

Palestine Focus

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Palestinian Uprising

Gaza and the West Bank Erupt

By Anita Vitullo

Jerusalem, December 22, 1987—The twenty years of military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza have been punctuated occasionally with successive days of mass demonstrations. So, the widespread protests and the military reaction witnessed in the occupied territories the past two weeks should not have surprised anyone. But they did, both Palestinians and Israelis for different reasons.

Palestinian residents were horrified that Israeli soldiers used live ammunition to disperse demonstrators inside refugee camps, in crowded streets, and even in front of hospitals and mosques and during funerals. They were also shocked that many of the shooting victims were children—11 and 12 years old—and women and that so many people—23 as of December 22—had been killed in indiscriminate and often unprovoked shooting. They did not understand why the military authorities did not stop shooting but instead sent out still more troops to areas full of tension over previous killings and allowed Israeli settlers to fire at will on human targets.

Despite the fact that nationalist organizations did not issue a call for a general strike, most schools and institutions in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, and Jenin, in all the refugee camps and all of Gaza shut down spontaneously and totally and sustained their strike against business-as-usual for the entire week. The huge Gaza workforce that normally commutes to Israel daily for day labor stayed home in mass protest at the bloodshed.

Israeli military authorities themselves ordered a two-day closure of all schools in the occupied territories on December 21-22 to prevent schoolchildren from congregating and taking to the streets during the general strike. Bethlehem's university was already under a three-



Palestinian demonstrators jeering at an Israeli soldier, armed with a tear-gas rifle, as they marched in Gaza.

month closure. Bir Zeit University was unofficially closed by its administration. Najah University in Nablus is de facto closed because of daily military roadblocks. The

Islamic University in Gaza was closed for three days by the Israeli military, and Hebron University was ordered closed for one month after soldiers shot demonstrators there. On December 22, three more colleges were closed for one month.

Women's voices were the loudest in camp demonstrations and marches, encouraging their children into the streets and throwing stones themselves. Everyone seemed surprised by the sheer energy and determination shown by Palestinian youth in continuing their lopsided confrontation with armed soldiers in the face of possible injury or death or long imprisonment. But anger at military repression was deep and cumulative and was reinforced with each new death, resulting in a genuine community solidarity across all sectors of the population in Gaza and the West Bank. And still the shooting continued.

The Israelis, both military and political establishments, seemed embarrassed by the third day when demonstrations still continued in Gaza and spread to the West Bank. The military authorities obviously underestimated the general political frustration of Palestinians and believed they could be "controlled" by brute force. The whole point of their two-year-old iron fist policy had been to terrorize Palestinians into submission by selecting out individuals for expulsion, detention without trial, and town arrest and by collective-punishment measures—such as curfews and school closures—against the general population. But the Gaza demonstrations proved that this policy had not brought the Israelis more control. It simply turned up the heat.

To the press, Israeli military sources blamed demonstrations on "a small number of inciters," "outside coordination by the PLO," "masked men from Shabiba, a pro-

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Editorial

1988 Elections and the Middle East

Now that the Reagan administration is winding down to its conclusion, the 1988 elections pose a critical choice. Will the military buildup, heightened intervention, backward domestic policies, and economic chaos instituted by Ronald Reagan continue with a new face in the White House—or will our country take a new course, steering in the direction of further arms reductions, noninterventionist policies, and social and economic justice? Such are the key issues facing the electorate during this critical campaign, and within the heightening debate over the whole array of foreign and domestic policies, we might expect issues of Palestinian rights and peace in the Middle East to be raised forthrightly, particularly in the wake of the current uprising. And yet, Republican and Democratic candidates, with one important exception, have vied not only for power but to outdo one another in denouncing Palestinians and expressing support for Israel.

The important exception is, of course,

Jesse Jackson, until the recent bizarre re-entry of Gary Hart, the frontrunner. Jackson has supported the need for a Palestinian homeland and for the United Nations-mandated international peace conference. Rev. Jackson, in 1988 as in 1984, is the first and only national candidate to dissent on the Palestinian issue. His campaign has placed the issue of Palestinian rights and Middle East peace squarely in the center of political discourse as never before. Jackson was the only candidate to issue a statement on the uprising and repression; he called on Israel "to end its repression of the Palestinians and to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories as soon as possible." Some of the other candidates echoed the U.S. government's criticism of Israeli handling of the uprising, but none, aside from Jackson, offered any significant proposals for peace.

Without doubt, U.S. policy in the Middle East deserves important attention in 1988. Growing U.S. intervention in the Gulf threatens the spread of war, while more than twenty years of Israeli occupation of the

West Bank and Gaza—at U.S. taxpayers' expense—continues amidst daily revelations of routine torture of detainees, Palestinian children shot dead for throwing rocks, and other massive violations of human rights.

Rev. Jackson has correctly made the right of Palestinians to establish an independent state in their homeland an issue. And, with both the U.S. and Israeli governments vehemently opposed, Jackson's support of the

U.N. international peace conference brings the expression of the current international consensus for an end to violence and injustice to an electorate who have been traditionally shut off from voices of reason and peace.

Conventional wisdom has it that it is sure political death for a candidate to support Palestinian rights or oppose Israel in anything. Yet the Jackson campaign has defied

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Palestinian Women Organize Against Occupation

Zahera Kamal is a leading member of the Women's Work Committee in the West Bank and a teacher who trains other teachers to teach science. Until recently she was under town arrest because of her political activities. She was interviewed for Palestine Focus in Geneva in September 1987 by Maggie El-Estwani.

Status of Palestinian Women in the 1967 Occupied Territories

Women in the occupied territories suffer from the same conditions as women in the third world generally. They are oppressed as women, as workers, and as people living under occupation by the Israelis. The Palestinian women's movement is affected by economic conditions in which women do not participate in a major part of society, i.e., in work for wages. The fact that only 14 percent of women worked affected the situation of women.

Under our traditions women are considered fit only to be wives and mothers. Education, work, and other areas are affected. The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza affected women after 1967 as they lost their land. The cost of living rose rapidly, and income is very low. Families need more than one to work; therefore, women had to go outside the home to work.

Thus women suffer in the second place as workers. Women do not work as professionals; most are not trained with skills. They do the "dirty work." If they have some skills, they are traditional women's skills such as sewing, hard routine work. Such work affects their health and their level of thinking.

After 1967, as women went out to work and earn money, ideas about women changed. People sent their daughters to school, to college, to get better diplomas in order to get better jobs. The percentage of girls finishing college rose, although mainly from the cities, not in villages and camps. In villages and camps, some girls do not go to school at all or else withdraw from school in the 4th or 5th grade because they would have to go to other villages to continue.

Tradition has held that they should not travel from one village to another or to the city. While some villages may share a high school, high schools are mainly in the cities. If the high school is in another village, it is even more difficult because students must take one bus to the city and then another to the village where the regional high school is located; they must pay two fares. With the low salaries their parents earn, it is very difficult.

Health under Occupation

Health conditions in the West Bank and Gaza are very bad, particularly for women. Since the 1967 occupation, institutions such as Hospice Hospital in Jerusalem and Augusta Victory Hospital have been closed. The number of beds in hospitals has been decreased, particularly in obstetric wards. Thus only 56 percent of women in cities delivered their children in hospitals; it is much lower in the villages. Most utilize midwives, but 5 percent deliver

their children by themselves, without any health support.

Therefore, 84 children out of every thousand die in their first year of life, a very high mortality rate compared with other countries. In the West Bank, with many cities and 495 villages, there are 110 facilities to dispense maternal child health care. Every village, even every street, needs a facility for material child health.

Food for children is also a health issue. There are many deaths from diseases related to malnutrition such as dehydration during curfews. People have only traditional methods to care for such illnesses.

Palestinian Women's History

Participation of women in the national movement started not in 1967 but in the 1890s when the first Jewish settlers came. In a village near Bisan, men and women demonstrated to protest the immigration and the settling of village land by the immigrants. After the large-scale immigrations, some organizations formed. In 1919 and again in 1921, the Palestinian Women's Union, a humanitarian society, held a very big conference. They sent a delegation to the Ottoman Empire to protest the immigration of Jewish settlers.

In 1936 during the general strike, about six other humanitarian societies were founded to train nurses and conduct literacy classes. After 1948 humanitarian organizations focused on those Palestinians affected by the Israeli war, the occupation of part of Palestine, and the formation of the Israeli state in that part.

After 1967 women were active not only in forming such associations and assisting those affected by the war, but also participated in the struggle: in demonstrations, strikes, and petition campaigns. They also held conferences on the various issues they suffered from. For these reasons, the situation of women is much better than it was before. Now women are considered part of the national movement in the occupied territories. After 1967 women also took part in operations as fighters. Some were sentenced to life prison terms or as long as 25 years.

In 1968 84 percent of the demonstrations were composed mainly of women. The remainder also included women. In 1978, when there were many more demonstrations after Palestinian students became very active, women participated in 71 percent. Women organized 55 percent of the sit-ins such as at the Red Cross. Women from various sectors of society have been active: mothers, sisters, students, particularly those directly affected such as those with brothers in prison and those whose homes were sealed or demolished. Also, many women were martyred in demonstrations. Between 1967 and 1986, 49 women were killed in demonstrations. Between 1967 and 1984, 256 women were imprisoned for terms of more than five years.

The majority of the prisoners are single, but in a recent case, a married woman had a 7-month-old baby who was breast-fed. When she was imprisoned, the baby refused



Palestinian women demonstrate outside military headquarters in Nablus.

