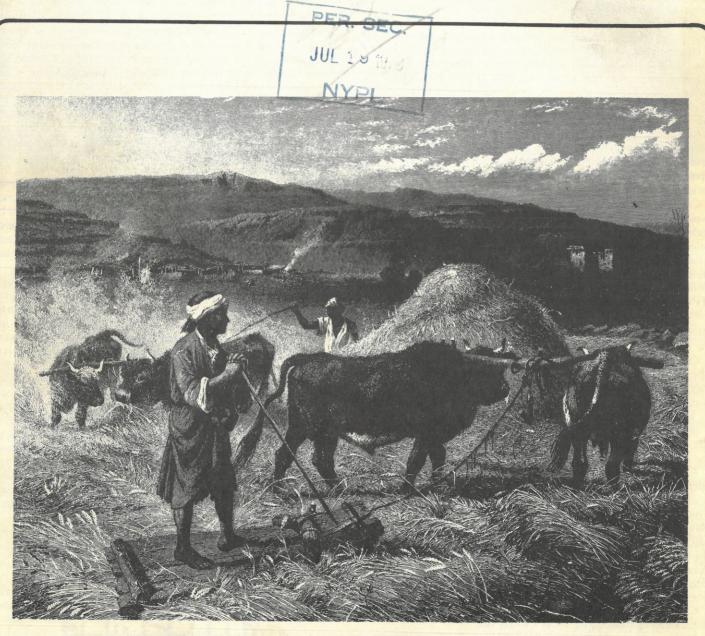
# DALESTINE MANUELLE AND LINE AN

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Threshing wheat in Baidar, Palestine, 1875



## On Publishing Palestine Perspectives

Over the years, a whole set of mutilated images has emerged in this country about the struggle in Palestine and of the Palestinian people. Commentators have traditionally exhibited ignorance about the national aspirations of the Palestinian people and the complex energies and goals of the Palestinian liberation movement. A whole body of racist mythology exists whose underlying theme is that the Palestinians are less than human and that somehow they should not be free and independent.

Hence, *Palestine Perspectives*, a monthly published by the Palestine Information Office, will address itself to defining the social, political and cultural reality of the Palestinian people and the secular, democratic values of their liberation movement. Behind the initiative of *Palestine Perspectives* is the belief that it is now time to go beyond one-dimensional statements about Palestine, that carry little or no truth, to a serious and relevant exploration of the conflict existing between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism.

The struggle for Palestine is already sixty years old. It has come to be the defining issue for peace and justice in the Middle East — with obvious implications for the entire international community. And for the last sixty years, it has been a major dynamic in the whole Arab world, both as a critique and as an inspiration for its nationalist motivations.

Certainly, then, as this issue is debated in world capitals and has exploded once again into war with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, understanding the contemporary and historical dimensions of the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom is indispensable. And no meaningful understanding of the Palestine conflict, or its peripheral component, the Arab-Israeli dispute, is possible without an appraisal of the consequences that the transformation of Palestine into a Zionist-controlled entity has had on the lives of the Palestinian people. In other words, the political and moral question of Palestinian national rights in Palestine remains basic to any judgment of Israel as a state and Zionism as a movement.

Consequently, when Israel is defined as a democracy, it is obvious that this "democracy" is worthless so long as the Palestinians, who now live either in exile or under military occupation, are excluded from it and have not had a say in framing its institutional dimensions.

If Israel can be defined as a democracy, then South Africa and Rhodesia are "democracies" too — exclusivist democracies for the benefit of a settler people.

A grim evidence of the irreconcilable formulations of this "democracy" is the Israeli Law of Return, which is eloquently unambiguous in its racist negation of all the tenets of democracy. The Law of Return makes it possible for a Jew from Miami Beach, New York or the Soviet Union to emigrate to, and settle in, Haifa, say, but bars a Palestinian, who was born there, from returning to the same city. No common or uncommon trick of argument could conceal the monumental injustice inherent in this law — introduced into Palestine by European settlers who in 1948 took over the major part of Palestine and expelled its inhabitants, and in 1967 took over the rest of the land west of the River Jordan and subjugated its inhabitants under military rule.

And regardless of how sympathetic one is to Israel, no attempt at reshuffling the history of the region could ever conceal two facts: That the occupation of one people by another, which is what has been taking place on the West Bank and in Gaza over the last eleven years, cannot be justified and that Jewish settlers in Palestine have created a state at the cost of making the

Palestinians stateless, that they now live in homes because the Palestinians are homeless and that they seek to be free *only* at the cost of denying the Palestinians their own freedom — the freedom of statehood, self-determination and sovereignty.

The Palestinians have struggled for freedom for thirty years inside Palestine (1917-1948) and for another thirty years outside of it (1948-1978). They have not vanished. Rather, they have written an eloquent statement about their capacity to endure, survive, struggle and regain their national sense of worth. They have been able to assert their presence on the politico-social reality of the whole Middle East, and etch their sense of peoplehood on the consciousness of the rest of the world.

Today, Palestinians born in exile are more Palestinian and more militant than their parents' generation. And today, Palestinians have trained more university graduates than any country in the Middle East and count in their midst poets, writers, ideologues, novelists, journalists, artists and educators.

More than weapons, the Palestinians of this generation are armed with resources inherent in the human spirit; they are endowed with a collective consciousness that only a nation in exile, determined at any cost to reassemble its identity, can produce; and the social, political and cultural nexus binding this nation has never been more cohesive than it is today, as Palestinians in exile struggle to Return to their homeland whence their traditions, their myths, their values and their roots are to be found. Not in any other place will Palestinians ever find peace or create conditions that would bring to an end their long exile and the devastation that has characterized their existence for the last three decades.

Palestine Perspectives will argue these issues every month, contending meanwhile that for every single question about the Middle East there is not, as has been traditionally the case, a single answer — an Israeli answer. Palestine Perspectives will not countenance the possibility that the study and transmission of literature on Palestine, other than that disseminated by Israel, is of marginal significance, is bizarre or subversive. Palestine Perspectives sees no reason why, moreover, analysis of the Palestine conflict should remain twisted and cheapened by a whole body of racist mythology, for many years an integral part of media perceptions, that seeks to single out the Palestinians as the only people in the world who somehow do not have the right to be free.

Palestine Perspectives will have a progressive editorial stance. This publication's commitment is to secular, democratic and humanistic values. It condemns injustice wherever and against whomever it is practiced. Its most important statement is the statement of the Palestinian liberation movement — which reflects the diverse currents and sensibilities of Palestinian society — of struggle until victory for the principles of social justice, secularism and freedom in Palestine.



To Our Readers:

Palestine Perspectives welcomes letters to the editor, reports of local activities, photographs and news items of interest.

# n solidarity





Photo credit: Milt Taam/LNS/Palestine.

May 7 demonstration, New York City

## Progressive Groups Around Country Protest Begin Visit, Israel Celebrations

Reverend Kirkpatrick, a former aide to Martin Luther King and a Black folksinger, addressed 700 people at an anti-Begin rally in New York City, May 7, saying: "If Martin was alive, I know he would be here with us." Citing the parallels between Zionism and South Africa's system of apartheid, he urged the crowd to sing along with the familiar civil rights song "Mind Stayed on Freedom" and with a new song he composed "Fight On, Palestine."

Only blocks away in Central Park, thousands of Begin supporters celebrated the 30th anniversary of the state of Israel and listened to an address by Menahem Begin. Sheila Ryan, an activist with the Palestine Solidarity Committee, pointed out that this celebration "was conducted on the rubble of Lebanese villages and the corpses of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians," 2,000 of whom died during the Israeli invasion. She held up a fragment of a cluster bomb, an anti-personnel weapon used by the Israelis, which had been brought back by a recent visitor to South Lebanon.

This "Counter-Salute to Israel," the third annual demonstration organized to oppose the traditional Israeli festivities, was three times larger than the previous year and was sponsored by more than twenty organizations, including Action for Women in Chile, Supporters of the Lebanese National

Movement, and the Union of Democratic

Jimmy Durham of the International Indian Treaty Council and the American Indian Movement (AIM) drew sustained applause from the crowd with an especially moving speech. Citing an incident where Portuquese dockworkers refused to load a shipment of Israeli weapons to the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza (whose army attacks the native Indian population), Durham stated: "If Israel is killing Indians, then I declare myself a Palestinian." The crowd responded: "Palestine, Wounded Knee, same struggle to be free." Durham also invited those people who approve of Begin's plan of "self-rule" for the occupied West Bank and Gaza to visit an Indian reservation and see how these plans work in practice.

