

Middle East

PEACE



NOTES

Middle East Peace Education Program
Issue No. 11

American Friends Service Committee
July 1992

Occupation Primer

by Billie Marchik*

Since June 1967, Israel has occupied the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.¹ Whether or not Israel originally intended to relinquish control of the occupied lands, in the past 25 years it has taken numerous steps to permanently change their legal status and demographic character.

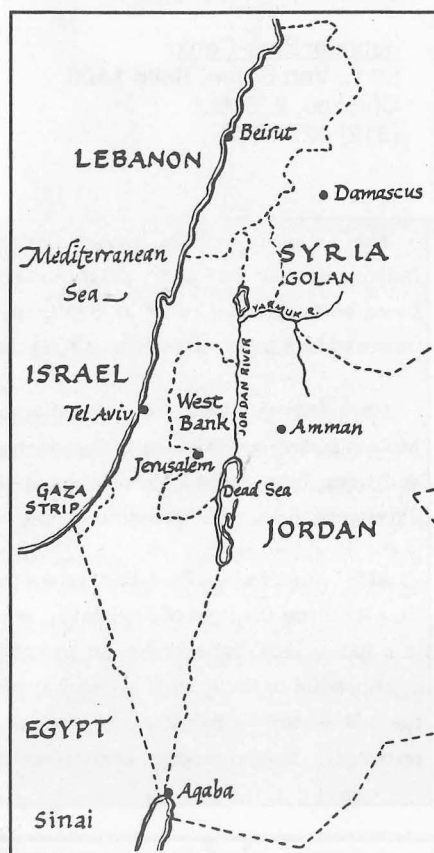
Israel has developed a system of arbitrary military orders designed to change the "facts on the ground". Palestinian civil rights have been denied and numerous repressive practices have been instituted to silence dissent and exact compliance with the occupation. Measures have been used to confiscate Palestinian land and transfer possession/ownership exclusively to Israeli Jews. Settlements have been constructed, a network of roads created, and water resources monopolized to expedite the colonization of the Occupied Territories by Jewish settlers. In addition, military orders have been used to hobble Palestinian economic growth in order to prevent competition with producers in Israel and the settlements.

It may appear that the occupation serves the purpose of ensuring Israeli security through the control of Palestinian land. But the real intention is far more insidious—to facilitate permanent Israeli de-facto annexation of the occupied areas through Jewish settlement. In the process the "silent transfer" of Palestinians is occurring. Deprived of their

lands and livelihood, and brutalized by the military occupation, many Palestinians are finding it in their economic and human interest to leave their historic homeland.

Administrative Structures

The military government exercises absolute legal and administrative control over the 1.9 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.² Separate military commanders/governors oversee control of the two areas. Vested with total legislative and executive powers, the area military commander has the authority to issue, suspend or annul military laws, to appoint or dismiss military judges and various officials, and to administer all aspects of the occupation. Such powers are arbitrary and absolute, without review or recourse (except in a very few restricted areas where the Israeli Supreme Court has jurisdiction). Over 1350 military orders have been issued in the West Bank, and more than 1000 in the Gaza Strip³, covering in minute detail virtually every aspect of life. A number of these military orders have not been translated into Arabic or even published.⁴



* Billie Marchik coedits MEPN and works in the Des Moines AFSC office.

(continued on page 8)

Editors' Note

June 1992 marks 25 years since the 1967 War when Israel captured the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.

For the 1.6 million Palestinians who live under occupation, Israeli rule means the denial of their human and political rights, and the loss of their land and economic livelihood. For Israeli society, the occupation fosters a continuing state of war, dehumanizes those who are called upon to enforce it, and drains away economic resources needed for development within Israel.

In this issue we provide a primer on the occupation, describing the administrative structure and the repressive measures that form the backdrop of daily Palestinian life.

Two other articles are included which describe the resistance to the occupation: one focuses on Palestinian efforts to end Israeli rule and establish independence; the other addresses the different strategies employed by Israeli peace activists to end the occupation and work towards peaceful coexistence.

We recognize that for some of our readers this issue will not provide new information. However, we hope that these articles will be used for educational purposes in schools, religious, and civic settings where people are addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the first time.

Again, we thank you for your continuing activism on Middle East issues and your ongoing support of MEPN.

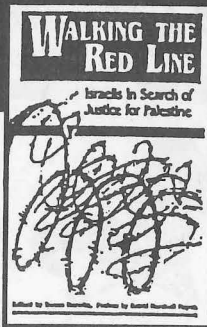
The Editors --

Jennifer Bing-Canar, Chicago
Billie Marchik, Des Moines

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION:

WALKING THE RED LINE

Israelis in Search of Justice for Palestine



Edited by Deena Hurwitz; Preface by Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer
New Society Publishers, 1992

This collection of essays by 19 Israeli activists who oppose the occupation, offers a glimpse of an Israeli social movement from its own perspective, provides startling insights into the problems of life and dissent in an increasingly militarized society, and gives clues for how concerned US allies can help to foster a durable, just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ordering Information - \$16.95 including shipping and handling. Orders in CA add 8% sales tax. **Send to:** Resource Center for Nonviolence, 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (408) 423-1626.

The Resource Center for Nonviolence offers a wide-ranging educational program in the history, theory, methodology, and current practice of nonviolence as a force for personal and social change.

Middle East Peace Notes is a quarterly newsletter jointly prepared by the AFSC Middle East/International Affairs programs in the Great Lakes and North Central regions. The newsletter is printed and mailed from Denver, but represents the collective work of the following staff:

Richard Cleaver
1414 Hill Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(313) 761-8283

Charlie Silver
1535 High Street, 3rd Fl.
Denver, CO 80218
(303) 322-6353

Jennifer Bing-Canar
59 E. Van Buren, Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 427-2533

Billie Marchik
4211 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50312
(515) 274-4851

The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization supported by individuals who care about peace, social justice and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the Quaker belief in the dignity and worth of every person, and a faith in the power of love and nonviolence to bring about change.

Since 1948 the AFSC has worked with Israelis, Palestinians and other Arabs in the Middle East. It has initiated and supported humanitarian projects in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the surrounding Arab states -- projects of community organization, development, early childhood education, relief, reconstruction and reconciliation.

AFSC supports Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders. At the same time it affirms the right of Palestinians to national self-determination including their right to a state. AFSC believes that an international peace conference between representatives of all parties to the conflict -- Israel, the PLO, neighboring Arab states, and members of the UN Security Council -- can lead to a comprehensive settlement assuring mutual recognition, mutual security, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Palestinian Resistance to Occupation

by Jennifer Bing-Canar*

The image of a Palestinian male, dressed in a black and white keffiyeh and hurling a stone at an armed Israeli soldier, has been popularized as the symbol of the Palestinian resistance. However, Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza is more complex than the picture of a young stone thrower. Palestinian strategy and resistance have evolved and developed over time, passing through important changes in the past two decades. This article will attempt to review major aspects of this development and provide an analysis of where the Palestinian resistance stands today.

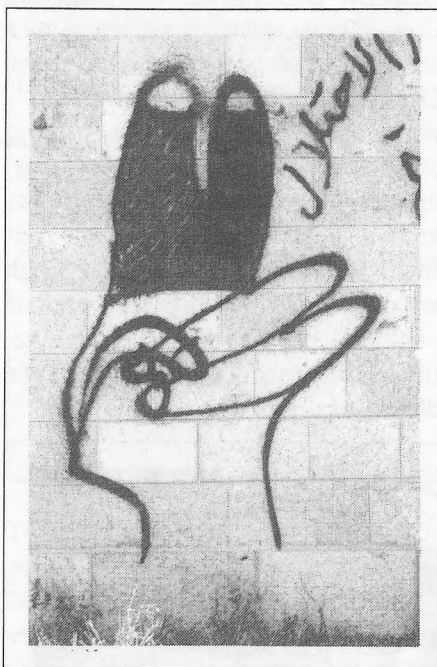
Phase of Liberation

Prior to 1967, Palestinians looked to the Arab states to recover their land by means of conventional war with Israel. In 1964 the Arab states, led by Egypt, created the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), keeping it under close supervision. Palestinians (except those living in the Gaza Strip) were prevented from organizing political parties or electing official representatives.