Associated Press/New York Times

the bottle and went several days without nourishment. Felicia Langer is defending this woman, and the defense team is seeking either to allow the mother to breast feed for a few hours a day, to bring the baby into the prison to live, or for another solution. This case has drawn a lot of media attention.

In another case of a married couple, the wife is a Palestinian refugee living in Egypt. To pressure her husband, the Israeli authorities refused to give her permission to return to Palestine and reunite with her husband. After a while she was let in, the couple had children, and now the woman and the children are being deported to Egypt. It is like a divorce without consent of husband and wife. Such situations are very difficult.

The statistics I gave exclude the many cases of women detained for 18 days, 21 days, or six months. During every demonstration there are arrests, and the women are detained for the day or a week. One woman was pregnant when she was arrested. The baby grew up in prison. At a year and a half the baby was given to the woman's family. Some prisoners are between 15 and 17 years old.

Conditions in Prison

In prison you are required to obey prison rules, for example, you are forbidden to sing or engage in other activities that can alleviate the pressure and tension. This is particularly difficult for teenagers. I met one while I was in prison who was 15 years old. She was singing; the guards came and asked her to stop. But she continued to sing. They asked her again to stop singing, and she did not. They brought iron chains and took her to another room. They took the mattress from the bed and chained her to the iron springs. But we heard her singing to us: "Look, they are tying me to the bed, I can't move." She would talk across the wall all the time. It was a very cold day. They kept her like that until 11 o'clock at night, a very long time to be kept in a damp room without any covering.

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FOCUS on Action

By Steve Goldfield

Protests, vigils, sit-ins, and other activities were held throughout the United States and around the world in response to the Palestinian uprising and the harsh Israeli repression. The Palestine Human Rights Campaign and the Palestine Solidarity Committee issued a joint statement on Dec. 14 which concluded: "The American people must also send a clear message to our own government. We cannot tolerate the massive human-rights violations inflicted by an occupation financed and politically supported by our own government." These and other organizations joined together to initiate activities throughout the country.

In New York there were five pickets at the United Nations and vigils at the Israeli consulate from Dec. 21 through Dec. 29 and at St. Patrick's Cathedral (500 people) on Christmas Eve. On Dec. 18, 23 Palestinians and supporters from the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) sat in and disrupted the UN Security Council, which was meeting on the current situation in the Israeli occupied territories. The previous day 400 people picketed the Israeli Mission to the UN. Educational events were held on Dec. 18, 20, and 22. A Jewish demonstration at the Israeli mission on Dec. 30 drew 200 people. At presstime, a teach-in with Naseer Aruri, Sheila Ryan, and Iqbal Ahmed was planned.

In Chicago, 44 organizations endorsed a December 18 protest at which 180 marched in the bitter cold at the federal building. They were addressed by a representative from the mayor's office and by Alderman Danny Davis. Chicago also held a candlelight vigil on Christmas Eve outside midnight mass at Holy Name Cathedral. Earlier the same day, 500 people marched in the downtown area. On Dec. 30, 300 people picketed the Israeli consulate. Six Arab-Americans and a North American were arrested for criminal trespass when they attempted to go up to the consulate. A teach-in is planned for Jan. 15.

In Washington, D.C., 30 people demonstrated in front of the Brookings Institution where Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin spoke on Dec. 16. On Dec. 18, 120 people picketed the Israeli embassy. There was a sit-in at the Arab League on Dec. 22. There were two demonstrations at offices of presidential candidates Michael Dukakis and Paul Simon on Dec. 23. On Dec. 24, 65 people demonstrated at the State Department, and two other pickets were held at Dukakis and Bush headquarters. That evening, Christmas Eve, candlelight vigils were held at the White House and the National Cathedral. On Jan. 1, another demonstration was held at the Israeli embassy. Six women were arrested for protesting too close to the embassy.

In Houston 120 people picketed the Israeli consulate Dec. 21. On Dec. 23 a picket was held at George Bush's headquarters and a Palestinian dressed as Santa Claus and carrying a Palestinian flag passed out a leaflet which said that Palestinian children get bullets for Christmas. On Christmas Day people leafleted four different churches. On Dec. 30 100 people demonstrated at the Israeli consulate. From Dec. 28 to 30 12-hour vigils were also held at the consulate. At presstime a picket was planned at the

consulate for Jan. 7 and a car caravan was planned for the second week in January.

In San Francisco pickets were held at the Israeli consulate on Dec. 14 and 22, along with a Christmas Eve vigil outside St. Mary's Cathedral attended by 300 Palestinians and American supporters. The Dec. 22 noontime picket at the consulate drew 500 people from all sectors of the Palestinian community, in addition to North Americans. Three people were arrested in front of the consulate on Dec. 29, and a BART alert candlelight vigil was held by members of the Jewish community in Berkeley on Dec. 30. At presstime a solidarity rally was planned for Jan. 8.

In Los Angeles 400 people picketed the Israeli consulate on Dec. 21. On Christmas Day nearly 100 people held a vigil at a church. On Dec. 30 400 people picketed the consulate.

Other cities reporting protests, educational events, and vigils include Philadelphia (60 people participated in a vigil and picket of Israeli consulate Dec. 17, Dec. 23, 75 people picketed the consulate, Dec. 23 a Jewish community event was held, Dec. 24 a vigil was held at a church); Austin; New Brunswick, N.J. (30 people at a vigil at Rutgers University, Dec. 16); Pittsburgh (12 people marched in Market Square); Paterson, N.J. (Dec. 26 educational event); Essex Community College (Dec. 27 educational); Seattle (50 people picketed the federal building); Sacramento (picket at Hyatt Hotel); Dearborn, Mich. (200 people held a candlelight vigil at Michigan Central Cathedral on Christmas Eve); Tucson (Dec. 21 picket and press conference at office of Cong. John McCain, sponsor of closing of Palestine Information Office); Youngstown (70 people picketed on Dec. 17); Cleveland (75 people picketed the federal building on

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Palestine Solidarity Committee Holds Second Convention

By Jeanne Butterfield

End the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and Support the United Nations International Peace Conference" will be the central pillar of the program of work for the newly renamed Palestine Solidarity Committee in its next two years. On November 7 and 8, over one hundred delegates representing 25 chapters of the former November 29th Committee for Palestine convened in New York City to evaluate the work of the committee over the past two years and to chart its course for the coming two years.

In its second national convention, marked by hard work, a high degree of unity, and a sober assessment of the obstacles ahead, the Palestine Solidarity Committee reaffirmed its support for self-determination for the Palestinian people and for the PLO, its opposition to U.S. intervention in the Middle East and U.S. aid to Israel, and its opposition to racial and religious discrimination, particularly that inherent in Zionism and the state of Israel. The committee pledged to continue its efforts to oppose the Israeli occupation and affirmed its support for the international peace conference within the United Nations framework.

Activists from around the country shared insights and lessons learned from years of pro-Palestinian work in the United States and discussed the thorny political questions arising from it. Workshops addressed a wide range of topics: organizing delegations to Palestine, material aid campaigns, expanding work among third-world communities, U.S. intervention in the Middle East, expanding the distribution of *Palestine Focus*, working in support of Palestinian women and in the U.S. women's movement, and building national campaigns to end the occupation and support the international peace conference.

A public event on Saturday night brought the committee's activists together with hundreds of friends and supporters of Palestinian rights. In his speech, PLO representative to the United Nations Zehdi Terzi called on supporters of the Palestinians in the United States to unite and work together. Hassan Abdul Rahman, director of the Palestine Information Office in Washington, reported on the U.S. government campaign to close the office. Attorney Leonard Weinglass moved the audience when he related how Puerto Rican defendants in Hartford voted unanimously to relieve him of duties in their case and send him to Los Angeles to defend Palestinians threatened with deportation. L.A. defendant Khader Hamide, former Berkeley Mayor Gus Newport, Salvadoran activist Yanira Coreas, and Palestinian trade unionist Nadia Habash also spoke and Al-Watan and the Sechaba Singers from the African National Congress performed.

The work of the convention was framed by a sober assessment of events in the Middle East over the past two years since the founding convention of the November 29th Committee for Palestine. Activists noted the consolidation of the three-way alliance between the United States, Israel, and conservative Arab regimes, such as the joint U.S./Israeli/Jordanian "development" plan for the West Bank. Israel's refusal to accept PLO legitimacy remains the principal obstacle to the convening of an international peace conference as called for by U.N. resolution 38 58c. And U.S./Israeli intentions regarding the Palestinians have been further exposed by the Israeli iron fist effort to crush any form of Palestinian national leadership or political expression in the West Bank and Gaza.

While the continuing civil war in Lebanon and the prolonged Iraq/Iran war are further indications that peace in the Middle East is not on the horizon, conference delegates noted many hopeful signs over the past two years. A reunited PLO is pursuing diplomatic initiatives within the United Nations framework while continuing its liberation struggle against Israeli occupation. A new unification and liberation front in Lebanon has arisen to tackle that country's thorny social, political, and economic crisis and to bring an end to attacks on Palestinians in refugee camps. And the international peace movement understands that the Middle East is a critical issue for world peace and supports the international consensus for self-determination and independence for the Palestinian people.