Zudhi Tarazi, the P.L.O. Permanent Observer to the United Nations spoke after Durham and observed that "freedom has no color" and that international support heartened Palestinians even in the most difficult moments.

The march also rallied at South African Airways where a member of the South African Students Organization (founded by Stephen Biko) drew succint comparisons between Israel and South Africa. At the end, during a spirited rally at the World Zionist

Headquarters on Park Avenue, a member of the Palestine Solidarity Committee roused the crowd with the declaration that as a Jew, he stood with many Jews who "with all their hearts opposed Zionism" and would fight "to save the humanitarian history of the Jewish people."

Similar demonstrations occured in Los Angeles May 1 — with 500 people protesting Begin's visit — and at Northwestern University in Chicago. The granting of an honorary doctorate at Northwestern to Begin stirred a protest more massive than any the university has seen for years. As Begin received his degree, 600 faculty and students gathered outside with signs that read "Terrorism plus Zionism Equals a Ph.D. in Law." The weeks before the demonstration, anti-Begin ads from various groups filled the newspapers and a referendum of students voted 1119 to 907 to refuse Begin a degree. Also, in San Francisco, 300 people gathered at an evening event to raise money for medical aid to Lebanon. Sponsored by a broad-based coalition, the event featured solidarity messages from ZANU, the Association of Vietnamese Patriots and a new group formed after the invasion of Lebanon called Jews Against Zionism that received an especially enthusiastic welcome from the crowd.



# WITNESS TO THE INVASION Interview with Soraya Antonius

Soraya Antonius is a Palestinian born in Jerusalem. A writer and editor, she was a founder of the Fifth of June Society in 1967, a group producing pamphlets and books on the Palestine question. A member of the General Union of Palestinian Women, she is now actively engaged in relief work among Lebanon's refugees.

You were in Lebanon during the Israeli invasion. Could you describe some of the relief work that went on during the invasion among the population of Beirut and the refugees?

The first few days it was terrible, because the bulk of people all came out in the first three days — that was about 200,000. The PLO has been expecting the invasion. In fact, they were expecting it before the commando raid on Tel Aviv. They'd been expecting it before the end of February so they were well-organized. They sent trucks on the Saturday before the Israelis moved and they brought out the civilian population of the refugee camps in the South — like Rashidiyeh and Bourj chemali — they put them into schools and mosques and private homes in camps that were further north and that they felt would be safe during the invasion. So the figure of 200,000 - 250,000 refugees means specifically Lebanese civilians. It doesn't include the Palestinian refugees since they were looked after throughout and fed and given rations by the PLO and moved back to their camps in the South by the PLO as soon as the Security Council Resolution was passed and the first UN troops came in. I'm not going to talk about that at all because that was done in a very orderly basis. The only problem there was hard work, there were no other problems. The difficulty came with the Lebanese refugees. They were not moved out in an orderly way. They came out on their own. They had to pay very often all their savings to get a seat in a car. In Beirut it was absolutely apalling, it really was. It was a nightmare. People were coming in all the time. They were lost and bewildered. You would see a car pulling up at a sidewalk and about 9 or 10 women or children getting out. They would just stand on the sidewalk blankly with perhaps a pot or a frying pan. They wouldn't know where to go, and the children would be crying. I've never seen a scene of such human misery. The first few days what happened was spontaneous organization by the Beirut populace. In other words, on my block the mosque was

designated as a gathering place because very often families were divided. One would find a child in the streets crying and you would ask "where's your mother?" and the child — perhaps only 3 years old — wouldn't know. She didn't even know her own family name. So you could go to the mosque with a lost child and say "does anyone know who this is?" The militias in our quarter from the Lebanese National Movement — the Socialist Party (Jumblatt's party) and the Marabitoun, the Nasserite group-organized the taking over of empty apartments. There are a lot of empty apartments because after the civil war the foreigners never returned. In my street, 60% of the apartments are empty. The landlords didn't rent them to locals because they hoped the foreigners would come back and pay higher rents. The political organizations came along and took over the apartments for the refugees. In most cases, they weren't refused because the people were upset. They would say "here are the keys, do what you like with the apartment.

Did the Lebanese government play any role?

In the first few days, nothing. They hadn't expected something on this scale. They thought it would be an attack of the kind the Israelis had mounted so often before but they never expected one eighth of the population

of Lebanon turned into refugees. The government opened two centers in Beirut tent cities — but the problem was nobody wanted to go into the tents because they were tents made of cloth and it was very cold that week. There was a terrible, terrible rainstorm for three days, sheets of water, and nobody wanted to sleep on the ground in a tent. Refugees would go to the tent city and spend one night lying in the mud and then move out and look for an apartment to take. The government organized the distribution of basics - rice, sugar, flour — and a lot of this was sent in from abroad and from groups like the International Red Cross, U.S. Omen and the Holy Land Fund, but the problem was that the government said that anybody who wanted these things had to go to the tent city and people didn't want to do that. They said "we'd rather be in an apartment and look for food." There was a great deal of contribution by local people. In other words, in my street, there is a Christian school and they asked all the children to go home and ask their parents to give them something for the people in the street — we had about 300 refugees. So, the students went home and they came back the next day with food and blankets and small clothes for the children. And this went on every day. Many of the refugees had some



The Lebanese village Quazzaye after Israeli bombardment



**Refugees fleeing South Lebanon** 

money and they were very proud, very sensitive. And they would tell you "I don't want anything but go to my neighbor because she is in want." They felt very strongly that they didn't want to be refugees and they were worried there would be resentment. There was very good medical care from the Palestine Red Crescent and international agencies. There was no threat of an epidemic.

What is the major problem for the refugees?

The real problem is not that people are starving in the streets, because they are not, the real problem is in the future. March and April are the seasons of planting and watering the tobacco seedlings and this is the cash crop of the South. In other words, if they don't get their crop in and water it, they won't have any money during the coming winter. There are two reasons why they don't want to return now. They are scared to go into the areas occupied by the Israelis, frightened that the Israelis will never leave and they will find themselves living under Israel. They know what happened to Palestinians and they don't want the same thing to happen to them. The majority come from villages that are occupied by the Israelis. Other people went back and discovered that their houses were bulldozed. The Israelis carried out a scorched earth policy; they burnt the earth with phosphorous bombs. They saturation-bombed the villages. They knew these villages were civilian and there were no Palestinians there, but they did it to punish people for supporting the Palestinians. And this is a big problem. How are people going to rebuild

their houses? You can't plant anything on a phosphorous-bombed field for a long time. This is the real problem, not the immediate problem of distributing rations.

The problem is the future. These are people who have had years of civil war, followed by a year of unrest and raids by rightists and Israel. Now it looks like for the fourth year around they aren't going to have a crop.

Now the press here has consistently carried reports that refugees coming from the South are beginning to blame the Palestinians as troublemakers, people that have brought on this terrible fate. How true is that?

I think the Israeli policy has been precisely this. The reason the Israelis have been so brutal in their material damage in the south — attacking people, houses and fields — is to get this effect. They want the people in the South to turn against the Palestinians. They want everybody in Lebanon to turn against the Palestinians. The Israelis have this very strange policy: they drove out the Palestinians from Palestine so the Palestinians were forced to go to neighboring countries. Now that they are in neighboring countries, the Israelis want to drive them further away. They want to create a vacuum around themselves in which no one can live. They did it in Jordan; they were successful there. They don't want to attack the Palestinians themselves directly because they know this will consolidate the admiration, the support that the Arab people feel for the Resistance and this is what happened during the invasion. It was interesting because when the Israelis had to attack the Palestinians face to face, they

were not as overwhelming as they thought they were going to be. They were stopped by little groups of fighters. The response in the Arab world was electric. At last people were fighting back at this great war machine.

So the major aim was to alienate the people from the Resistance—and it failed in the short run.

What about the reason the Israelis give for the invasion?

The Israelis knew perfectly well that the attack on Tel Aviv did not come from the South. They never went near the place where it had come from. What they were interested in was harming Lebanese civilians to make them turn against the Palestinians. And of course some people do blame the Palestinians. A man and a woman who see their house in rubble and their children dead and their fields burnt out and they are very simple and haven't thought about politics; they're not analytical, they're just interested in living peacefully. They could say "if the Palestinians had never been here, this would never have happened." On the other hand, there was also a great deal of support from the population — they took in wounded at great risk to themselves, they helped people escape, they stood up to the Israelis about the presence of Palestinians.

