palestine perspectives

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Credit: drawing by Bourhan Karkoutli

editorial

Fifteen Years After the Re-Emergence of the Palestinian Movement

Fifteen years ago this month, on January 1, 1965, to be exact, the Palestinian national independence movement re-emerged after 17 years of quiescence to assert its presence in the Middle East and etch its reality on the consciousness of the world.

The re-emergence of the Palestinians, particularly in the years following the June War of 1967, will probably be looked upon by future historians as one of the most eloquent statements about survival in the 20th century.

In 1948, the Palestinians faced the most awesome challenge that any people could face: loss of patrimony, a loss that implied the severance of a people from its physical link to the land that it needed to complement its national being. The Palestinians were placed, for the most part, in refugee camps or in other equally devastating situations of exile. They were denied the right to national self-expression, self-determination and even geographical mobility—including the right to hold a passport. They lived for many years with their heads pushed against the whetstone of economic, social and political persecution. They inhabited disparate geographical locales ostensibly geared to dissipate and segment their identity and national origin. Then as now, prisons were full with Palestinian patriots. Then as now, acts of savagery and violence were committed against them. And the world, meanwhile, had believed that, by force of time or social attrition, Palestinian society will lose its cohesiveness, Palestinians will lose their commitments and the whole problem will disappear.

Yet the Palestinians survived all of that.

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And in this case, survival—which has been transformed by the Palestinians over the years into a national art form—represents more than the question of a people remaining intact as a nation after facing the harrowing challenges of destruction. And it represents more than a mere heroic expression of endurance by a people relegated to a world of non-being in refugee camps, in exile and under occupation.

Rather, the survival of the Palestinians, as a people and as a nation, represents a more meaningful statement than that. It is a historic challenge to Zionism itself, and indeed a defeat of it. For so long as the Palestinian people are around, their presence must bring into question the legitimacy of Israel itself, and the right of Israel to continue its colonial policy of total control in Palestine.

And this is precisely the reason why Israel refuses to be involved in any meaningful negotiations that include the problem of the Palestinians. Israel knows that these negotiations must ultimately lead to the question: And where did the Palestinians come from in the first place, and how long had they lived there?

Not wanting, at any cost, to deal with this and other seminal questions related to conflict in Palestine, Zionist leaders have resorted to the now hackneyed slogans about "terrorism" and "the Palestinian National Charter." [It is uncanny, however, that no one in the Western world, the only place left where Israel retains a measure of sympathy, has bothered to ask who it was that had made terrorism fashionable in Palestine and whether the governing Herut Party, along with other Zionist parties, have renounced their own national charter calling for, not only the annexation of the whole of Palestine as a Jewish state but also for the whole of Jordan as well.]

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The continued survival of the Palestinian people, then, and the re-emergence of their national independence movement exactly 15 years ago, represents a major defeat to Israel as a Zionist experiment in Palestine.

Israel, whether as an "established state" or an occupying power, can not know peace, can not have security, can not flee from political reality and the doubts about its legitimacy, so long as there are Palestinians around defining themselves as Palestinians and telling the world where they, and their grandparents and great-grand parents came from: Haifa, Jenin, Ramleh, Lydda, Nablus, Jaffa, Jerusalem and other cities and towns and villages in Palestine, the land from whence Palestinians had derived the essential repertoire of their national consciousness and historical self-definitions.

But the Palestinians, as they celebrate this month the 15th anniversary of the re-emergence of their struggle for freedom, have done more, much more, than survive. They have been able to transcend the awesome doses of oppression meted out to them by Zionism and its allies, and to write a long chapter in the history books about the ability of a people to endure, to struggle, to achieve self-actualization and to regain its national self-worth.

This is one of the historical facts of the Middle East that the megalomaniacal Israeli leadership and its supporters would do well not to abstain from acknowledging.

Historical facts, which are an immutable and constant facet of the geopolitical equation of any region, have a way of rebounding on the heads of those who continuously seek to evade them, mutilate them and replace them with messianic fabrications.

analysis

Zionism: The Next Decade

Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman closed a decade that has seen over 13 billion dollars of U.S. aid transferred to Israel by arriving in Washington in late December with a request for 3.45 billion dollars in economic and military aid in 1980. This staggering sum is almost double the 1.785 billion already promised to Israel by the U.S. Congress for 1980 (a figure which, like Weizman's, does **not** include the 3 billion promised to Israel over three years by the "peace package"). The seventies have witnessed an astronomical leap in aid to the Zionist state: by 1978, according to economist Ann Crittenden in her article 'Israel's Economic Plight" in the Summer 1979 *Foreign Affairs*, one fourth of all U.S. assistance was given to Israel.

Weizman's request amply demonstrates that in the 1980's Israel's dependence on U.S. aid will only increase. Both the request and the response - a pledge by President Carter for a loan of an additional 200 million dollars - say much about the crisis facing Zionism and the Zionist state in the 1980s and point to possible impending strains in U.S.- Israeli relations in the coming decade.