Conference delegates also assessed the situation in the United States and the obstacles faced in day-to-day solidarity work. The Reagan administration has implemented an aggressive, interventionist program in the Middle East. With the largest armed presence in the Gulf in history, the United States has strengthened its alliance with conservative Arab regimes, which have for the first time defied Arab public opinion and openly granted the United States bases on their territories. The U.S. bombing of Libya found broad public support (although the peace movement

did protest), and the United States acts as though it is protecting "our oil" in the Middle East, by force if necessary. Official support for Israel is largely unchallenged as is U.S. aid, and the public continues to accept the equation of "PLO equals terrorism." The Reagan administration actively pursued its anti-Arab contingency plan, its arrest of Palestinians in Los Angeles, its imposition of travel bans to Libya and Lebanon, and its closure of the Palestine Information Office in Washington D.C. and the threatened closure of the PLO Mission at the United Nations.



Among those in the front row (left to right): Aubrey Nkomo, UN Division for Palestinian Rights; Gus Newport; Zehdi Terzi; Hassan Abdul Rahman.

Again, activists noted the hopeful signs of growing public opposition to this aggressive campaign by the U.S. government. The widespread support expressed for the Los Angeles Eight, the Congressional move to apply the War Powers Act to the Gulf intervention, the stirring of criticism around the Pollard spy case and the Lavi aircraft project, and the recent *Los Angeles Times* poll indicating 50 percent public support for negotiations with the PLO indicate that there are significant cracks in the pro-Israel public consensus. While conditions are still difficult, there are ample opportunities to pursue work in the United States in support of Palestinian rights.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee outlined an ambitious program of work for its members for the coming two years. Taking heart from the growth of cooperation between pro-Palestinian groups in the United States over the past several years, the PSC committed itself to furthering common areas of work where a broad array of organizations can speak with a unified voice. These include efforts such as "Breaking the Silence" conferences organized by the peace movement, "End the Occupation" campaigns and events, work in support of the L.A. Eight, campaigns around particular human-rights violations in the West Bank and Gaza, cosponsoring speakers from Palestine and from the Israeli peace movement, and activities with the Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) working on the question of Palestine. The report of the National Executive Committee (NEC) noted: "Our goal with these groups continues to be to find common areas of work where we can combine efforts and speak with a unified voice."

Noting that within the context of this common work, the question of "mutual recognition" and "two-state solution" often is used to divide, delegates elaborated the PSC's thinking on these questions. The PSC has always supported self-determination for the Palestinian people and has declined, as a U.S. organization, to determine "solutions" for the Palestinians. PSC activists have found that the "two-state/mutual recognition" debate in the United States is, in the words of the NEC report, "often an attempt to shield Israel from criticism" and to avoid the discussion of Palestinian self-determination and the reality of Palestinian oppression. The question for our activists is not simply whether we support the PLO in its negotiation for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, which we certainly do. Deeper questions must be posed to those who want to stop with the formulation "two-state solution." How do they view the struggle for democratic rights inside the Israeli state? What is their position on the right of return for Palestinians? Do they call for a genuinely independent Palestinian state? Do they support the United Nations framework on the international peace conference as outlined in General Assembly resolution 38 58c?

The UN framework for peace in the Middle East asserts that Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, is the only possible starting point for a real peace. It affirms the right of the Palestinian people to return, to self-determination, to establish their own independent state, and to be represented by the PLO in any negotiations. This real framework for peace exposes the Peres/Hussein talk of an international peace conference as a Camp David charade.

While the question of the international peace confer-

ence and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is not yet widely addressed by the U.S. peace movement, the recent sharp escalation of U.S. intervention in Libya and in the Gulf has helped to activate the broad peace movement to work against U.S. intervention and war in the Middle East. The convention resolved to increase its focus on U.S. intervention in the Middle East through coalitions and networking with the broad peace movement.

The convention highlighted lessons learned from the organization's work with national minority communities and communities of color in the United States and reaffirmed the importance of antiracist work for the Palestine Solidarity Committee. Communities and organization of people of color are powerful agents of social change in the United States, a country forged by centuries of racial and national oppression. The PSC has built alliances with and interacted with these communities on many levels, in recognition of their support for the Palestinian struggle and of the skills and experience they bring to pro-Palestinian work in the United States.

The high level of anti-Arab racism in the United States is also a constant factor in the PSC's work, and relations with the Palestinian and Arab communities are crucial. PSC pledged to continue its work in support of the L.A. Eight, to respond to anti-Arab attacks such as the murder of Alex Odeh, and to increase relations with the immigrants rights movement.

The Latino Task Force of the Palestine Solidarity Committee was formed to consciously advance support work for Palestinian rights in Latino communities. The task force has already successfully organized a delegation to the Middle East, produced literature in Spanish, including its newsletter, *Noticiero Palestino*, and held events particularly oriented to Latino communities. The PSC committed itself to expanding the work of the task force with the formation of a Latino network on Palestine, regular publication of *Noticiero Palestino*, and attention to leadership development among Latino activists within PSC chapters.

PSC's work with the anti-apartheid movement has not only strengthened ties with the Black community in the United States, but has also helped strengthen the anti-apartheid movement. A national African National Congress/Palestine Solidarity Committee speaking tour targeted Israel's role in South Africa and made it impossible for pro-Israeli sectors of the anti-apartheid movement to pressure the movement into silence on this issue.

The PSC's work with the Rainbow coalition and with Black elected officials has helped inject the Palestinian issue into national political debate and has begun to build a base of support among a particularly visible sector of the Black community. And local PSC chapter response to racist attacks such as that at Howard Beach put the committee squarely on the side of antiracist forces in the United States who will not tolerate the increasingly overt racist violence directed at minority communities. While the PSC, as a solidarity organization, feels it is inappropriate to become directly involved in the electoral arena, such as by endorsing candidates, it remains committed to interacting with such coalitions as the Rainbow.

The centerpiece for the Palestine Solidarity Committee's work over the next two years will continue to be "End the Occupation—Support the International Peace Conference." This theme calls attention to the ongoing daily repression and actual conditions of life faced by the

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In 1988 *Palestine Focus* marks five years of publication, five years of documenting the Palestinian people in their long and arduous search for their national rights, of reporting on solidarity work for Palestinian rights around the world, and of covering the myriad issues of Israeli and U.S. intervention, repression, and blockage of justice and peace.

Five years of producing *Palestine Focus* has been difficult but rewarding. Some of our readers have sent positive feedback, and many have given financial support by subscribing or sending donations. To continue for another five years and beyond, we need your continued support. One of the best forms of support, if you are not already a subscriber, is to subscribe to *Palestine Focus*.

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Continuing Israel Renewed Palest

By Riyad Khoury

The tremendous intensification of resistance in the West Bank and Gaza has three main causes. First are the short-term provocations by the Israeli military, as noted in the preceding article. Second is the longer-term dissatisfaction with the occupation, the repression of which has intensified over the last few years, and with the lack of any progress toward peaceful change because of the intransigence of the United States and Israel and the collaboration of Jordan's King Hussein. Third is the achievement of unity earlier this year at the Palestine National Council in Algiers.

Aside from the immediate events which triggered the uprising in Gaza, the twenty-first year of Israeli occupation over the West Bank and Gaza has been full of provocation. In the first eight months of 1987, the Palestine Human Rights Information Center in Jerusalem reported 17 political killings of Palestinians by the Israeli army and settlers; 111 people were seriously injured. In the same period 13,000 olive and fruit trees were uprooted by the military occupation authorities; universities, schools, or unions

were closed 48 times; six community leaders were expelled; 109 Palestinians were placed under administrative detention, i.e., with no charges; 80 received town arrest orders; 84 houses were demolished or sealed. The average Palestinian prison population in Israeli jails was about 4,500, considerably above the number before the 1985 prisoner exchange. The current wave of protest actually began in September, making this the most prolonged uprising since the occupation began in 1967.

The Nightmare of Occupation

For Palestinians, occupation is a continuing nightmare that never seems to end. Occupation is a nightmare for the scores of Palestinians wounded or killed by trigger-happy Israeli soldiers just as 1987 drew to a close. Without exception, all Palestinians have witnessed and suffered from Israeli occupation policies which target their very existence, as the recent wave of deadly shootings demonstrates. Yet though these policies are systematically brutal and oppressive, another problem faces the Palestinian people.

The ultimate aim of this occupation makes it different from most other occupations. Rather than temporarily seizing another people's territory, the Israeli occupiers are attempting to take away all Pales-

tinian land and have already built permanent settlements with large populations. This land-confiscation policy has been in force continuously since the beginning of the occupation more than twenty years ago.

This occupation has been anything but benign. The Israeli authorities have violated and disregarded all norms of international law, including the Geneva Conventions, a tragic irony since these were enacted in response to persecution of Jews.

An entire generation of Palestinians has grown up under occupation.

Confronted by one of the most powerful military forces in the world, the Palestinian people have had to resist occupation in order to survive and preserve their identity. An entire generation of Palestinians has grown up under occupation. The lives of the Palestinian children of occupation are constantly shaped by violence and death at the hands of Israeli soldiers.

The growing militance of Israeli settler vigilantes also spells death and violence for the Palestinians. The settlers, increasingly encroaching onto Palestinian land, exercise their own policies of violence against the Palestinian people but are not independent, really, from state policy. The supposed distinction between the military occupiers and the settlers is blurred by the stark similarities of their intentions and actions, by their obvious cooperation and coordination, and by the failure of the army to stop or punish them. To Palestinians, the distinctions are a matter of formality and nothing more.

The idea of Palestine and Palestinian nationalism are the real threat and what the occupiers fear most. The occupation is thus designed to suffocate all forms of political expression, even songs, the flag, or any-

thing which could be construed as embodying Palestinian national identity. A child throwing a rock at a military vehicle, for example, is less a physical than a political threat.

