of Palestine* because it contains several significant anniversaries that underscore the aggressions committed against the Palestinian and other peoples of the Middle East on the part of an expansionist Israel:

June 6 marks the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war. The date marks twenty years of military occupation, armed settlements, administrative detention, land confiscations, and continual abuse of human rights of the people of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. For twenty years Israel has violated the Geneva conventions and international law. For twenty years the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have lived without being able to exercise their national rights and to express their self-determination in an independent state. But these have also been twenty years of strikes, demonstrations, and determined work defending institutions such as universities, hospitals, and newspapers against the repressive measures of military occupation—twenty years of resistance.

June 5 marks the fifth anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians were killed during Israel's infamous "Peace in the Galilee" campaign against Lebanese sovereignty and the Palestinian movement for self-determination. The mass-based Lebanese resistance and their Palestinian allies pushed Israel back, yet on the fifth anniversary of the invasion Israel still occupies Lebanese soil, continues to bomb refugee camps and cities in all parts of Lebanon, and interferes in Lebanese affairs.

November 29, 1987 marks the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations vote to partition Palestine into two states. The Palestinian people have survived without the fulfillment of even a portion of their national rights for forty years. To acknowledge this denial and to launch a process to reverse it, the United Nations, in 1977, declared this the day of international solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The November 29th Committee for Palestine joins with other nongovernmental organizations in the North American and international United Nations NGO committees to organize celebrations of the strength of the Palestinian people's resistance and to

build effective protests of the injustices they face. Our responsibility in the United States is to work to make these anniversaries active expressions that will galvanize the American people. It is our tax money that bolsters the Israeli government—and we have considerable leverage to demand that our public officials join the international consensus for peace with justice that includes governments and institutions around the world.

During *The Year of Palestine*, we want to alert American public opinion to the danger of our own government's hypocritical policies. President Reagan would rather pursue tactics of aggression and lies (more politely termed "disinformation") in the Middle East than pursue justice and real peace. We will tell our own public officials that a new policy must be forged that recognizes Palestinian rights.

During *The Year of Palestine* we will be paying particularly close attention to the twenty years of occupation that Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza have faced. For the obvious first step towards achieving peace is Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967. But instead of pressuring Israel to withdraw, the Reagan administration now speaks about "improving the quality of life" of Palestinians living under military occupation, attempting to join with Israel and Jordan's King Hussein to stifle Palestinian national aspirations with "development" schemes that require acquiescence to continued occupation and the perpetual denial of national expression. During this year we will draw attention to the fact that the most important "improvement" in the "quality of life" for Palestinians is to be free from occupation, to be able to determine their own destiny in an independent state.

For twenty years Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have been living with military occupation. The Israeli "Iron Fist" is the violent "stick" that is meant to join with a "quality of life" type "carrot" to make Palestinians give up their most basic demands for freedom. The solution is the free ability of Palestinians to determine their futures without the settlers' Uzis and the tanks of the Israeli Defense Forces. What the Palestinians seek are the fundamental rights claimed by any other people in the world today. During *The Year of Palestine* people around the world will declare that there is only one way to achieve peace in the Middle East: Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. □

For twenty years Israel has violated Geneva conventions and international law; for twenty years the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have lived without their national rights in an independent state.

societies, nurseries, underground committees to help prisoners and their families, and many other institutions of resistance. To an outsider the Iron Fist appears suspiciously like Nazi Germany's occupation of France, and resistance also takes armed form.

Remaining in Palestine is another form of resistance. After 1948 and after 1967, many Palestinians did leave Palestine. But today, while some still go abroad for an education or for employment, few Palestinians leave for good unless they are among the growing number expelled by the Israeli military occupation authorities, another clearcut violation of international human-rights agreements which Israel signed.

When we met with former prisoners, most of whom have not been given identity cards—a real hardship given the many Israeli military checkpoints Palestinians must cross—they told us, "we do not fear their prisons. We have already seen the worst they can do." Indeed, while parents are often fearful when their children go to jail, they are also proud. The Palestinian political

prisoners in Israeli jails are among the most organized and disciplined in the population. Since the massive prisoner exchange in

The Palestinian people—as a recent West Bank and Gaza poll sponsored by *Newsday*, the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Fajr*, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation demonstrates—are not fooled. The poll, which was conducted just before our delegation's visit, shows that 93.5 percent believe "the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." Only 6.3 percent preferred placing the West Bank and Gaza under Jordanian sovereignty, even as an interim measure.