What will happen in the next months?

I think there will be a very concerted move to try to crush the PLO in Lebanon. This is what's been going on since 1975. It's all part of the same plan by the Israelis. The Lebanese right is financially and militarily helped by the Israelis. Without any question, it is their major policy at the moment. So I'm afraid we're in for a great deal of trouble in Lebanon. This is what everybody's worried about.

What have you found on your tour in terms of the American reaction to the invasion of Lebanon?

I've been very sad to find that people know very little. They know a great deal about one side but they don't know the facts that are going on. These facts don't seem to be reported in this country. I've noticed in the time I've been here — I've been in touch a bit with people in Lebanon and they tell me what's going on there — about the political situation and the attempt to elect a new government. But even these neutral facts aren't reported in the U.S. press. I was very disappointed that even people who are vaguely sympathetic simply do not know the truth. They have what I call "active misconceptions" that appear to be planted in their minds by the media. If you talk to somebody about the humanitarian plight of the refugees, they are sympathetic — they say "that's terrible" — but they have very little understanding of the causes. They all believe, for instance, that the Israeli invasion was a response to the commando attack on

(Continued on page 16)



#### THE MIDEAST-VIETNAM REVISITED

Analysis by Prof. Naseer Aruri

Israel's sweeping invasion of south Lebanon supported by naval and aerial bombardment of cities, villages and refugee camps is being presented to the American people in a simplistic, biased and stereotyped manner that distorts the facts and confuses the real issues involved in the conflict. The Palestinian struggle against Israel since the June War of 1967 has generally been portrayed by the media as a form of terrorism with virtually no explanation of the underlying issues, the nature of the grievance, or the context of the struggle. The emphasis on the symptomatic effect rather than the source of the malaise, has served to create attitudes and construct images that contribute to the perpetuation of a tragic conflict which has already resulted in the destruction of communities, dispossession of innocent people and countless deaths on all sides.

The Israeli military action in Lebanon has been generally portrayed as a legitimate selfdefense even when this involved the crossing of international boundaries and the savage bombing and destruction of civilian refugee camps, villages, and towns. It is generally described in terms which recall what most Americans would like to consider a by-gone era. Headlines referring to "mopup operations" and "cleaning up of infestations", "search and destroy", are not only offensive to those who know that the victims were mostly civilians including women and children, but indeed has a brainwashing effect; and is repugnant to basic standards of fair journalism. This formulation is reminiscent of the early treatment of the American involvement in Southeast Asia by the media and officialdom, when American forces were portrayed as being involved in defensive action (protective reaction) against Vietcong "terrorism" and the North Vietnamese "aggression". But the American people finally realized the true nature of the social struggle in Vietnam as their forces engaged in endless "mop-up" operations, and hopelessly tried to break the will of a nation determined to resist all foreign invaders. It was a hard lesson and a costly one for the American people in terms of human and material resources, and we can only hope that this can be avoided before a full understanding of the underlying issues in

the Middle East conflict is finally realized.

The central factor and the crux of the problem in the Middle East today, as it was in the past sixty years, is the fate of the Palestinian people, and their concern for their very existence. These people who now number 3 1/2 million, constitute a community which has normal desires for security, dignity, self-respect and concern for their children's happiness. These people, within the life time of the present generation, have been transformed, through forces beyond their control, from a normal people to a community whose every single individual leads an abnormal existence. Every Palestinian in the world today is either a refugee, displaced, dispossesed, 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 own memory, its people constituted the majority of its population.

Until this abnormality with all the privations, the grievances and the sense of injustice that 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 - the right to selfdetermination, statehood and return to one's country of origin. These rights of the Palestinian people are steeped in history, enshrined in international law and supported by a global consensus in the world today. Indeed, there can be no peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian society, the very source of security for its people, will be reconstructed on Palestinian soil. The destruction of its fabric in 1948 was for Palestinians a holocaust (Al-Nakba) which resulted in a political extermination of a whole nation manifested in land alienation, colonial settlement, demographic changes, expulsion of population, and a reign of terror for those who remained behind.

But if the 1948 (Nakba) involved the eviction of indigenous Palestinians by Israeli settlers, the 1967 war ushered a pattern of organized genocide against the Palestinian people. The recent Israeli invasion of Lebanon is part of a ongoing process of

systematic annihilation carried out by Israel with U.S. economic, military and diplomatic assistance, and with acquiescence or collusion of reactionary Arab regimes. Today more than ever, Zionism seems bent on administering its final solution to the Palestinians. It is the resistance of the Palestinian people, in the face of denial of their national and civil rights, and a clear and present Israeli threat of liquidation, which Israel and its apologists in this country, including important sectors of the mass media, refer to as terrorism.

Why, we must ask, is Palestinian violence called terrorism but Israeli violence "retaliation", "reprisal", or "mop-up" of "infestation"? By what moral or legal standards can the institutionalized and organized terror perpetrated by the Israeli State on Palestinians and Lebanese be justified? Don't Israeli practices in the West Bank and Gaza constitute a form of state terrorism, when they include confiscation of property, demolition of homes, administrative detention, population expulsion and many other human rights violations? Americans who refuse to apply a single standard for Jews and Arabs in Palestine will only perpetuate Israeli intransigence, prolong the occupation, and create the conditions for a third world war in the Middle East.

For Israel, the regular resort to military measures and the proclivity to Empire building in an era of decolonization will, in the end, prove morally and institutionally corrosive. Indeed, the greatest threat to the Jewish people in Palestine is the one that may arise from within as a result of its leadership's increasing dependence on military means and repression. Not only does Israel hold the world record for the share of military expenditures in the GNP (35.2%) but it is probably the only state whose foreign debt (9 billion dollars in 1976) exceeds the state budget. Militarization, which penetrates the economic, political and social sectors of Israeli society, has become the focus of national life. It behooves Menachem Begin and his ruling circle to address this dimension of insecurity whose remedy will not be found in the pursuit of biblical frontiers or the subjection of another people.

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### Senator Abourezk Exposes Israeli Propaganda

The following are excerpts from a speech delivered by Senator James Abourezk (D-South Dakota) to the U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce International Business Conference on April 20.

After having found, in 1948, that crime does, indeed, pay, Israel has decided to continue taking what it wants from its neighbors. In 1976, Egypt tried to drill oil in the Red Sea in its own territorial waters, but was driven off by the Israeli navy. In the 1960s Lebanon tried to irrigate its arid southern region, but the construction workers were attacked by the Israeli Air Force to prevent the dam from being built. In 1949 Arab farmers living in the Huleh Valley below the Golan Heights were removed by the Israeli military and replaced with Israeli farmers.

The waters of the Litani River have been a tempting sight for Israel for a long time. I was told in 1974 by an Israeli journalist that Israel would wait for a proper provocation, then move into Southern Lebanon to secure the Litani waters for itself. That has just happened. I would predict that Israel will retain access to the Litani River — unless — they consider that access too costly, in terms of international politics.

And I heard with my own ears Prime Minister Begin telling members of the United States Senate that they need not worry about an Arab oil embargo, because if there were such a threat, Israel would take care of insuring a flow of Arab oil to the United States.

Israel's arrogant expansionism has been made possible by the support it has received in the United States. Its support has been assured in a unique way. Israel has

developed a great many friends in the American news media, in the film industry, and in television. Some are Jews, most are non-Jews. The genesis of that support was the image of underdog, created at the outset, an image attractive to all Americans. That clever propoganda ploy has been successful for Israel in covering up aggression and expansionism which no other nation could get away with.

Israel conducted a campaign of terror bombing on civilians in Southern Lebanon for five years and, incredibly, no one in the United States knew about it. I protested continuously to the State Department. I issued press releases. I offered amendments on the floor of the Senate to shut off weapons to Israel if they continued the bombing, and those amendments lost overwhelmingly. The press would not touch the story and, only occasionally, would print an Israeli communique describing it as a raid on terrorists, whenever an Israel raid killed dozens of civilians. They used cluster bombs, phosphorous and napalm at will. I learned from the State Department that we furnished Israel some 10,000 cluster bombs over a five-year period. But, under the leadership of that great humanitarian, Henry Kissinger, who was well aware of what Israel was doing, we provided more weapons to Israel than did any previous Administration.

I convinced one small circulation magazine, *New Times*, to investigate the story and write about it. They did and the magazine's publisher, who is an American Jew, received, but resisted, heavy pressure from the Israeli lobby *not* to print it.

