

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
 NEWS RELEASE

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May 1, 1979

JEWISH AND ARAB SPEAKERS CALL FOR
COMPREHENSIVE PEACE THAT INCLUDES PALESTINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON--The Palestinian Mayor of the West Bank city of Halhul, Mohammed Milhem said, "We believe that Israel sought and obtained at Camp David a formula which can only...lead to the closed road of unilateral settlement with Egypt." Several Jewish and Arab speakers at a Quaker-sponsored Conference over the past weekend called for a "comprehensive peace which includes the Palestinians."

Mayor Milhem told the national conference, held by the American Friends Service Committee, that "As far as the Palestinian dimension of the conflict is concerned, the (Camp David) agreement was deliberately designed to provoke Palestinian rejection. We see no reason why we should be interested in negotiating a settlement which rules out in advance the option of independence for the Palestinian people.

"Any agreement which does not require, without equivocation, an internationally supervised cessation to Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza, betrays lack of good faith and a cruel disregard for the future of our people."

Jewish speakers emphasized that there must be a secure state of Israel, and one, Herman Edelsberg, a lawyer, writer, and former counsel for B'nai B'rith, said the Palestine Liberation Organization must accept the existence of Israel, but that such action would not be a bargaining card. "The real bargaining power," he said,

(More)

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"is the Palestinian ability to destabilize and obstruct peace in the Middle East. That's what can bring them to the table once they accept UN Resolution 242."

Stanley Hoffman, a professor of government at Harvard said, "No peace will be achieved without Israel's consent. But, he asked how it would be achieved without solving the Palestinian problem. He concluded that the PLO must be brought into the negotiations process and that the outcome of negotiations ought to include the option of a state on the West Bank and in Gaza for the Palestinian people.

James Zogby, National Chairperson of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, questioned why the Israeli-Egyptian peace is "purchased with \$5 billion in U.S. heavy weapons." He charged that U.S. policy has the affect of fostering divisions in the Arab world.

Shula Hoenig, a sponsor of the Tel Aviv journal, New Outlook, said that much in the Middle East is based on fear and historic memories. "It's time to open the door and start dialogue," she declared. I.F. Stone, the U.S. writer said, "Step by step is very good, but it has to be step by step to comprehensive peace."

The conference concluded Sunday with sessions on "U.S. Policy: Alternatives and Citizen Action."

Mayor Milhem spoke at an American Friends Service Committee luncheon for journalists in Washington, Monday (April 30) and at the Washington Press Club on Tuesday (May 1).

The AFSC seeks to encourage the hearing of all voices in the Middle East, where the Quaker organization has been active for over 30 years. The AFSC's programs and projects leading toward peace and justice are now active in 13 countries, including the United States.