

# Palestine Focus

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## Editorial:

### U.S. Out Of Lebanon!

**"Once again the United States has chosen to prop up a government whose power stems from brutality, not from popular support."**

While Ronald Reagan "gets more determined" to impose the May 17th Shultz agreement and his version of an "independent" Lebanon, the unpopular Gemayel government only controls a small part of Beirut. At present events were moving rapidly. The broad Lebanese resistance to Phalangist and Israeli domination has made considerable headway, giving any Reagan for President campaign worker sleepless nights. The entire Lebanese cabinet resigned. Most non-Phalangists defected from the army. The opposition took over West Beirut, and the decision was finally made to move the Marines from the airport to ships offshore. Since then, the battleship New Jersey has bombed Lebanon on a massive scale with its gigantic guns.

Since the October bombing of the Marine headquarters in Beirut, finding a way out of Lebanon has preoccupied the U.S. government, the military, and the American public. A recent Harris poll shows that 64 percent of Americans now "want to pull all the Marines out of Lebanon within a few weeks or months." Two reports on the Marine compound attack, one issued by the Pentagon and the other by the House Armed Services Committee's Investigation Subcommittee, were sharply critical of the use of the Marines in Lebanon. Testifying before the subcommittee, General John Vessy, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that all of the five chiefs opposed the current use of Marines. Three former CIA chiefs—Turner, Schlesinger, and Colby—have urged that the Marines be moved from the airport. By February, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neil began the Democratic bid to pass a congressional resolution asking for a troop withdrawal.

In an election year, the presence of U.S. troops in Lebanon has become a volatile campaign issue. Although Reagan has been intransigent—according to an aide "he gets more determined to keep the Marines on their mission with each new terrorist atrocity"—as a candidate he cannot ignore the danger the Marines' presence poses. As a top Reagan advisor put it, "Lebanon is the most explosive issue we face. If we should take 20, 30, or 40 casualties there in one day, we'd be in serious trouble."

Various sectors of the U.S. establishment and the American public increasingly believe that the United States should entirely pull out of Lebanon. Removing the Marines themselves is certainly an important first step. But it would be a mistake to think that getting out of Lebanon means the same thing to the Pentagon, the CIA, Congress, and the Reagan and Mondale campaigns as it means to the antiinterventionist movement and the general public.

For the military and the CIA, pulling out of Lebanon means avoiding a "two front" fight. With the heat off in Lebanon, the United States could concentrate its military resources in Central America. The troops in Lebanon—onshore or offshore—are thus seen as a distraction from the more critical fight against the guerrillas in El Salvador and in support of the contras trying to topple the Nicaraguan government. Hawks in the Congress regard Lebanon as a question of a failed military strategy. They describe the Marines as sitting ducks; their location at the Beirut airport—hard to protect and defend—was the problem.

The American public has increasingly expressed its fears and sense of futility. To many it appears that the United States is once again intervening in another nation's civil war as in Vietnam. Once again, the United States has chosen to prop up a government—in this case Gemayel's regime—whose power stems from brutality, not from popular support. The "legitimate government" Reagan seeks to defend was installed at gunpoint by Israel after its invasion; it is a government led by self-admittedly fascist party. Even the imminent collapse of the Gemayel government will not stop the United States from seeking other Lebanese front men to support.

For the concerns of the American public to translate into a real U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon, we must prevent the dissension among the upper echelons of the U.S. power structure from short-circuiting into some halfway "solution." It is not enough for the Marines to be moved from the Beirut airport to offshore positions or to leave the country only to be replaced by an even larger Israeli occupation force. The recent reaffirmation of strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel could mean some new configuration of U.S. intervention with Israel providing ground troops and the United States providing air and naval power in strikes against Syria, the Lebanese opposition, and the PLO. Such a "new" Lebanon policy could only cause more suffering for the Lebanese people, whose continuing resistance has thus far frustrated U.S. policymakers, and, for Americans, could repeat the torment of Vietnam.

Peace and nonintervention activists must therefore play a major and urgent role. The public must understand that ending U.S. intervention in Lebanon means ending all military and economic aid to the Gemayel government, ending U.S. support for the Israeli occupation and ending all aspects of the U.S. military presence—the Marines, the battleship New Jersey, the fighter jets, etc.

So that public opinion can more effectively pressure for a nonintervention policy, we need to place the issue of U.S. out of Lebanon in an international context. For the Marines to be taken from Lebanon only to be shipped to El Salvador or Nicaragua is unacceptable. In its fight against U.S. militarism worldwide, the nonintervention movement must be based on respect and support for national self-determination. All peoples—in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and in Lebanon—must have the right to choose their own governments and not to have the United States choose for them by force of arms and economic power. □



Lebanese resistance forces taking over a position from the crumbling Lebanese Army.

## Palestinian Women: A History Of Resistance

By Amal Moussa

If you visit homes in the West Bank today, you can find Palestinian women working, producing brilliantly-colored traditional embroidery. In small cooperative plants women bottle olive oil and other foods. Such work is organized and funded by the Association for the Resurgence of the Family, one organization of the multifaceted Palestinian women's movement. The Association's support for food and handicraft cooperatives is a good example of how a women's movement operating in the context of a national fight for survival and self-determination faces its complex tasks.

The Association not only sustains women and their families by paying women a decent wage, but by establishing economic alternatives, the Association participates in the resistance to Israeli military occupation. Withstanding Israeli economic penetration is an essential component in the resistance against annexation. The goods produced by the Association help West Bank Palestinians to boycott Israeli goods; the jobs allow some Palestinian women to work in their villages instead of as maids or washerwomen in Israeli homes, as many are com-

pelled to. The handicrafts are also part of the ongoing fight to keep Palestinian culture alive.

The General Union of Palestinian Women, the Arab Women's Union, and several women's work committees also promote women's activism in both the women's and national movements. The Arab Women's Union is renowned for sponsoring work programs which provide employment for women and preserve traditional handicrafts. The work committees are fairly recent and operate in different parts of the West Bank. They are structured so that women from all sectors of Palestinian society are adequately represented. In order to mobilize women they carry out literacy campaigns, political education, and campaigns to preserve Palestinian culture. The committees also set up nursery schools to enable women to participate more fully in political and economic life.

The General Union of Palestinian Women was very active in Lebanon before and during the 1982 Israeli invasion. The organization played a vital role in creating an infrastructure of Palestinian institutions—schools, hospitals, nutritional and literacy

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# African Professor Attacked

By Joyce Chediak

In the past six months a Black professor in a small Black studies program at a mostly white college has literally had his life threatened and received hate mail. He has been opposed by scores of professors who have also attacked the Black studies program itself. He has been the subject of inflammatory news articles and has even been denounced by the governor of New York.

What is this man's terrible crime? This psychologist teaches a course on racism in which one of the topics discussed is Zionism.

The professor is Ernest Dube, 54, who was born in South Africa and is a member of the African National Congress. Professor Dube teaches in the Africana Studies Program at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, not far from New York City.

On July 15, Selwyn K. Troen, a visiting professor from Israel, wrote a complaint accusing Dube of "racist bias" and "the kind of sloganeering that is practiced by the anti-Semite." Troen's complaint was based solely upon a conversation with one of Professor Dube's students and a copy of the syllabus of Dube's course, "The Politics of Race."

Troen returned to Israel without attempting to speak to Professor Dube or to hear him lecture. Troen's complaint, however, found its way to a group of sixteen professors and administrators, two local newspapers, the local Anti-Defamation League, which insisted Dube be condemned, and eventually to the governor's office.

"Not only do they not want this topic discussed," said Dube of his course analyzing racism, "they want to write the syllabus for me. They make it impossible to know the truth, except the truth which is coming from them."

The pressure has grown so intense that, according to Professor Leslie Owens, head of Africana Studies, one Albany legislator "has threatened to hold up the budget of SUNY [the entire New York State college system] unless Professor Dube is fired and the course stricken from the books." Most recently, Dube and Africana Studies have



Professor Dube addressing New York teach-in.

had to deal with a group which has threatened Black professors with physical harm. One, according to Dube, even boasted that he had killed Arab people in the Middle East.

There is a certain irony in charging Dube with racism. As a Black South African, Dube grew up under the most repressive regime in the world. He spent four years in a South African jail where he was tortured because of his anti-apartheid activities. Says Dube, "As a member of the African National Congress, my organization and its members, who consist of all racial groups in South Africa, have fought and continue to fight all forms of racism."