Immediately following the June 1967 War, the Palestinian national movement entered, what Palestinian sociologist Salim Tamari calls a "phase of liberation."¹ Given the Arab states' stunning defeat by Israeli forces, Palestinians decided to develop a revolutionary movement, independent of Arab state control, located in Jordan.

The goal of the Palestinian movement was to create a democratic secular state in all of Palestine where Arabs and

Jews would have full equality. This was to be achieved through all means necessary, including armed struggle. Using the Chinese/Vietnamese model of a "people's war", Palestinians engaged in guerilla warfare, infiltrating the West Bank and attacking primarily military and economic targets in Israel. Although militarily inferior to Israel, resistance fighters gained a sense of pride in facing the Israeli army directly in combat.



Palestinian graffiti /Bing-Canar photo

During this period, the PLO grew organizationally, building new institutions and attracting new personnel and popular support. The number of guerilla groups increased dramatically so that the PLO began to fulfill a coordinating role. An elaborate social apparatus emerged, providing social services such as schools, child care centers, orphanages, clinics, and hospitals. "In less than three years," writes Palestinian researcher Sameer Abraham, "the Palestinian national movement was transformed from a weak, clandestine

organization dependent on the Syrian regime which harbored it to an open, self-propelled national liberation organization in Jordan."²

The Palestinian movement's presence in Jordan was soon to change. The rise of Palestinian power and autonomy, especially among the guerrilla forces, precipitated a crackdown by the Jordanian government. Clashes with the Jordanian army in 1970 and 1971 eventually forced the Palestinians to relocate to Syria and Lebanon. After the relocation, radical factions within the PLO began staging spectacular guerrilla actions, such as hijacking and terrorism, in order to draw world attention to their cause. This remained controversial within the Palestinian movement.

Phase of Independence

Salim Tamari has written: "Since the mid-1970s, and to large extent as a consequence of the October 1973 War in which for the first time there was a stalemate between the military might of Israel and that of the Arab world, a significant shift occurred in the formulation of Palestinian nationalist objectives. Palestinians now called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state in those areas from which Israel would withdraw."³

Following the war in 1973, the Palestinian national movement changed its political goal in the direction of a "two state" solution with Israel. In 1974, after gaining wide acceptance internationally as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", the PLO upgraded its diplomatic missions around the world, worked within the United Nations to gain support for national independence, and engaged in

*Jennifer Bing-Canar co-edits MEPN and works in the Chicago AFSC office.

dialogue with influential Israelis and Zionists.⁴

The commitment to revolutionary armed struggle was, according to Abraham, "operationally relegated to a strategy of self-defense, as opposed to the preceding period when it was conceptualized as an offensive weapon. Terrorist activities had all but ceased by 1974 or were carried out by fringe groups outside the PLO's control."⁵

In the 1970s, the PLO embarked on a effort of "national reconstitution"⁶, in essence creating a nation in exile. In Lebanon, a community of some 400,000 Palestinians organized an elaborate social welfare infrastructure, including PLO institutions for health, education, culture, industry, research, law, and economic development. Palestinian resistance groups also had formed in part to protect Palestinians in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, similar structures also developed in the West Bank and Gaza. The objective of this was to help Palestinians endure the Israeli occupation.

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories adopted the tactic of "samud" or steadfastness to resist Israeli army repression. Many Israeli efforts were made to break this resistance and to defeat the popularity of the PLO which had successfully run candidates in municipal elections in 1976. (The mayors were later removed by Israeli authorities.)

In response, the Israeli government under the leadership of Likud launched a campaign to "smash the bases of PLO power both militarily and politically"⁷ by invading Lebanon and imposing an "iron fist" policy in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli military carried out a series of repressive measures in the Occupied Territories in the form of "a wave of arrests, detentions without charges, deportations, and [by] set[ting] up armed militias of collaborators known as the Village Leagues."⁸ Although Palestinians resisted through various acts of civil disobedience and confrontation with the army, their actions were generally contained and of a dispersed nature.⁹

The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and siege of Beirut resulted in significant civilian losses,¹⁰ and ousted the PLO from Lebanon. Although the leadership escaped unharmed, the PLO once again became dependent on and vulnerable to host Arab states. The 1982 war later resulted in a split in the national movement between the mainstream and leftist factions. However, in February 1987, the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists held their general conference in Algiers, bringing together all of the main PLO factions. Two months later the PLO was formally reunified at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers.¹¹ This development was to be critical in the early stages of the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

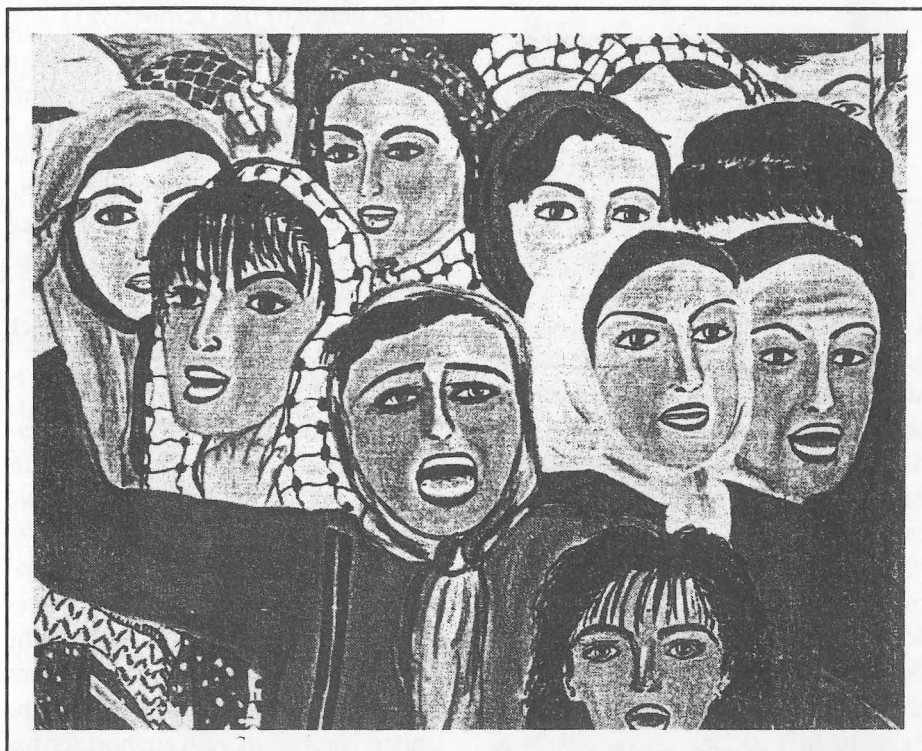
The Intifada

Setting the stage. Several factors set the stage for the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising or "intifada" in December 1987. First, several Palestinian "uprisings" occurred in the 1980s: one in December 1986, after several Birzeit University students were killed by Israeli troops, and a second in January 1987 following the deportation of Palestinian activists.

Second, the Israeli army had a policy of using live ammunition to quell demonstrations. By the fall of 1987, several human rights organizations had officially expressed their concern over the shooting of demonstrators.¹²

Third, the Palestinian question was completely ignored at the Arab Summit held in Jordan in November 1987. This sent an important signal to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories that their hope for an external political solution, particularly one assisted by the Arab states, was unlikely.

Thus the stage was set for a Palestinian initiative to come from the Occupied Territories. On December 8, 1987, an



Painting by 15-year-old Salwa Sawalhi, Gaza Strip.

Israeli truck driver collided with a line of cars at a military checkpoint in the Gaza Strip, killing four Palestinian workers and injuring seven others. Rumors spread that the accident was intentional, sparking protests throughout the area. On December 9, 15-year-old Hatem Sissi of Jabalia Refugee Camp was on his way home from school when he joined in a stone-throwing demonstration held to protest the events of the day before. Hatem was shot twice by Israeli soldiers concealed in a nearby house, and became the first fatality in the uprising. Within days, Palestinian protests spread throughout the Gaza Strip to refugee camps in the West Bank. Thousands of men, women, and children took to the streets to demand an end to Israeli occupation.