Zionism has long projected Israel as a nation of self-sufficient pioneers working in the "promised" land to fulfill an age-old dream. Leaving aside the obvious contradiction that Zionism, a settler-colonial movement, claimed a land already inhabited, a look at present-day Israel, in which combined aid from official and private sources in the U.S. amounts to $1000 per person, a little less than half of the per capita income of $2100 in 1978, quickly belies other elements of this myth. Indeed, Zionism only developed, and could only survive, in the shadow of the imperial powers, first Britain and then the United States. In the 1980s, Israel's growing economic crisis, alongside regional developments that are rapidly changing the political map of the Middle East and the determined resistance of the Palestinian people, brings the contradictions in Zionism in sharp focus.

Israel's Economic Crisis

Begin and his Likud coalition government have already been challenged by the public over their failure to make good on election promises to solve Israel's growing economic problems, chief among them an inflation rate that hit 100% in late 1979. Government measures, which have included cuts in basic subsidies for food and fuel, have infuriated the Israeli public (leading, for example, to a two hour work stoppage last August that was observed by 90 percent of the country's work force), but have refused to deal at all with the most obvious cause of Israel's lopsided economy: a military budget which is about one-third of Israel's Gross National Product. (The U.S., whose own military budget is certainly swollen, uses about 6% of its GNP for military spending). Among the expenses deemed essential by the Israeli government, and thus paid for by the U.S., are the costs of maintaining the Military Government in the West Bank and Gaza and instituting an ever-escalating settlements program, in direct opposition to U.S. policy on settlements and in violation of Article 49 of the Geneva Convention.

The International Economic and Social Commission of the World Jewish Congress, chaired by Baron Guy de Rothschild, issued, in a November 19, 1979 statement, an urgent "call to action" to confront Israel's "virulent and accelerated inflation, the huge and widening balance of payments gap and the enormous public debt and external debt service burden." The Commission's outlook was deeply pessimistic: if present trends continue, they prophesied, "The entire financial structure based on external support would collapse. The very economic foundations of the country would be seriously threatened." The Commission's recommendations, however, which focus on goals like "sharp reductions in excess employment and payrolls in the public services," and other measures designed to place the burden on the working people, just as resolutely steers away from the political roots of Israel's crisis as does the present Begin government.

Even the right-wing Begin government, however, has been restrained in actually implementing more conservative policies like wage freezes and cuts, employment reductions and public service cuts. Due to the need to attract and keep immigrants, the Zionist state has always had to provide a relatively high standard of living and a range of public services to its Jewish citizens. To date, the words of an Israeli banker, Ephraim Rainer, quoted by Ann Crittenden, ring true: "the public here doesn't pay the price of inflation. The United States and the Jewish people around the world do that." Whether they will continue to do so in such a massive fashion is a question plaguing Israeli policymakers as they look to the coming decade.

U.S. Aid: Will the Well Run Dry?

Judging at least by the pledges of U.S.Presidential candidates, U.S. aid to Israel is in no danger of drying up, or even being conditioned by any provisions that Israel abide by international law in relation to the occupied territories or South Lebanon. Yet there are real strains on the Israeli-American relationship, as Carter's reluctance to pledge additional funds shows.

The strains come from two major areas: Israel's intransigence in implementing "autonomy" under the Camp David accords, and the rapid changes in the region, especially in the wake of the Iranian revolution, that have left the U.S. in a desperate scramble to find policy alternatives to keep its control over Middle East oil and the vital Gulf area, called by George Ball in his article "The Coming Crisis in Israeli-American Relations" in Winter 1979-80 *Foreign Affairs*, the "strategic heart of the world."

Ball's article, in fact, provides an important indictment of Israeli intransigence vis a vis the U.S., as seen by one sector of the U.S. foreign policy establishment (Ball served as Undersecretary of State from 1961 to 1966 and as U.S. Representative to the U.N. in 1968 and continues to be an influential voice in policy matters). Calling the current Israeli relation to the U.S. "dependence without responsibility," Ball noted that "Israel is more dependent on the United States than ever and yet feels itself free to take hard-line positions at variance with American views without fear of anything worse than verbal admonitions from Washington." One such hard-line position is the Begin definition of "autonomy" which Ball describes as "little more than a proposal to regroup occupation forces, with a sweetener of local self-government."

Ball affirms that the "only answer" to the Palestine problem is "unqualified acceptance of ultimate self-determination" for the Palestinian people, far from a mainstream position in U.S. policy circles. President Carter's most recent statement on the matter was a declaration that he had never favored an independent Palestinian state, which would not be "helpful" for the area. Ball himself is not particularly moved by the justice of the Palestinian cause but rather by this more pragmatic assessment: "as long as Israel holds on to the occupied territories, and especially so long as it seems to be seeking to consolidate its hold on the West Bank for the long term, its impact on the stability of the Middle East will be wholly negative." "Stability," it should be noted, in

(continued on p. 10)

Celebrating the Revolution: Palestinians Express Confidence and Determination

Palestinian children in January 1 celebration carry model of their refugee camp.