As for the charge of anti-Semitism, some of Professor Dube's most enthusiastic supporters are Jewish. For example, Jewish students in his class have testified on his behalf and signed a petition supporting him.

Even the student who helped spark the Israeli academic's complaint was not of the same mind as Troen. When Robert Goldsmith, 23, saw Troen's letter, his response was that "he did not agree from his experience that Professor Dube was either a racist or anti-Semitic," according to the *New York Times*.

None of those who have accused Professor Dube have firsthand knowledge of his

panics on the faculty."

Finally, on August 27, 1983, the faculty University Executive Committee, in a unanimous vote, cleared Dube of charges that his lecture linking Zionism and racism violated academic ethics. "This means that, in our eyes, the allegations did not have merit," said Joel Rosenthal, president of the Executive Committee. That should have been the end of the matter.

A few days later, New York Governor Mario Cuomo entered the picture, raising the whole issue to a new level and giving it national attention. Based upon Troen's thirdhand account, the governor singled out Dube and his teaching as "intellectually dishonest and pernicious." Clearly unhappy with the University Senate's decision, Cuomo actually called upon faculty members to speak out against Dube, adding, "The silence at Stony Brook is thunderous."

Cuomo "insulted me and my students," was Professor Dube's response. "To conduct what amounts to a kangaroo-court trial is not what we expect from the governor." Cuomo is violating the very premise of Black studies programs. According to Owens, "It hardly seems possible that anyone would expect Blacks to act as if they could not identify various forms of discrimination and distinctions based on race when they see them in this country and abroad." But bone-crushing pressure is being exerted upon Dube to ignore Zionism.

Were Professor Dube to lose his job, it would not only be a victory for rightwing Zionists, but for pro-Apartheid forces as well. Such alliances have become familiar in a time when the United States and Israel are the only governments which vote for South Africa in the United Nations.

What can you do to help? Professor Dube requests you write letters to Governor Cuomo protesting the fact that the governor has unfairly condemned Professor Dube without any attempt to find out the facts. Write: Governor Mario Cuomo, The Capitol, Albany, NY. □

Joyce Chediak is a member of the People's Antiwar Mobilization and of the National Interim Steering Committee of the November 29th Coalition.

## "What is this man's terrible crime? He discusses Zionism in his course on racism."

class. In a general course on racism, Professor Dube spends about half of one session—out of 24—on the subject matter which has raised such a furor. He calls Zionism an example of "reactive racism," meaning that victims of racism can be racist against others, in this case the Palestinian people. He points out that in 1976 the majority of the nations of the world passed a resolution in the United Nations calling Zionism a form of racism while distinguishing it from Judaism. Never does he call a whole people racist.

The Africana Studies Program has also felt the heat. When five professors in Africana Studies issued a statement defending Dube and his teaching, they found themselves denounced in a counterstatement signed by 43 senior professors. These tenured academics also attacked Africana Studies itself, according to Owens, for "not living up to its potential to contribute to a multicultural university." Owens points out that this attack on the program comes at a school which has scandalously low numbers of Blacks and Hispanics, and where there is "a virtual lockout of Blacks and His-

## FOCUS ON ACTION

By Steve Goldfield

Los Angeles Moves on Lebanon: At presstime, a broad-based coalition, the Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in Lebanon, planned a February 11 march and rally to demand complete Israeli and U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon under the slogan, "No Peace Until Invaders Withdraw." The Committee includes the Los Angeles chapter of November 29th, CISPES, ADC, U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Association, the Committee to Close the Racist South African Consulate, Lebanese and Palestinian organizations, and participation from trade unions, churches, campus groups, and peace groups.

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Mobilization for Survival, a national network of peace and antiintervention groups, held its 1984 national conference in Berkeley, California the weekend of January 20-22. Mobe decided to continue its nuclear free zone and first strike Euromissile campaigns and to demonstrate at the Republican convention but reached no agreement on electoral strategy.

The Middle East was an important agenda item; Mobe passed a five-point resolution, agreeing to link the Middle East with other issues in demonstrations and actions, put staff time into Middle East work, form a national Middle

East Task Force or a Middle East Peace Action Network, increase cooperation with Israelis and Palestinians willing to work with each other, and to strengthen the existing Mobe policy statement. Mobe will also hold conferences as part of their Deadly Connections program in eight or more urban areas showing the connection between intervention and nuclear war.

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November 29th teach-ins were held successfully all across the country. Over six hundred signed in at the New York event, a marathon eight-hour event with a long roster of well-known speakers. In Chicago thirty people signed up to work with November 29th. Events were also held in Los Angeles, Seattle, Sacramento, San Diego, Boston, Eugene, Detroit, Madison, and other cities.

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A few issues back we reported on the start of TAPME

(Taxpayers for Peace in the Middle East), a petition drive to get an initiative on the Berkeley ballot to cut U.S. aid to Israel by the amount Israel spends on settlements in occupied territories. A similar campaign is under way in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Petitions in Berkeley went out on October 9, 1983. By January 23, 7,125 signatures were turned in, far more than the 4,800 signatures needed to get on the ballot and 15 percent of eligible Berkeley voters. The TAPME initiative is forcing many Berkeley political activists to take a stand on Palestinian rights for the first time. The initiative is uniting individuals from many organizations, including the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Committee for Academic Freedom in the Israeli Occupied Territories, New Jewish Agenda, International Jewish Peace Union, Quakers, Democratic Socialists of America, and others. □



Audience responds at New York teach-in.

Mike Smith/Palestine Focus

# The Jackson Campaign And The Middle East

By Hilton Obenzinger and Steve Goldfield

The Rev. Jesse Jackson brought the otherwise lackluster 1984 presidential campaign to life simply by virtue of his progressive stance on many issues. But his bold mission to Damascus to release prisoner-of-war Lieutenant Goodman forced the nation to take him seriously. Jackson dramatically demonstrated how the United States might pursue the foreign policy of peace and negotiations that he advocates rather than military intervention. And his successful mission ironically forced President Reagan and the Democratic hopefuls to embrace the only Black candidate in the race for serving his country—and the cause of peace—very well.

But Jackson's campaign is far more than a series of stunning electioneering stunts as some critics have charged. Jackson has polarized the field of Democratic candidates around the issue of whether or not the United States will genuinely pursue peace while eliminating inequities faced by Blacks, Latinos, other minorities, women, and the elderly, whether or not the United States will continue its military buildup while neglecting the unemployed and the impoverished. Seeking to "empower the poor," Jackson is building a "rainbow coalition" that poses all the serious questions facing most Americans—and that demands adequate answers.

Jackson's courage is most clearly exemplified by his position on the Middle East. Jackson calls for recognition of and negotiations with the PLO by the United States and Israel.

About the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, he declares that America is "a party to the occupation and to the invasion. In effect, America helped to finance that invasion and occupation which robbed America of any innocence or any moral authority." Jackson challenges the "strategic consensus" between the United States and Israel as an alliance for war, calling for negotiations and rejecting U.S. intervention to impose solutions on the Lebanese people. He does not simply call for bringing home "our boys."

Jackson's positions—and actions—concerning the Middle East have aroused ex-

**"Jackson's Rainbow Coalition poses all the serious questions—including Palestinian rights."**



Jacques M. Chenet/Newsweek

tremely agitated responses from some quarters. In regard to Palestinian rights in particular, Jackson is the only candidate to challenge the ordinary knee-jerk pro-Israel stances of the other Democratic candidates. Jackson is only stating the obvious. He simply acknowledges that Palestinians have rights, too, and that "the Palestinian question remains at the heart of the Middle East agony." Jackson declares that "America has an interest in Palestinian justice, or self-determination, or a homeland for Palestinian people."

Furthermore, Rev. Jackson's position closely parallels the results of several recent public opinion polls showing a majority of Americans favoring recognition of the PLO, negotiations, and the creation of a Palestinian homeland—and, most recently, getting the Marines out of Lebanon. One recent study of American Jewish opinion, commissioned by the American Jewish Congress, showed 70 percent of Jewish-Americans favor Israeli negotiations with the PLO. We should note that this emerging broad consensus began to grow first among those in the "rainbow coalition," the Black community in particular.

The other democratic candidates call for the Marines to withdraw but for U.S. intervention in Lebanon to continue in one form or another. (George McGovern notably has a similar approach to Jackson's but does not go so far or make such an impact.) Mondale has tried to outflank Reagan from the right, demanding that the United States should "stop beating up on Israel" and go after Syria. Glenn praises the "strategic consensus" between the United States and Israel. Cranston sticks to his staunchly pro-Israel stance; some call him the "Senator from Tel Aviv." Strange is the phenomenon of Democratic or liberal politics whereby liberals—such as the pro-Nuclear Freeze Cranston—remain vehemently hawkish concerning the Middle East while offering gestures toward peace and nonintervention elsewhere.