No, the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation are not fooled, and we must not be fooled either. The current diplomatic charade is designed to eliminate the national dimension of Palestinian aspirations at least for decades. The only course for Palestinians and their supporters is to oppose the U.S./Israeli/Jordanian plan, to support the process of Palestinian unification, and to develop more and better Palestinian national institutions. Any plan which attempts to bypass Palestinian national aspirations is doomed to fail because the resistance of the Palestinian people is a reality for which Jordan, Israel, and the United States still fail to account. □

Um Khalil (Sameeha Khalil, head of Inash el-'usra women's charitable society in el-Bireh:

eight hundred Palestinian prisoners there, who have been protesting atrocious conditions, including severe overcrowding in which prisoners are locked twenty-three hours a day in cells where they are allotted 1.4 square meters per prisoner. "Practicing such a method against political prisoners who insist on being treated as human beings will not work," said Fahoum. The resistance at Jnaid, along with the current hunger strikes at Hebron and Ramallah prisons, are an indication that the Israeli strategy of refilling the prisons with less experienced prisoners so as to set back the prisoners' rights struggle will not succeed.

Farraj says, "We are proud of our jails. Our people have paid a great deal, from their blood, their pain; the jails are the academy of the Palestinian revolution. During the first period of the occupation, the jails were like graveyards. Prisoners had no rights. They could eat and sleep and nothing more. Today, you find something else. You find rights we have achieved: books, pens, papers, two hours a day of exercise in the prison yard. We even have our own representatives of the prisoners within the jails, who present our demands to the prison authorities. But the prisoner exchange of 1985 emptied the prisons of our leaders. The administration wants to steal our rights

again, take away prisoners' radios, beds, canteen. There are many strikes again, more than fifty from May 1985 till now [August 1986]. In 1970, my brother was taken to jail, and my mother wouldn't drink tea or coffee for one year. It was as if she was mourning. Today, our people are not afraid of jails at all. Families come away from their visits in high spirits."

The treatment of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails continues to be one of the most blatant violation of human rights in the world today. And the work of those prisoners to preserve not only their life, but their very humanity, remains an inspiration and a challenge to all human rights and solidarity activists around the world. □

Resources

Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem, "1985—Policy of Torture Reviewed: Survey, Testimonies and Allegations."

Committee Confronting the Iron Fist, Jerusalem, "Special Report, April 1986: We Will Be Free in Our Homeland"; available from Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 1 Quincy Court, 220 South State Street, Suite 1308, Chicago, IL 60604.

Prisoners...

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The former prisoners were seasoned veterans of the Israeli prison system. The "exchange" not only made room in the prisons for new detainees, but it got rid of these longterm troublemakers. At Neve Terze, the women's prison, Palestinian women prisoners had won the right to be treated as political prisoners through long struggle and a painfully harsh and protracted hunger strike in 1984. After the prisoner exchange, one former prisoner stated, "Now the women are suffering conditions from several years ago, before our strikes. They are having to demand again that Israeli criminal prisoners be separated from Palestinian women political prisoners. They are demanding again to stop the use of tear gas in the cells. And again they are having to strike to insist that prisoners should not have to cook for their jailers."

Walid Fahoum, Nazareth attorney and member of the Prisoners' Friends Committee, prepared a recent report detailing conditions at Jnaid prison in Nablus. He wrote that the prison is on the verge of eruption. The administration is following a policy of "breaking the heads" of the

Spies, Scandal, Strife ... and War

By Douglas Franks

In recent months Israel has been experiencing a rash of domestic crises involving espionage—largely against the United States—scandal at the highest levels of government, religious strife, and continuing economic woes. While the number of such incidents may appear to be out of the ordinary, the kinds of incidents are hardly new to Israel. Its history resounds with scandal and embarrassments of every shape and size.

The usual facility with which the Israelis keep their failings out of the public eye, however, seems to have diminished. The sheer magnitude and frequency of these occurrences have made them impossible to hide altogether, despite the Reagan administration's unwavering assistance in trying to erase the fingerprints. Even the generally charitable tone with which the major American media deals with Israel's blemishes has failed to mute their gravity, breadth and dangerous implications.