Building a Power Base. A "spontaneous civil insurrection" lasted for three weeks, until the uprising became institutionalized under the command of the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU). UNLU, an underground leadership composed of representatives of the various political factions, emerged in early January 1988 to coordinate the intifada. UNLU's regular communiques provided a suggested schedule of resistance activities and "often reflects on recent events, gives encouragement and praise to groups or villages experiencing particular difficulties, warns collaborators not to work against the intifada, and presents the evolving political program."^{13,14}

The West Bank and Gaza Strip emerged as the primary area for Palestinian resistance. An "intifada" or "shaking off"¹⁵ of Israeli military rule was underway. Neighborhood and popular committees, largely created in the 1980s by various PLO factions, improvised to meet the needs of the population and establish self-governance: when schools were closed, popular schools were set up in homes and community

centers; when communities were put under prolonged curfews, committees began household animal production and home gardens projects, and groups were formed to distribute food and medicine. According to Tamari, "The uprising has brought about a further crucial development: a shift in perception from one of survival and endurance to an agenda of building a power base which can challenge the ability of Israeli colonialism to control the territories on a day-to-day basis."¹⁶

**"From the intifada
went the inspiration
and the force that
transformed
diaspora
Palestinian caution
and ambiguity into
clarity and
authentic vision."**

The mass participation in the intifada permitted the growth of Hamas (an Islamic resistance organization) which sometimes cooperated with UNLU, but also competed for sympathies of the Palestinians living under occupation. Hamas seeks an Islamic state in all of Palestine and rejected the PLO's moves toward compromise with Israel.

In the first year of the intifada, Palestinians mobilized to dismantle the occupation by building alternative structures and coordinating joint nonviolent actions such as general strikes, displaying national symbols (such as hanging flags or writing graffiti), and not paying taxes to the military government. UNLU called on police and tax collectors to resign and encouraged the boycott of Israeli projects. UNLU also

called on Palestinian business owners to reorganize the work week, hire more workers, and not deduct wages for work days missed due to curfews and strikes.¹⁷

By the end of 1988, the momentum of the intifada empowered the PLO to embark on a bold new political initiative. "From the intifada went the inspiration and the force that transformed diaspora Palestinian caution and ambiguity into clarity and authentic vision: this of course was embodied in the 1988 Algiers PNC Declarations."¹⁸

In November 1988, the Palestine National Council (PNC) adopted a Declaration of Palestinian Independence and formally accepted United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, which laid the framework for a two-state solution and formally recognized the State of Israel. In December, PNC Chairman Yasser Arafat formally renounced terrorism. The national movement strategy now combined pressure on the occupier (through the intifada) with a conciliatory political stance of compromise and coexistence. In 1989 the PLO went on a diplomatic offensive and gained increased international support, including an official "dialogue" with the U.S. Dialogue and public meetings between Israelis and Palestinians occurred as well, culminating at the end of 1989 in a symbolic show of unity through the formation of a human chain of Israelis and Palestinians around the Old City of Jerusalem.

In the Occupied Territories, the Israeli government banned popular committees (late July 1988), crippling some of the earlier efforts to build self-sufficiency. Collective punishment measures (such as extended curfews, house demolitions, closure of institutions) increased in all areas: refugee camps, urban centers, and rural villages. In 1989 there were more Palestinian injuries and deaths caused by gunfire, more Palestinians were detained, and massive street dem-

onstrations became less frequent. Collaborator networks were rebuilt by the Israeli authorities, resulting in a "anti-collaboration campaign" carried out by newly formed intifada "shock forces". By 1990, many Palestinians including the PLO expressed concern over the excesses in treatment of collaborators and perceived collaborators, as hundreds of Palestinians were killed by other Palestinians in the Occupied Territories on the pretext of working as Israeli army informants.

New Challenges. Several challenges to Palestinian resistance occurred in 1990: 1) land confiscation in the Occupied Territories increased; 2) the settlement construction expanded under Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon's leadership; 3) the Soviet immigrants into Israel intensified, displacing many migrant Palestinian workers; and 4) school closures and other collective punishments continued, resulting in further social and economic hardship. Political infighting between various popular committees, such as in the health sector, also resulted in duplication of services and increased tension in communities. The emergence of Islamic conservatism also affected social conduct, particularly for women who in some communities were pressured to cover their heads and dress "modestly".

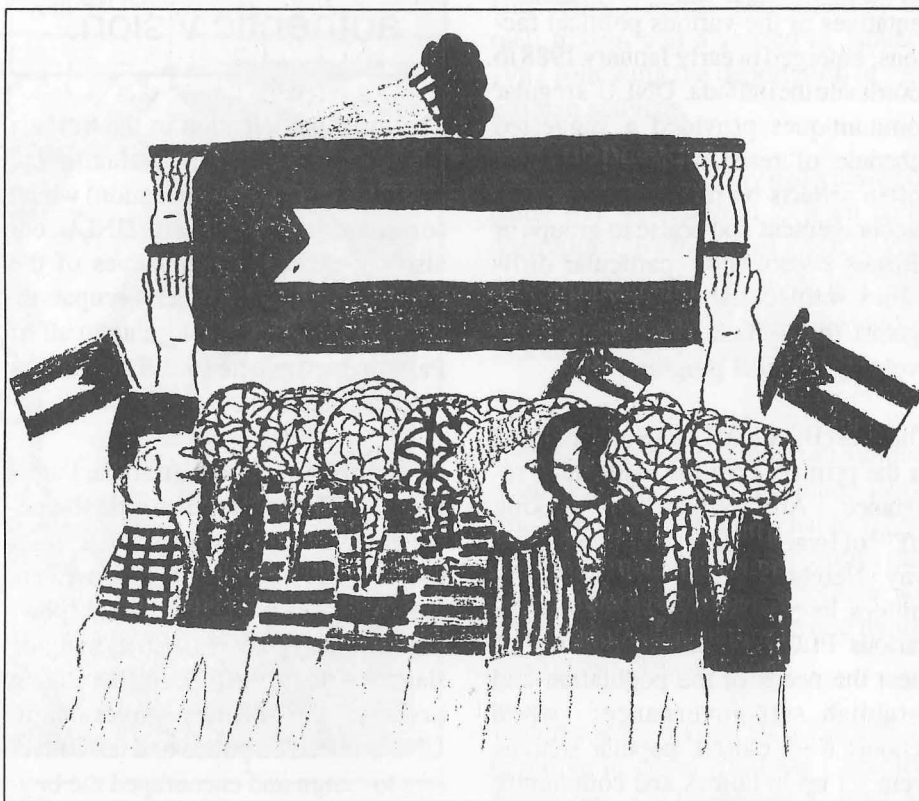
The Gulf crisis also had a devastating impact on the Palestinian community. Those in the diaspora were forced to flee their homes in the Gulf, leaving behind their possessions and their jobs which served as an important source of revenue for the national movement. Those living in the Occupied Territories experienced new vulnerability under prolonged curfews, loss of Gulf remittances for families and institutions, and threats from Iraqi missiles.¹⁹ Palestinians also experienced international isolation for their support for Iraq during the war.

Following the Gulf War, the Bush Administration launched a new effort to bring Palestinians, Israelis, and neighboring Arab states into negotiations. Palestinians had several reservations about the process, particularly U.S. (and Israeli) insistence that official Palestinian representatives not be members of the PLO or be residents of Jerusalem; that the Palestinians' right to self-determination not be recognized at the outset, and the United Nations not be involved. Despite their anxieties, the PLO endorsed participation in the negotiations.

The Palestinian national movement achieved a public relations coup at the opening of the peace talks in Madrid in October 1991, eloquently articulating the Palestinian desire to "end the prolonged exchange of pain" with Israel and replace "domination with coexistence". For the first time, Palestinians spoke on their own behalf at the negotiating table. In the Occupied Territories, a festive atmosphere (though per-

haps premature) was dominant, portrayed poignantly by Palestinian youth bringing olive branches to stunned Israeli soldiers. As the U.S.-led peace process continues without any tangible progress toward ending the occupation or even a settlement freeze, Palestinians have become more vocal in their criticism of the process and less optimistic about its outcome.