The Palestinian and Lebanese people celebrated the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Palestinian Revolution in a confident and joyous mood. Thousands of people attended rallies in Palestinian refugee camps and major Lebanese towns expressing their determination to continue the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. On the evening of December 31, Chairman Arafat and leaders of Palestinian and Lebanese organizations attended a popular march where hundreds of Palestinians from different refugee camps marched carrying torches and banners saluting the Fifteenth Anniversary of their revolution.

At the town of Damour, Palestinian families from Tal al Zaatar camp celebrated the occasion by holding a popular march and revolutionary dances and songs. On January 1, Chairman Yasser Arafat and leaders of the Palestinian and Lebanese movements, as well as representatives from socialist and Third World countries attended a massive rally and reviewed symbolic units of the Palestinian and Lebanese fighting forces. Palestinian children, representatives of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, as well as workers from Samed factories, marched and greeted their leaders. To express Palestinian unity, both George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Chairman Arafat gave speeches at the rally stressing the will and determination of the Palestinian people to continue their struggle and to unite their forces. They both emphasized that the struggle ahead is long and difficult, but that the Palestinian people will win and defeat Zionism and imperialism through unity and continued armed struggle. Lebanese leaders, including Inam Ra'ad and Major Ahmed Khatib of the Lebanese Arab Army also stressed Lebanese unity with the Palestinian Revolution and the determination of the Lebanese people to defend South Lebanon against Israeli and isolationist attack.

Chairman Arafat received solidarity messages from all friendly Third World and socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, which stressed their support for the Palestinian Revolution. A delegation from the Iranian Revolution, headed by Mohammed Montazari, also attended the celebrations and expressed the determination of the Iranian people to fight with the Palestinian and Lebanese people against Zionism and imperialism. Thousands of Palestinian children celebrated the Fifteenth Anniversary at their different schools, and in refugee camps. At Rashidiyeh camp near Sour, Palestinian children marched and sang songs remembering their country, Palestine, while the Israeli-isolationist forces were shelling areas around the camp. At refugee camps in Beirut, Palestinian workers at Samed factories, as well as Palestinian children, held popular rallies and sang revolutionary songs in celebration of the occasion.

Hundreds of colorful posters were displayed at all refugee camps, showing the confident mood of the Palestinian people and greeting the Palestinian freedom fighters. Chairman Arafat opened an exhibit of Palestinian children's painting and art and attended a festival sponsored by Samed where the children of Tal al Zaatar danced to revolutionary music, expressing their determination to continue the struggle. So as a new year dawns for the Palestinian people, the children of Palestine were in the forefront, expressing their feeling and emotion, their love and yearning for their occupied homeland, Palestine.

The same spirit was expressed as Palestinians and their supporters gathered in many U.S. cities to celebrate the anniversary. In a January 12 celebration in Washington, D.C., several hundred people enjoyed Palestinian music and dance and heard speeches by Amin Hafez from the Lebanese National Movement, a representative of the Iranian Embassy, American Indian Movement leader Russell Means, who drew parallels between the struggles of the Palestinian and Native American people, a representative of the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party, Dr. Samih Farsoun, Dr. Hatem Hussaini and representatives of several Palestinian organizations, including the Committee for a Democratic Palestine and the Palestine Aid Society.

Anniversary celebrations also occurred in Houston, Los Angeles, Boston and New York City.

"We Will For a Second Time Do the Impossible"

Following are excerpts from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's January 1 message:

"The revolution of our people launched on January 1, 1965 — more than any eloquence, and more profoundly than any number of revolutionary slogans—has brought about a basic change in the course of the conflict in our region, and has proved the strength of a people who believe in their goal and are guided by revolutionary values. Our alert and active revolutionaries and fighters who believe in the inevitability of victory are a new generation, the generation of the revolution, the generation of hope and victory, the generation of the people's armed revolution: a revolution which is unsubjugated and free from external domination and direction, and which is guided only by the will of its militant people.

"Inevitably, the confrontation taking place in our region must be based on the principle of strategic differentiation between friends and enemies and it is therefore imperative for us to consolidate the camp of friends and allies among the Islamic, African, Non-aligned and socialist states, so as to impose the will of our peoples upon our enemies via revolutionary escalation and at all levels, and not by humiliating concessions, nor by offering the waters of the Nile to the Zionist state, nor by bribing America with a few barrels of oil, nor by offering world imperialism new treaties which further insult and shame our people.

We do not fight Jews, but Zionism, which misguides and exploits the Jews themselves. We stand against the Zionist movement and the Israeli military leaders who are leading the Jews towards the abyss, and who offer them nothing but constant bloodshed and wars. This movement used the Jews as cannon-fodder for the regional ambitions of imperialism, which wants to keep them as obedient tools in its hands, to serve its interests in the region. Thus, on the basis of the humanistic and civilized precepts of our revolution, we understand that a just peace in Palestine means a Palestinian peace which includes all Jews who live in Palestine and who will live with us without racism or discrimination, in equality, fraternity and justice—Jews, Moslems and Christians on the soil of Palestine.

There must be further national unity—a single, unified rank, free from protectorates, subjugation, containment and blackmail, constituting in its whole a single force under the banner of the PLO, which speaks in all our names and represents our national entity, on the road of liberation and return to Palestine, the land of love and peace, of revolution, the land of the independent progressive state for our free people.