The level of violence inflicted on the civilian Palestinian population is severe and never stops. When the occupation authorities run out of excuses to brutalize people, they often harass and try to provoke them, especially the youth. A youngster is ordered by an Israeli soldier to stand by the side of a street facing a wall for long periods of time. A group of children is forced to imitate animals and engage in other humiliating acts for the amusement of soldiers. Israeli soldiers are allowed to violate all norms of accepted behavior knowing they are insulated from any reprisals for their actions, legal or otherwise. The result is the legalization and sanction of violence and the reinforcement of behavior already predisposed toward racism.

Palestinians not only endure constant attacks and harassment; they are the ones called all sorts of names and labeled "terrorist." Part of the Palestinian tragedy, then, is that the victims are blamed and portrayed as victimizers.

Palestinian prisoners receive the worst treatment. Israeli authorities finally admitted that torture of prisoners to gain confessions is routine and has been since 1967. Most Palestinians are arrested without any evidence against them and often with no charges; without torture-induced confessions under interrogation, few would be convicted. Youthful arrestees, male and female, are also victims of systematic torture, including sexual abuse by guards.

The Nightmare of "Diplomacy"

Palestinians not only face Israel's "iron fist" and political inflexibility in their question for security, independence, and nationhood; they also face a consistently anti-Palestinian, pro-Israel orientation from one U.S. administration after another. Unwavering U.S. support for Israeli intransigence toward the Palestinians, in particular, is viewed as



Shlomo Arad/Newsweek

Israeli troops drag a Palestinian from his home in Khan Yunis, Gaza.

Uprising ...

Continued from page 1

Fateh group," and political prisoners released in the 1985 prisoner exchange. In fact, Jabalia residents first took to the streets on December 9 to express outrage at what they considered the deliberate murder of four Gaza residents, three of them from Jabalia, by an Israeli driver the night before.

The Israeli had rammed a super-big army tank transporter into a line of cars carrying Arab workers back from jobs in Israel. The accident occurred in front of Israeli soldiers, just meters away from the main army checkpoint separating Israel from Gaza. Gazans, who were braced for some kind of revenge after the stabbing death of an Israeli salesman in Gaza's main square only 24 hours before, believed the accident was staged and deliberate.

A 17-year-old Jabalia youth was shot and killed during that morning's demonstration by students, and 26 were seriously injured, many under the age of 16. A second youth was shot dead in front of Gaza's Shifa hospital, where people gathered to hear reports on the dead and wounded. More than one thousand people protested the shootings by marching through the main street, while teenage boys and young men erected stone and burning tire barricades across streets and main entrances to Gaza refugee camps and waited with stones in their hands for soldiers to come, shooting their way into the camps.

The first day's incidents were repeated so often on successive days that details of each day's events become blurred into a monotonous refrain of morning demonstrations, shootings, gatherings at hospitals, more shootings, evening funerals, beatings, and shootings. More daring

youths heaved petrol bombs made from 7-Up bottles, gasoline, and nails at military vehicles and Israeli buses and cars. Most failed to ignite or hit their targets, but at least one military car in Gaza and an Israeli bus in Rafah were burned.

On December 10, the West Bank began to react to the repression in Gaza with barricades and rock throwing at soldiers. And almost immediately the West Bank mourned its first death, a young man killed in Nablus by an army sniper. [Official Israeli policy is to station snipers with automatic weapons and shoot-to-kill orders on rooftops throughout the occupied territories.] The next day, on the outskirts of the city in Balata refugee camp, residents were shot at by border guards as they left the mosque after noon prayers, shouting "Allah Akbar" [God is great]. A 17-year-old girl was shot in the back and died, a 54-year-old woman was killed at the doorstep of her house, and an 11-year-old boy was killed with a bullet in the head. More than thirty people were injured in the blaze of gunfire and then prevented by soldiers from reaching the hospital for treatment. The camp was curfewed, on and off, for a week.

It would be hard to exaggerate the extreme violence used by the Israeli army, borderguards, and settlers against Palestinians in the occupied territories during these two weeks. Foreign journalists reported that boys were beaten unconscious by soldiers, strapped to the front of jeeps as a human defense against stones, beaten and teargassed in hospitals, and shot in the back fleeing from demonstrations. One 17-year-old who was injured in the first day's demonstrations was taken from Gaza hospital strapped to a stretcher and arrested. On December 18, soldiers broke into Shifa hospital after trying to do so for a week. They smashed the x-ray machine and anaesthesia equipment

and beat up male and female nurses, as well as the 65-year-old mother of a dead youth. Those wounded in Gaza now have to be transferred to hospitals inside Israel for treatment and possible arrest.

One of the few institutions operating in Gaza is the military court. More than four hundred youths were arrested and sent to Ansar 2 prison camp, which can accommodate no more than one hundred, so military tribunals are trying to quickly "process" the detainees with speedy trials. Eighty youths were brought to court on December 18, but only twelve could be sentenced, two to eight months imprisonment and high fines, because none of the youths would sign confessions. [Since this article was written, over three thousand Palestinians were arrested, charged with "organizing" the uprising, and threatened with expulsion, administrative detention, prolonged imprisonment, and the Israeli routine of interrogation under torture to produce "confessions."]

A 70-year-old man died from asphyxiation at Al-Aqsa mosque when police teargassed demonstrators and worshippers after Friday noon prayers. The protest at the mosque had been in remembrance of the recent Palestinian martyrs and against Israeli Minister Ariel Sharon, who used soldiers to move into his new apartment in the Moslem Quarter in Jerusalem. "He was responsible for Sabra and Shatila, wasn't he?" is how Palestinians from the Old City respond to questions about their new neighbor.

On December 21, a three-day strike in progress in the West Bank was joined by a general strike called by heads of Arab towns and villages inside Israel. Palestinians and Lebanese in Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre also struck December 18 in solidarity with the West Bank and Gaza. In Damascus, fifty thousand Palestinians rallied in Yarmouk refugee camp on December 24. Dem-

Israeli Occupation — and Palestinian Resistance



the primary obstacle to an internationally mediated resolution. U.S. opposition to Palestinian objectives thus contributes greatly to the anger of Palestinians who turn to throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at soldiers and burning tires in the streets.

The expanding needs of the Israeli occupation are a key piece of U.S. international strategy in the region, and the vast military and economic aid Israel receives each year from the U.S. government is the price paid with hardly a whisper of dissent. The United States also stands behind Israeli actions and policies in the international arena as well, most glaringly in the United Nations. The logic of this policy leads to U.S. and Israeli denial even of the fundamental Palestinian right to choose their own representative, i.e., the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Another ominous development for the Palestinians is the growing role of Jordanian King Hussein in aligning himself with both Israel and the United States in their common vision of a "solution" to the Palestinian question. This vision is to rob the Palestinians of their right to ever live in freedom and security by reimposing Jordanian rule over the West Bank and Gaza in conjunction with continued Israeli settlements and military presence. West Bank Palestinians, who were brutally occupied by Jordan from 1948 to 1967, see such a development as the worst possible outcome.

Israel and Jordan have been cooperating to attack support for the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza and nurture a collaborationist elite. With a critical infusion of financial aid from the United States, they say they want to "improve the quality of life" for Palestinians under occupation. The money would largely go toward buying the loyalty of Palestinian collaborators who would pose as a Palestinian leadership "alternative" to the PLO and acceptable to Israel, Jordan, and the United States, i.e., to everyone but the Palestinian people themselves!

Under this plan Israel and Jordan would share authority over the occupied territories. Both, therefore, aim to suppress all forms of Palestinian nationalism. King Hussein's government, for instance, banned the circulation in Jordan of the nationalist Palestinian newspaper *Al-Mithaq* a few months before the Israeli authorities closed down the East Jerusalem daily entirely in 1986. In 1987, Palestinian resistance has accelerated partially in response to the gradual edging of Israeli/U.S./Jordanian plans toward realization. The Palestinian uprising sends a clear message of rejection to Jordan's King Hussein.

But the Palestinians also have hope, and this is an important ingredient in the latest uprisings. In April, the PLO put forward a united program at the Palestine National

Council meeting in Algiers. That program includes a call for the convening of the U.N.-proposed international peace conference. U.N. resolution 3858c, which calls for the conference, specifically includes the assertion of Palestinian national rights as a basis for such a conference, including the representation of Palestinians by the PLO and the right to an independent state.