Another source of frustration in the Palestinian movement is the lack of response to Palestinian calls for democratization in the national movement. Since the end of the Gulf War, several public forums were held in Jerusalem and in Palestinian newspapers to discuss some of the weaknesses of the intifada and the state of the Palestinian national movement. Some of the concerns expressed were: the lack of an organized decision-making process; the lack of an overall program to regulate the economic, cultural, judicial, and public health sectors; the lack of balance between local initiatives and



Drawing of a funeral march by an 8th grade Palestinian student, 1989.

the national interest; a sense of immobility and routine caused by the lack of creativity in developing new forms of struggle; and the need to establish an internal leadership that will have the confidence of the people.²⁰

In response, the Palestinian leadership has supported debate, stating that it is a healthy sign that people can openly disagree and debate the tactics, strengths and weaknesses of the movement. In recognition of the desperate state of the Palestinian economy, UNLU has recently stated that shopkeepers may stay open beyond the closing hours instituted during the early months of the intifada. UNLU has indicated that fewer general strikes will be called and some efforts are being made to repair relations between the nationalist parties and Hamas.²¹ The Palestinian proposal for an interim self-government includes modalities for conducting democratic elections in the Occupied Territories for a 180-member legislative assembly in an effort to create a public leadership directly responsible to its constituents.

Repeatedly, the Palestinian negotiating team has voiced its concerns to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker that people in the Occupied Territories need to see positive results from the negotiations. Instead, Palestinians watch as more of their land is confiscated and trees uprooted for Israeli settlements and infrastructure, experience extended punitive curfews, and witness increased number of Palestinians killed by Israeli undercover units.

Many challenges face Palestinians who are resisting occupation. Some of these include the pressures Palestinian women face having to resist Israeli occupation and continue their struggle for equality in Palestinian society, or the difficulties Palestinian parents and educators face as they watch their children/students grow up in an atmosphere where brutal violence becomes an as-

pect of "normal daily life".

Despite these challenges, the Palestinian resistance has been transformed by at least two important dynamics of the intifada: the popular involvement of all sectors of Palestinian society in resisting the occupation, and the determination of the Palestinian people to continue to struggle until they achieve their goal of independence.

The Palestinian resistance has been transformed by at least two important dynamics of the intifada: the popular involvement of all sectors of Palestinian society in resisting the occupation, and the determination of the Palestinian people to continue to struggle until they achieve their goal of independence.

While the stone-throwing Palestinian youth is an important symbol of Palestinian resistance, so too is the Palestinian woman who defiantly protects her children from a soldier's club, the educator who clandestinely teaches reading in his home, the prisoner who organizes a hunger strike for better prison conditions, the shopkeeper who sells only Palestinian products, the health worker who spends her days and nights caring for the injured, and the negotiator who together with Israelis strives to find a solution recognizing the needs for self-determination and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.#

Footnotes:

1. Salim Tamari, "What the Uprising Means", Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation, (Boston: South End Press, 1989), p.130.
2. Sameer Abraham, "The Development and Transformation of the Palestine National Movement", Occupation: Israel over Palestine, (Belmont: AAUG Press, 1989), p.631.
3. Tamari, "What the Uprising Means", p.130.
4. Abraham, pp.638-639.
5. Abraham, p.642.
6. Edward Said, "Reflections on Twenty Years of Palestinian History", Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. XX, no. 4, Summer 1991, p.20.
7. Tamari, "What the Uprising Means", p.131.
8. Tamari, "What the Uprising Means", p.132.
9. Tamari, "What the Uprising Means", p.132.
10. An estimated 15 - 20,000 Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians, the majority civilians, and 500 Israelis were killed in the three months of the war. [Deborah J. Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples: The Conflict over Palestine, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p.88.]
11. Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinian People: Twenty-two Years After 1967", Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation, (Boston: South End Press, 1989), p.122.
12. Anne E. Nixon, The Status of Palestinian Children during the Uprising in the Occupied Territories: Child Death and Injury — Part I, (East Jerusalem: Radda Barnen, 1990), Vol. 1, p.6.
13. Gerner, p.127.
14. Although UNLU is composed of Palestinians from inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, interaction with the PLO has been continuous, including on the direction of the Palestinian national movement.
15. The Arabic root for "intifada" is "nafada" which means to shudder or tremble, shake off, to recover, or jump to one's feet.
16. Salim Tamari, "The Uprising's Dilemma: Limited Rebellion and Civil Society", Middle East Report, May-August, 1990, p.7.
17. Phyllis Bennis, From Stones to Statehood: The Palestinian Uprising, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1990), p.39.
18. Said, p.21.
19. Palestinians for the most part did not receive gas masks nor were their communities equipped with early warning systems during the Gulf War. Both precautions were universally available in Israel.
20. Azmy Bishara, "Palestine in the New Order", Middle East Report, March-April, 1992, p.6.
21. Daoud Kuttab, "PLO Gets Its Act Together", Middle East International, No. 426, May 29, 1992, p.11.

continued from page 1...

In 1981, following the initiation of the Camp David autonomy talks, Israel created the "civil administration".⁵ Designed as a type of Palestinian "self-rule", the new administration assumed control of most civilian functions of the occupation. Although some 21,000 Palestinians were integrated into this administrative framework, in effect they served as agents of the occupation. Having no authority to select their own representatives, to pass legislation or to amend the system — such powers being reserved for the military governor — they merely administered a system subordinate to the military government. In creating this, Israel was attempting to establish a framework for Palestinian autonomy which left the military occupation intact.

A dual system of governance⁶ was developed, allowing Jewish settlers to be governed under Israeli law rather than the military law. To accomplish this, the Knesset passed special provisions extending Israeli law beyond the pre-1967 borders of the country. In addition, separate governmental units were established for the settlements, giving them a different legal status. Thus, Jewish settlers living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip enjoy full Israeli citizenship rights and are spared the indignities of military occupation.

Denial of Civil Liberties

Palestinians are denied a wide range of civil rights — freedom from death or injury, rights to due process and political expression, freedom of movement, and freedom from collective punishment or exile.

Threat to Life. Many deaths and injuries have occurred as a result of the occupation. According to the Palestinian Human Rights Information Center, over 1000 Palestinians have been killed by security forces since the intifada began, most by gunfire.

Although Israel claims that soldiers follow standard guidelines in the use of firearms, in fact, "a whole system of implicit understandings, winks and nods has developed alongside the system of commands."

Another 121,000 are estimated to have been injured.⁷ Palestinians have been shot with live ammunition and with plastic bullets. A number of small children have lost their eyes from rubber-coated bullets. Clubs have been used to break bones in order to deter stone throwing and instill fear in the population. Tear gas has been fired into confined spaces, resulting in respiratory problems, sometimes even death, and leading to a number of miscarriages. In addition Israel has violated medical neutrality. Ambulances carrying injured persons have been stopped, rerouted and fired upon. Medical personnel have been arrested or prevented from giving care. Patients have been removed from hospitals, even from operating tables, and taken into custody without regard for their medical condition.

In 1988 open-fire rules permitted live ammunition to be fired at a person's legs after a warning had been issued only if a soldier was in mortal danger, a person was engaging in an attack, a suspect was escaping, or a masked per-

son was fleeing.⁸ However such regulations did not restrict the use of firearms against unarmed demonstrators, children, or persons who happen to be wearing a keffiyeh as protection against the weather. Consequently, "Israeli security forces have used lethal force against Palestinians for, among other things, demonstrating, stone-throwing, raising a Palestinian flag, writing graffiti, wearing a mask, erecting barricades, burning tires, distributing leaflets, or fleeing when ordered to halt or while dispersing from a demonstration or clash."⁹

In February 1992, changes in the regulations allowed soldiers to use live ammunition to apprehend wanted persons, or if a person is armed but no weapon is drawn (although it is unclear how soldiers would know in such instances that a person is armed). A soldier charged with shooting illegally is not required to prove that the action was in self-defense.¹⁰

Since early in the intifada Israel has operated special undercover army units in the Occupied Territories, which use civilian clothing and vehicles to disguise themselves as Palestinians in order to track down and kidnap or execute Palestinian activists. In 1991, at least 27 Palestinian activists were killed by nonuniformed security personnel, most while unarmed and engaged in normal daily activities. Since January 1992, another 24 have been killed.¹¹ Such actions clearly constitute extra-judicial executions which are forbidden under international law.