“As far as the Israeli military is concerned, war with Syria was not a question of ‘if’ but of ‘when.’”—Hirsch Goodman, military correspondent, Jerusalem Post

Israeli Espionage

Early this summer, U.S. federal authorities issued subpoenas and search warrants against officials working for Israeli Military Industries (IMI), Israel's ministry of defense procurement office in New York, and three U.S. companies. They are all being investigated for attempting to illegally obtain U.S. technology for the manufacture of cluster bombs.

In May 1985 a California engineer was indicted for unlawfully shipping to Israel between 800 and 810 nuclear triggering devices known as krytons, an especially alarming “munitions” transfer in light of recent revelations concerning Israel's nuclear weapons stockpile. A similar offense took place in December 1985 when several U.S. companies illicitly transferred technology to Israel for chromeplating tank gun barrels (to make them last longer in combat!).

The case of Jonathan J. Pollard, U.S. navy analyst who was caught passing classified documents to Israel, caused the greatest sensation of all. The usual summary denials by Israeli officials of any impropriety, their assertions that the Pollard incident was a “rogue operation,” did little to mask Israeli culpability. Quoting a U.S. official involved in counterintelligence, the *Washington Post* stated: “In every intelligence operation you have a built-in plausible deniability. You can't have the number of people, the quality of intelligence [Pollard provided], the amount of money involved and the amount of time in an operation and have it be a so-called ‘rogue operation.’”

Even when caught redhanded, Israel not only routinely engages in “plausible denial,” but is also assured of U.S. cooperation in downplaying any Israeli wrongdoing, even though the U.S. government itself may be the victim. In the case of the cluster bomb affair, the Reagan administration, reacting to Israeli accusations that the U.S. Justice Department was carrying on some sort of vendetta against Israel, profusely apologized to Israel that news of it had gotten out.

In an editorial on the Pollard spy case, the *Christian Science Monitor* commented on how U.S.-Israeli ties operate outside the normal limits of propriety: “The mere fact that highest authorities are helping to quiet it all down is in itself a partial explanation of why Israel does things like this and thinks it can get away with it. ... Israel does in fact get away with almost anything in its relations with the U.S.” The *Monitor* makes the point, too, that winking at Israel's under-the-table methods goes beyond the realm of military hardware and technology.

Recent incidents corroborating the *Monitor's* editorial are merely the latest ones coming to light in a long shadowy track record. According to *Newsweek*, investigators from the Justice Department, Customs Service and the State Department's Office of Munitions Control, assert that Israel's procurement office

in New York, IMI, often sneaks American weapons technology past authorities. One senior investigator said “There's always a trail that leads back to IMI.”

Revelations of Israeli espionage in other international circles have surfaced as well. West German authorities have been investigating the Israeli government's role in a deal to sell \$82 million worth of U.S. weaponry to Iran. In April 1986, three Israelis, including a reserve general, were arrested in Bermuda for conspiring to smuggle \$2.5 billion worth of sophisticated U.S. military hardware to Iran. Clandestine Israeli dealings with South Africa and Panama have also been documented.

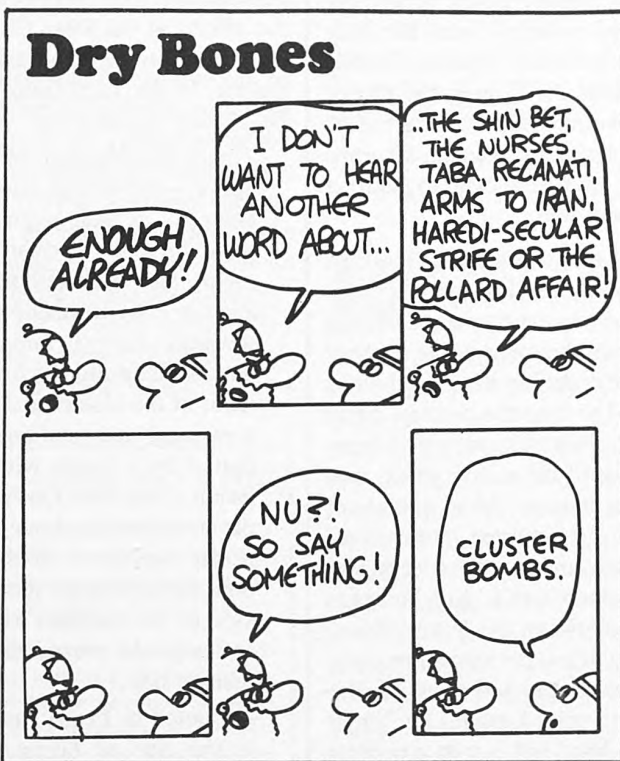
Not content with unimpeded access to whatever American secrets it wants and the liberty to violate trade and export laws, Israel is now requesting recognition as a NATO partner—taking swipes at other NATO members in the process—in order to increase its already huge inventory of benefits and privileges. A *Jerusalem Post* editorial spelled out Israel's NATO goals: “Because Israel is not a NATO member, it must pay for the F-16s it purchases from the United States a significantly higher price than does say, NATO-member Greece. And Israel, unlike Greece, cannot benefit from the special U.S. research and development funding granted to NATO countries.”