The surge of resistance comes at a time of renewed Palestinian unity inside and outside the West Bank and Gaza and is fed by

it. Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and to the Israeli/Jordanian plan demonstrates the vitality of Palestinian nationalism and poses a powerful challenge to plans to usurp legitimate Palestinian leadership or impose an unjust settlement. The clear message of the current uprising is that only a genuine solution, which responds to the inalienable aspirations of the Palestinian people for self-determination and independence, can lead to peace. □

Palestinians Killed by Israeli Occupation Forces and Settlers (confirmed) December 9-30, 1987

Date	Name/Age	Residence	By	Comment
1 12/9	Hatem Abu Sis, 17	Jabalia, Gaza	M	Shot in chest
2 12/10	Wahid Abu Salem, 13	Khan Yunis, Gaza	M	Shot in head
3 12/10	Ibrahim Ikaik, 17	Nablus	M	Shot in head
4 12/11	Sahar Jirmi, 17	Balata, Nablus	M	Shot in chest
5 12/11	Ali Musa'ed, 11	Balata, Nablus	M	Shot in head
6 12/11	Suhaila Ka'bi, 57	Balata, Nablus	M	Shot in head
7 12/14	Hassan Abu Jarhoun, 25	Khan Yunis, Gaza	M	
8 12/15	Abdallah AbuHussein, 17	Khan Yunis, Gaza	M	Shot 12/12
9 12/15	Khaled Abu Takia, 18	Jabalia, Gaza	M	Shot 12/14
10 12/15	Mahmud Sakhie, 22	Jabalia, Gaza	M	
11 12/15	Talal Hwihi, 17	Beit Hanoun, Gaza	S	
12 12/15	Nafez Katanani, 15	Deir Ballah, Gaza	M	
13 12/15	Najwa Masri*, 17	Beit Hanoun, Gaza	M	
14 12/16	Adwa Abu Samhadan, 20	Rafah, Gaza	M	
15 12/18	Abdel S. S. Iftakhi, 19	Bureij, Gaza	M	
16 12/18	Maysara al Butanji, 22**	Al-Shaja'ia, Gaza	M	
17 12/18	Khalil Mahsiri, 70	al-Bireh	M	Tear gas at prayer
18 12/21	Riad Shehadeh, 20	Gaza	M	Shot 12/9
19 12/21	Najig Suwafti	Tubas, Jenin	M	
20 12/21	Bassem Suwafti	Tubas, Jenin	M	
21 12/21	Yusef Arawi	Jenin	M	
22 12/22	Mahmoud al-Aziza, 17	Jenin	M	Shot 12/21
23 12/22	Khaled Hamed, 17	Jabalia, Gaza	M	
24 12/30	Mustafa Issa al-Beik, 17	Gaza	M	Shot 12/21

M = Military (border guards or army); S = Settlers.

*Multiple sources have confirmed the shooting death of Najwa Masri on 12/15. Her family reported that she died of a heart attack, probably to prevent the military from taking the body.

**The 65-year-old mother of Maysara al Butanji was beaten with clubs by Israeli soldiers on 12/18 when she arrived at Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza, to see her son. She is hospitalized in serious condition.

SOURCE: Palestine Human Rights Information Center: Jerusalem.

onstrations against Israel were also reported in Peking, Sofia, Rome, Nicosia, and Stockholm.

The December 21 strike was observed by Palestinians in all of historic Palestine and by Syrian Druze in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 there has never been such a total, united strike. Three thousand Palestinian strikers in Um al-Fahem blocked the main north-south road into the Galilee for two hours. A large march was held through the center of Nazareth, and demonstrations and stone throwing were reported from Jaffa, Haifa, and even the village of Abu Ghosh, one of the few Palestinian villages between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv not bulldozed in 1948.

Meir Kahane and his supporters disrupted a peaceful demonstration in the Galilee, saying his group was visiting an ancient synagogue. A clash ensued with villagers. Twenty-two of Kahane's followers were arrested at the scene but were released the next day. Some one hundred Palestinians from inside the Green Line, i.e., Israeli citizens, were arrested and are still in prison.

A 22-year-old bicycle mechanic from Bureij refugee camp in Gaza explained the daring behavior of fellow Palestinians to an Israeli journalist: "We are walking now with our chests bared. We don't care any more. Our life is not worth it. If we get killed, maybe it can produce a better life for our people."

Israeli policy has been to attack such hopes. Israeli officials have warned Palestinians that they have "nothing to gain" from the protests, despite appeals from the European community that an international peace conference is even more imperative to end the violence. Israel seemed to be without regret and without any serious outside pressure to desist from its shoot-to-kill policy toward demonstrators.

In Gaza, where protests were most intense, representatives from health, women's, and professional organiza-

tions met to discuss the situation and could only release a list of rather moderate demands: end economic stagnation, stop brutal measures against residents, stop settler violence, allow families to reunite, etc. Dr. Haider Abdul Shafi, head of Gaza's Red Crescent Society, later explained that the real demand of the people is that military occupation end and that Palestinians have the right to live in their own state with full national rights. □

Anita Vitullo writes for the Guardian newspaper in New York. She wrote this article for Palestine Focus from the Palestine Human Rights Information Center in Jerusalem.

Vanunu ...

Continued from page 8

thought it is his duty and he owes it to humanity even if he is risking his life that people will face this issue in Israel and outside Israel. The Israeli government definitely is setting an example. Second, they are trying to undermine some of the damage or prevent some of the damage. I don't see it as damage, of course, it is a security matter for everyone on earth. After all, if someone builds nuclear weapons for some time in secret, that is a kind of crime. I think it is a matter after all for the Americans, for the Western countries, for all the people in those countries who are dealing with nuclear weapons anyway to start to deal and look at those areas where nuclear proliferation has been happening in the last decade. Whether it is in the Middle East or the Indian subcontinent or in South Africa. We didn't give it enough thought at all. In a couple of decades we have this kind of spread of nuclear weapons though formally all these countries are talking against proliferation, but practically things are happening in their awareness.

They know about things. It is happening with their passive and active help of countries like the United States, France especially, or Norwegian heavy water. It shows the basic hypocrisy of people, both inside Israel and outside. □

Convention ...

Continued from page 3

Palestinian people under occupation. The occupation is the central and immediate obstacle to peace in the Middle East. It represents the day-to-day oppression of one-and-a-half million Palestinians and the denial of their national, human, civil, and political rights on the ground. Educational and organization work about occupation requires that we raise the issues of prisoners, torture, house demolitions, expulsions, land and water, agriculture, settlements and settler violence, labor, and the resistance which is rapidly growing in the West Bank and Gaza. While ending 20 years of occupation was a particularly appropriate theme in 1987, activists agreed that opposition to the ongoing occupation must continue. The current uprising confirms the correctness of that decision. The international peace conference called for by the United Nations addresses not only ending the occupation but steps to ensure Palestinian national rights which can lead to a just and comprehensive peace.

Acknowledging that the challenges ahead are certainly formidable, the Palestine Solidarity Committee renewed its commitment to careful and patient education and organizing. That is what it will take to build understanding of, and support for, the struggle of the Palestinian people among the people of the United States. The task of changing U.S. public opinion and U.S. policy may be difficult and long-term, but peace and justice for the Palestinians depend on it. And peace and justice for the people of the United States depend on it as well. □

At Neve Tirze women's prison there was a hunger strike because the prison administrators asked the prisoners to cook for the administrators and prison guards and for the Jewish criminal prisoners. The political Arab Palestinian women refused to cook for those who persecute them. They refused to work. The guards then confined them to their cells. They were not allowed to leave their cells to walk in the courtyard and breathe fresh air.

All prisoners love books and spend most of their time reading. So the authorities decided to take the books from the cells to the dining room. They asked the women to move them. The women refused. The guards started to take the books. The women shouted, "Stop taking our books." The guards returned with soldiers and tear gas. The women were returned to their cells. The authorities used a lot of tear gas on the prisoners in their cells. The prisoners had respiratory problems, difficulties with speech, and burns on their faces and hands.

Two weeks later, Knesset members visited Neve Tirza

and were affected by the lingering presence of the gas which caused their eyes to tear, an indication of the amount of tear gas used two weeks earlier. Life in prison is terrible. The same women were also engaged in a hunger strike at the time. All in all, the prison strike lasted nine months including the hunger strike. I have been talking about a women's prison, but there are a lot of prisons for men, like the high-tech Jnaid Prison in Nablus which had strikes two months ago.

There were some protests outside the prisons because of the situation of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, but the strikes in prison are because of the conditions in the prisons. Things are very bad. Soldiers are always beating prisoners and using bad language, which is intolerable, and the prisoners strike. Also there are shortages of beds and blankets, complaints about the quantity and quality of meals, lack of water, lack of hot water for washing. For these reasons there are a lot of strikes.

I would also like to talk about a prison for teenagers, Al-Faraa, and Ansar II in Gaza. These prisoners are between 12 and 19 years old. Torture is routinely used against these kids. They have no books and no visitors. Perhaps because of the large teenage Palestinian prison population, there are thirty children to a room. They can't

move; they can't sleep except in shifts. These are very, very bad prisons.

Possible North American Tour

I hope to be able to come, although I have not yet been able to get a U.S. visa. When I come, I want to talk about our people and their rights because as women living under occupation, we are looking for freedom. We would like others to defend us in our rights to return, to self-determination, to have a national state in our land. Secondly, I think the Israelis have a big propaganda machine in the United States and Canada, and in that way they are deceiving people. People do not know the real situation in the occupied territories. I know this because some who have visited the occupied territories have said they feel very bad because they have been deceived. They did not know the real situation even about the refugee camps and the suffering of the people. I would also like to show our suffering through slides, which are very concrete, about women's conditions and their life. I want to speak about universal women's issues although there may be some national differences. But the basics are the same. As women, we could work together on these feminist issues. □

Action ...

Continued from page 2

Dec. 18, candlelight vigil on Christmas Eve); **San Diego** (75 people held a Christmas Eve vigil at the Balboa Park nativity scene and 150 people picketed at the Balboa Park free speech area on Dec. 27); **Lansing, Mich.** (rally at Michigan State University); **Ann Arbor** (Dec. 29 demonstration at University of Michigan); **Detroit** (Dec. 18 picket, 25 people, Dec. 22 picket at federal building, Dec. 23 picket at Red Cross and 200 people held a vigil); **Boston** (picketed downtown Dec. 26, Dec. 19 demonstration at Israeli consulate, Dec. 23 demonstration at Dukakis office, Dec. 24 candlelight vigil at Massachusetts Central Church), **Portland, Ore.** (Dec. 23 protest at City Council, 75 people), and **Dallas** (Dec. 23 picket in Kennedy Square, 150 people).