May this 16th year, as we enter the 1980s, be the year of fateful confrontation on the road towards the great goal, the year of changes in this region and in this Arab nation so that we may all progress towards Palestine.

We have together achieved the impossible on the day we brought our people back from nothingness, and placed it on the political map of the region, where they became the most important factor in the Middle East equation. Non, we will for a second time do the impossible as we take up the fateful challenge on the road to Palestine, to Jerusalem, over whose towers and minarets we will raise our flags."

Palestinian leaders at anniversary march: (from left to right) Abu Jihad, Abu Eyad, Yasser Arafat, George Habash.

Israel: Weapons for Sale

Israeli Arms Sales to Dictatorships: Will the U.S. Life Restrictions?

In addition to his request for a massive amount of additional U.S. aid to Israel, Israeli Defense Minister Weizman, in his late December visit to Washington, asked the U.S. to lift restrictions on Israeli export of military equipment to various countries. Under U.S. arms export laws, U.S. arms are supposed to be prohibited to countries deemed serious violators of human rights, or who intend to use these arms for aggressive purposes. Obviously, these laws are laxly and selectively enforced (Israel being one prominent "exception") but they have served to limit arms sales to some repressive regimes, like the apartheid government in South Africa.

The Jerusalem Domestic Service reported on December 30 that these restrictions "caused grave difficulties in selling Israeli fighters to South American countries and Southeast Asia." (The Israeli Kfir fighter has an engine made by U.S. corporation General Electric, and thus falls inside the U.S. arms export agreement.) Chief among Southeast Asian countries receiving Israeli arms is Indonesia, where a bloody dictatorship headed by Suharto has murdered 50-80,000 people in Timor, in a U.S. - backed military offensive, according to Professor Noam Chomsky and other analysts.

In South America, the Israeli clients are equally illustrious: Chile and Argentina. Interestingly, Israel has not been deterred from its arms shipments by the overtly anti-semitic policies of both military juntas. South Africa, too, would benefit from a lifting of arms restrictions: it already is the recipient of Israeli military technology in the form of gunboats, small arms, military advisors and even, it is speculated, nuclear technology.

Israeli radio also reported that "Secretary of State Vance promised to sympathetically consider this request." The U.S. has often looked with a blind eye at Israeli arms transfers to repressive regimes. Indeed, Israel has had the useful role of supplying arms to U.S. clients when direct transfers would be politically embarrassing for the U.S.: the most recent case was large Israeli shipments to the failing Somoza regime in Nicaragua, arms that surely prolonged the suffering of the Nicaraguan people at the hands of the brutal National Guard. Nontheless, an actual lifting of the restrictions by the U.S. government would give the go-ahead to Israel to substantially increase its support of repressive governments: the Israeli press reports that some of the deals held up have involved millions of dollars.

Israel's rationale for its arms policy is both political and economic. Politically, arms deals and other forms of trade overcome Israel's isolation in the face of international condemnation of its occupation policies. Economically, arms exports now constitute 20% of Israel's industrial exports (according to economist Ann Crittenden), or $500 million in 1978, with 1979 figures expected to reach $600 million. Israel's reasoning may be clear: the rationale of the U.S. government in violating its own laws and condoning repression in order to build up Israeli exports should be challenged by all Americans concerned with human rights.

Israeli Court: No to "Palestine"

Judge Moshe Cohen of the Jerusalem District Court ruled in mid-January that the "Palestine Press Services," a translation and publishing firm in East Jerusalem, could not be registered because the name "Palestine" would "hurt the feelings" of the Israeli public. The two owners of the Palestine Press Services, Raymonda Tawil and Ibrahim Ka'aeen, plan to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. During the hearing, their attorney had argued that they were entitled to use the term because "Palestinian" was included in the Camp David accords.

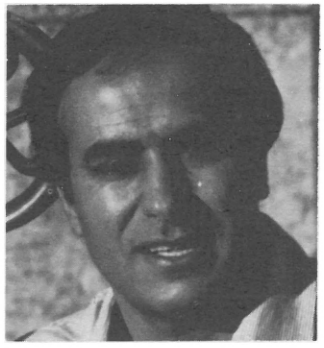
Ka'aeen told *The Jerusalem Post* that he and Tawil were "upset but not suprised" by the ruling. "It makes nonsense of all the talk of peace between Israelis and Palestinians," he said. "How can there be peace if they don't even recognize our name?"

Bassem Shaka and others meet to protest electric company seizure.

Israeli Seizure of Jerusalem Electric Company Resisted

Rallies and protests have occurred in Jerusalem and most cities in the occupied territories over the Israeli announcement that the Israeli government would take over the Jerusalem Electric Company. The Company is currently run by a Board of Directors of prominent West Bank figures, including some Mayors, and is staffed by Palestinians. Dr. Emile Khatib stressed to *As Shaab* newspaper that the Israeli decision is part of Israeli determination to continue the occupation of Arab territories. Chairman of the Board Anwar Nuseibeh stressed that this company belongs to the Palestinian people, and that the Israeli authorities are trying to take over the company as part of their policy to annex Jerusalem and include it in the state of Israel. Nuseibeh called on the Palestinian people to continue their protest and to safeguard the Palestinian ownership of the company.