Recently an American citizen, Sami



Lebanese refugee in camp near Sidon

Esmail, went to Israel to visit his dying father who had returned there to spend his last days. Esmail was arrested at the airport, tortured and held several days without being charged with anything. Eventually he was charged with being a member of an enemy organization and of being in contact with that organization, neither of which are violations of any law in the United States, and neither of which could have been committed in Israel. But he is still languishing in an Israeli jail, and human rights groups are silent about it.

The Israelis systematically torture, abuse and deport Palestinians on the West Bank, according to a major investigation done by the London Sunday Times. Not a word of any of those gross violations of human rights has appeared in the major American press. Menachem Begin announces his rejection of a Palestinian state next to Israel because, "it will provide a base for the Soviet Union in the Middle East." But nowhere in the American press was it disclosed that Israel was providing arms to Ethiopia side by side with the Soviet Union in the Somali-Ethiopian war.

Last year, the Washington Post reported in major headlines that King Hussein of Jordan received some \$10 million in secret CIA payments. But what the Washington Post did not report, although they knew it at the time, was the secret payments by the CIA to Israel of over \$80 million during the same period of time. When the United States undertook the carpet bombing of North Vietnam with cluster bombs and other barbarous weapons, the streets of America were filled with protesters. Today all too many of them are silent about the slaughter in Lebanon with the same kind of weapons. And each night on television we have been accustomed to sad funerals of Israelis killed during raids by the Fedayeen in Israel. But reports of the death of Arab men, women and children are clinical and cold, if they are reported at all. The only message that I am getting out of the double standard which has been applied to the Middle East is that the life of an Israeli is worth more than the life of an Arab. To me, that type of dehumanization is racism of the worst sort.

Recently, the attitudes towards Arabs have changed somewhat in the United States, and also in the United States Senate. But, there is a long way to go in order to achieve proper understanding for the Palestinian cause and fairness in treating the Arabs as a multifaceted society with a long history — rich in culture and tradition.

The presence of this group in the United States will have, I believe, a greater impact than you might imagine. In my view, however, there needs to be even more contact between Arabs and Americans if we want to create greater understanding.



#### THE PALESTINIAN

A film that is part poetics, part art, part epic

The Palestinian: Directed by Roy Battersby. Vanessa Redgrave Productions, 1977.

It is no wonder that this poignant documentary was turned down by mass-circulation film distributors in this country—it shows the Palestinians as an intensely human people conducting a dignified struggle not only against Israel but also an equally dignified struggle to survive and endure, transforming the world of nothingness they had been relegated to in exile to a habitable world full of hope and an incorruptible sense of history.

In the United States, this is a subversive view of the Palestinians, a view that destabilizes hitherto comfortable assumptions about them as "cut-throat terrorists" or "refugees" standing with begging bowls outside a tent.

The Palestinian, an intensely successful documentary that plays on the nerves and the intellect with disquieting intimacy, traces the trials and tribulations of the people of Palestine as they struggle alongside Lebanese patriots in Tel Zaatar and in the south of Lebanon against Zionist or fascist forces. It is difficult to imagine anyone, except those afflicted by the notion that they alone have a monopoly on pain and those others who continue to cling to their erroneous images of Palestinians, not enjoying the film. The Palestinian is so full of energy, humor and dignity that it might carry even them to laughter or tears.

Like other films from the Third World, such as *The Battle of Algiers* and *Ramparts of Clay*, or films about it, such as *Z*, *A State of Siege* and *Hearts and Minds*, *The Palestinian* is authentic to the spirit of documentary art that attempts to create an awareness of injustice and a Third World people's response to it, thereby generating in the audience a spontaneous desire to identify with the sorrow or triumph of an oppressed people.

Unlike these films, however, Ms. Redgrave's *The Palestinian* has a different emotional range, since nowhere in the film does the director attempt to charge up her scenes. Perhaps she does not have to, for what she is painting is no less than the portrait of a people inspiring history itself and its very processes. So it is to Ms. Redgrave's artistic credit that her movie earns every emotion we feel and where not a scene is pushed too hard, or a moment too

far

The Palestinian does this even though it is tapping one of the most complex enigmas of the twentieth century: how people in the Third World, inspired by the most puzzling and achingly inexplicable drives in the human spirit, will struggle against the greatest political and military odds in order to be free. The Palestinian distills this prodigeous spirit in a delicate, emotionally rich way, against locations in refugee camps, in Tel Zaatar and the south of Lebanon that are used unostentatiously.

The movie begins with the aftermath of Tel Zaatar. Redgrave is interviewing a doctor who had been there the whole time the camp was besieged in 1976. He is recollecting, with quiet dignity, the carnage inflicted on the camp, how the people had withstood the siege (enduring sixty thousand artillery pieces) going for three months with little water, medicine or food, and how scores of children died of dehydration and wounds.

Only when he recalls the events following the evacuation of the camp (when the Palestinians were betrayed, having been assured safe conduct to Western Beirut) did he display pitched emotion.

"All my nurses," he recounts, "were lined up against the wall by the fascists and shot dead." He was spared, he adds, only because one fascist, whom he had once operated on, remembered him. This scene is given added poignance as the camera moves outside the doctor's clinic to afford us glimpses of Palestinian children on their way to and from school, Palestinian artisans in workshops, Palestinian guerillas training and pregnant Palestinian women, in their embroidered Palestinian national dresses. walking around the camp as if to make an eloquent statement about the sense of continuity in their lives. The juxtaposition of scenes, the one narrating the devastatioin inflicted on Tel Zaatar and the other of normalcy around the camp outside, become inexplicably fused.

This is how *The Palestinian* opens, establishing a potency that few documentaries have attained and raising political and aesthetic questions that few directors have asked about the problems of a people that refuse to vanish. Unlike the staccato fervor of *The Battle of Algiers, The Palestinian* does not carry the audience with it to a point where it does not give you time to think. It is affectionately leisurely as if Ms. Redgrave, unlike Pontecorvo and Costa-Gavras,

whose special genius as Marxist film makers makes us think of the masses rather than the individual as hero, is here preoccupied with the beauty, not so much of the collective consciousness of a whole nation, but of how individuals deal with the primitive terrors of historical conditions of oppression. And the second part of her film shows that clearly.

Here we are with the director (and Ms. Redgrave uses the techniques of the New Journalism of infusing herself into her subject) who is sitting with a group of women and men, survivors of the holocaust of Tel Zaatar. They talk about their struggle. their vision of freedom and the processes of history raging around them. They do that through the narration of their experiences during the siege. Without these men and women ever once mentioning Marx, we discover as they talk to each other and respond to Ms. Redgrave's questions, that they are using Marxist metaphor to interpret their reality. They did not have to use terms such as the class struggle, the bourgeoisie, imperialism and the rest of it.

What makes this sequence beautifully, unbearably exquisite is one of the old men in the room who had lost two sons in the siege who offers to sing a popular song about oppressed people. As he proceeds to do so, the camera moves to the devastated Tel Zaatar where the fascist militia had made sure that not one building, not one tree, not one human being, was spared their terror.

The song goes on, sonorous, percussive, strange, as if it is itself a form of struggle, pounding its sounds and lyrics against the ruins of the former refugee camp. As the song continues, and the camera lingers on, over, around the scenes of destruction, we know that the shrill, rhythmic sounds of the song are telling us that all life around Palestinians is screaming for freedom, defying death, oppression, helplessness.

Had The Palestinian ended there, it would have been an emotionally and intellectually gratifying film. It does not. In the next sequence, Ms. Redgrave recreates scenes of the plus-minus dichotomies, that have always existed in Lebanon, between the rich and the poor, the sectarian and secular, the state and the stateless and that vision of fundamentalism and tribalism espoused by the ruling classes in the country, and that of revolutionary democracy that is the goal of the Palestinian and Lebanese national movements.

Ms. Redgrave's camera takes us to Junieh, the enclave to the north of Beirut, inhabited almost exclusively by the rich elite in Lebanon, where Pierre Jemayel, leader of the fascist Phalangist militia, is seated in the living room of his palatial home overlooking the Jounieh Bay.

Having just taken us from one of the poor districts in West Beirut, where people lived in ramshackle homes and had access to water only through a communal water-

#### The Palestinian. . .

(Continued from page 8)

pump, to Jemayel's mansion with its arrogant display of wealth, the transition in spatial and temporal reality is unbearably jolting, but artistically moving.