The Palestinian Women's Association (PWA) held sit-ins at Red Cross offices in San Francisco; Washington, D.C.; Boston (at Amnesty International); San Diego; Los Angeles; Orange County; St. Louis; Houston; and Chicago. On December 30 the PWA organized a Palestinian children's demonstration at the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles.

At presstime, demonstrations were planned for Jan. 7 at Israeli consulates and the embassy, at federal buildings, and other locations in the following cities: Sacramento, Tucson, Houston, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and others.

Many events were held to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, November 29. In Iowa City, Iowa, the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC—formerly November 29th Committee for Palestine) joined the Arabic Association, the General Union of Palestinian Students, and New Wave for a candlelight vigil on the steps of the Old Capital in Iowa City, Iowa on December 4 to protest U.S. military support for Israel. A solidarity evening was held in Iowa City on December 5 featuring Dr. John Zogby from the Arab American Institute and Dick Reilly and Amy Smith from the PSC regional office in Chicago.

In Austin, Texas, the Native American Support Group and Palestine Solidarity Committee held an educational forum on "Indigenous Peoples' Rights" on December 5. Tony Gonzales of the International Indian Treaty Council and Hilton Obenzinger from *Palestine Focus* spoke.

In Chicago, Meir Vanunu, brother of imprisoned Israeli antinuclear and peace activist Mordechai Vanunu, joined Australian Episcopal priests John McKnight and Stephen Gray, community activist Adrien Capehart, and PSC Midwest Regional Coordinator Dick Reilly at a December 4 Palestine Solidarity Committee dinner. Pat Lynch, an Irish-American folksinger, and the Arab Community

Center dancers also performed. Meir Vanunu, McKnight, and Gray also joined *Israeli Foreign Affairs* editor and publisher Jane Hunter at a December 5 PSC dinner and solidarity event in San Francisco.

The Tucson chapter of the PSC, the Committee for Palestinian Self-Determination, joined the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Peace in Central America Coalition, Tucsonans Against Apartheid, Students Against Apartheid, General Union of Palestinian Students, and Tucson Friends of the United Farm Workers in a November 21 event. Speakers included Los Angeles defendant Michel Shehadeh; Peggy Hutchinson, a defendant from the sanctuary movement; Betts Putnam from the Tucson Committee for Human Rights in Latin America and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Barbara Elbrandt of the American Friends Service Committee; and Frederick Klein of the American Civil Liberties Union. The program was entitled "Who's Next: Reagan's Assault on Civil Rights."

Radio Station WBAI and the Palestine Solidarity Committee cosponsored "Our Roots Are Still Alive" in New York on December 4. The program and dinner featured Palestinian trade unionist Nadia Habash, poet and community activist Safiya Holmes Henderson, Chairwoman Mamazane Zulu of the African National Congress Women's Section, and performances by Al-Watan, Roy Brown, and Simon Shaheen.

Nadia Habash also spoke in Boston, Syracuse, Philadelphia, Washington (DC), Youngstown, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Ann Arbor, Birmingham (Ala.), Austin, Houston, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Her tour was cosponsored by the North American Coordinating Committee and the International Coordinating Committee for Nongovernment Organizations Concerned with the Question of Palestine.

Protests continued at the closure of the Palestine Information Office (PIO) in Washington, D.C., Hasan Abdul Rahman, PIO director spoke in San Antonio and Austin in October, according to activist Jean Mainer from the San Antonio Forum for Middle East Peace. In Seattle, the Ad hoc Committee for Free Information on the Mideast collected signatures from several dozen community activists for a statement opposing the closure of the PIO office to the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*. The signers are affiliated with such organizations as the Palestine Solidarity Committee, Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, Organization of Arab Students, Socialist Workers Party, Semitic Women Taking Action, Fellowship of Reconciliation, National Lawyers Guild, Seattle Coalition Against Apartheid, Washington Rainbow Coalition, United Holy Land Fund, All Peoples Congress, Faculty for Human Rights in El Salvador, Pledge of Resistance, Casa Chile, Seattle

Women Act for Peace, Peace and Solidarity Alliance, Communist Party, and a number of trade unions and church groups.

January 26, 1988 marks the first anniversary of the arrests of seven Palestinians and one's Kenyan wife in Los Angeles and the beginning of the Reagan administration's attempt to deport them on the basis of the McCarran-Walter Act. The next round in the appeal to dismiss the case because of government misconduct is coming up soon. In Los Angeles, the Committee for Justice to Stop the McCarran-Walter Act Deportations will hold a first anniversary commemoration on January 26. The event, billed as "It Did Happen Here ... Who's Next?" features former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Casey Kasem, and the In Camera Playhouse. In Ann Arbor, the Palestine Solidarity Committee and the General Union of Palestinian Students featured L.A. defendant Khader Hamide and defense attorney Brian Hudson speaking on the case at an Oct. 27 event, "The Civil Rights Case of the Eighties."

The Association of Arab-American University Graduates held its twentieth annual convention in Arlington, Virginia from November 19 to 22. The convention theme was "Arab-Americans and the Arab World: Challenges and Opportunities." Several sessions commemorated the theme of the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war and the resulting occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Palestinian scholar Walid Khalidi was the keynote speaker; he addressed "The Challenge of Israel."

An advertisement ran in the British *Guardian* on October 31 "Against the Israeli Law of Return—For the Palestinian Right to Return" in commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, in which colonial Britain pledged to permit a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The 85 signers—British, American, French, Australian, and Israeli Jews and relatives—declared opposition to the state of Israel as a Jewish state and to the Zionist movement. The statement also affirmed the Palestinian people's right to return, to self-determination, and to an independent state in Palestine; the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; the state of Israel does not represent the Jewish people legally, morally, or in any other way; and the Zionist structure of the state of Israel is at the heart of the racism and oppression against the Palestinian people and should be dismantled. The statement was run again on November 29 with more than 150 signatures. □

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

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

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

Editorial Board: Douglas Franks, Steve Goldfield, Riyad Khoury, Hilton Obenzinger

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Demonstrations, protests, Israeli soldiers shooting point-blank at children—the recent uprising in Gaza and the West Bank exposes the ugly reality of the Israeli occupation as never before. But, while the totality of repression began to seep through the news media, it still remains a difficult task to discover exactly the full extent of Israeli human-rights violations.

One invaluable resource is the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, which has just begun publishing monthly reports of human-rights violations under Israeli rule. Established in May 1986, the Database Project on Palestinian Human Rights has its headquarters at the Palestine Human Rights Information Center in East Jerusalem, with another office in Chicago for disseminating information.

Information on human-rights violations under Israeli rule is collected by a staff of field workers who investigate violations on a daily basis. The data is then translated into English and entered into a computerized database and used to produce special publications, periodic statistical summaries, and the recently launched monthly report.

The Palestine Human Rights Information Center in Jerusalem serves as a base for data collection, as well as for information for the press, human-rights organizations, and all persons interested in human-rights violations under Israeli rule. The PHRIC proved to be one of the few reliable sources of information during the uprising, with Israeli official reports of deaths and casualties notoriously understated. Of course, Israeli human-rights violations did not begin with the uprising, and the DataBase records the number of deaths, arrests, house demolitions, expulsions, and other abuses regularly. As well, these statistics do not stand alone; the bare numbers have names, faces, lives that are regularly described. Indeed, one of the goals of the Database is to counter the dehumanization of the Palestinians.

Some of the reports available from the Chicago office include "Ansar 2" by Anita Vitullo (on conditions in an Israeli prison), "Nonviolence and Death at Bir Zeit University" by Frank Collins, "24 Hours in 20 Years of Israeli Military Occupation," and a "1982-1987 Human Rights Data Summary." The recent monthly report should prove an indispensable tool, too. For more information, write to the DataBase Project, 1 Quincy Court, Suite 1308, Chicago, IL 60604.

As the resistance of the Palestinians increases so has interest by the Latino communities in the United States.

Getting It All In FOCUS

NOTICIERO PALESTINO

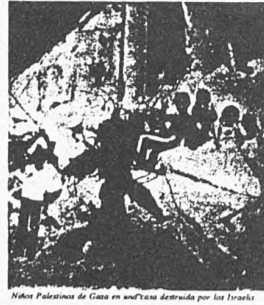
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La Comunidad Latina y la Cuestión Palestina

Por Leticia Peña

Esta edición del Noticiero Palestino es muy especial porque es la primera vez que se publica un medio de comunicación sobre la cuestión Palestina dirigido a la comunidad Latina. Es también muy especial porque constituye uno de los proyectos principales del Comité Latino del Comité 29 de Noviembre por Palestina. Pero más que nada es de mayor importancia porque su propósito es el de informar a la comunidad Latina sobre la cuestión Palestina, específicamente exponiendo el papel que juega Israel en América Central, haciendo comparaciones entre la lucha del pueblo Palestino y la de los Latinos en los Estados Unidos y a través de Latinoamérica, y exponiendo el potencial que existe para que se desate una guerra en el Medio Oriente y el efecto que tendrá la misma en nuestra comunidad.

El Comité Latino fue establecido en Octubre del año pasado. Su objetivo principal es el de buscar formas de educar a la comunidad Latina sobre la cuestión Palestina. El Comité es un proyecto concreto que surge de nuestro reconocimiento de que el



Niños Palestinos de Gaza en un'cárcel destruida por los israelíes.