Although Israel claims that soldiers follow standard guidelines in the use of firearms, in fact "a whole system of implicit understandings, winks and nods has developed alongside the system of commands."¹² When a Palestinian has been killed by security forces, the army typically claims that the shooting was justified. No investigation occurs un-

less a complaint is filed, and then it is conducted by the army rather than by independent investigators. Soldiers are often coached on how to present testimony so that the case will be closed. Witnesses or attending physicians are seldom interviewed so the soldier's testimony usually is accepted. Even when the soldier is found guilty of misconduct, a very light sentence is imposed — several months in jail or a suspended sentence — or a pardon is granted. With such minor penalties, soldiers are given the message that the government clearly sanctions the use of lethal force.¹³

Arbitrary Arrest, Detention without Trial, and Torture. Under military occupation all due process rights are denied. Military orders permit a person suspected of committing an offense to be arrested without a warrant, and to be detained without charge or trial for up to 18 days. A military judge may extend this to six months; if there is an indictment the detainee may be imprisoned until after the trial proceedings. Since the detainee may be released any time during the initial 18-day period without explanation, the detention may be used as harassment or arbitrary imprisonment, as when all men in the village of Beita were held for five days following an incident with a settler.¹⁴

Administrative detention, a form of punishment without trial, is used when no crime has been committed. Once a person has been arrested, a military judge may issue a renewable six-month detention order. A detainee has the right to appeal, but since the evidence is secret, appeals are seldom successful. Under this policy thousands of Palestinians have been "legally" imprisoned for months or years without ever being charged with a crime.¹⁵ Since the intifada began, an estimated 15,000 persons have been held in administrative detention, some as young as 13 years of age.¹⁶

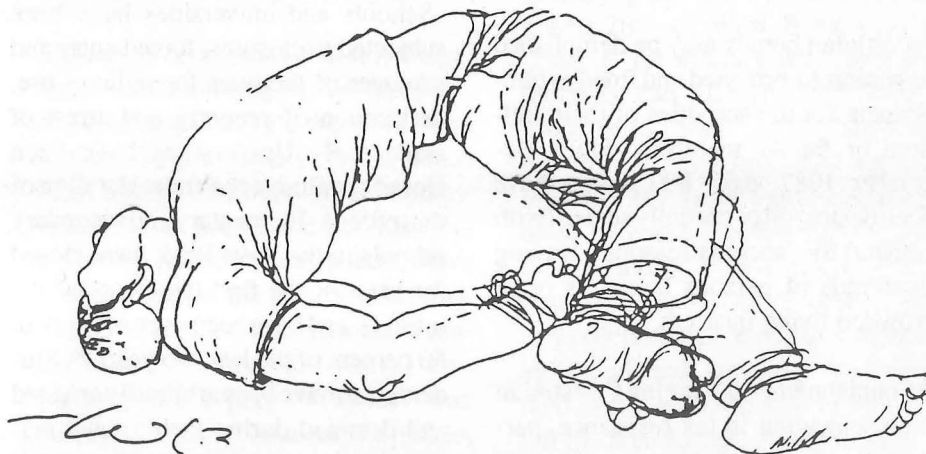
Detainees may be prevented from meeting with an attorney for 15 days or longer if the interrogating official so orders. During the 15-30 days which detainees are commonly deprived of legal counsel, they are held in isolation and interrogated. Not surprisingly, a great number sign confessions, most of which are written in Hebrew rather than Arabic; often they do not know what they are signing.¹⁷

Torture is routinely practiced by military authorities to extract confessions. Interviews conducted with a sample of Palestinian detainees revealed that 85 percent experienced torture or mistreatment.¹⁸ According to a study released in 1991 by B'tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, prisoners are commonly subjected to: verbal abuse, sleep and food deprivation, deafening music or noise, "hooding" with a wet sack or bag, forced standing or confinement in small spaces (the "closet" or "refrigerator") for prolonged periods, severe beatings on all parts of the body including the genitals, being bound in painful positions (the "banana tie") or tied to overhead pipes, and limited access to toilet facilities.¹⁹

Restrictions on Movement. The military authorities rigidly control Palestinian movement and travel. Military

check points are routinely set up throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip to regulate the movement. Palestinians have been issued identity cards, the equivalent of internal passports, which they are required to carry at all times. A computerized data bank allows the army to identify Palestinian activists. Persons in good standing with the military authorities have been issued magnetic identity cards. Special "green cards" have been issued to Palestinians deemed to be security violators. Those holding green cards are prevented from working in Israel or passing through East Jerusalem, which links the north and south portions of the West Bank, thus completely restricting their movement.²⁰

In addition, a new system of permits instituted in the wake of the Gulf War literally severs the north and the south portions of the West Bank. To pass through East Jerusalem, Palestinians must secure a permit with six government stamps affixed, something which can take weeks to obtain and yet may be valid for only a few days or weeks. Failure to obtain the proper permit may result in a \$175 fine and a jail term. Under this system, Palestinians may be prevented from going to work, visiting relatives or seeing a physician.²¹



The "banana tie"
drawing by Dudu Gerstein, B'tselem/Israel



Gaza Strip under curfew. /Bing-Canar photo

Palestinians also may be deprived of their residency rights if they travel abroad. To obtain travel documents, some Palestinians have been required to sign a statement indicating that they will not return before the end of a three-year period. This, coupled with the fact that they must surrender their identity cards upon departure, puts their residency status at risk.²²

Collective Punishment. International law prohibits the punishment of a person for acts that s/he did not commit. However, Israel uses a number of collective measures, both punitive and preventative.

Palestinian homes may be demolished or parents imprisoned and fined as punishment for the activities of their children or family members. Since December 1987, over 800 homes have been destroyed or partially sealed (with cement) for "security reasons", leaving thousands of persons homeless or in crowded living quarters.²³

As punishment for hanging Palestinian flags, engaging in tax resistance, participating in street demonstrations or stoning settlers' cars, the military authorities may place a village under 24-

hour curfew for an indefinite period, effectively turning homes into prisons. Families may be confined to their homes day and night, unable to work, tend crops or livestock, go to school, or even shop for food and medicines except for short periods when the curfew is temporarily lifted.²⁴ During the Gulf War, a six-week blanket curfew was imposed on the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip to prevent protests. In addition, the army may cut electricity, telephone and water service, destroy Palestinian crops and orchards, raid homes, and withhold work or travel permits for an entire community.

Schools and universities have been subjected to closures, forced entry and takeover of facilities for military use, destruction of property and arrest of students.²⁵ Universities have been closed for almost the entire duration of the intifada. Elementary and secondary schools in the West Bank were closed for most of the first two years of the intifada, and have been open only about 60 percent of the last two years.²⁶ Students also have been arbitrarily arrested and detained during their annual matriculation exams so they do not advance to the next grade.

Expulsions. International law expressly forbids the forcible transfer or deportation of persons living under occupation. Nonetheless, Israel has used this as a form of punishment against political activists, expelling an estimated 2000 Palestinian residents since 1967.²⁷ Sixty-six Palestinians have been deported during the intifada, including journalists, university professors, student activists, and union organizers.²⁸

According to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "The deportation process is characterized by a lack of formal charges and the use of secret information not disclosed to the suspect or his [her] attorney. These procedures make it extremely difficult for Palestinians to prepare an effective legal defense against deportation orders."²⁹ Only one appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court has resulted in a deportation order being rescinded.