Even before the fascist leader begins to speak, we already have had a glimpse, and a stark one, of the causes of conflict in Lebanon. As we contemplate the scene, we realize we are living a hideous moment in time where two worlds coexist side by side, dialectically opposed to each other, linked together only indirectly through the knowledge that the joy and comfort of the one is derived exclusively at the cost of the pain and helplessness of the other.

Pierre Jemayel sits in a large living room, behind an antique desk. Above him is an impossibly massive emblem of the Phalangist party. A fragment, stark and brutal, from Nazi Germany is transplanted intact on the screen.

"I have always been fond of sports," he recounts in French. "You might say I have always been *sportif*." In the Jounieh Bay, sailboats are bobbing up and down in the water. "When I went to Germany for the Berlin Olympics, I greatly admired the sense of discipline displayed by the Nazis."

Another fascist leader, a young man with a pockmarked face, opines that "it is the duty of every Lebanese to kill at least one Palestinian."

Before we have time to gasp at the brutality of it all, he continues: "That includes children. Especially children. Before they become adults."

The scene is so repugnantly painful that we wish Ms. Redgrave's camera would move us away from it, to that other world in the refugee camps which, despite its open sewers and material poverty, is so pregnant with humanity and is full of children who talk about how their struggle is "against Zionism not the Jewish people," and where anxieties are human and engagingly rationalized.

But here Ms. Redgrave is undoubtedly applying a well known technique that had been successfully used in *Potemkin* and *The Battle of Algiers*. In the latter, for example, an epic about oppressed masses who are the hero of the film, Pontecorvo and his writer Franco Solinas did not have any of their Algerian characters express a revolutionary consciousness or slogans, since this was expressed, in its anthithesis, by the French Colonel Jean Martin, who represented the counter-revolutionary impulses against which the Algerian masses struggled.

And so it is with *The Palestinian* — where Pierre Jemayel, representing indigenous Arab reaction (in its most extreme form), is seen through his outrageousness to be on the wrong side, the wrong side of history



Vanessa Redgrave filming in South Lebanon

and the wrong side of the conflict, destined to be doomed by the former and defeated in the latter.

The Palestinian is not, however, a totally faultless documentary film.

Though *The Palestinian* can stand alone, by the force that its location asserts, by the glimpses it affords of people, individuals, masses determined to survive and endure, by its visions of excruciatingly ecstatic humanness (which keep the audience alert and emotionally vulnerable), Ms. Redgrave has strangely decided to include in her film long, rambling interviews with Palestinian leaders. Surely, no matter how articulate they are (and many wax poetic in their definition of exile, occupation and statelessness) the interviews remain

inadequate against the backdrop of the energies of the Palestinian people as we had seen them in scene after scene, in this two and a half hour film, describing the geography in the soul of a whole nation in exile.

Were Ms. Redgrave to edit out much of the ponderous, erosive segments in these interviews (shortening her film, in the bargain, to a cohesive one and a half hours) The Palestinian will become not just a wonderous movie, part poetry, part epic and part art syntax; it will be one of the best movies, not just about the Palestinians, but about any Third World people in struggle, excelling all others of its kind in its restrained dignity and tone, its emotional range and its fantastic metaphoric logic.



## Palestinian Commitment to Freedom Reaffirmed

Elias Freij, mayor of Bethlehem and a proclaimed West Bank "moderate", in an interview conducted by Robert Adams of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, declared "There are no more moderates left on the West Bank. I am including myself." Freij, who supported the Sadat initiative a few months ago said grimly, "His peace initiative is dead. It is gone with the wind. It was buried under the dead corpses of the Palestinian women and children who were massacred in south Lebanon." Freii went on to predict that the Lebanese invasion would make Palestinians even more determined to achieve self-determination. "You know these tragedies." Freij said. "It's like when you put cast iron into a fire to make pure steel out of it. All these tragedies are going to make pure steel out of the Palestinian

The Freii interview was part of a four-part series on the Palestinians done by Robert Adams of the Post-Dispatch, that ran April 25-28. His interviews revealed a common theme articulated by Palestinians wherever they might be. Raymonda Taweel, West Bank journalist imprisoned without trial for two months and recently freed, although she may yet be forced to stand trial, said "We want first of all self-determination...They thought in 30 years people would forget. There would be a new generation. But it's not true. We are one people. How can we forget?" Kamal Jabour, a 45 year old Nazareth lawyer echoed these feelings: "The refugees are a piece of me." Adams, concluding that support for the PLO is particularly strong in refugee camps quoted a middle-aged man from Shaati camp in Gaza Strip, "Things cannot be solved except through the PLO...Everything that has to do with the Palestinian people is the PLO."

#### Carter Statement Condemned

WAFA — the Palestine News Agency — reported on May 2 an official spokesman's reaction to Jimmy Carter's recent interview with the New York Times Syndicate in which Carter opposed the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and declared qualified support for the Begin plan of "self-rule." The PLO spokesman affirmed: "The PLO sees in Carter's declarations new evidence of the hostility of the U.S. government and its aggressiveness against the PLO and the militant Palestinian people." He warned that Carter's statement reaffirmed the U.S. goal of dominating the

region.

The goal of U.S. control of the Middle East was evident in an April 9 column by James Reston of the New York Times in which the U.S. "peace plan" was being bolstered by "the possibilities of a United States treaty guarantee...backed by a United States air base in the Sinai and a naval base at Jaffa."

#### Use of Cluster Bombs Protested

In a letter to President Carter dated March 22, Representative Paul N. McCloskey, Jr. (R-California), protested the use of U.S.-made cluster bombs by Israel. He urged Carter "to terminate the sale or transfer of such weapons to the Israelis." Describing the horrible effects of the bombs (which create a blizzard of steel fragments over an area as large as 25 acres), McCloskey noted his own meetings with Laotian civilians injured by CBUs (Cluster Bomb Units) dropped by American planes in 1971. He said: "The terrible injuries suffered by the peasant women and children in that unfortunate area will remain a permanent reminder of U.S. consciousness that these weapons should never again be used against a civilian population." In direct violation of a special agreement with the U.S. concerning CBUs, Israel dropped cluster bombs on the Rashadiyeh camp and elsewhere in Southern Lebanon.

#### No Easeup on Zionist Intransigence

Washington Post writer H.D.S. Greenway has called Israel's recent statements on the West Bank and Gaza --that Israel would negotiate a settlement within the framework of U.N. Resolution 242 — "international window dressing." These words were confirmed by two events: first, the resumption of construction work on the Nebi Salech site 9 miles northwest of the West Bank town of Ramallah. Nebi Salech is an Israeli settlement approved last September as part of a compromise with the Gush Emunin Bloc in Israel. The other event is Begin's April 24 statement to a group of 3000 cheering settlers at Kiryat Arba, a settlement near Hebron on the West Bank. Referring to demands for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank, Begin said: "We must be prepared with a strong heart to respond to such demands with one word. It's small, it's great and it's quite — the word no."

#### What is "Self-Rule?"

Israel's contribution to the peace process is the plan for "self-rule" for Palestinians on the West Bank. P.L.O. Chairman Yasser

Arafat has called this plan "worse than Bantustans." The ingredients of "self-rule" according to the Israelis are these: the Israeli military retains control of "security and public order," Israelis are free to settle on the West Bank and are not responsible to the local councils, and matters of importance — like immigration laws, judicial procedures, labor practices, etc. — will be decided by a three-person committee, a Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli representative. Since the decisions must be unanimous. Israel maintains a veto over any public policy decisions. The U.S. proposal to allow a plebiscite for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza after five years was rejected by the Israelis. Their reason, as reported in The New York Times is that "a plebiscite must inevitably lead to a state ruled by the Palestine Liberation Organization."

## Land Day Celebration Draws Thousands

On March 30, 1978, more than 20 thousand Palestinians and progressive Jews gathered in a massive rally at the village of Sakhnin in the Galilee area to celebrate the second anniversary of Land Day, a day dedicated to protesting the Israeli policy of confiscation of Arab land. And in all Palestinian villages and towns, mosques and churches rang their bells in memory of Palestinians killed by Israeli troops while protesting Israeli persecution of Palestinians in the Galilee area. In the occupied West Bank and Gaza, most Palestinian towns went on strike in solidarity with the Galilee residents.

The Israeli police and army surrounded the village of Sakhnin with roadblocks, yet thousands of people poured into the village and gathered in the main cemetary where a memorial grave was erected for the six Palestinians who died on Land Day, 1976. They then marched to the village square where a number of speakers paid tribute to the heroism of the Palestinian people.