It is thus these other candidates who must account for their positions to the American people. Yet Rev. Jackson is the target of scurrilous attacks that he is "anti-Semitic" because he expresses concern for Palestinian rights.

Why is Jackson subjected to such smears? Martin Luther King drew attacks when he questioned the government's commitment to slaughtering Vietnamese chil-

dren. Jackson crossed another unwritten line—he questions the basic U.S. agreement to defend Israel's attacks on the Palestinian people. "We have an obligation to support Israel's right to exist for security, not to support her right to occupy and expand." Some may feel Jackson concedes too much to the Israelis, but even such a mildly stated criticism of Israel draws venomous attacks.

Even to support Israel's "right to exist" does not satisfy Israel's most hardcore supporters. The press plays up Jackson's "problems with the Jewish community." Meanwhile the dangerous fanatics from the Jewish Defense League have been bold enough to launch a "Jews Against Jackson" hate vendetta. "Had Jesse Jackson been White, would the liberal establishment and Jewish leadership be so cravenly timid?" the Jews Against Jackson ad in the *New York Times* asked. Though many Jews are active in his campaign and though the *New Jewish Agenda* has come to his defense, Jackson must still battle this smear campaign.

It is high time for some political reality to be injected into the charades which pass for political activity of the two major parties. After years of pro-Israel propaganda, effectively organized by the pro-Israel lobby, such smears are only to be expected—but they must be fought and overcome. More and more Americans are willing to ask serious questions, willing to question long-held assumptions, willing to seek peace rather than war, justice rather than inequality and deprivation. As Rev. Jackson puts it, "peace must have justice as its content and its center."

Whether or not Jackson achieves his presidential goal—in 1984 or 1988—Reagan, Mondale, and the rest of the political establishment are on notice that they must listen to what a restive population is saying, articulated by Rev. Jackson's campaign. The Jackson campaign provides an invaluable opportunity for the broad peace and antiintervention movement to establish the oft-talked-about links with the "disfranchised" of this country. However we decide to approach the Jackson campaign, the rainbow coalition is the shape of things to come. The task is to build it to have an impact on American political life for far longer than the course of a single presidential election campaign. □

## Palestinian Women...

Continued from page 1

programs—which were largely destroyed by the Israeli army. Many women, both as fighters and civilians, gave their lives to combat the invasion, and Palestinian women activists continue to be targets for assassination and imprisonment by the Israeli occupation and Lebanese collaborators.

Palestinian women's active participation and leadership in the fight for the advancement of Palestinian women and the self-determination of all Palestinian people have not come about overnight. Rather, they are the product of a long history of organizing among Palestinian women. The first Palestinian women's union was founded in 1921 in Jerusalem under the leadership of Zlikha al-Shihabi. When the Palestinians revolted against the British in 1936, such organized women were an integral part of the resistance movement. They provided training and medical care to Palestinian fighters, planned and staged demonstrations, wrote and distributed leaflets and sent protest telegrams to the British mandate authorities.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the resulting dispersal of the Palestinian people sparked further efforts to organize Palestinian women. Between 1947 and 1950, women tried to meet the many needs of refugees

**"The fight for self-determination has shaped Palestinian women and their movement."**

through new groups such as the Arab Women's Union. At this stage in the Palestinian women's movement, these organizations were almost exclusively led and composed of women from the ruling elite families. These women focused on improving the refugees' plight, on health care, food, clothing, and education. They established associations such as the Home of the Arab Infant, the Red Crescent Society, the Society of the Wounded Militant and the Association for the Professional Training of Palestinian Refugees.

In the mid-1960s, the composition and concerns of the Palestinian women's movement began to shift. Following the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964, Palestinian women took part in the First National Congress as well as the founding conference of the General Union of Palestinian Women in 1965. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the GUPW and other women's organizations

were called to fight political repression and systematic Israeli attempts to destroy Palestinian national culture—from confiscation of Palestinian land and water to suppression of academic freedom in Palestinian universities. Women's organizations responded by setting up committees for the preservation of heritage and culture and by establishing organizations like the Association for the Resurgence of the Family. What started primarily as women's charitable work was transformed into networks of resistance.

Following the September 1970 massacre in Jordan, the focus of Palestinian women's activities shifted to Lebanon and other parts of the Arab world. More and more women joined the ranks of the PLO and engaged in the armed resistance. The GUPW reorganized itself in Lebanon and began to establish international branches. The GUPW set up nurseries, kindergartens, clinics, and literacy programs in the refugee camps.

Perhaps the most important dynamic of the Palestinian women's movement has

been its relationship to the Palestinian national fight for a homeland. This fight for self-determination has shaped Palestinian women's opportunities, priorities, and limitations (in contrast to the way economic transformation has so shaped the U.S. women's movement). Participation in a national movement has given Palestinian women an opening which allows them to challenge what in the past had been a sharply defined, extremely limited notion of women's role in society. The demands of daily survival faced with the threat of physical and cultural annihilation have pushed women to organize and to fight.

The Palestinian women's movement must also ensure that gains made by women will not be lost when the Palestinian homeland is won. They recall the problems Algerian women encountered following independence, when attempts were made to have them return to more traditional roles. Algerian women had to fight to defend the gains they had made as women.

At this point in the history of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian women's movement is faced with serious challenges. Faced with an enemy bent on genocide, the movement must work for the future of Palestinian women by trying to ensure that there will be a Palestinian people, culture and homeland in the future. This is the paramount task, one which is only strengthened by the increasing role of women in the national struggle. □

# The Question Of Palestine And The Role Of The PLO

By Naseer H. Aruri

It must be recognized at the outset that the question of Palestine is intertwined with the PLO, but the two are not one and the same. The question of Palestine encompasses the Palestinian experience, which consists of struggles spanning the past seven decades. The Palestinian experience includes aspirations, dreams, and hopes, most of which remain unfulfilled. It includes a vision for the future society and a framework for pluralist coexistence in Palestine. Mountains of literature, prose and poetry, paintings and music, sayings and anecdotes, costumes and foods, folklore, common historical experience, and common yearnings—all define the Palestinian experience, the heart of the question of Palestine.

The PLO, on the other hand, is the Palestinian people organized, the political expression of the Palestinian community, the current embodiment of Palestinian nationalism and the Palestinian nationalist will. The PLO is the Palestinian people's instrument for the restoration of their fragmented community. It is the vehicle which facilitated the reemergence of an independent Palestinian struggle after nineteen years (1948-1967) of dormancy. It is the institution which asserted the peoplehood of the Palestinians and served as their anchor in the community of nations. It reaffirmed their political identity and brought them international legitimacy and respectability. The PLO legitimacy derives not so much from its military character, as from its ability to bring together a dispersed, dispossessed community within its broad social and political framework. That framework symbolizes national identification and renders human services to a nation in exile.

The present troubles of the PLO represent a serious setback to the struggle for Palestinian rights. The fighting in and around Tripoli and the subsequent departure of Yasser Arafat and his followers from Lebanon have been nothing less than catastrophic for the Palestinian cause. The unity and cohesion of the Palestinian national movement has been seriously undermined; its independent will and autonomous decision are in question; its recognized leader, who has become the personification of the struggle to obtain redress, has been humiliated. Yasser Arafat, who became the living symbol of Palestinian aspirations for statehood and who led their efforts to regain normalcy, is facing the most serious challenge to his career. While previous challenges in 1970, 1976, and 1982 were purely external, today's challenge is internal as well as external.

But unlike what some U.S. commentators and officials have been forecasting, the challenge to Arafat does not imply the end of the PLO. Since 1979 when Zbigniew Brzezinski proclaimed his "bye-bye PLO," the Palestinian movement survived the Camp David affair and stood firm against the siege of Beirut. The decree by Caspar Weinberger in December 1983 that the PLO is irrelevant to the Middle East question is likely to prove just as fallacious. As long as there are Palestinians in the world, as long as their rights are not considered, and as long as the wrongs which have been inflicted upon them are not redressed, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

Those optimists who have a myopic view of history have never been able to understand the dynamics of social movements. Their political generation has been long accustomed to viewing the social process in technical terms.