In the past, the Israeli Military Government has attempted to control basic services on the West Bank, and hook up major Palestinian towns to Israeli utility lines, as well as controlling major resources, most importantly water. Palestinians see the takeover of the electric company as part of this campaign, as well as "creating facts" to buttress the illegal annexation of Jerusalem. For these two reasons, protests have been sharp in the last weeks. Participants in rallies have sent telegrams to the Israeli Prime Minister and to Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim at the United Nations. The secretary of the municipal council in Gaza also sent a telegram to Waldheim affirming that the Israeli decision to seize the Jerusalem Electric Company was part of the Israeli drive to build settlements in the occupied territories.



Isa Hanna

Another Sami Esmail?: U.S. Citizen Arrested in Jerusalem

In an eerie recapitulation of the December 1978 arrest of Sami Esmail, Israeli military authorities arrested another U.S. citizen of Palestinian descent, 35 year old Issa Hanna, on December 23, 1979. Issa who was visiting his family in Ramallah, was apparently arrested on a "security offense," a charge covering a wide range of actions, from distributing leaflets (one of Esmail's so-called "crimes") to membership in an illegal Palestinian organization. Under the 1973 Extraterritoriality Law, Israel claims universal jurisdiction: any action illegal under Israeli law committed anywhere on the globe can result in imprisonment and trial in Israel.

To date, over a month after Issa was arrested, the Israeli authorities have not formally charged him. According to the U.S. State Department, however, he is being held "on suspicion of having been in contact with members of the PLO," a charge that could be levied at Andrew Young, many U.S. journalists, and U.S. citizens who have exercised their right to freely hear opinions and points of view. According to the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Issa has been interrogated and roughly treated, blindfolded and forced to stand for long periods.

Sami Esmail spent eleven months in Israeli prison and Terre Fleener spent over a year before international pressure was successful in securing their release. Hopefully, Issa Hanna will not have to endure such a prolonged ordeal.

Kiryat Arba Expansion Ignites Protest; West Bank Mayors Interrogated

The Israeli military authorities on the West Bank began the New Year with a characteristic move: on January 1, under the watchful protection of Israeli soldiers, tractors began to break ground on Harsina Hill, near Hebron, in order to expand the Israeli settlement of Kiryat Arba. Kiryat Arba has been a center of the right-wing Gush Emunim movement and one of the headquarters of Meir Kahane's fanatic Jewish Defense League. Kiryat Arba has long declared it intention to encircle, and then settle in, the Arab town of Hebron. Last May, settlers from Kiryat Arba invaded two Arab homes in Hebron, and terrorized the occupants, kicking one child and tearing up the book of another. Kiryat Arba settlers are also implicated in the murder of two young Palestinians in March in Halhoul.

The Israeli government declared the 600 dunums of Harsina Hill to be "state-owned" land and thus available for Jewish settlement. ("State-owned" refers to land registered to the Jordanian government pre-1967, rather than land the Israelis have any title to or claim upon). Fifty Arab landowners from the neighboring village of Beit Ya'am and Hebron claim otherwise, and have been meeting with Hebron Mayor Fahd Kawasmeh, who will apply to the High Court of Justice for an injunction against the current construction of the Kiryat Arba suburb.

On January 3, several hundred people rallied in Hebron and attempted to hold a protest prayer on Harsina Hill. Israeli soldiers forcefully turned back the protestors, which included Mayors Kawasmeh and Milhelm of Halhoul, and two young Palestinians were arrested. The next day, Israeli military authorities interrogated the two mayors, who explained that they they "had calmly and silently protested the expropriation of land and that they had left the site immediately upon request." Nonetheless, the mayors were only released upon payment of 5,000 Israeli pounds each, on the ostensible excuse that the bail would ensure that they will report to the authorities if necessary. Neither mayor has ever failed to report to the authorities if requested.

Palestine Prisoners

The municipal councils of Hebron, Halhoul and Ramallah have released statements protesting the Israeli interrogation of the two mayors, and expressing their opposition to Israeli attempts to confiscate more Palestinian land and build more Israeli settlements. The statements affirm that the mayors have every right to protest these Israeli policies, and appeal to the world community to defent the rights of elected Mayors and protest Israeli policies of colonizing the land.

This interrogation is part of a campaign of harassment against the West Bank mayors, which has included arrest, denial of permission to travel and interrogation, that has escalated in the months following the Egyptian-Israeli treaty. Currently, Ramallah Mayor Karim Khalaf and El Bireh Mayor Ibrahim Tawil, await the decision of the military court on their alleged "disruption" of an Israeli hearing about land seizure near the two towns.

The Human Rights Committee of the Ramallah Federation in the U.S. has organized an appeal demanding that the charges against Khalaf and Tawil be dropped. The petition has been signed by Noam Chomsky, Reverends Jesse Jackson and Joseph Lowery and other prominent Americans. For more information or to add your endorsement, contact Jim Harb, POB 3851, Durham, NC 27702. Tel. (919) 286-0747.