Mayor Jamal Tarbieyeh of Sakhnin spoke in anger against Israeli policies of land consifscation and stressed that the people, Palestinians and progressive Jews, will resist the government's attempt to take over the land. The state and the Jewish National Fund already owns 92% of the land. The Mayor of Araba, Muhamad Abri, spoke of Palestinian resistance for the last thirty years.

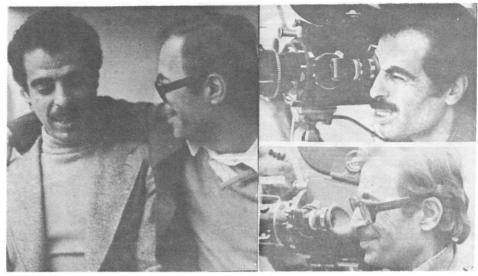
Meir Vilner, Secretary-General of the Communist Party (Rakah) condemned the invasion of Lebanon. He stressed that **News Briefs** (Continued from page 10) progressive Jews in Israel stood alongside the Palestinians in opposing Israeli confiscation of land and persecution of Palestinians.

As the mayor of Nazareth, Tawfiq Zayad spoke about the long struggle of the Palestinians and the need for unity and solidarity with progressive Jews, Israeli helicopters dropped tear gas bombs near the village. The people did not disperse but cheered Zayad and sang patriotic songs.

# Israelis Kill Two Unarmed Photographers

On April 15, 1978, two young Palestinian photographers, Ibrahim Nasser and Abdel Hafez al-Asmar, were in the village of Bint Jubail with a number of other journalists and photographers recording the devastation in South Lebanon in the wake of the Israeli invasion and occupation. As Israeli bombardment began, the group withdrew from the village and took shelter in the nearby refuges. Eyewitnesses saw both Nasser and al-Asmer were wounded. When Israeli tanks surrounded their shelter, they shouted that they were unarmed and wounded. But Israeli soldiers disregarded their pleas and opened fire, murdering both photographers.

The Palestinian Cinema Institute, of which both were members, issued an urgent appeal to Arab and international cinema



Ibrahim Nasser and Abdel Hafez Asmar

organizations asking for an immediate investigation.

The two men had made significant contributions to the Palestinian film industry. They both attended a number of international film festivals and won awards for a number of their documentary films, among them "Tel Zaatar," "Palestinian Visions," and "Kfar Shouba." Nasser was born in the village of Rmoun, Palestine in 1942, and Amar in the village of Tarsaya, Palestine in 1942. They both studied journalistic photography in Cairo and Bagdad and worked with the Palestinian film maker Hani Jourharieyeh.

Ibrahim Nasser left behind five young children and Abdel Hafez left three children. Ibrahim's wife said: "I am proud he died for Palestine and I hope his children will grow up to continue his work." Amer's wife said "Abdel Hafez was kind and gentle and loved his children. I cannot believe he is dead and I will always remember him."

The Palestinian Cinema Institute lost much of its equipment in the invasion and has asked for immediate help from the international community to enable it to continue its work. For more information, please write Palestinian Cinema Institute, P.O. Box 8984, Beirut, Lebanon.

## Dalal Al-Moughrabi: Why Did She Fight?

Why did Dalal Al-Moughrabi, a nineteen year old Palestinian woman cross over into occupied Palestine to confront the Israeli army? Western media, which brands Dalal and other Palestinian participants in the Tel Aviv attack "terrorists" and "murderers" do not address this question.

Born in exile, in 1958 in Lebanon, she spent nineteen years waiting for the return to her parents' hometown, Lydda. She waited, while the Israeli army occuiped the West Bank and Gaza. She waited and saw Israeli jets drop bombs and kill her relatives in refugee camps in Lebanon. She waited while the Israeli army continued their raids on South Lebanon, devastating the land and killing the people.

On April 11, 1978, she waited no more. She crossed into her homeland, Palestine and left behind the bitter memories of exile, of oppression in refugee camps, of persecution

and denial of her human dignity.

She crossed over to face the Israelis who occupied her home and to make a statement that Palestinians would rather die on their land in dignity than to be forgotten in exile. Her purpose was not to kill civilians. Her mission was to rescue Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli jails, and for this she fought Israeli soldiers and police for three days. The explosion of the bus, which occurred during the crossfire and possibly was caused by Israeli firing into the gastank, ended her life, the life of her comrade, and of the hostages.

Dalal Al-Moughrabi finally returned to her homeland Palestine and told the world that Palestine lives. Her only choice was to make this statement by sacrificing her life. If she is to have a legacy, it is in working to build a future where Palestinians may leave behind the bitterness of exile to live in equality and peace in Palestine.



Daial Al-Moughrabi



# May 15, 1948 A Beginning of Tragedy and Struggle

As demonstrators in major American cities gather to welcome Menahem Begin or to denounce his visit, it is clear that the event he has come to celebrate — the establishment of Israel in Palestine on May 15, 1948 — is an event whose meaning is still contested in the world arena. Thus, it is crucial for Americans to understand the history of this day, a history unknown to most people in this country.

On May 15, 1948 — thirty years ago — David Ben-Gurion stood on a podium in Tel Aviv and, amid wild applause from the assembled Jewish settlers, proclaimed the birth of Israel. Eleven minutes later, U.S President Truman cabled American recognition. The rest of the Western powers followed suit. The goal of Zionism — the establishment of a Jewish State — had been achieved.

Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders before him had labored for 50 years, since the First Zionist Congress in 1897, for this goal, which many observers throughout the years had defined as unattainable. But the Zionists persistently followed two intertwined strategies, both of which came to fruition in the months preceding May 15, 1948.

The first was a high-powered drive to get backing from the imperial Western nations, focusing especially on the United States. On the governmental level, Zionists made headway by arguing that U.S. interests in securing the oil-rich and strategic Middle East were best protected by a settler state loyal to the West. On the grassroots level, Zionists mounted a campaign that reached into all strata of American society — churches, Jewish organizations, unions — to press for support for a Jewish state, using the argument that German fascism proved the necessity of a state for the Jewish people.

Inside Palestine, Zionism had another face. There, the settlers were engaged in a systematic war against the Palestinian Arab population. The logic behind this war was simple but chilling: if the Jewish State was to flourish on Palestinian soil, Zionists needed to "clear the land" (in their own words) of as many native Palestinians as possible. The strategy was articulated by Zionists from the beginning. Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism, called it the "transfer of the population." Zionist leader

J. Wertz wrote in his diary in 1940 that "not one village, not one tribe...should be left."

Since the beginnings of Zionist settlement at the turn of the century, Palestine was in a constant state of unrest as Palestinians resisted the goals of Zionism. By March of 1948, the war between Jewish settlers and Palestinian Arabs, which had flared up with the announcement of British withdrawal from Palestine, had entered its fourth month and was moving too slowly for Zionist strategists. David Ben-Gurion ordered the implementation of "Plan Dalet" — an all-out attack on Palestinians throughout the country, not just the area granted the Jewish State by the U.N. Partition Plan.

These attacks were accompanied by both psychological and physical terror, aimed not at soldiers, but at civilians, with the aim of forcing them to flee to neighboring countries. March and April witnessed the massacre at Deir Yassin by the Irgun, commanded by Begin, with 254 civilians dead, the attack on Haifa in which Menahem Begin reported that Arab civilians fled the city crying "Deir Yassin! Deir Yassin!", and the emptying of Jaffa in which the Haganah (the Zionist Army) played recordings that said "Flee for your lives! The Jews are using poison gas and atomic weapons!" (documented by Erskine Childers from monitoring of Hebrew Radio) 40,000 people left Jaffa during this attack. By May 15, 300,000 Palestinians had fled to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

With the declaration of the new state, the policy continued relentlessly in the remaining months of 1948, despite the intervention of the Arab armies after May 15. Under the hot July sun, refugees streamed towards Lebanon from the conquered towns of Lydda and Ramle. They had been stripped of their possessions as they left the city and eyewitnesses reported people dying of thirst alongside the road. By January of 1948, when the U.N. intervened to impose a ceasefire, 500,000 more refugees had fled their homes in Palestine. Israel encompassed 80% of historic Palestine, with the remainder either annexed to Transjordan or administered by Egypt.