While no one can claim, however, that the PLO will emerge unscathed from its present ordeals, we can safely assume that the Palestine question will not go away. Let me repeat, while the PLO and the Palestine question are intertwined, they are not one and the same. The PLO is the instrument for Palestinian expression, for mobilization of Palestinian resources, for determination of Palestinian priorities, for pursuit of Palestinian goals. The PLO today is the central dimension of the question of Palestine. The struggle for Palestine predates the PLO and it will not disappear with the fracture and the weakening of the PLO. The Palestine question is the culmination of an historical process, a social process, a national experience that has been and remains to be central to political development and international relations in the Middle East.

I would like to discuss this centrality as it manifests itself on three different levels: the levels of Palestinian politics, of Arab politics, and of Israeli politics.

On the level of Palestinian politics and history, Palestinian nationalism was the principal force behind social change. Palestinian peasants staged one uprising after another in the 1920s against a colonial

**"Even in its frantic attempt to deny Palestinian existence, Israel devotes the largest share of its energy to combat the idea of Palestine."**



Day of the Land rally in Deir Hanna, 1979.

Lena Rifkin/MERIP Reports

settler movement which coveted the land without the people. They refused to be spirited "surreptitiously" across the frontier by the Zionist settlers. Their 1936 revolt was a classical peasant revolution which engaged a mighty colonial army with 70,000 soldiers and several settler organizations for nearly three years. The strike they staged, lasting for six months, was one of the longest general strikes in history. Those revolutionaries were the PLO of the 1930s.

Between 1946 and 1948 they were again engaged in armed conflict with their Zionist enemy. Their struggle was directed by the Arab Higher Committee—the PLO of the 1940s. And seventeen years after they lost their home, they renewed the struggle and established the new PLO in place of the Arab Higher Committee. The reemergence of Palestinian armed struggle in the aftermath of the 1967 war was seen as a new chapter in the Arab nationalist movement. As such, it was viewed with a great deal of apprehension by the conservative Arab regimes, by Israel, and by the United States. The very existence of the PLO was an indictment of Arab diplomacy, Arab armies, and Arab ideologies, which stood defenseless in the face of the Zionist onslaught. It was a confirmation of the centrality of Palestine, an affirmation of a common plurality and humanity and a rejection of segregated political existence. It was also a reminder of the need to confront imperialist penetration of the Arab world.

Perhaps it is a testimony to the vitality and revolutionary potential of the Palestinian national movement that so many forces, simply strange bedfellows, are bent on its destruction.

On the level of Arab politics, the Palestine issue is the core dynamic. It has been the dominant single issue in Arab political development since World War II. It is a four-way dynamic which affects Arab domestic politics, Intra-Arab politics, Arab-Israeli relations, and Arab-Western relations.

Domestic struggles in the Arab world are frequently expressed in terms of the Palestine question. In Egypt, for example, the dismantlement of social welfare was linked to disengagement from Palestine. The de-Nasserization and open-door policy of Sadat went hand-in-hand with the sellout of Palestinian rights. Conversely, the rise of Arab socialism was linked to solidarity with Palestine. However, issues of class in Egypt are fusing with the nationalist issue (the anti-imperialist issue) in general, but in particular they fuse with the question of Palestine. Thus the Palestine question is interlocked with the bread-and-butter issues in Egypt. The same dynamic is also at work in the relationship between Syria and Palestine. That is why Syria could not go the same route as Sadat's Egypt.

On the level of intra-Arab politics, the question of Palestine has been the pivotal factor in what used to be called the Arab cold war in the 1950s and 1960s. It has been the pivotal factor in the so-called Arab consensus emerging from the Rabat summit of 1974, the Baghdad summit of 1978, and the Fez summits of 1981 and 1982. It will undoubtedly be at center stage during the forthcoming Arab summit in Saudi Arabia. In fact, the apparent current Arab paralysis is built around the consensus of the Fez plan. State-to-state relations are thus energized

around the Palestine question. Their struggles continue to revolve around the same question.

Again, the question of Palestine determines the character of Arab-Israeli relations. With the exception of Egypt, no Arab state has recognized Israel. And Egypt feels rather uncomfortable about its newly established relations with Israel. The Egyptian ambassador who was recalled from Tel Aviv during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon has not yet returned. On the level of Arab-Western relations, the Palestine question has also been a dominant factor: The Euro-Arab dialogue, an essentially economic concern, has focused on European politics toward Palestine. And with regard to U.S.-Arab relations, several Arab states have not had diplomatic ties with the United States since the war of 1967. Every Arab visitor at the White House, regardless of ideology, finds it necessary to place Palestine high on the agenda. So, in terms of Arab politics, the question of Palestine has been and remains central.

Thirdly, the centrality of Palestine is also seen on the level of Israeli politics and policies. Even in its frantic attempt to deny Palestinian existence, Israel devotes the largest share of its energy to combat the idea of Palestine.

At the heart of current Israeli policy is an all-out effort to eradicate Palestinian national identity and destroy any organized Palestinian voice that can speak for Palestinian rights, whether in Lebanon or in the West Bank—this is the meaning of the avowed goal of crushing the PLO.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon must be seen in the context of an ongoing and relentless campaign to preempt a Palestinian state-in-formation. Lebanon was the principal base of the infrastructure of Palestinian state-in-waiting: the West Bank and Gaza constitute the logical site of that state.

The reemergence of the Palestinian national movement in the aftermath of the 1967 war and the worldwide recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and statehood, under the leadership of the PLO, have created a national obsession in Israel, where the solution is not defined in terms of Palestinian-Israeli coexistence. The zero-sum solution thus inevitably led to the attempt to deal the PLO a crippling blow, hence the Israeli invasion. And hence the Israeli policy of de facto annexation, destruction of Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, illegal dismissal of elected mayors, usurpation of land and water resources, encouragement of armed vigilantes, and now dismantlement of refugee camps as a step toward expulsion.

It is rather ironic that while Israel denies the very existence of the Palestinian people, its relationship with these people has taken the form of a process: a process of disinstitutionalization, a process of deskilling, depopulation, dispossession, and proletarianization of an entire nation.

Israeli denial of Palestinian existence is also intended to remove all internationally sanctioned proposals for Palestinian-Israeli coexistence from the agenda of the world community. It is also intended to convince the United States that the Palestine question is a secondary issue that must not interfere with the relationship between

Continued on page 6

**PF:** What does Zionism mean for you, and how do you view the relationship between Zionism and Judaism or, conversely, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism? How do you view the role of the American Jewish community in this framework?

**NC:** I don't even know what Zionism means any more. If Zionism means support for the policies of the state of Israel, then to say that anti-Zionism has anything to do with anti-Semitism is absurd. If anti-Zionism is taken to mean that Jews don't have the right of national self-determination, but other nations do, well that's anti-Semitism. But a person who believes that Jews have the right to national self-determination could very well be opposed to a Jewish state.

In fact, as everyone in Israel ought to know, a substantial part of the Zionism movement was, at least officially, opposed to a Jewish state. So one can certainly oppose the policies of a Jewish state. One can certainly oppose the concept of a Jewish state. And a Jewish state, remember, means a state based on the principle of racial discrimination. Otherwise it would not be a Jewish state. A Jewish state with non-Jewish citizens is a racist state. If we mean by Zionism a commitment to a state based on discrimination, then being opposed to it is not anti-Semitism.

So the term "Zionism" has really been used as a moral weapon, just as anti-Semitism has. And the two concepts have lost any clear meaning. You can see this very clearly in the United States. Take the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which is almost the official organization that's supposed to oppose anti-Semitism. It's interesting to see what they mean by anti-Semitism. A recent exposition may be found in a recently published book by the national director of the ADL, Nathan Perlmutter, and his wife, entitled *The Real Anti-Semitism in America*. Anti-Semitism means, for example, "Giving war a bad name and peace too favorable a press." That, to the Perlmutter, is anti-Semitism. Opposition to American support for violent murders and neo-Nazi thugs in Central America: that's anti-Semitism. Opposition to the American attack on South Vietnam and the whole war in Indochina: that's anti-Semitism.

There's a logic in their view. For them, the interests of Jews are the interests of Israel. The interests of Israel for them means a special kind of Israel. Israel that is militaristic and violent, a power capable of dominating the region by force: that's what they want Israel to be. The interests of Jews are the interests of that kind of Israel.

**W**ell, that kind of Israel certainly depends on American power and violence. So anybody opposed to American power and violence, anybody who gives war a bad name and peace too favorable a press is an anti-Semite. Well, okay, if one accepts the view of Israel and its interests that is typical of the ADL and others like it, then you can draw these connections. Anti-Zionism in their sense will be anti-Semitism in their sense.