Palestine Aid Society (NAJDA) Opens New Chapter in Washington

A new chapter of the Palestine Aid Society in Washington, which had been established recently in the city, held its first exhibit of Palestinian arts and crafts in late December. One of the non-profit, charity group organizers, claimed that "the success of the exhibit exceeded all our expectations."

The Palestine Aid Society, known as *Najda*, is an organization that was established in Beirut in the early 1970's to preserve and enhance Palestinian arts and crafts, including the Palestinian national dress, Palestinian embroidery and art works. Moreover, as Najda began to expand in 1978, it acquired the added role of using its profits to aid Palestinians and Lebanese who had suffered the ravages of the civil war, to relocate refugees, gainfully employ hundreds of women in its workshops and to train them in various skills at its training centers.

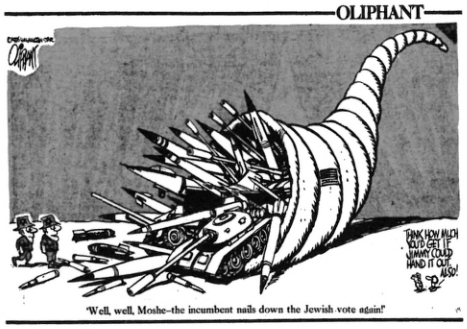
Najda is also currently engaged in establishing clinics, day care centers and institutions to combat illiteracy.

Many of Najda's projects are to be found in refugee camps and in the poorer quarters of Beirut.

In the United States, the half dozen Najda groups serve as a conduit for the products of their mother organization in Lebanon through the opening of exhibits such as the one recently held in Washington.

washington watch

Reagan and Connally: Republican Frontrunners and the Middle East



On the Republican side of the 1980 race for the Presidency, the leading candidates as of now, and most likely in the future, are Ronald Reagan, George Bush and John Conally. Concerning the Middle East issue, it has been believed that Republicans, because of their business investments in the area, would be more in sympathy with the Arab position. This assumption is fundamentally wrong, as the Presidency of Richard Nixon and the policies of Henry Kissinger, pre-eminently a protege of Republican corporate interests like the Rockefellers, prove. While it is true that corporate America is more Republican, it is not true that this makes for better understanding of the Arab point of view. It may make, as in the case of John Conally, for a broader definition of "American interests" in the region than exclusively those tied to Israel.

Conally: Peace Equals U.S. Bases

On October 11th in Washington, D.C., John Connally spoke to the press outlining "a new approach to build stability and lasting peace in the Middle East." What he said about the Middle East, most of which is the policy of the U.S. Government, was attacked by every candidate to the Presidency, as well as by the leaders of the Jewish community. Connally's peace plan includes the following points:

1) "Israel must withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan" with an allowance for "minor border rectifications" agreed upon by parties involved. The territories which Israel will withdraw from will become demilitarized. Under this plan Israel would be allowed to "lease military strong points in each of these areas" and access to these points must be guaranteed.

2) After the signing of peace treaty between Israel and the Arab States, "all Israeli civilian settlements, including the so-called para-military ones, must be withdrawn from the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan."

3) In his third point Connnally in fact grants the "Palestinian people" the right to decide for themselves if they want an independent entity or an entity "autonomous within the Kingdom of Jordan."

4) Regarding Jerusalem, he proposes free access to all religious groups to the holy places, a united city and a system of "political autonomy for each of the national groups" living in the city, each "in the area where it predominates." Sovereignty over the city, however, is to be decided in a "peace conference". In return for Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories, the Arab governments must abandon the use of oil as a weapon to further Arab-Palestinian interests. In guaranteeing peace in the area, Connally proposes a "strong military... including major air force components."

In proposing such a plan, Connally must have known that he would lose almost all of the Jewish vote, an important element in capturing the White House. To his credit, Connally is the first presidential candidate to risk losing the American Jewish community's and other pro-Israeli voters' support prior to a Presidential campaign. From his point of view, however, Connally is not forsaking Israel, but rather he emphasizes that "a clear distinction must be drawn by the United States between support for Israel's security, which is a moral imperative, and support for Israel's territorial acquisitions." Connally's risk is balanced by his emphasis on safeguarding American interests. Usually many American officials and almost all candidates for the U.S. presidency don't see any incompatibility between the interests of the U.S. and those of Israel concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. John Connally, a millionaire and a former Governor of the oil state of Texas, attributes much of the oil problem faced by the United States to the Arab-Israeli conflict and to the U.S. siding with Israel. 'We must now pursue a new approach based not merely on individual Arab or Israeli interests, but on American interests," Connally said.

Connally's commitment to Israel's survival and security is unquestionable. In order to assure that security for Israel and, naturally to further the interests of the United States, Connally introduced a new phase of American policy in the Middle East. , i.e. the stationing of American military personnel and weapons in the Middle East. He also argues that the U.S. is morally committed to defend Israel within secure borders. Connally suggests the Sinai air fields for American air bases and the Sinai, according to Camp David Accords, is to be returned to Egypt with specified limitations on the number and type of weapons it can maintain there.