Israel's Domestic Woes

Israel faces turbulence on its homefront as well. In mid-April, according to *Middle East International*, an Israeli investigative committee submitted a report calling for the resignation or dismissal of the heads of Israel's banking system. These men were held responsible for “massive and prolonged share-rigging” which resulted in the October 1983 economic crash in Israel. Yet some were handsomely rewarded upon their resignation; the others continue to wield vital economic leverage and have threatened to wreak further havoc on Israel's economy if they are forced out of their jobs.

The Shin Bet scandal is still raging in Israel and continues to be a nightmare that won't go away for the Israeli government. A complex issue with many twists and turns, it began in April 1984 with the killing of two Palestinians while they were in custody for a bus hijacking. The murders were initially covered up by way of systematic perjury. When then attorney-general Yitzhak Zamir insisted on an investigation into the whole affair, he was fired. Tempered by strong sentiment from many political and public quarters to keep the whole episode under wraps, debate wears on over whether or not to hold an investigation and if so, what kind. Meanwhile, top Shin Beth officials implicated in the crime have been pardoned ahead of time.

Much of the resistance to holding an inquiry into the murder and coverup has to do with the damning likelihood that orders to kill came from the highest echelons of the Israeli government. Shin Beth chief Avraham Shalom, one of those pardoned, wrote in a letter to Israeli President Herzog that “all my actions in the matter of Bus 300 were carried out by authority and with permission.” That permission could only have come from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.



Furthermore, Israeli lawyer Yigal Arnon warned against having Shin Bet operatives testify in hearings, saying that “if any Shin Bet man were forced to testify about alleged offences committed on duty, the entire organization would crumble.”

The Shin Bet can relax, however, given the Israeli government's practice of retaining or recycling those within its ranks found guilty of terrible crimes. Besides

receiving pardons, according to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, “Shin Bet officials have not appeared to suffer any losses from exposure to the affair. All have remained with the agency except for Shalom, whose name has been mentioned in the press as a candidate for the post of adviser to the prime minister on terrorism once Shamir returns to that office.” Shalom thus joins the company of people like Generals Ariel Sharon and Amos Yaron, prominent members of the Israeli government who not only went free after grave offenses but were appointed to prestigious new posts.

Jew Against Jew

Religious strife within Israeli society is another major headache, even source of polarization within the Jewish state. In this “war of the bus shelters,” ultra-orthodox Jews, or *haredim*, destroyed or vandalized bus shelters because of their violent opposition to advertisements posted in the shelters depicting women in bathing suits or standing together with men. In retaliation, secular Jews (the overwhelming majority of the Israeli population) attacked and vandalized a *yeshiva* (theological seminary) and a synagogue.

Beneath these specific acts of violence—and there have been many—runs a current of profound differences between religious and secular Jews inside Israel. Feelings run very high on both sides over the question of “what is Judaism?” A highly volatile issue, it is evoking day-to-day fervor in every corner of Israeli society.

Civil unrest among Israeli Jews will not be easily quelled nor readily resolved. If anything, it will get worse before it gets better. In a speech delivered at the University of California at Berkeley in October 1985, Israel Shahak, Chair of the Israeli league for Human and Civil Rights, reported that “talk about a possible civil war among Jews ... is now given very serious consideration inside Israel.”

Lashing Out Against Syria—and the Palestinians

One of the ways the Israeli government responds to internal difficulties is to lash out, even launch wars. In fits of moral indignation it habitually and aggressively blames others, denies responsibility, and denounces and attacks those who dare do otherwise. And its attacks can be deadly as well as merely rhetorical.