In the new film "The Palestinian," a Palestinian interviewed in South Lebanon called May 15 "the beginning of our tragedy." In the first hard years after 1948,

as Palestinians struggled to survive in exile or live under the Israeli Military Government, Zionism seemed secure in its conquest of Palestine. Celebrations in the new state on the anniversary of the declaration affirmed the permanence of the Zionist presence. But if May 15 was the beginning of tragedy, it also marked a significant awakening in the Arab world. The defeat of the Arab armies and the loss of Palestine to European settlers shockwaves through the Arab countries that contributed to the rise of Nasser, the 1954 revolution in Iraq, the 1958 uprising in Lebanon and to the transformation of Arab nationalism as a whole.

Most important, a new consciousness stirred in the camps and cities where exiled Palestinians now lived. Each May 15, from the very beginning of exile, Palestinian schoolchildren in Arab countries led strikes in their schools, with even elementary children participating. This consciousness led to the development of the Palestinian Resistance and the emergence of the P.L.O.

In the past few years, a new generation of Palestinians have further altered the meaning of May 15. In 1976, in the occupied West Bank, May 15 capped a series of strikes and demonstrations against Israeli occupation that had gone on for months. On May 16, hundreds of students in Nablus continued their demonstrations. Israeli soldiers followed one young demonstrator, 16 year old Lina Hassan Nabulsi to the home of a friend and there, inside the door and a half-hour after the demonstration, shot her fatally in the neck. 8,000 people followed her coffin, draped with a Palestinian flag, to its resting place.

The story of Lina Nabulsi contains both meanings of May 15: the continuation of the tragedy but also the thread of resistance. This May 15 is especially charged as Israel celebrates its thirty-year anniversary. The Begin government has seized upon this occasion to attempt to bolster Israel's public image which has been considerably tarnished since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the refusal of Begin to negotiate over or recognize the national rights of the Palestinians. But, demonstrations against Begin — the highest level of American activity against Zionism shows that the struggle symbolized by Mav 15 continues.

# AFRICA AND PALESTINE Poetry of Struggle



Photo credit: Robert Kramer

The month of May marks, not only Palestine Day, but also African Liberation Day, celebrated this year in major American cities. The two struggles share a common goal: independence and freedom in their homelands. As the African National Congress, a group combatting apartheid in South Africa, states: "Like the PLO, the African National Congress is fighting for the birthright of the oppressed, super-exploited and landless people of South Africa."

#### WE MUST RETURN

To the houses, to our crops, to the beaches, to our fields we must return.

To our lands red with coffee white with cotton green with maize we must return.

To our minds of diamonds gold, copper, oil we must return.

To our rivers, our lakes to the mountains, the forests we must return.

To the coolnes of the mulemba to our traditions to the rhythms and bonfires we must return To our beautiful Angolan homeland our land, our mother we must return.

We must return to liberated Angola independent Angola.

—Agostinho Neto, President of the Peoples Republic of Angola, written while a prisoner in Portugal.

WE SHALL REMAIN
It is a thousand times easier
For you
To pass an elephant through the needle's
eye
To catch fried fish in the milky way
To plow the sea

To teach the alligator speech A thousand times easier Than smothering with your oppression The spark of an idea.

Here we shall remain
A wall on your chests.
We wash dishes
And serve drinks to the masters.
We mop the floors in the dark kitchens
To extract a piece of bread
From your blue teeth
For the little ones.

Here we shall remain A wall on your chests We starve, Go naked, Sing songs And fill the streets With demonstrations And the jails with pride.

—Toufiq Zayyad, Palestinian poet and mayor of Nazareth.



# Tel Zaatar Was the Hill of Thyme

by Fawaz Turki

This is the second part of a two part piece by Palestinian writer and poet Fawaz Turki. The first part appeared last month in Free Palestine.

It was not just the water that dried up when the siege of the Hill started. For even before that, children died in simple silence. The ones who did not die in silence, died after the fall of the Hill. The ones that survived the fall, died in the long trek to the Western side of the city. And the ones that remained alive, through it all, who had felt the cruel finger of more than fifteen winters and then seen the forty three varieties of ritual terror in the forty three days of siege - these few will now lie in wait for the coming of every bitter spring, with their hands reaching out for tough argument. And someone will then smother their screams and their fury. Someone will. For the children of the Hill are like that. I am from their Hill and of their pain. For I grew up on a neighboring hill that we called Borj el Barajena, or the Tower of Towers; and when I recall it, in a flash of images, I get only a pungence of nameless pain.

I want to talk about Tell Zaatar because I like my voice and I like my pain. I like them in my aloneness, because only in it can I define our Palestinian solitude in a fraternity of screams at sunrise.

I have a blank page with me. And the dumb keys of a typewriter. With these I am supposed to paint a portrait of the geography of the soul of a whole community of men, women and children who had survived the siege and fall of their Hill. It is so helpless a project. So vain. And so absurd. It is like my Palestinian chilhood in the muddy lanes of the Tower of Towers and the ghettos of Beirut and when I would stomp my feet, lusting after the taste of unspecific afternoons, stretching back, backwards, to Palestine. Between then and now, between the Tower of Towers and the Hill of Thyme, between my original leap to a maturing consciousness and my helpless rage, lies my Palestinian sensibility. Thus when I roamed foreign cities, all these years, I never windowshopped for ideologies. I already had one. I just looked for stores that sold guillotines. For soon — surely it must be soon — the case of those who set siege to the Hill will come up for trial.

They called themselves fascists, they who besieged the Hill. Their ideology was the ultimate code of the bully. Their vision a denial of human compassion.

It is the duty of every Lebanese to kill one Palestinian.

Fascists surround the Hill from every direction. They pound it with artillery shells. day and night. Day and night. Day and night. There is no respite between the setting of the sun and the break of dawn, between the noon sun and the afternoon wind. The big bow flies, along with the emaciated dogs and cats, feed on the dead bodies that lie in the lanes, the front yards of abandoned homes and around the water pumps. The first child dies from a dog bite, and an order is given by the commanders of the Resistance to kill all dogs and cats. Fear of death from rabies is added to the fear of death from dehydration. thirst, starvation, unattended wounds and from living in a place with such a lyric name.

Fascist snipers are perched around the Hill to shoot at anyone and anything that moved. Fascist guns pound any structure that is not already in ruins. The Hill of Thyme became the testing ground for the world's modern weaponry. Syrian weapons from the Soviet Union, Lebanese weapons from France, fascist weapons from Israel.

Among the forty three days of siege someone who was not there sobbed with pain. But what is the use of empathetic pain, especially when experienced in Connecticut Avenue? It is just that you know a fragment, another fragment, of inky black darkness is added to your history. But its enormity belongs to me, and that is why, from the time a gaudy twilight closed its fist on the Hill of Thyme, the story of Tell Zaatar will etch itself on my skin.

On an another day during the siege — was it at the start or the end of it, at the beginning or the end of our eternity — I spoke on the phone to someone "over there" in Beirut.

How is it, Um Adnan?

She shrieked the quintessence of sixty years of grief into the receiver.

May the Lord pour acid on their souls and their homes and their honor. May the Lord destroy the house they built.

We come from the womb of a mother, they believe, who is an outlaw, an outcast against whom the world should protect their nations. Palestine should now hide from the sun. There is no place under it for our own nation. And Tell Zaatater laughs at the phillistines and their absurd notions.

Around the Hill, the fascists tell each other and the world that they believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. They have pictures of the Virgin Mary taped on

their guns and helmets. Inside the Hill of Thyme, the screams of human suffering lash out like the tail of a rabied history. Napalm canisters roll on the roofs, side by side, end over end, and burn the hill. And blood leaps on the walls. In the sky, jets pierce a long trail. The ideology of this Arab world, around the Hill of Thyme, rattles its sounds like the dirt under the fingernails of all the dead bodies in our mass graves. There is a strong desire, a formidable desire, to see death inflicted on Palestinians in this part of the world. There is a season, every now and again, when Palestinians should die, like the prairie grass to be burnt for the new season of crops.

In Bloody April of 1948, we sobbed in rooms that had no windows. In Helpless June of 1967, we ran helter skelter across the Allenby Bridge and our children, in the panic, found no hands to hold. In Black September of 1970, there was no time to bury all the dead because motorcycle gangs wanted our hills for their turf. And in between then and the siege of our Hill of Thyme, jets with air conditioned cockpits dropped their loads of incendiary bombs on us.

I am not tired of watching a heroic scene. I am just tired of books that describe it. I am tired of my own books, of fleeing into the confines of my poems where I am sure of shelter.