Or take Abba Eban, who is supposed to be a dove. Back in the years when he was still foreign minister, he once made a statement in the United States. He said that in contacts with the gentile world, our major commitment must be to convince them that anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are the same thing. But then the term anti-Zionism meant opposition to the policies of the state which he was representing.

The Labor Party were expansionists. They wanted to gain control over the occupied territories. Opposition to that policy was, according to Abba Eban, anti-Semitism. Again, that's simply using the moral weapon of anti-Semitism to try to silence a criticism of some state policy. By this logic, people like Eban and the ADL have argued that any criticism of Israeli policies they would regard as anti-Zionism, equate it with anti-Semitism, and use the memory of the Holocaust, of real anti-Semitism, as a mechanism of discrediting criticism of the state which they represent.

**PF:** You are an American Jew and for some years of your life were an active Zionist. What made you change your mind?

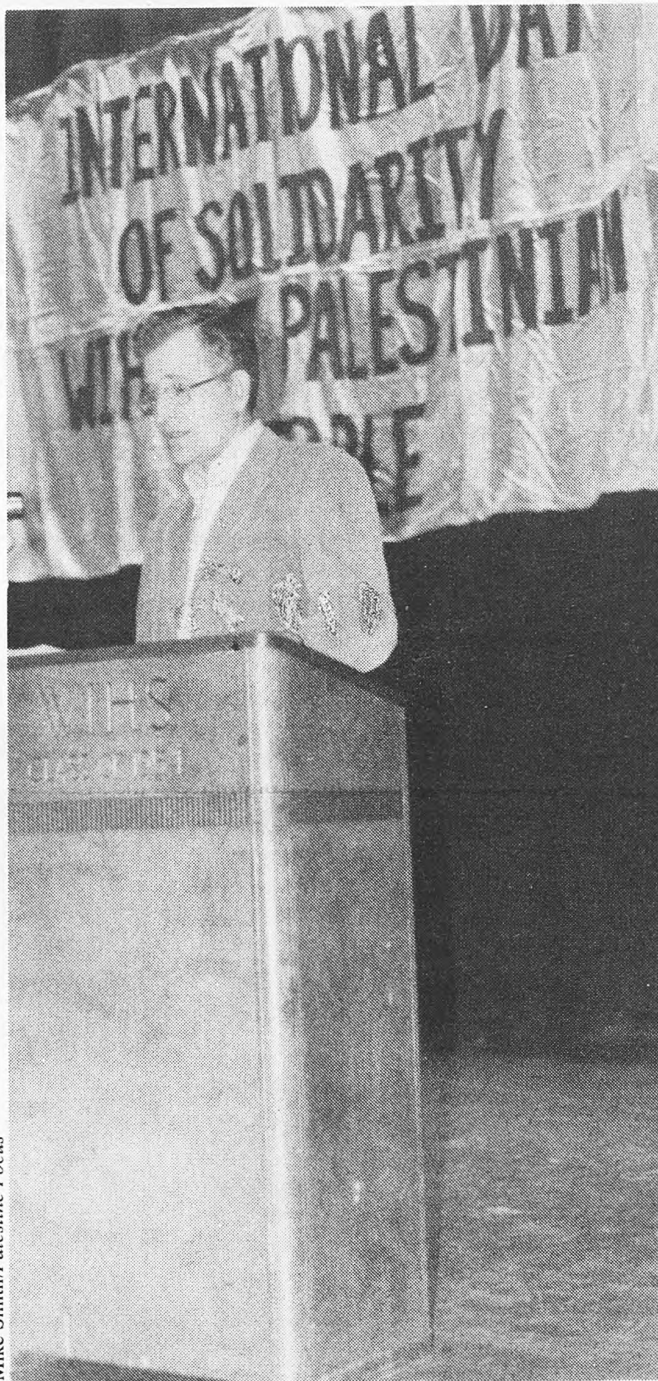
**NC:** Actually I didn't change my mind very much; Israel changed. In the days when I was a Zionist, my position was opposition to a Jewish state. This was when I was a teenager, so I won't say that my views now are the same as they were then. But in essence they are.

I was opposed to a Jewish state because the very concept of a Jewish state is inconsistent with democratic principles. On the same grounds, I would oppose a Moslem or a Christian state or a White or Black state. In a democracy, a state is the state of its citizens. It's not a state of some dominant sector of its citizens.

There is an old Zionist slogan that Israel should be as Jewish as England is English, but that just doesn't work. A citizen of England is English; a citizen of Israel may not be Jewish. Insofar as Israel defines itself as a Jewish state it is defining itself as a discriminatory state, a racist state. That's no academic issue. It isn't just a matter of symbolism. It has to do with land laws, the role of the Jewish National Fund, the development funds and so on.

## Interview With Noam Chomsky

# Part I: Zionism And The State of Israel



Noam Chomsky at New York teach-in.

**"Any conquering power begins to internalize the values that justify the conquest."**

I am talking about Israel within the Green Line [the 1948 borders—ed.]. Israel in the occupied territories makes no pretense about equality of citizens. The very concept of a Jewish state is inconsistent with ideals that I hold and have always held.

I've felt all along that the long-term appropriate solution for that region, the former Palestine, would be some sort of binational federation. There are two national groups that claim national rights and the right of national self-determination in that region, and undoubtedly the indigenous inhabitants have a just claim. I have no doubt that the Jewish settlers also have justification. The appropriate settlement for that kind of a problem is some sort of a binational federation. This idea, by the way, was advocated by major Zionist leaders in the 1930s. Whether

they meant it or not is another question, but they certainly advocated it.

**PF:** Very often Israeli Zionists respond to this kind of idea by saying, "Look at Lebanon, look at Cyprus, look at all these countries..."

**NC:** Look at Israel, look at Ireland. Let's look at the Balkans, at European history for the past 300 years. The state system is one of violence, savagery, and destruction. That kind of argument doesn't get you very far.

I don't think this is a practical proposal today. I do think, incidentally, that it was practical not many years ago. From 1967 to 1973, Israel could have moved toward implementing a true binational federation among equals. If it had had the vision and understanding to do so, it would have overcome the problems and crises and the ultimate destruction it now faces. But it didn't have the vision to do so.

**I**srael was committed to conquest and destruction, and anyone who brought up these issues as I did was denounced as a traitor. It was impossible to discuss these issues rationally. Those who have suffered from that have been the Israelis and the Palestinians. That kind of hysterical irrationality and fanatic chauvinism is one of the factors that led to the 1973 war and has led to the conflicts since and will ultimately lead to the destruction of Israel.

After 1973 that was no longer a reasonable proposal. After 1973 the world situation changed, and the local situation changed. A feasible proposal became a two-state settlement, in accordance with the international consensus. There have been many opportunities to realize this possibility. From 1967 the major Arab states and from the mid-seventies the PLO have proposed various solutions of this sort, some of them quite explicit, some exactly in accordance with the international consensus, some more ambiguous. Every single one has been rejected by Israel and the United States. In contrast, not a single proposal for peace which even begins to recognize any sort of right of national self-determination for the indigenous population has been made by Israel. The only proposal has been conquest. And the United States has backed Israel.

This is a very shortsighted expression of a temporary period of military dominance. Undoubtedly Israel is now so much more powerful than anybody else in the region that it can obtain its will by force. But this is a very dangerous course. For one thing, it has the consequences of moral degeneration. That is already quite evident in Israel, and ultimately it bears with it the strong likelihood of physical destruction as well.

Israel has purposely turned itself into an oppressor state. Forgetting what's happening inside the Green Line, where there are plenty of problems, in the occupied territories Israel is just a conquering power using its physical might and its capacity to repress in order to control a subjugated population. The same is true now in southern Lebanon. The consequences for Israeli culture and Israeli psychology are devastating.

Any conquering power begins to internalize the values that justify the conquest. Take the most extreme case, the Nazis. The Nazis internalized the values that justified their massacre of the Jews. You read Himmler's diaries, and it was a noble act to massacre, purifying the German race. Or take South Africa, where the justification for the oppression of Blacks is internalized on the part of the South African mentality. That's happening in Israel, too. These internalized values are reflected in the understanding of interpersonal relations, or relations among communities, and so on. Of course that can only corrode the moral fiber of any society, and it's corroding that of Israel as well.

As for Israel's physical destruction, that isn't imminent. Israel is now the dominant military power in the region, but Israel by now is not a state in the normal sense. It's a state which relies increasingly, and to a degree that's virtually unprecedented in the world, on the charity of a foreign power. That charity isn't given out of any moral commitment. It's given because Israel is seen as performing services.