La Segunda Década de Israel en América Central

Por Jane Hunter

No pasó mucho tiempo para que el relato del cadáver decapitado de un famoso guerrillero, el Dr. Hugo Spaldóro, prefiera tener un ángulo israelí. Spaldóro, un Panameño quien recientemente se había unido a las fuerzas del grupo de comunistas ARDE en Costa Rica, dirigido por Efraim Passera, fue asesinado en Panamá el 19 de Septiembre de 1985 y su cuerpo fue descargado a una corta distancia del territorio colombiano. En Octubre, su abogado dijo a un periódico costarricense que Spaldóro renunció su participación en ARDE porque no estaba de acuerdo con el control ejercido sobre los misioneros anti-Nicaragüenses por el General Panameño Manuel Antonio Noriega por virtud de ser el conductor de armas de Israel al ARDE.

Spaldóro fue asesinado cuando se estaba preparando para hacer declaraciones en contra de Noriega por tráfico de drogas, tráfico de drogas, servicio de inteligencia, el asesinato de Spaldóro y el arreglo de elecciones por medios fraudulentos entre los criminales que se le atribuyen a Noriega en series de espionaje de primera página, aparentemente calculados a fomentar su retiro

político. En el transcurso de esas acusaciones, Newsweek reportó que Noriega ha estado "vendiendo secretos Estadounidenses a Israel" en reuniones con "agentes de paraisos alban de la Mossad" - la CIA israelí - en Panamá, Canadá y Europa en sucesos sucesivos. Newsweek también reportó que una "contribución" israelí de muchos millones de dólares al Presidente de Panamá pudo haber sido un pago para Noriega.

Teresa Duruch, corresponsalera en Jerusalén del periódico Estado de la ciudad de México, escribió acerca de varias veces en los cuales pagos fueron hechos por Israel para "sobornar ministros de defensa con el solo propósito de asegurar la venta de armas." El estado panameño Presalé tiene de agente de varias compañías de armas del estado y privadas israelíes hizo una donación de \$10,000 al candidato presidencial Guatemalteco Jorge Carpio Nicols; el diario israelí Mideve, el cual reporta la donación, relata que \$50,000 más fueron prometidos.

Más relatos se darán a conocer a medida que Israel se dirige hacia la segunda década de involucramiento en América Central. Continuó en Página 8

Noticiero Palestino: new Spanish publication on Palestinian rights.

Now, the biannual *Noticiero Palestino* is available in Spanish to fill this need. Published by the Latino Task Force of the Palestine Solidarity Committee (formerly the November 29th Committee for Palestine), *Noticiero Palestino* includes an article on "The Latino Community and the Palestinian Question" by Latino Task Force Chairperson Leticia Peña, as well as articles on Israel in Central America, the Iran-Israel-Contragate scandal, the L.A. 8, and more. Initial response has been enthusiastic as this new vehicle for developing pro-Palestinian sentiment reaches out into the Mexican-Chicano communities of the Southwest, the Puerto Rican communities of the Northeast, and in the many diverse Spanish-speaking communities around the country. For more information write to *Noticiero Palestino*, P. O. Box 27462, San Francisco, CA 94127 or send \$4 for two issues.

Elections ...

Continued from page 1

such predictions as it continues to gather increased support, exploding the myth that any questioning of Israeli policy must be squelched. Nor is Jesse Jackson the only candidate to buck the pro-Israel tide—and thrive. In the 1986 election the pro-Israel lobby organized a smear campaign to defeat Sacramento, California county supervisorial candidate Grantland Johnson because of his defense of Palestinian victims of the Sabra-Shatila massacre. Johnson was elected with a strong majority.

Nonetheless, it still remains a sad political fact that at the national level only Jesse Jackson has so far had the courage to defy the media and government barrage of propaganda against the Palestinian people. His example should inspire not only support, but a renewed commitment by the peace movement to challenge all the candidates, presidential and otherwise, to rethink their stands on the Middle East conflict. The current Palestinian uprising makes this task more urgent and more possible.

While this is the task before all those seeking peace and justice in the Middle East, no one should harbor illusions that the 1988 campaign will mark a sharp break from the past aside from Jackson's position. With both administration and congressional attempts to close the Washington Palestine Information Office and the New York PLO United Nations observer mission, it is quite clear that the pro-Israel lobby is taking no chances in stifling any real debate. However, Israel's shoot-to-kill repression on the evening news makes the lobby's work more difficult.

Before a sharp break in the automatic pro-Israel trend in American politics can occur, a long process of organizing and building will be required. A loud and strong grassroots progressive movement must in-

corporate Palestinian rights into its program in order to sway the "mainstream" discussion. The Rainbow Coalition, a broad movement that mobilizes both within and outside the electoral process, has taken a major step forward in beginning to articulate such a program. And while the Rainbow Coalition has been inspired by Jesse Jackson, it is more than just one man's campaign; it is an attempt to place an overall progressive alternative to the American people, in which supporting Palestinian rights and restraining U.S. intervention in the Middle East are important elements.

But we can expect not just the Rainbow Coalition but other broad political coalitions and mobilizations to form during the election campaign. A progressive viewpoint on the Middle East should be incorporated into all activities during the campaign, both to challenge all candidates and to set the basis for future debate. Several key points need to be highlighted:

- The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza must end. An end to the occupation—the complete withdrawal of Israeli soldiers and settlers—would open the door to internationally supervised negotiations to formalize a just and lasting peace, i.e., the United Nations international peace conference. Not incidentally, an end to the occupation would bring an end to the intense Palestinian suffering caused by harsh and brutal Israeli repression. The U.S. government has so far acted not to end but to bolster the occupation. As the *Los Angeles Times* recently noted, "Both the White House and Congress have acted, overtly or passively, to encourage perpetuation of the Israeli occupation. The billions of dollars in aid now flowing to Israel, the largest recipient of aid in the entire world carry few restrictions. There has been no demand for an end to the continued expansion of Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights of Syria, the occupied West Bank, and the Gaza Strip."

The *San Jose Mercury News*, in an editorial entitled "A \$3 Billion Lever," argued, "Providing \$3 billion annually in direct aid to Israel, the U.S. government has a responsibility to more than moan and abstain from Security Council votes. The \$1.8 billion in annual U.S. military aid to Israel should be part of the equation. That aid is not meant to pay Israeli soldiers shooting Palestinian teen-agers. That aid makes the United States an accomplice to these atrocities. ... How long will Americans accept a ridiculous situation in which Israel uses our money and our weapons in violation of our principles and policies? It is time that U.S. military and economic assistance to Israel be linked to a settlement in the occupied territories."

- In the debate over deficits, taxes, and the need to cut the military budget, the billions sent to Israel deserve increased scrutiny. In an atmosphere in which defense contractor and Defense Department scandals have become commonplace, it is outrageous that billions of dollars are sent to Israel without any oversight or even accounting to the U.S. government on how its funds are spent. No other recipient of U.S. foreign aid enjoys such latitude. Clearly, our taxes are used to bolster Israeli militarism, to pay for the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and to build segregated settlements illegally on occupied land.
- The United Nations international peace conference must be projected to the American public. The peace proposal calls for all parties to negotiate a comprehensive peace, which means the PLO will participate as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Distinctions need to be drawn between such a peace conference and the sham proposals floated by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the Reagan administration, which seek to bypass the PLO by involving Jordan's King Hussein in direct bilateral talks with

Israel on behalf of the Palestinians.

- The demand for no U.S. intervention in the Middle East has never been more timely with the U.S. Navy sailing through the dangerous waters of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The broad peace and non-intervention movement has the opportunity to respond boldly and directly to brazen U.S. intervention going on before our eyes. The current Gulf intervention has allowed the United States to implant more bases in the region and to promote the growing role of the Central Command in the region. Our government is playing a dangerous and reckless game, one which endangers not only U.S. servicemen but the whole world. The Dellums/Shroeder plan to cut the Central Command from the military budget is a concrete noninterventionist proposal.
- Israel's role in the Iran/Israel/Contra scandal must be vigorously addressed, particularly since Congress and the media have chosen to cover it up. Israel's meddling in Central America and its continuing active alliance with South Africa are integral to ongoing destabilization of those regions and to U.S. international strategy. If criticism of Israel is muted in the broad peace movement, then human-rights violators and racists around the world will be allowed to receive support from the United States' "strategic asset" without allowing the American people to assess the consequences.

The 1988 campaign will present many opportunities to raise these issues. An election campaign is supposed to be an opportunity for real political debate, and that is our aim: to launch a genuine debate on real history, facts, and issues concerning the Palestinians and Middle East peace. That is a debate that we can insist should be held before the American people, a debate which, in the long run, we are confident that supporters of peace and justice can win. □

"Any nuclear weapons, no matter where they are, are a threat to humanity"

Interview with Meir Vanunu

Meir Vanunu is the younger brother of Mordechai Vanunu, who revealed the extent of Israeli nuclear weapons facilities to the London Sunday Times in October 1986. Just before his story appeared in print, he was lured to Rome, kidnapped, and taken to Israel, where he is imprisoned under heavy security and facing espionage charges. Meir Vanunu was interviewed by Palestine Focus in San Francisco in December 1987.

PF: How did Mordechai and you become involved generally and on the issue of Israel's nuclear weapons?

MV: I got involved in the nuclear issue because of him. If he hadn't done what he did, I wouldn't be forced to help him and try to sustain some of the influence of his action by my activity.