Israel's current saber-rattling against Syria is an ominous example. Although the Israeli government denies it seeks war with Syria, it is loudly trumpeting its military superiority over Syrian defenses. Drawing on conclusions made by Aharon Levran, a leading Israeli military analyst, the *Jerusalem Post* asserts that “the Israeli Defence Forces remain qualitatively and quantitatively stronger than the Syrian armed forces, despite Syria's military buildup over the past two or three years.”

Israel likewise makes no secret of its willingness to employ military force against Syria, “the most extreme and most serious of Israel's enemies,” in the words of Shimon Peres. The real bone Israel has to pick with Syria is that it perceives Syria to be approaching military parity. In the past, Israel has gone to war against neighboring Arab countries for precisely that reason. In his efforts to thus orchestrate the perfect pretext for striking, Israeli Defense Minister Rabin has named Syria a principal target in Israel's “war against terror” against whom Israel would not hesitate to inflict “maximum damage.”

Indeed, the debate among Israeli military experts seems to center not on whether to wage war but on what are the optimum circumstances for doing so. Assessing the findings of a major conference in Israel on U.S.-Israeli strategic relations conducted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Israel Military Correspondents Association, *Jerusalem Post* military correspondent Hirsch Goodman wrote that “as far as the Israeli military is concerned, war with Syria was not a question of ‘if’ but of ‘when.’”

The Palestinian people are by far the hardest hit victims of Israel's “seige” mentality. They have long been the targets of Israeli aggression whatever the circumstances. As Israeli state “stress” mounts, the Palestinians under occupation become increasingly and more creatively victimized whether by the crushing pressure of unabated “iron fist” policies or regional treaty schemes which exclude Palestinian representation. In Lebanon too, Palestinian refugees as well as the Lebanese still live in constant fear of increasingly frequent Israeli air raids.

Israel's policies towards the Palestinians cannot reasonably be expected to be any less unyielding than they have ever been. On the contrary, the present crises only underscore the habitual venality of the Israeli state, hence an even harsher “iron fist” campaign against the Palestinian people, an even greater unwillingness to seek equitable answers to the question of Palestine, and a very real threat of war against neighboring states. □

The Kurt Waldheim Affair

By Hilton Obenzinger

What has been peculiar about the sensationalized Kurt Waldheim affair has not just been the allegations but the apparently calculated way they have been raised. The affair stands as one more example of how leading forces in the Zionist movement seek to manipulate the memory of the Nazi murder of European Jews to serve questionable political ends and thus to distort the world's understanding of the horrors of fascism and betray the memory of the many millions—Jews and non-Jews—who were butchered at the hands of Hitler's terror.

There does not yet appear to be any conclusive evidence that Kurt Waldheim himself participated directly in Nazi war crimes. To be sure, Waldheim was *not* a member of the anti-Nazi resistance movement but dutifully served the Nazi war machine—as did thousands of other Germans and Austrians who were “rehabilitated” after the war and serve in important positions in West German and Austrian society.

His case became a worldwide media occasion when evidence about Waldheim was released piecemeal by the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in the midst of the Austrian presidential campaign in what appeared to Austrians as an attempt to intervene in Austrian politics. What was such a sophisticated organization as the WJC thinking? Didn't they realize that their handling of this campaign would arouse resentment, some of which enflamed anti-Semitic sentiments in Austrian society?

Simon Wiesenthal, who has brought more than eleven hundred former Nazis to trial, underscored the shabby political agenda of the WJC's campaign. “When I come out

Yet the WJC's not-so-subtle political agenda also aimed at discrediting Waldheim's tenure as former Secretary-General of the United Nations, and, consequently, undermining the UN itself. Waldheim presided over the UN in the seventies during which the world body began to focus increasingly on the plight of the Palestinians. General Assembly resolutions demanded Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, granted the PLO official observer status, and declared Zionism a form of racial discrimination; the Palestinian demand for self-determination and an independent state won worldwide support. The WJC campaign wants such pro-Palestinian pronouncements to be viewed as tainted by Nazi anti-Jewish hatred (although the Secretary-General of the UN plays a minor role in charting the political direction of the world body). Indeed, the smear is against the entire UN, and by implication, the vast majority of the governments of the world. One former member of the U.S. delegation to the UN observed, “Waldheim and the UN deserve each other.”