The chance that Connally will actually win the Presidential election of 1980 is not high. First, he is a Republican, and usually a Republican candidate will not win the election unless a substantial number of Democrats also vote for him. Because he was a Democrat and switched parties, it is not likely that many Democrats will support him. Second, Connally was also a very close associate of Richard Nixon and served in more than one capacity in the Nixon Administration. After the Watergate era, this is undoubtedly a handicap. Third, he is conservative on domestic issues which puts him distant from most poor Americans, blacks and whites. And finally, he became known as the candidate of wealthy Americans and corporate interests, and because of this his campaign is the best financed of all the candidates, Democrats or Republicans.

Reagan: No Palestinian State

Ronald Reagan, former Governor of California, is a good friend of Israel. In his last run for the Presidency in 1976, he made very strong statements in support of Israel thorughout his campaign. Although a Republican and the most conservative of the four top Republican candidates, Reagan's position on the Middle East is in total harmony with Israel's. The rest of the Middle East is viewed by Reagan only as a source of oil and other natural resources, and as a buffer in the face of "Soviet expansionism." The desires of the people who live there and their aspirations for true independence, self-determination, and control of their resources are not considered by Reagan.

Since his official announcement declaring his intention to run for the presidency,

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on the record

Amnesty International: "Serious Human Rights Violations" By Israel

The following is the section of Amnesty International's 1979 report dealing with Israel and the occupied territories.

"Although a clear distinction must be drawn between Israel itself where a parliamentary system operates, and the Occupied Territories, to which military rule is applied, Amnesty International is concerned that serious human rights violations are occuring in both regions, both to residents of the territories and to Israeli citizens. These violations fall under each of Amnesty International's statute provisions and include the arrest and conviction of prisoners of conscience, the denial of fair trials to a number of prisoners, and the lack of effective safeguards to ensure that the basic rights of those in custody are protected.

But Security offences cover a wide range of acts, such as membership of a hostile or illegal organization (Defence Emergency Regulations of 1945 (DER), article 85), incitement and hostile propaganda (Security Order 101, 1968) and training in weapons (DER article 63 and Security Order 284, 1967), which might in certain instances place the prisoner outside Amnesty International's concerns. However, in a number of cases, and particularly in those involving the charge of membership, this legislation has been interpreted very broadly by military courts so that individuals have been sentenced to prison terms for acts which are of a purely political nature.

Amnesty International is also concerned that, in convicting individuals for security offences, Israeli military tribunals often rely for evidence on nothing more than accused's confession (although the technical requirement exists that independent supporting evidence be adduced for a confession to be ruled admissable). In Amnesty International's experience, exclusive reliance on confessions tends to encourage improper interrogation procedures.

Amnesty International also expressed its concern in several letters addressed to Attorney General Yitshak Zamir, at the treatment accorded to conscientious objectors under Israeli law, and referred particularly to Jehovah's Witnesses and Druze who were refusing to serve in the Israeli Defence Forces. In a reply on 20 December 1978, the Attorney General stated that Jehovah's Witnesses are given renewable one-year deferments, but that all Druze are still bound by a decision, taken by the Druze community leaders over 20 years ago, that male Druze who are of age would serve in the Israeli Defence Forces. Resistance to the draft among the Druze (often leading to imprisonment) has reached substantial numbers.

In February 1979, Amnesty International started work on behalf of six Israeli Arab students at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem who were confined by an administrative order to their home villages for a period of three months, because of their part in producing a document which supported the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This punishment was in accord with the rarely used DER article 110. It also protested against the threatened deportation under DER article 112 of another student also suspected of producing the same document.

Amnesty International continued to work on behalf of all individuals under administrative detention (any person specified by a region's military command may be detained for renewable six-month periods without ever being formally charged or brought to trial). This practice is in clear violation of articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The original legal basis for administrative detention is in DER article 111, but this has now been replaced for the Occupied Territories by article 87 of the 1967 Security Provisions Order and for Israel proper by a new law passed by the Knesset in March 1979. Although the new law introduces the principle of judicial and ministerial controls on the practice of administrative detention, it is not yet clear how effective this control will be in practice. Also, the new law does not apply to the Occupied Territories, where all cases of administrative detention in recent years have occurred.

During the past year Amnesty International worked for 48 administrative detainees, of whom 22 are still in prison. The 48 included a group of 14 people captured in an Israeli raid into Lebanon in March 1978 and held in detention in Israeli prisons until February 1979. In February 1979, they were released and returned to Lebanon under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The longest held administrative detainee is Ali Awwad Jamal, who has been detained since May 1975. . .

Amnesty International is also concerned by the ways in which the system of military justice deviates from fair trial practices. In particular, there are no rights of juidicial appeal for those tried before military tribunals in the West Bank, although a military appeals court exists for residents of East Jerusalem and Israel proper. Furthermore, although appeal to the Supreme Court is in principle possible for residents of both Israel and the Occupied Territories, many suspects from the Territories are represented by West Bank lawyers who are not members of the Israeli Bar and who are thus not able to appeal cases to the Supreme Court.