In a related practice, Israel has pursued a policy of expelling nonresident Palestinians. Only those Palestinians who resided in the West Bank or Gaza Strip at the time of the Israeli census in 1967 were granted residency rights. Others who had fled the war front or who happened to be living or working outside the area were not registered. This effectively separated thousands of Palestinian families. For example, Palestinian women raised in Jordan but married to Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank or Gaza Strip are denied residency rights, and thereby the right to live with their families.³⁰ The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that some 200,000 Palestinians have applied for family reunification permits since 1967; of these only about 19,000 have been approved.³¹

In order to remain with their families, nonresident Palestinians must secure a visitor's permit which is valid for only three months. When the permit ex-

pires, they are required to leave the country and return only after securing another permit. If they remain beyond the expiration date, they risk being deported. By the 1980's many families had become exhausted from leaving every three months, so many simply remained "illegally". In 1989, at least 250 persons, primarily Palestinian women and their children, were rounded up, often in the middle of the night, and deported to Jordan.³² Although a ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court in 1990 gave some nonresidents permission to stay, others continue to be denied.³³

Political Repression.

Under occupation, all forms of political expression and participation are banned. Political parties and meetings are forbidden. Persons convicted of membership in an "illegal" organization, or of meeting in a group of 10 or more without a permit, are likely to face a lengthy prison sentence and heavy fines. Similarly, it is illegal to display political symbols such as the "V" sign, the Palestinian flag, national colors, or graffiti. A Palestinian caught committing such acts may be shot, beaten, fined, or imprisoned.³⁴

Political expression is also controlled by strict censorship of the press and the banning of publications. Newspapers published by Palestinians must receive written consent from a military censor prior to printing any report, article, photo, or caricature related to security issues, public order or the intifada. Military authorities also have interfered with media coverage. Areas have been declared "closed" to journalists during a demonstration or military operation.

Cameras, film and recording equipment have been confiscated or damaged. Journalists have been harassed, beaten, imprisoned without trial and/or deported. News agencies have been arbitrarily closed for months or years at a time. In 1991, eighteen journalists were arrested and seven press offices were closed, each for a period of two years.³⁵



Chicago protest. /Bing-Canar photo

Military orders decree that it is illegal for a vendor to bring any newspaper, book, or magazine into the West Bank or Gaza Strip without a permit, which must be renewed every three months. Hundreds of books and publications, including literature and poetry, have been banned on the grounds that they might incite Palestinian nationalist sentiments.³⁶ Several years ago Shakespeare's play "Hamlet" was banned because it contained the phrase, "To be or not to be...."

Land and Water Expropriation

International law stipulates that an occupying power may not confiscate the land it occupies for its own use or transfer its own population into the occupied territory. In flagrant violation of these principles, Israel has confiscated Palestinian land and turned it over for use by Israeli settlers. Over 65% of the West Bank and 50% of the Gaza Strip land is directly controlled by Israel. Some 250,000 Israeli settlers live in the areas occupied since 1967.³⁷ Between January 1990 and July 1991, the Israeli government confiscated 418,642 dunums of land (one dunum equals one-fourth of an acre), 7.3% of the total land area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the next three to four years it plans to build housing for 400,000 more Jewish settlers.³⁸

Israel has employed a variety of mechanisms to acquire Palestinian land. Private land may be "closed" for immediate

military purposes. In 1989 an estimated 20% of West Bank land was "closed" for military use. Israeli authorities can classify nonregistered property as "state" land. Since only one-third of Palestinian land was registered in 1967, Israel exploited this situation by ending further land registration, leaving Palestinians without documented proof of ownership. Military orders also permit land to be seized as "abandoned" property. An absentee landowner is defined as anyone who left the area before, during or after the 1967 War. Even when an owner has not left his/her property, it may be taken for

settlement use via a third party. Lastly, military authorities can compel a property owner to surrender land for "public purposes" such as the construction of settlement roads and parks.³⁹

In addition, Israel has systematically monopolized the water resources found in the West Bank. In 1990, Israel drew some 500 million cubic meters of water from the West Bank aquifer, while Palestinians used one-fifth that amount. Israel has dug new deep wells, sometimes leaving shallower Palestinian wells dry. Palestinians are restricted in their water use and charged about six times more per cubic meter than Israeli users. Consequently, Palestinian agricultural production has dropped. Due to water restrictions, farmers in Jericho were able to plant only 30% of the arable land in 1991. In some areas daily water consumption has fallen below the 44 liters per capita necessary for minimal health conditions.⁴⁰

Economic Exploitation

Military laws serve to make the occupation profitable for Israel while they keep the Occupied Territories economically dependent. The Occupied Territories provide Israel with a captive export market, a cheap labor pool, and a source of revenues through various taxes and fees.

Israel enjoys a captive commercial market, which prior to the intifada generated nearly \$1 billion in annual export sales to the Occupied Territories.⁴¹ This is made possible by a system which simultaneously prevents Palestinians from exporting their products to Israel and limits Palestinian competition with Israeli goods in the Occupied Territories. In order for new factories or businesses to be licensed, Palestinian owners must certify that their products will not compete with Israeli producers. Needless to say very few new licenses are issued, and the Palestinian economy

suffers an annual trade deficit with Israel of over \$650 million.⁴² As a result, economic growth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is stunted.

Palestinians from the Occupied Territories provide Israel with a pool of cheap labor. Prior to the Gulf War, an estimated 120,000 Palestinians were employed in Israel, predominately in low-paying menial jobs. Many work as "day laborers", without regular employment, and so they must rise at 3:00-4:00 a.m. to travel across the "Green Line" into Israel where they may stand

**The situation
cannot be
remedied by
simply creating
a "kinder and
gentler"
occupation.**

for hours in the streets bidding for jobs with Israeli employers.⁴³ Although Palestinian workers have the same payroll deductions and taxes taken from their earnings as their Israeli counterparts, they do not enjoy the same benefits. A report by Sanabel Press Service showed that Gazans employed in Israel were not entitled to pension plans, survivor's or children's allowances, unemployment insurance, health care coverage, disability insurance, or vocational training benefits.⁴⁴ When benefits and earnings are taken together, the average Israeli worker earns between two and three times more than a Palestinian worker.⁴⁵

The Occupied Territories also serve as a direct source of revenue for Israel. International law permits an occupying

power to impose taxes provided that these monies are returned in services. While Israel collects an estimated \$400 million in taxes, it returns only \$250-280 million in social services, the remainder going into the Israeli treasury.⁴⁶ Various fees have been imposed, as in 1988 when motor vehicles were required to be re-registered and relicensed. The fee assessed ranged between \$400-6600, depending on the vehicle; even donkey cart owners were required to license their "vehicles" at a cost of \$280.⁴⁷ Other arbitrary tax assessments have been imposed, often in excess of annual profits; in one case a merchant was assessed \$65,000 for a month during which his store was closed due to a community-wide curfew.⁴⁸ Value-added taxes have contributed as much as \$800 million to the Israeli treasury since 1967. In addition the fees and travel taxes collected for the bridge crossings between Israel and Jordan have added about \$34 million per year to the Israeli economy.⁴⁹

Reflections

The harsh conditions resulting from the occupation indicate that the status quo is untenable. Human rights violations are taking place on such a scale that the situation cannot be remedied by simply creating a "kinder and gentler" occupation. Ultimately, the only way to guarantee Palestinian human rights is by guaranteeing self-determination.

Clearly, any peace process will be invalid unless it achieves an end to the occupation and gives Palestinians control over their land and lives. A peace settlement that results in autonomy but leaves the occupation in tact does not address the fundamental problems. Therefore, people who are genuinely concerned for Palestinian human rights need to support a peace process leading to Palestinian statehood and independence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.#

Footnotes/Occupation Primer:

1. The Sinai peninsula was returned to Egypt as a result of the Camp David Accords.

2. Since East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights are claimed as annexed territory, these areas are governed under Israeli law, though the Palestinians living there do not enjoy full Israeli civil rights. For population figures see: Geoffrey Aronson, "250,000 Israelis Now Settled in 210 Communities in Lands Captured in 1967 War", Report on Israeli Settlements, Winter 1991-92, p.1

3. In accordance with international law, the military government is based on the legal systems that were in force prior to the occupation — Jordanian law applied in the West Bank and Egyptian law was administered in the Gaza Strip. In addition, Israel reimposed the British Defense Emergency Regulations which had been in force in Palestine during the British mandate period. However, these local laws have been amended beyond recognition by the hundreds of military orders issued over the past 25 years.