He himself was working at the nuclear plant at Dimona. He came to that decision—it was a very long process to make the decision—to do what he did. That was his own decision, very individual decision, with no other participation from anybody else.

I gave a lot of thought to different questions in Israel when I was about 19. My brother and I underwent the same sort of process. We grew up with a very religious orthodox Sephardic education, including yeshiva in Israel, which is a very religious education. There was a kind of rebellion time against religion at the age of 16 or 17 for both of us.

It was a kind of natural thing to break from that kind of atmosphere to the other side, the more secular, because we came from Morocco with our very religious, orthodox, conservative background. It is similar to what occurred with the Jewish people in Eastern Europe a hundred or two hundred years ago when they went out of their closed societies to the new, modern, and secular philosophy.

Since we were disconnecting ourselves from religion, we went to the army as anyone else—we served for three years. We had then the time to start to think for ourselves, to choose for ourselves the way in Israel. For me the main thing shaping my views about the whole situation in the Jewish question in Israel happened after I had the time in the army to read a lot of media, press articles, essays, books. I was in anti-aircraft missiles. I had a relatively good, comfortable service.

During my university time at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for about four, five years, naturally I had the time really to look at all kinds of questions, back to the roots, to the Bible, and the connections. It is a question of identity after all. With many conflicts in Israel—between the religion-state, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Ashkenazi-Sephardics, and the Jewish people in Israel and the Jewish people globally—you ask yourself where you stand. I formed some of my ideas then.

I was not active or a member of any party. I attended different discussions and meetings at the university and outside, participating by listening to things and reading about things, but not really taking action.

My brother is different. My brother is the kind of person who, if he takes up something, takes it up without much compromise. He takes things strongly. He began to be aware in his late twenties when he started to study philosophy at Ben Gurion University in Dimona when he was working in the nuclear plant. Then he started to learn more things and understand more about the political and social life in Israel, religious problems. From his philosophy he also started to get some different angles on the situation that exists in Israel. He started to take a lot of actions by really getting involved in campus life, including establishing a student cell, which was considered to be liberal or leftist in Israel, calling for equal rights for the Palestinians as well. There was a picture of him demonstrating for a Palestinian state. He believes very strongly in basic values of humanity, universalism really, which it is really hard to find in the way the society in Israel lives.

PF: So because of what happened to your brother you had a chance to express your own views.

MV: Not really a chance. I had my own ideas, but I didn't want to put them in action in Israel. I went out of Israel and traveled. I stayed in the United States for a couple of years in Boston, in Los Angeles for a year. I traveled in Europe. I was thinking from here about the situation there.

But I wasn't really waiting for an opportunity, a chance. My brother knew my way of thinking—he sent me a letter to Boston after he was captured. He knew I had some things I could help him with and help the issue that he started. He wrote me, "I started something, and if you want, you can try to go on with it. Maybe you have some more important things in your life to do. It's up to you, but there is something if you want to take it up and go on."

When I went to Israel, I learned there was a lot to do first of all because of my understanding in the legal field

because of my studies. First of all, from the legal point of view I had a lot of things to contribute by changing the whole situation, firing the lawyer, Amnon Zichroni, and hiring a new lawyer. Since then, the history of the case and all this issue has changed. Because at the time we fired the lawyer, he was going to conduct the trial in a very secret way in a dark, hostile atmosphere. The trial would be finished already in May. We began by firing the lawyer and gaining some time and letting more things come out.

PF: You are unable to return to Israel because of charges connected to your revelation about how Mordechai was kidnapped. Can you tell us what you know?

MV: Mordechai was lured to Rome by a woman named Cindy, an American who offered to help him contact the Italian press. In Rome they were supposed to go to her sister's apartment. There, as soon as he came in, he was attacked by two Israeli men who beat him, chained him, and drugged him with anesthetics. They put him on a boat, and he was returned to Israel on October 6 or 7.

That information was hinted on the palm of his hand when he held it up to reporters saying he was hijacked in Rome. I believed that the British, the Western countries, Italy would be interested to hear the details and then they could take some action. I hoped here I'm going to do something really good from the point of view of some legal or diplomatic action by the Italian government. But nothing really happened from that side. But that information could be used for other purposes to get back attention on the way he was brought to Israel and back to the treatment he is receiving in Israel. In that way I succeeded in most countries aside from the United States, which has some special reasons to cover up this story.

PF: Why do you think the Israeli government is so vehement about suppressing that information?

MV: If they did something right, they would let it be known to the people. If they did something wrong, that's what they are doing, they're hiding it. That's what I told myself. I had a duty. If they did something wrong, I owe it to my brother and to justice to let it be known that he was abducted and how he was abducted, the manner and the way they did it. Because of that, they put out a warrant for my arrest. If I go back to Israel, I'll be arrested and put on trial. The charge is revealing state secrets, espionage.

PF: What has happened to Mordechai in the year since he was arrested? What have been the conditions of his incarceration?

MV: It started with his kidnapping about 14 months ago. Then they interrogated him heavily under very difficult conditions and made him sign some confessions. Then later on he faced charges of treason, aggravated espionage, and giving information to unauthorized people. Mordechai immediately admitted the facts but denied his guilt. After that there were many appeals to the Supreme Court to challenge some of the immunities which are to close the doors of the trial, to not permit some witnesses, not to let Mordechai himself speak about the kidnapping in the court behind closed doors, not to let him speak about some of the facts of the job he was doing and why he did what he did. All these were under heavy signatures on papers. That was challenged in the Supreme Court.

In August there were decisions by the Supreme Court to let Mordechai speak up on some of his testimony, not the whole thing, not all the circumstances of his kidnapping, not all the facts of his work. That was in the beginning of September when the pretrial started. For about five days, Mordechai testified, and other people from the nuclear plant, other defense people, gave testimony. Mordechai's lawyer Avigdor Feldman was challenging certain basic things such as whether Israel has jurisdiction to try him because he was kidnapped, whether the confession is valid because of the circumstances in which he signed them, whether again some of the trial could be open, and to invite or order some of the politicians to come and give testimony on the role of the nuclear plant or nuclear policy in general.

Most of these appeals were rejected by the district court. In the beginning of December there was an appeal to the Supreme Court on the closed door trial and to try to have it open for the international experts part. The decision about that will be given this week. There is a good sign that they might decide to open part of the trial. Last Wednesday Mordechai gave his real testimony, and the trial really started. He gave his testimony about some of the subjects. Again, he cannot speak about most of the things. In the next few weeks we are going to see some more testimony from international experts, people from the *Sunday Times*. It will go on for a few weeks, and the decision will be given at the beginning of next year.

PF: What kind of support did your brother receive in Israel and internationally?

MV: In Israel there was a very strong fear to support the case from any angle: the personal one or the political one. It took time until some people started to do things. It was at the beginning of this year about four, five months after the kidnapping, after the trial had formally started. I think time is doing its job by letting things get open. More people are writing about it. Not just the left like Matti Peled and Uri Avnery; these people were supporting it early. Now we see people like Shulamith Aloni, and an editorial by *Davar* (Histadrut newspaper) criticizing the government role. Then newspapers started to write in a more positive way, including some articles defending



Steve Goldfield/Palestine Focus

him. In the last month, there are much, much fewer hostile articles or lines like "the traitor" or the "man who sold the secrets" or "the atom spy." This is what they were calling him before. These things are more and more hard to see.

But what's amazing is in America some of them are still using these things, "the man who sold the secrets," because in some way in the United States they have some more interest to not let this story be opened at all because it is very sensitive what's happening about Israel and America in the nuclear issue and maybe the whole affair of Mordechai.

Internationally, things are much more encouraging. Many antinuclear movements in Europe and as far as New Zealand, Australia, and Canada are interested in giving support. Some of them adopted Mordechai and are acting on his behalf. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain nominated him for the alternative Nobel Peace Prize. The alternative prize is going to be awarded to him this week. He won't be able to be there, and I'm going to get it for him. There are also some prominent people, academics, intellectuals, and other people in Britain and elsewhere, Nobel prize winners, supporting Mordechai. The same in the United States: we have a very good list of people signed on a committee, Linus Pauling, Noam Chomsky, and others. Mordechai will receive another award at the beginning of next year. So all these things are showing a momentum of support internationally. It's growing.

PF: How would you characterize Israel as a nuclear threat?

MV: According to my brother, any nuclear weapons, no matter where they are, are a threat to human beings, to humanity in general. Nuclear weapons in the Middle East are even more threatening in some ways because it is a volatile area. There were rumors in 1973 that Israel armed some of its nuclear weapons to try to defend itself on the eve of the war.

In the future another war in the Middle East of the size of 1973 could be nuclearized. Not only that, we know that Syria has chemical weapons. It is a very dangerous situation to have nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, in this kind of area. Mordechai mainly opposed morally the fact that human beings created this type of dangerous weapon, the nuclear weapon. With our hands, he is saying, we are going to destroy humanity. We have the responsibility and the ability to disarm ourselves from all these things, wherever they are, the nuclear weapons, in the Middle East and other places.

PF: Why does the Israeli government find Mordechai's information so threatening?

MV: It is very hard to understand the thinking and intentions of the Israeli government in keeping it secret, what are they really gaining? There are many practical reasons. How did they build their weapons? Most of it was illegal. From international law or local Israeli law. The other could be to let the nuclear lobby in Israel work free from any observation from the people or the politicians. If there is any other real reason why they're hiding it, I don't see any.

The situation was comfortable for them, and Mordechai

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