So Israel is increasingly working itself into a position where it can survive just so long as it can provide services to the superpower that keeps it alive. Israel does not exist on the basis of internal resources; it exists as an appendage to the United States, actually the Pentagon. Israel must act as the agent of American power in the Middle East and in other areas. Israel has taken on such a disgraceful role in Central America and in Africa as part of this strategic alliance.

Israel is increasingly going to be pushed into this role. By accepting the principle of occupation, it has thereby accepted everything that goes with it: a state of confrontation, subjugation of another people, dependency on a foreign power. Sooner or later this constant state of military confrontation will mean destruction. □

*Noam Chomsky is professor of Linguistics at M.I.T., a long-time activist, and author. He was interviewed in Cambridge by Ur Shlonsky for Palestine Focus.*

# "We Would Rather Die Than Leave"

*Interview with Jamal Taraby, mayor of Sakhnin, a Palestinian village in the Galilee, and a founder of the "Day of the Land" movement. Sakhnin, with a population of more than 15,000, lies in the western Galilee between Tiberias on one side and Acre and Nazareth on the other. The Galilee, though it is inside the pre-1967 Israeli borders, has a majority Palestinian population which has been subjected to continual and massive land expropriation since 1948. Mr. Taraby was interviewed by Palestine Focus in Geneva in September 1983.*

of one family. They collaborated with the Israeli authorities which explains why they held that office for so long.

My election was almost as if a coup had taken place in Sakhnin. I was young; my predecessor was old. I was a university student; he left school to take up the job of mayor. Everything started to change. The town's youth began to wake up and understand what was happening. This group of young people stood by me, ready to help in my work, and they continue to do so today.

After thirteen years I still work with vigor

and enthusiasm for the interests of my town, my people, and my country, Palestine. I work to advance my people's just cause throughout the world.

In 1976 Sakhnin and nearby towns, such as Araba and Deir Hanna, received letters from the ministries of police, interior, and defense. These letters declared all the land surrounding our towns to be under the jurisdiction of the military and forbade us to enter them.

I and the mayors of two other towns decided to protest this decision. We called for



Jamal Taraby

Steve Goldfield/Palestine Focus

**"For us, there is no other country and there is no other place to go."**

I was elected mayor of Sakhnin in 1972. The previous mayor, whom I defeated in that election, had succeeded his father and grandfather for a total of 75 years

## Day Of The Land: Eight Years Later

On March 30, 1976 a general strike was declared against the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian land; thousands of Palestinian Arabs throughout the Galilee demonstrated against the Israeli policies of political repression, expropriation of land, and occupation. The Israeli military met the demonstrations with machine guns; six Palestinians were killed, tens were wounded, and hundreds were arrested. Since then, March 30th has been designated as the "Day of the Land," commemorated in Palestine and by Palestinian communities throughout the world.

This event represented a turning point in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Israeli apologists could no longer contend that the Palestinians living in the 1948-occupied territories, whom Israel refers to as Israeli Arabs, were docile and had already been incorporated into the Israeli state.

Until a short while ago it was accepted that the Arab population in Israel had a high degree of identification with the state and had been drawn into its various frameworks. Recently certain phenomena occurred which have challenged these assumptions... The Israeli Arab is no longer passive and has gone over to nationalistic manifestations. —Israel Koenig, Commissioner of the Ministry of Interior for the Galilee

In the same document, Koenig points out the demographic "danger" facing Israel, along with increasing Palestinian demonstrations and support for the PLO, the election of a Palestinian communist (Tawfik Ziyad) as mayor of Nazareth in 1975, and the declaration of the Day of the Land in 1976.

Palestinians constitute a majority of the population of the Galilee, which was awarded to the proposed Palestinian state under the U.N.'s 1947 partition plan but seized by the Israeli army in 1948. In 1961, the Israeli government, then headed by Levi Eshkol, came up with a three-pronged plan to create a Jewish majority in the Galilee by the 1990s. The plan called for 1) increased confiscation of Palestinian land from the following villages: Raineh, Kufir Kinna, Deir Hanna, Yanouh, Sakhnin, Yarka, Kufir Buraam, and Araba; 2) new Israeli settlements; and 3) encouraging Jewish families to move north by offering incentives such as cheap housing, high paying jobs, and so forth.

The escalation of Israeli aggression and expansion has brought an intensification of Palestinian resistance, particularly in the territories occupied in 1948. On the seventh anniversary of the Day of the Land, in March of 1983, twenty-five thousand Palestinians demonstrated in the Galilee to assert their Palestinian identity and their opposition to Israeli occupation. In 1984 demonstrations are planned throughout the 1948 territories and in every major city of the West Bank despite warnings and threats from Israeli right-wing organizations and from the Israeli government. □

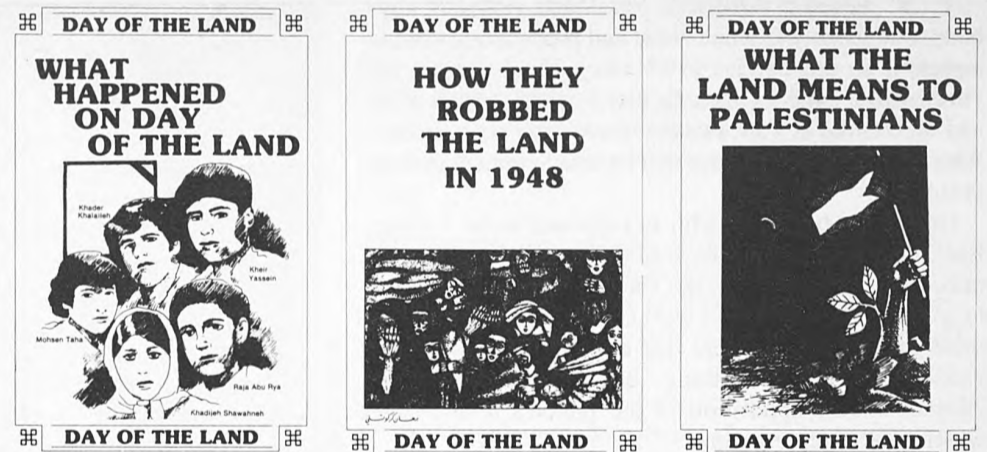
a general strike throughout the Galilee to be held on March 30, 1976; that day became the Day of the Land. On that day the Israeli police and army attacked us in order to stop our protest; we were only exercising a democratic right.

Six young people were killed by the army and police; these murders inflamed the feelings of all Palestinians living in the Galilee region. The army and police also tried to disperse the demonstrations and arrested many people. March 30 took on great historic significance for our people; it was a day of uprising against oppression and land expropriation and for our freedom.

In 1976 the Israeli authorities were forced to retreat. They did not succeed in taking over our land in Sakhnin. We are still able to come and go to it freely and to cultivate it. The Israeli army cannot enter it for military maneuvers any more. We considered this situation a victory for our people's will and determination to be united and to be part of the Palestinian people.

When the massacres of Sabra and Shatila took place, Palestinian patriots gathered for a mass meeting in Haifa. They decided to call for a general strike and demonstrations in every town and city of the Galilee. In Sakhnin everyone demonstrated, young and old. The police and army could not intervene because people were angry over the massacres. Our people demonstrated in solidarity with those of our people outside Israel and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

We Palestinian Arabs in Israel call upon all the democratic people in the world and especially those in the United States to stand with us in our struggle for survival, for our land, and for our country. For us, there is no other country and there is no other place to go. We would rather die than leave. □



## Question of Palestine...

Continued from page 4

a superpower and its strategic ally.

While Israel succeeded in convincing Washington of this thesis, the fact is that Israel is using this approach to deal with its own crises—crisis of economy, crisis of politics, and crisis of ideology. Israel's solution to these crises is defined in military terms. And the military approach has been extended to occupation of three countries. The regular resort to military measures and the proclivity to empire building, in this age of decolonization, has already proven morally and institutionally corrosive for Israel. Militarization, which has already permeated the economic, political, and social sectors of Israeli society, has become the focus of national life.

The remedy for Israel's crises of economy, of politics,

and of ideology will not be found in the continued denial of Palestinian existence (a variant on the strategy of the ostrich). It will not be found in the pursuit of biblical frontiers in the age of secularism, nor will it be found in destabilizing neighbors and spreading hegemonies in the age of nationalism.