4. Don Peretz, Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p.5.

5. Raja Shehadeh, Occupier's Law: Israel and the West Bank (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1985), pp.69-71; and Peretz, pp.15-16.

6. Shehadeh (1985), pp.64-68.

7. It is difficult to assess the number of injuries. Many do not seek medical treatment at a clinic or hospital since the army often searches these sites and arrests or detains the injured. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency puts the number of injured, through October 1991, at 65,000; but UNRWA officials only count those who seek treatment at its facilities. The Israeli government puts the number for the same period at 14,500. See B'tselem, Violations of Human Rights in the Occupied Territories: 1990/1991 (Jerusalem: B'tselem, 1992), p.23; and Palestine Human Rights Information Center, "Human Rights Violations Summary Data", April 1992.

8. Al-Haq, Critique of the United States Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991: Israel and the Occupied Territories, March 11, 1992, p.17; and B'tselem, The Use of Firearms by the Security Forces in the Occupied Territories (Jerusalem: B'tselem, July 1990), pp.22-28.

9. Al-Haq, p.3.

10. "Changes in Orders Regarding Opening Fire and in Guidelines for the Special Units", News from Within, May 6, 1992, pp.2-3.

11. Al-Haq, pp.2-3; and Louise Cainkar, "Summary Executions of Palestinian Activists: Israel's

Shoot-to-Kill Policy", Palestine Human Rights Information Center press statement, May 28, 1992, pp.1-4.

12. Anne E. Nixon, The Status of Palestinian Children during the Uprising in the Occupied Territories: Child Death and Injury — Part I (East Jerusalem: Radda Barnen, 1990), p.285.

13. Nixon (Part I), pp.285-91.

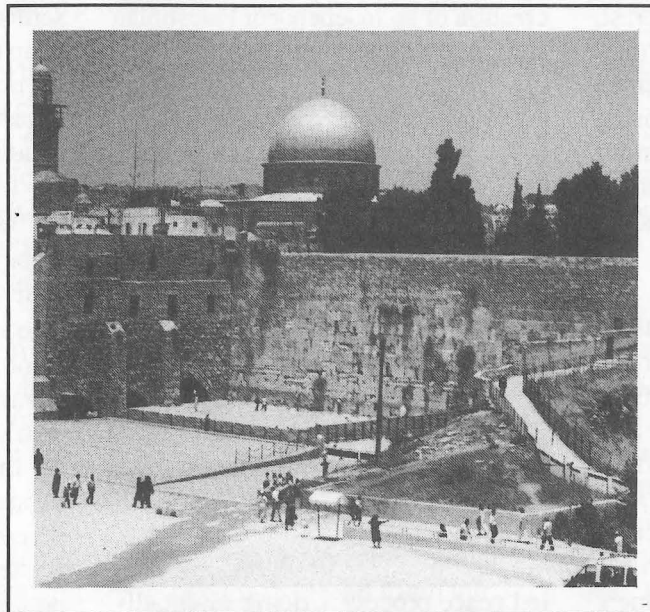
14. Peretz, pp.63-65.

15. B'tselem (1992), pp.80-85.

16. Palestine Human Rights Information Center (April 1992).

17. B'tselem (1992), p. 65; and Al-Haq, p.16.

18. Al-Haq, p.11.



Jerusalem /Bing-Canar photo

19. B'tselem, The Interrogation of Palestinians during the Intifada: Ill-treatment, "Moderate Physical Torture", or Torture? (Jerusalem: B'tselem, March 1991), p.106.

20. Nancy Murray, Palestinians: Life under Occupation, (Cambridge: The Middle East Justice Network, 1991), p.24.

21. Murray, p.24.

22. Murray, p.24.

23. Palestine Human Rights Information Center (April 1992).

24. Murray, p.43.

25. B'tselem (1992), p.112.

26. Anne E. Nixon, The Status of Palestinian

Children during the Uprising in the Occupied Territories: Collective Punishment — Part II (East Jerusalem: Radda Barnen, January 1990), p. ; and Al-Haq, p.8.

27. Cited in Peretz, p.6.

28. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Israel's Proposed Deportation of 12 Palestinians from the Occupied Territories Violates International Law", January 5, 1992, p.1; and Murray, p.46.

29. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, p.2.

30. "Married Women without Identity Cards", Article 74 , No. 2, April 1992, pp.1-2.

31. Sanabel, Transfer Policy in Action: The Expulsion of Non-residents (Jerusalem: Sanabel Press Service, December 1989), pp.3-4.

32. Sanabel, pp.1-4; and Article 74 , p.2.

33. Article 74, p.2.

34. Murray, p.20; and Al-Haq, p.18.

35. B'tselem (1992), p.122-29; and Al-Haq, p.18.

36. Al-Haq, p.18.

37. Aronson, p.1

38. "Israel and the Occupied Territories", The Review: International Commission of Jurists, No. 47, December 1991, p.14,19..

39. The Review: International Commission of Jurists, p.15-16.

40. Thomas R. Mattair, "While Diplomats Debate Land for Peace, Palestinians are Losing their Land and Water", The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Vol. X, No.4, p.48.

41. Peretz Kidron, "Peres Faces Israel's Economic Abyss", Middle East International, No. 342, January 20, 1989, p.18.

42. Frank Collins, "Palestinian Economy in Chaos after Gulf War", Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Vo. X, No.2, July 1991, p.23.

43. Murray, p.52.

44. Cited in Nixon (Part II), p.112.

45. Joost Hilterman, Behind the Intifada, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p.23.

46. Raja Shehadeh, "Occupier's Law and the Uprising", Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 67, No. 3, Spring 1988, p.33.

47. Nixon (Part II), p.115.

48. Murray, p.52.

49. Shehadeh (1988), p.34.

Israelis Working for Peace and Justice

by Deena Hurwitz*

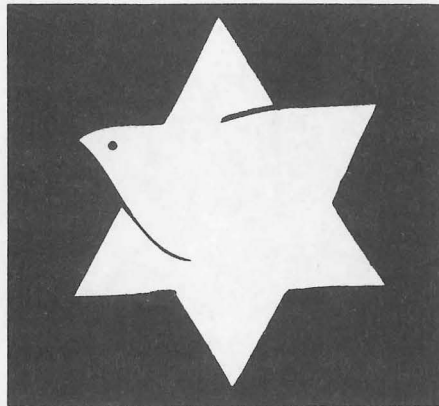
Israel's peace forces represent the nation's contradictions and its strengths. While unified in their focus on the issues of peace and the occupation, they are not a unified movement. Israel's more than forty peace groups can be divided into two camps: the left and the mainstream. The distinction between them has been characterized as the difference between a movement based on principle and one on self-interest. Those belonging to the left are primarily concerned with Palestinian human and national rights. Those comprising the mainstream peace camp are motivated by their concern for the disintegration of democracy in Israel, and by their nation's image abroad.

The mainstream, liberal camp consists primarily of the Zionist political parties, including *Ratz* (the Citizens Rights Movement), *Mapam* (the old socialist left) and *Shinui* (the center party) which have formed an alliance for the June elections. Also included in this camp are some Labor party doves and *Peace Now*, the non-parliamentary movement best known in the U.S.

Comprising the left or progressive peace camp are a number of grassroots women's groups such as the *Women and Peace Coalition* and the *Women's Organization for Political Prisoners*; human rights groups including *Kav La'Oved-Workers Hotline*, and the *Association of Israeli and Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights*; other

issue-oriented groups such as *Yesh Gvul* (an organization of soldiers and reservists who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories), the *Association of the Forty* and the *Ramya Solidarity Committee* (both concerned with the rights and needs of "unrecognized" Palestinian villages in Israel).

The mainstream peace camp's agenda includes: advocating territorial compromise, although not necessarily the creation of an independent Palestinian state; and supporting the current U.S.-



Peace Now logo.

led peace process. Being essentially reformist in nature, they actively participate in the electoral and parliamentary process. Moreover, they reject the concept of selective refusal, refusing to engage in offensive or repressive army duty, preferring to be an internal moderating influence on the army.