The campaign may not only target the UN, but Austria's Middle East policies as well. The Austrian government—for many years led by former Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, himself a Jew and a socialist who did resist the rise of Hitler—has developed a relatively even-handed policy in regard to Israel and the PLO. Although Waldheim was running on the conservative People's Party ticket, the WJC's allegations sought to discredit all such policies on the part of any Austrian government. Indeed, Wiesenthal and other Zionists regard the attack as a blunder, as the People's Party holds a more pro-Israel

we try to do everything within our capacity to help the persecuted Jews. Then we ask ourselves “Where were they all these years?”, “Why did they not immigrate to the country [Israel] in time?” ... Still later, and deep in our heart there is a tiny flicker of vicious joy: “Serves them right”; “We warned them!” “We told them so!” It is, of course, not customary for us to talk about it in public, but many of us felt a tiny bit of joy at another's calamity when we read in the paper reports about [anti-Semitic incidents] ... Despite all the anger and the shock and the insult, these phenomena fit into our world view, because Zionism said then as it says today that this is the state of affairs, and that such it must be so long as Jews live among the Gentile nations. In our great enthusiasm for the achievement of Israeli independence and sovereignty we sometimes forget the negative aspect of Zionism—its cruel world view ... [Zionism] assumes the eternal hatred of the Jew by the Gentile, irrespective of how liberal the Gentile may be.... Of course we must do everything in order to enable every Jew who so desires to immigrate to the country and establish his life here.... But does the state of Israel have duties towards Jews who cannot immigrate to the country and do not wish to do so? Furthermore, do we have the right to tell them: “We know better than you what is good for you. We shall therefore act to get you to immigrate to the country. We might even act in order to facilitate the deterioration of your situation [in the Diaspora] so that you should have no other choice but to immigrate to Israel!” We have already had to face this question in very concrete situations, and we may have to face it again in the future.

—Uri Harari, “Our Responsibility towards Jews in the Arab Countries,” *Yediot Aharonot*, Feb. 9, 1969 in Uri Davis' *On Zionism and Jewish Identity* (London: Polemic Press, 1986).

To those who may be shocked to think that a Jewish organization actually could consciously enflame anti-Semitism to achieve political ends, a careful review of Zionist history would reveal the many times that such tactics have been employed. From Theodor Herzl striking a deal with the Czarist minister Plehve that the Zionist movement would not condemn the pogroms against Jews organized by Plehve in exchange for a favorable response to their colonial project ... to Israeli agents throwing hand grenades into synagogues in Baghdad in the early fifties to panic Iraqi Jews into fleeing to Israel ... to Menachem Begin giving a gold medal to Rev. Jerry Falwell for distinguished service to the State of Israel and the Jewish people, the “cruel world view” of the Zionist movement has all too frequently conciliated or outright collaborated with anti-Semites. Certainly, the overall perspective of the Zionist movement has been, in the words of Herzl, to “recognize the emptiness and the futility of efforts to ‘combat anti-Semitism’” in favor of the colonial project.

Still, the WJC poured out its hypocritical campaign in the pages of the *New York Times* while there remains deafening silence concerning other ghosts of the Nazi past. “The U.S. is today one of the chief sanctuaries of Nazi war criminals,” said Allan Ryan, who headed the Office of Special Investigations in the U.S. Justice Department for four years, after it was set up in 1979 to track down these criminals. “I take ten thousand to be a conservative estimate of Nazi war criminals living in the United States today.” The history of U.S. policies of allowing, even recruiting, former operatives of the Third Reich into the United States has not been promoted as the scandal it really is

because of U.S. support for Israel.

Ronald Reagan would even rid Americans of our “Anti-Nazi Syndrome” (just as he would have us rid ourselves of our “Vietnam Syndrome”), urging us to “forgive and forget” the Nazi era, as he laid a wreath at Bitburg where SS men also lay buried. The Nazi atrocities during World War Two should never be forgotten as crimes against all of humanity. The lessons of fascism are too important to be ignored, and no Bitburg stunt can obscure them.