No matter what Israel does and regardless the nature of the latest Reagan-Shamir arrangements, which formalized the ongoing strategic relationship, the central factor and the crux of the problem in the Middle East today, as it has been for the past seventy years, is the fate of the Palestinian people and their concern for their very existence. These people who now number 3½ million, constitute a community which has normal desires for security, dignity, self-respect, and concern for their children's happiness. These people, within the lifetime of the present generation, have been transformed, through forces beyond their control, from a normal people to a people whose every single individual leads an abnormal

existence. Every Palestinian in the world today is either a refugee, displaced, dispossessed, stateless without political identity; or a civilian inhabitant of a land under alien military occupation; or a member of a minority in a land in which, within his or her own memory, the Palestinian people constituted the majority of its population.

Until this abnormality, with all the privations, grievances, and sense of injustice it breeds, is remedied, there can be no peace in the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East, in the final analysis, revolves around the question of whether the Palestinians will be able to enjoy those elementary rights which people throughout the world have enjoyed or are deemed entitled to enjoy. □

*Naseer Aruri is professor of political science at Southeastern Massachusetts University and former president of the Arab-American University Graduates. He gave this speech at a teach-in in Berkeley, California on December 3, 1983.*

## Action Alert

Palestinian and Israeli women's groups have launched a campaign to protest the town arrests of three Palestinian women: Zahera Kamal and Lawahiz Jaabari of Jerusalem and Amal Wahdan Labadi of Abu Dis. All three are active

in Palestinian women's committees. No charges have been laid or evidence presented against any of the women. None has been tried, nor can they appeal their cases in court. Their freedom of movement and association and their professional and social activities are severely restricted. They can be imprisoned at any time. Zahera has been under house arrest for four years. Lawahiz, a student, will not be able to graduate from Bir Zeit

University as a result of her arrest. Amal, who is nine months pregnant, is denied access to needed medical care and faces a life-threatening situation. If you wish to help, write letters of protest to:

Sherut Batei Hasohar (prison authorities)  
Tel-Or-Cinema Building  
Jerusalem, Israel

Mr. Josef Burg  
Minister of the Interior  
Knesset Israel  
Jerusalem, Israel

Mr. Moshe Arens  
Minister of Defense  
Knesset Israel  
Jerusalem, Israel

We suggest you send copies of any letters to Women Against Occupation, P.O. Box 2760, Tel-Aviv, Israel

By Hilton Obenzinger

*The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World* (Zed Press, London England, 1980) is one of the few books treating this critical topic in English. Nawal El Saadawi, Egyptian doctor, novelist, and author on Arab women's problems and their struggles for emancipation, examines the complex relationships of women in Islamic society. She covers such topics as sexual aggression against female children, female circumcision, prostitution, marriage, divorce, and sexual relationships. She is quite pointed in describing the conditions of women's oppression in the Arab world in a socioeconomic framework.

Nawal El Saadawi rose to become Egypt's Director of Public Health, and from this influential position was an outspoken partisan of women's rights. Dismissed from this post in 1972 as a result of her activities, she has had to confront frequent harassment ranging from censorship to arrest by the Sadat regime. *The Hidden Face of Eve* is the first of her books to be translated into English, and it is readily apparent that her survey of the condition of Arab women is suffused with anger, compassion, and a keen analytical method linked to commitment. Addressing herself to Western readers, she speaks of "a feeling of superior humanity" which we in the United States often assume in regard to Arab women: "We, the women in Arab countries, realize that we are still slaves, still oppressed, not because we belong to the East, not because

## Getting It All In FOCUS

we are Arab, or members of Islamic societies, but as a result of the patriarchal class system that has dominated the world for thousands of years."

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Meanwhile...in the latest tale of pro-Israel prejudice gagging the press, *Village Voice* columnist Alexander Cockburn was "suspended indefinitely" by the newspaper, part of the publishing empire of ultraconservative Rupert Murdoch. Cockburn's misdeed was to accept a \$10,000 grant from the Institute of Arab Studies to assist him in writing a book about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. While authors often receive grants or advances, *Voice* Editor David Schneiderman declared that the Institute of Arab Studies has a "political bent." Imagine if he had received a grant from some "Institute of Jewish Studies" and he got the ax at the *Village Voice*—the (fully justified) howls decrying anti-Semitism would be deafening. Still, such crude attacks continue to wreak havoc on

open minds in the media...and not just in the media. We hope to expose the increasingly coordinated campaigns to attack pro-Palestinian groups on college campuses throughout the country by such Zionist groups as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)...

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One of those often targeted by AIPAC as an opponent of Israeli policy is M.I.T. Professor Noam Chomsky, who has just released a major study, *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, published by South End Press, 302 Columbus Avenue, Boston, MA 02116. Professor Chomsky's book is a good starting point for anyone studying the Middle East and U.S. policy. Chomsky provides a detailed factual recent history, always scrupulously honest and well-documented, which juxtaposes what really happened with how events are portrayed in the U.S. media. Sure to spark debate concerning many of Chomsky's assumptions and definitions, *The Fateful Triangle* provides a comprehensive and critical basis to understand what is at stake in the Middle East.

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Finally, there's a new publication readers should know about: *Palestine Perspectives*, edited by Dr. Muhammad Hallaj, and published by the Palestine Research and Educational Center, 818 - 18th St. N.W., Suite 645, Washington, DC 20006. Filled with news and opinion by leading Palestinian intellectuals, *Palestine Perspectives* should prove useful to anyone trying to keep abreast of the Palestinian struggle. □

Viewpoint:

## A Challenge For The U.S. Women's Movement

By Pam David and Michelle Mouton

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, some women organized and participated in the demonstrations, reaffirming their support for the Palestinian and Lebanese people. Others, particularly in the organized women's movement were immobilized. For them, the events in Lebanon were obscured by ongoing debates over anti-Semitism in the women's movement. For example, as bombs fell on Beirut, the feminist group Di Vilde Chayes published an open letter to the women's movement in several women's newspapers stating "any anti-Zionist position is . . . anti-Semitic." As International Women's Day is celebrated in 1984, the internationalism of the women's movement—as reflected by the response or lack thereof to U.S.-Israeli intervention—remains in question.

The women's movement has played a key and active part in international causes such as Vietnam. However, the women's movement has been selective in the international issues it takes up. While women support the fight for national liberation in Central America, the Palestinian fight for self-determination is often ignored. While women carry out antinuclear work, some disregard the key political realities which make nuclear war likely to break out in the Middle East. The U.S. women's movement, like the rest of the nonintervention movement in the United States, has been deeply affected by Zionism and anti-Arab racism. The internationalism of the women's movement is seriously undermined, its political clarity and direction clouded.

Building support for the Palestinian people is an integral task of an internationalist women's movement and the broad movement for social change of which it is a part. Activist women have an important role to play in developing ties with their Palestinian sisters, whose situation as women is completely bound up with their people's fight for survival. Palestinian women have to maintain both their families and the Palestinian national identity in light of genocidal onslaughts by the United States, Israel, and the Lebanese Phalangists.

The harsh reality faced by Palestinian women includes death, injury, and imprisonment. Many husbands, fathers, brothers,

**"The women's movement has been selective in the international issues it takes up."**



**"Building support for the Palestinian people is an integral task of an internationalist women's movement and the broad movement for social change of which it is a part."**

and children have also been killed or imprisoned. Often men are away with the resistance or must go abroad to find work. These women must provide for their families, participate in defending their communities, and preserve their cultural life in the midst of Israeli occupation and in war-torn refugee camps. The conditions faced by Lebanese women are equally severe, framed by civil war, fascist attacks, and increasing U.S. military involvement.

The domestic cost of this massive U.S. intervention and aid should also be of central concern to the U.S. women's movement. The money to fuel the war drive has come from slashing the domestic budget. Many of the programs cut, such as child nutrition aid, have benefited poor women and children, who are disproportionately people of color.

The racist thrust of Reagan's domestic policies is mirrored internationally in the portrayal of Palestinian and Lebanese people as "terrorists" and "fanatics." The reality is both harsh and ironic; poor and minority people in the United States pay dearly for U.S. military aggression directed primarily against third-world people.