The left clearly demands an end to the occupation, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, and negotiations with the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people. Selective refusal is an act of civil disobedience which members of this camp commonly engages in. This is significant in a country where civil

disobedience is not only unpopular, but where the army is "sacred" and serving in it is considered the pinnacle of civic duty. Issues such as land expropriation, human rights violations such as torture, prisoners' rights, curfews, school closures, and deportations are concerns of the progressive peace camp. Many warn of the effects of unrestricted U.S. aid to Israel, or oppose it outright.

Both camps agree on the need to end settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a serious obstacle to peace and the need for Israel to withdraw from all or part of the Occupied Territories as a condition for peace.

Crossing the "red line"

In Israel, where security is the dominant concern and fear the dominant emotion, protest in times of crisis is taboo. Needless to say, the nation seems always to be in a period of crisis. Those who actively begin to take responsibility for the occupation, for the abuse and misuse of power, inevitably confront the contradictions within Israeli society. Some become increasingly aware and protest within the system, others go beyond protest to challenge and confront the structures and institutions that buttress the system of injustice. This border between protest and confrontation can be seen as a red line -- a personal boundary beyond which one is unwilling to transgress; or conversely, the point which moves one to action.

The recent \$10 billion U.S. loan guarantee debate highlighted at least one of the dilemmas of the present Israeli government: which is more important -- immigration or settlements? Shamir has made a choice for a "greater Israel" at the expense of the quality of life for new immigrants (among others).

*Deena Hurwitz is the editor of *Walking the Red Line. Israelis in Search of Justice for Palestine*. She works for the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, and is a member of AFSC's Pacific Region Middle East Subcommittee.

A Visit to Silwan

by Allan Solomonow*

Silwan represents a defining moment in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Over the last generation, the government has "annexed" land surrounding Jerusalem, including the area of Silwan, thereby expanding the border of Jerusalem to the north and south.

The modest Palestinian village of Silwan has enjoyed excellent relations with the Jewish community. But it is located strategically near the Old City of Jerusalem. Last year Jewish settlers took over a number of Palestinian homes based on the claim that these buildings at one point, before the birth of Israel, had been occupied by Jewish families. Although the settlers were forced to leave most of the homes, they were granted permission to stay in two buildings.

With at least tacit support of the Israeli government, Jewish families settled in and extended their claims with harassment and intimidation. Prominent Israelis sprang to the defense of the Palestinians in Silwan, as did the international community, but to no avail. The Israeli government was not willing to rein in the settlers. Palestinians regard the expansion of settlements as an inexorable step toward a "Palestinian-free" East Jerusalem.

During a trip to the region in February, we met a man from Silwan who worked at our hotel. He explained that he was unable to go home to Silwan because it was too far to walk and too expensive for his scant earnings to take a taxi. This was why he visits his family just once a week.

We invited him to travel in our cab to Silwan. His family had recently reoccupied their home after drenching rains had forced them into the already crowded home of nearby relatives. When we entered the house, the walls were still damp and seemed to suck the warmth from our bodies. The youngest child ran barefoot across the floor, shy at first and later curious. While we were served coffee and homemade pastries, we heard a very familiar story: because of the overall economic decline, the family could not afford drainage pipes, the absence of which allowed heavy rains to cascade down the hill onto their small home.

As we departed Silwan, our host pointed out the Palestinian homes that have been taken over by Israeli settlers who evicted the Palestinian residents and caused the neighbors to leave as well. As I left the question in my mind was: wouldn't it be a better, more humane investment for Israelis to build drainage for the Palestinians than to expand the settlement of those motivated by intolerance?

* Allan Solomonow works in the San Francisco AFSC office.

The Gulf crisis and massive Soviet immigration have increased economic and social pressures, encouraging racism. Palestinians — whether from the Occupied Territories or Israel — have lost their jobs to the new immigrants. Signs in shop windows advertising "no Arabs employed here" have been a familiar sight, particularly in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis. Palestinian Israeli writer Emil Habibi's award of the prestigious Israel Prize for Literature caused great controversy. While Habibi declared it a victory for Palestinian arts and culture that a right-wing Israeli government should grant him the award, the ceremony was widely protested. Inside the hall, Yuval Ne'eman, right-wing Tehiya Party leader and recipient of the Israel prize for Physics in 1969, disrupted the event by standing up and announcing that he would give back his prize in protest.

Recently, Knesset Member Abdel Wahab Darwashe of the Arab Democratic Party tried to establish an all-Arab parliamentary list. Some view this as a positive political separatism; others see it encouraging racist tendencies in Israel. Some on the left are concerned that such a move would result in a backlash against Arabs in general and in particular, against the movement for an independent Palestinian state and peaceful coexistence. Anti-Arab racism within Israel is closely related to the struggle for coexistence and demands attention from those concerned for peace.

Of increasing concern is the issue of U.S. aid and its impact on the general economy as well as Israel's ability to maintain the occupation. Progressives such as former Knesset member General Matti Peled argue that a decrease in aid would have a healthy impact on the political situation; if Israelis had to pay for the occupation from their own pockets, they would not support it.

from page 15 . . .

Consistent with its pro-U.S. position, the mainstream camp supports continued aid. Still, it is significant that *Peace Now* has maintained such a vocal opposition to the settlements, putting them on a collision course with the U.S. loan guarantee proposal.

A poll conducted in February by the Tel Aviv-based International Center for Peace in the Middle East found that 82% of Jewish Israelis favored continuing the peace process; 61% would support a peace agreement involving withdrawal from most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, accompanied by security arrangements; and of these, 40% affirmed that Palestinian autonomy is an indispensable stage to a permanent solution.

Yet interest in and hope for the current peace process is ever-diminishing. The peace forces do not waste their time attempting to influence the government's handling of the peace process. On the one hand, the negotiations have been sidelined by the elections in Israel and in the U.S. On the other hand, many activists on the left have little faith in a process which holds out autonomy as its end point.

Greater pressure should be placed on the U.S., and in turn on Israel. As *Challenge*, a magazine of the Israeli Left, editorialized:

"... if there is a glimmer of hope in the gloomy picture, it was that a U.S. administration for the first time made financial assistance conditional upon a settlement freeze. [in reference to the loan guarantee, ed.]

"But in order to force Israel to comply with the U.N. resolutions, much more pressure is needed. At best, the current U.S. conditions would result in the freezing of the current situation, which is already unacceptable. As it stands today, the U.S. position on the Arab-Israeli conflict lacks the necessary elements to bring about a breakthrough.

"Since the Gulfwar, U.S. foreign policy has sought to use sheer force. In the supposed U.S. dominated 'world order,' there is no room for Palestinian self-determination. On this issue Bush, Shamir and Rabin see eye to eye. As long as the Israeli electorate and the U.S. administration resist a fundamental change, we shall see no end to this painful conflict, with its high price of human suffering." (Challenge, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 3)

Meanwhile, the peace camp continues its work on a variety of issues. Efforts range from working to gain liberal seats in the new Knesset, to solidarity visits and symbolic tree-plantings in the East Jerusalem village of Silwan where Palestinians have been dispossessed by Jewish settlers. Other activities range from meeting the wives of Palestinians slated for deportation and issuing a call for the government to revoke the orders, to appealing to the Israeli Supreme Court to lift a lengthy night curfew in Ramallah. Some activists have confronted the taboo subject of torture by publishing a report on torture in Israeli prisons, while others have brought warm blankets to political prisoners. Soldiers continue to refuse military service in the Occupied Territories, activists continue to support Arab-Israeli villages of Ramya and Arayan, and legal experts continue to oppose the continued land confiscation and expansion of Israeli settlements — all with the hope for a peaceful future.#



American Friends Service Committee
1535 High Street, 3rd Floor
Denver, CO 80218

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Denver, Colo.
Permit No. 1187

ATL693

SARALEE HAMILTON

AFSC

1501 CHERRY ST

PHILADELPHIA PA 19102