I know, one day, I will meet one of the children whose bodies were set on fire, who died of dehydration, defending the Hill of Thyme. I will meet one of them, and I will tear off my skin with grief and ram my head against his eternity. Above all, I will cut my fingers off. For what is the use of hitting them on the keys of a typewriter, in my study, in my comfortable diaspora dream, in order to write a poem and play with my child on a carpeted floor, and complain to myself that the whole world is taking its revenge on the defenseless children of our exiled nation?

Yet always I feel the exquisiteness of infinite numbers walking side by side, arm in arm, with our history. On the Hill of Thyme. In the Tower of Towers. With Izz el Deen el Kassam. After Karameh. Inside Palestine. During the Return.

I know five women I want to say goodby to in the Arab world. So goodby to you Samira, sitting in the center of our house (still) after Tell Zaatar. Sitting there, a dirty rice corn on our plate, a little ash in the fireplace of our world. Street poets and our fat ahetto women curse you, and curse the prophets, for not making you in their own image. But then we know that prize bulls should not concern us — their time will come and the corner butcher store will sell their meat at reduced prices (like that of field mice at our time of famine). And goodby to you Eweet, mother goose, who betraved my rejection of silk gowns and high cathedrals in our city squares. You hugged and kissed a swindler. many swindlers, in the streets of Jerusalem. you bowed and scraped to the Mafia, in the masters' bedroom. And we all kill two centuries before the next evening news about our condition, the time we can begin using shampoo on our hair and our children no longer tug at our shirts, asking for visions, before they go to sleep. And goodby to you. snake buried in the body of a scarecrow. goodby to you Issam, lying supine on a manicured street, poised to check the progress of a blossom of a neighbor's apple tree, clutching the pain of a disease at a spot where the dead will rest. At a spot where the desert has dried up many tears. And hey, to vou Salma bent Alemia, the right hand testicle of every vision, the pimple on every face, surprised by nothing, not even the words of savage metaphor, trying frenziedly to find a place to hide, goodby. Goodby, Salma bent Alemia, the little residue from the time we were all patients in a colonial hospital, vomitting on our sheets, as we watched The Price is Right on your television screen — spectators crazed by too many commercials. And where can Johara be for me to say goodby to? Johara, pacing her bloody years among the corpses of crazy children with crazy sorrow; Johara, barking orders to survivors of a crazy holocaust, speaking a lingo, and crossing its hands and doing heart transplants and playing the fool and clutching at our throats and then speaking softly and then and then and then — it all takes too long to tell. And then I pissfart my goodby to Salma bent Alamia's sisters, who live along the beach, along the desert, dressed in their Friday's best, eating Baskin Robbin's ice cream while we were thirsty.

I finally said goodby, after Tell Zaatar, to Almeeia. I went to her workshop, like an innocent abroad, to bid her farewell. She picks her nose and offers me condolences, with truth and flowers. She says why aim for heaven; heaven does not suit me. I should feel fine on earth.

And I see the ocean, through the surf of a kind of heavy eternity. I see the women as the footprint of a shadow, a wall to be scaled, like the snowflake on the body of a whale.

Today I am sick of goodbys. I just want to explain to these women that my accounts with them do not balance. I am a wizard with

words. I shall write the account of accounts, stretching to a vanishing point, which will meet the guillotine.

In the meantime I shall be on Connecticut Avenue debating the Prince of Wales.

The Prince of Wales...he drinks whiskey by the Cliffs of Dover off the sea, where Ben Battouta travelled eating french fries and a hamburger with Coke. He offers the men cigarettes with coupons inside the packets. Hold it, Leila, the other men in the palace of Macbeth and his Lady, they are fighting over the throne with Macduff. And no one knows who was making love on the Orient Express when they screwed the Greek sailor as he stood on deck with his brothers waving their pickets at heavens. But who cares about statements or slogans. People are drinking wine and whisky in speakeasys; and the truckdrivers pick up hitch-hikers on the road and talk and talk — hey brother, you got a smoke?

But one has to go now. Jesus and all the prophets have shaved their beards and taken off their earrings and their beads. They are sitting in side-street cafes in Georgetown talking about Marx and Tell Zaatar. Others are loving women with long hair who dropped their names in their hip pockets and drew lines on their sheets with their fingers, before going to sleep.

In the morning, the garbage collectors pick up shoes, and the echo of people's memories in the gutter. They say the news is not good today. The news is not anything I have control over. And I just lie in my bed and applaud. I read stories about bravery in battle and inflationary sorrow that I cannot afford.

Then Julius Caesar is assassinated by someone — the baker on Atlantic Avenue who pleads his innocence. Anthony addresses the crowd, but no one cares, no one cares how the crowd feels — it is an infamily feud. And then after the cheering, St. Paul travels to Damascus to sing the sensual Song of Solomon to excite the crowds who march to Washington to watch the fireworks on the fourth of july. And these explode in the air like crazy men giving away grants and awards to American writers and artists. Mrs. Murphy lives in the bowels of middle class America — she tells me I don't exist. My hands don't feel and my mind doesn't sense. So I dream more dreams of flying and loving women who drive carts with vegetables and oranges and olives grown in Palestine in the streets of Jerusalem

I stand on the sands of the Mediterranean and wait for Ulysses and Joe Kline, who were both angels from American corporations, making kids and exporting napalm and manufacturing weekends in the Holy Land for Geoffrey Chaucer's fellow travellers and King Arthur's Knights. But no one knows, no one knows, that Excalibur, the sword, was left in our tent. It is sharp.



#### Witness to the Invasion

(Continued from page 6)

the bus. They don't go beyond this to say "why have the Israelis been attacking the South for the last six years?" They don't even know that Zionism has declared that the South of Lebanon is an integral part of Israel and that they must have the Litani River water in order to supply their own farms with water. They don't know that long before there was a Palestinian Resistance. that the Israelis bombed the dam that the Lebanese were building in the South in order to use the Litani River in 1965. This is really significant. The Lebanese decided that the South needed development; they have this river which is entirely theirs by any standard of international law — it rises in their territory and runs out in their territory - and the Lebanese said "all right, we'll build a dam and irrigate the South" - and the Israelis bombed it. The Israelis sent a warning through the American Embassy. But, the Lebanese went ahead and started the dam and the Israelis sent over fighter planes and bombed it. And that was the end of that. And they told the Lebanese "anytime you try to build that dam, we will bomb it." This desire for the river is one reason people don't think they are going to withdraw unless the U.S. tells them to, but certainly not of their own free will. Israel in the last thirty years has never once complied with a U.N. Resolution to withdraw from occupied territories. In the seven times that it's expanded its territory, its only once withdrawn and that's when President Eisenhower told Israel in 1956 "if you don't, we'll withdraw our aid." That's the only time.

In terms of people in this country that are sympathetic with the situation in Lebanon and with the Palestinians, what do you think are the most pressing things we can do? Is there still a need for material aid or is there more a need for political work?

I myself am always in favor of political work because this will undercut the future need for material need. In other words, I would much rather be poor now with the prospect of having a decent life next year than to be given blankets today and be a refugee for the next ten years. A pressing need is first for people to learn a bit about what's going on. I'm sure if people knew the truth — for the majority of Americans are fair minded — if only the truth were told them, they would be horrified and shocked. And the need really is for people to write to Congress, to write to the newspapers and to mobilize public opinion. I don't like only ameliorating suffering. I like stopping it completely and it would be terrible if these Lebanese refugees are going to spend the next twenty years sitting around as refugees. Lebanon cannot support them. And it's wrong. They've got their homes and their fields. The Israelis can't be allowed to do this. The great need is for political involvement. And it can be done.

What kinds of demands and issues are the most important?

Withdrawal from the territories occupied. Israel should comply with the U.N. declaration. It is a member of the U.N. and should abide by its Charter and the Declaration of Rights. If Israel were to observe the U.N. Resolutions, we wouldn't have a problem today. The U.N. has voted, and the U.S. voted also on it, that the Palestinians have a right to return to their

homeland. Israel has always refused to comply with this. The big issue is an independent state for the Palestinians. If we can get this, we are at the heart of the Middle Eastern problem. And then pressuring the Senate and Congress. They have an idea that the PLO are a bunch of terrorists. They should learn a little bit more about them. It's a government in exile with its own institutions and social services. It's not a bunch of terrorists; it's fighting for the right to go home. Either everybody is human, everybody has a right, and one must struggle for all human rights, or else if one person doesn't have this right, then nobody does

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