The challenge for the U.S. women's movement is clear. Ignore our Palestinian and Lebanese sisters or begin the educational and organizational work necessary to express our sisterhood. We must learn about the conditions faced by Palestinian women in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and elsewhere, as well the conditions faced by Lebanese women in the midst of civil war and Israeli and U.S. occupation. It is time to confront the anti-Arab racism in the women's and broader movements. The prevailing notion that the main problem facing Palestinian women is Palestinian men must be countered; the problem is Israeli occupation and reactionary terror! We must join with other people in the United States and around the world in stopping U.S. intervention, halting the Israeli war machine, and supporting Palestinian self-determination and the Lebanese national movement. When the challenge is met, the full internationalist spirit of International Women's Day will truly be celebrated. □

*Pam David and Michelle Mouton are activists in the Alliance Against Women's Oppression (AAWO), a national, multi-racial women's organization.*

# Israeli Feminists In The Antiwar Movement

**Interview with Osnat Ron and Merav Dvir of Women Against Occupation, an Israeli feminist organization. This interview was recorded in September 1983 in Geneva, Switzerland.**

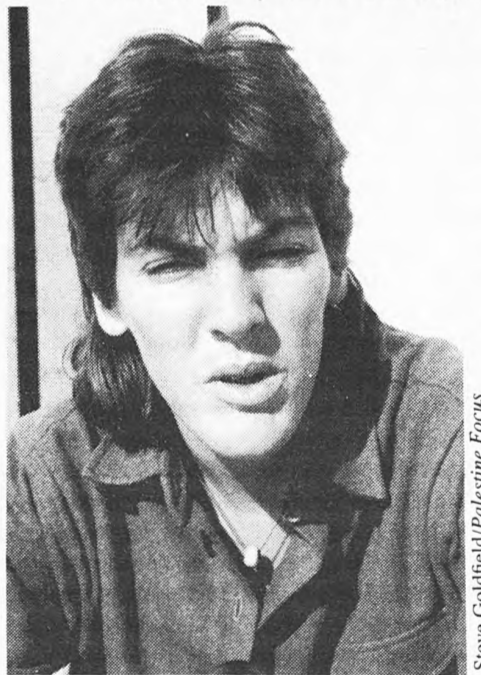
**PF:** Please tell us about the feminist movement in Israel today, how it developed, and how you became involved.

**O:** I joined the Women Against Occupation at its founding, which was at the beginning of the war. Women Against Occupation is a feminist antiwar group, which differs from the rest of the feminist movement in that we do not call ourselves Zionist. We say that a feminist movement cannot be Zionist at all because Zionism, by definition, discriminates against Palestinian women and, as such, is not equal. We think that if a feminist movement is struggling for equality of women and for women's liberation at large, it cannot discriminate against other women.

**M:** Some years ago there was a split in the Israeli feminist movement over this issue. The other feminists wanted to kick out the anti-Zionist women, who were very active in the movement. So they decided to call themselves the Israeli pro-Zionist feminist movement, which is what it is called today.

The Israeli feminist movement is very similar to the American feminist movement. It just adopts the American way of thinking and doesn't consider the specific problems of the area and the Palestinian people. It takes no political stand on these issues. Most of the women in the movement are Americans who have emigrated to Israel. There are no Palestinian women active in it because it is pro-Zionist.

For example, the feminist newspaper



Osnat Ron

printed in Israel is full of stories on women all over the world but has very few stories about women in the West Bank or about women in Israel. The feminist movement struggles for very important issues, such as the women in the media, but sometimes you really can sense that's not the issue to speak

because they refused to cook for the guards. As a result, they were sanctioned by the prison authorities. They were not allowed to have writing materials, books, newspapers, or radios, and they were not even allowed to watch television. They were only allowed to leave their cells for one hour a day, which

**“Women suffer from the war, not only the Palestinian women but the Israeli women. We think that women should oppose it.”**

about now. We have so many problems with occupation; the entire political situation is very tense.

**PF:** Is Women Against Occupation the only anti-Zionist feminist group in Israel?

**M:** Yes, we are the only group. Most of us were already feminists, but when the war began, we organized together because we really feel that it is very important for feminists to speak out in wartime. We don't think, as the pro-Zionist feminist movement in Israel thinks, that women shouldn't interfere in political issues because they don't fight in the wars. “Women don't initiate wars. It's a man's business, and women shouldn't take part in it.” There are people in the feminist movement who say this. We answer that in that way you only reinforce the authority. We think that women suffer from the war, not only the Palestinian women but the Israeli women, from the war and from Zionism. We think that women should oppose it.

Our group has twenty women, members who meet every week. There are no Palestinians in this circle. But if we hold evening events, a demonstration, or other activities, we can gather many more women, some of whom will be Palestinians.

**PF:** What sort of activities does your group initiate or participate in with other groups?

**O:** We take part in any peace movement activities that take place in Israel, in the West Bank, etc. because we see any activity that's got to do with stopping the war and withdrawal from the West Bank is terribly important. We can't really afford the luxury of not taking part in any of those activities. As a group, we organize various demonstrations to deal with women's issues and women in the West Bank.

Recently we held a demonstration outside the women's prison in Israel, where 26 Palestinian political prisoners are held. About three months ago they went on strike

obviously increased their isolation. We organized a demonstration outside the prison because, according to the Geneva Conventions, they don't have to cook for the guards. We demanded the immediate termination of those sanctions. This demonstration was pretty successful; we had women from the West Bank—from the Ramallah area—joining us, which we considered quite a success.

Another quite good project we did was to print a poster based on an antiabortion statement made by the personal advisor of the minister of health, who said that since the creation of the state of Israel, Israel had lost about twenty divisions because of abortion. The Israeli authorities are worried about the demographic problem. They take the woman's role to be sort of babymakers or soldiers-to-be makers.

**M:** We also take part in all the activities of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon in the West Bank and in Israel. We also go to demonstrations of Peace Now. Everybody in Israel feels it is very important to be a large group and to fight together against the settlements, around these very important issues.

**PF:** What is the status of women in Israel? What sorts of special problems do women have? What are the inequalities?

**M:** Well, the status of women in Israel is decreasing all the time. Part of it is the war situation that Israel is in all the time because Israel is becoming a very, very militaristic society and very violent. For example, we know that during the war, violence against women increased because the soldiers bring the violence back home. Violence inside the family is a very big problem in Israel.

These demographic problems that Osnat talked about: they want to stay a Jewish state, but there are no Jews coming to Israel from anywhere. So they are pushing very hard to increase the birth rate. There is a legal right to abortion only on a mental basis and if the woman is not married. But if a woman is married, none.

Another problem is that as a Jewish state there is a very great emphasis on the relig-



Merav Dvir

ious point of view. All these issues—abortion, marriage, and divorce—are seen through the eye of religion. We can't get married in a civil ceremony in Israel. And we must get divorced through the religious courts, which are very discriminatory against women. If the man doesn't want a divorce, according to this law, a woman cannot get a divorce. She can show that she is beaten, that he has been with other women; she can show whatever she wants; she can wait twenty years; but she won't get her divorce. Another problem now is that because of the economic situation in Israel—unemployment—they don't want to encourage women to go to work. Equal pay for equal work is also an issue. Women get two-thirds of the men's salary.

**PF:** What do you have to say to American women on the issue of Zionism and Anti-Zionism in the American feminist movement?

**M:** At first, when we started discussing occupation through the feminist perspective, we talked about the occupation in general, but we kept finding ourselves slipping to the question of Zionism in general. As I see it—I'm not sure if this is the view of the whole group—Zionism and feminism can't go together. Zionism discriminates when it says the Jewish people are more important than the Palestinians. In this way it is racist.

**O:** What we see are the great similarities between the kind of discrimination against women in the Israeli society and the discrimination against Palestinians. It's the same government, the same authority, the same men—if you like—who are doing the same things with the same methods, although much harder on the Palestinian people, obviously, because they are much more of a threat. Women are not considered such a threat to men as are another people. So we are trying to write a booklet developing those links, methods to resist it, and our objectives. □

## PALESTINE FOCUS

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*Palastine Focus* is the national newsletter of the November 29th Coalition. It is an information vehicle tied to an activist movement, yet aimed at a general audience with little background knowledge. We intend to report on activities, not only of our coalition but also of other groups, and to provide consistent commentary and analysis of the situation in the Middle East.

The November 29th Coalition takes its name from the date declared by the United Nations as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Our task is to spark and support consistent, far-reaching, and effective activity which brings the issue of Palestine before the American people and builds a growing and deepening base of understanding. Our movement organizes to stop U.S. intervention in the Middle East and to cut U.S. aid to Israel. We educate Americans on the need to support the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, developing a movement to oppose the discriminatory and racist policies and practices toward Palestinians inherent in the Zionist movement and the state of Israel.

*Palastine Focus* is distributed free. However, we urge readers to write for individual subscriptions for mail delivery at \$5 per year.

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

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