But the campaign against Waldheim underscores the dangers inherent in the distorted Zionist version of World War Two, fascism, and the Jewish holocaust. These distortions need to be uncovered, examined, and repudiated. They are used not only to justify the existence of an exclusivist Jewish state as both a necessity and as a moral penance on the part of the entire world for having allowed anti-Semitism to climax in Nazi mass murder, but to undermine a proper understanding of the dangers of fascism as well. Given both the dominance of pro-Israel thinking along with the frightening rise of the right in American political life, the stakes are of utmost importance.

The Zionist characterization of Hitler's regime has been to present a simplification of the nature of fascism, viewing it only as the murder of Jews, as is the overwhelming statement made by the exhibits at the Yad Vashem memorial to the Holocaust in Jerusalem. Actually, fascism emerged as the most violent defender of the corporate establishment. Fascism utilized a call to chauvinist patriotism, racism and a disdain for all democratic freedoms—all in the service of an expansionist militarism. Hitler attacked all democratic organizations with ferocity under the guise of a battle against communism. As a result, the Nazi regime's holocaust engulfed millions of trade unionists, social democrats, communists, Christian democrats—all of the defenders of democratic rights throughout Europe. Millions of gypsies, slaves and Russians became victims of Nazi genocidal race theories, while homosexuals were also murdered in concentration camps as violators of the purity of the Aryan family. Jews were not the only victims, and the dangers of fascism rising today are minimized if it is viewed only as the persecution of Jews. The people of southern Africa are fighting fascism, as are Palestinians who live in the West Bank and Gaza. Both the South African and Israeli regimes are motivated by racism, national chauvinism, and a disdain for democratic rights of subject peoples that fuels an expansionist militarism.

As well, the constant use of the holocaust to justify settler colonialism tends to view the genocide of the Jews in historical isolation. European Jews were not the only people who have faced extinction. In the course of history—and particularly the history of western civilization—other holocausts have occurred. Certainly, in our own country, the deaths of ten of millions of Africans during their slave ship passage across the Atlantic, not to mention the genocide of Native Americans, stand out sharply. “Never again” is projected in the media about Nazi murder of the Jews, but we hardly ever hear about the Indian peoples massacred by American settlers or about the peoples of the Amazon who face extinction right at this moment. To place the holocaust of the Jews in such a context does not belittle the Jewish experience. But it should be seen that even the special characteristics of the Nazi genocide, such as its high degree of “scientific” efficiency in the technology of mass murder, are extensions of other atrocities carried out in the name of “western civilization.” There is a direct line of descent from American settlers trading blankets purposely infected with smallpox to Indians...to concentration guards ushering a



South African Prime Minister John Vorster visits Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, April 1976.

with a case, it might take a long time but everything is there. On the other hand, their [the WJC] campaign is a war of nerves with a bit of news each week. This has cast doubt on their competence.... Their campaign has put our work back thirty years, and the loopholes in their documents have produced a solidarity effect among Austrians which won votes for Waldheim.” Wiesenthal, who is Austrian himself and a supporter of Israel, concluded that Waldheim was an opportunist during the war but there was not enough evidence that he was a war criminal. The lack of evidence has prompted even the Israeli and U.S. governments to avoid pressing the issue any further.

Nevertheless, Israel Singer, General Secretary of the WJC, threaten to harass all Austrian passport holders, stating that “it should be clear to the Austrian population that, should Waldheim be elected, the next years will be no sweet time for the Austrians.” This prompted Wiesenthal to ask, “How can a Jew who has been a member of a race which for two thousand years was a victim of collective threats do the same now to another race?”

stance than the socialists.

As for anti-Semitism in Austria, the WJC's attacks were made in a way which maximized anti-Semitism and reinforced fears among Jews in Israel and around the world. Whenever there are instances of anti-Semitism, whether in Austria or in Turkey, the Zionist movement broadcasts a particular message to Jews. To Israeli Jews, it could be summarized as, “Things may be bad in Israel, but it's worse outside.” Since the rate of those Jews leaving Israel, called *Yordim*, is far greater than those immigrating, it is hoped that such fears—real or imagined—could stem the tide. The message to Jews outside Israel is to come and help in the colonizing project. And short of moving to Israel, Jews should redouble their political and financial support for the Israeli state. After all, Jews may feel safe in America, but the exclusivist Jewish state is there *just in case*.

Veteran Israeli journalist and political commentator Uri Harari, passionately described this view:

[When there are anti-Semitic attacks]

Africa Groups/Palestine Groups in Sweden