Allegations of ill-treatment of prisoners continued to reach Amnesty International, both directly through former prisoners and through published reports. The most serious public accusations were those made in early 1979 by Alexandra Johnson, a former United States consular official in Jerusalem, who, on the basis of interviews with 29 Palestinian former prisoners applying for visas to the United States, concluded that ill-treatment of prisoners was not limited to the practice of a few over-zealous officials, but was systematic and required at least the tacit approval of higher authorities. Credible testimony recently received by Amnesty International from other former prisoners is consistent with Alexandra Johnson's conclusions.

In January 1979, Amnesty International launched urgent actions on behalf of two prisoners, Nader Fayiz el-Afouri and Youssef el Jou'beh, who were reported to have suffered ill-treatment while in prison in Israel. In March 1979, Amnesty International received letters from the Attorney General denying that any ill-treatment had occurred.

In addition to the alleged ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners, there is disturbing evidence that similar practices are occurring within Israel proper, to both Israeli Arabs and Jews. A number of reports to this effect have appeared in Israeli newspapers such as *Yediot Ahronot, Haolam Hazeh, Zu Haderech* and *Ma'ariv*. These reports include evidence of ill-treatment under interrogation and of brutality committed by the Border Guards,

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Zionism: The Next...

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the lexicon of U.S. policy makers, stands for U.S. control.

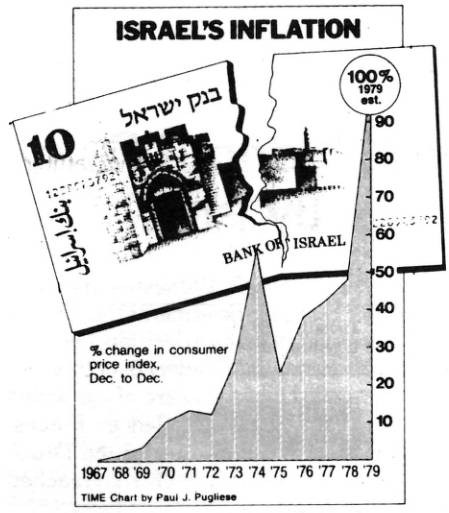
The search for this form of "stability" is at the crux of any crisis in U.S.- Israeli relations. U.S. control of the Middle East was challenged in 1979 by the Iranian revolution, and by signs of upheaval in the Gulf area, directed at the feudal monarchies, especially Saudi Arabia, that the U.S. regards as vital to American control over oil and strategic waterways. Israel has adversely affected U.S. relations with the key Gulf states, who were forced to oppose the Camp David accords by both external and internal pressures. Every act of Israeli intransigence worsens these relations.

Israel: Still Watchdog for the West?

Israel's traditional argument when the U.S. shows signs of growing weary of supplying it with massive amounts of aid is that Israel is well worth the price: Israel military forces stand ready to preserve U.S. and Western interests in the Middle East. Ball questions this assumption given the current political climate in the area, noting that "with Iran in a militantly anti-Israel posture that is unlikely soon to change, there is no possibility whatever of Israel playing any useful part in the direct military or strategic sense."

Ball's assessment is overstated: conditions can be envisioned, if not in the Gulf perhaps in the Arab East, where Israeli force might once again be welcomed by the U.S.. One interesting indication, however, of a weakened Israeli position in U.S. Mideast policy is the muted Israeli reaction to the U.S. decision to supply Egypt with credits for three billion dollars of advanced U.S. arms and to sell Saudi Arabia U.S. missiles and 1000 cluster bombs (anti-personnel weapons obviously slated to be used against potential guerrilla insurgency). Although the Israeli press has reacted with predictable outrage (some directed at the Begin government for failing to speak against the deals forcefully), official Israeli response, and pro-Israeli response on Capitol HIll, is of an entirely different nature than the massive campaign mounted by the Israeli lobby in May 1978 to stop the "package deal" sale of F-15's to Saudi Arabia and F-5s to Egypt.

As well as showing some erosion in the Israeli relation with the U.S., (the Israelis have expressed their indignation that they were not "consulted" about the Egyptian arms deal), the Israeli response may also suggest shifts in Israeli thinking about its regional role. In an interview with CBS-TV's *Face The Nation* on December 30, Defense Minister Weizman said he hoped the



Egyptian-Israeli treaty was the first link in an "American chain" that would someday include "Jordan, Morocco, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia", along with Egypt and Israel.

Weizman's "vision" of the future is a resurrected version of the Baghdad Pact, a pro-U.S. military alliance to oppose states and movements seeking independence from the U.S. Such an alliance, like those before it, would polarize the region and lead to tension, conflict and bloodshed, before it ended in inevitable failure. Repeated failures of such alliances, which founder because they offer no solutions to the pressing problems of developing nations, and run counter to demands of indigenous movements for independence, have apparently not taught Weizman or his other Camp David partners their historical lesson. In recent weeks, both Egypt and Israel have offered the U.S. base facilities. Egypt, perhaps a better candidate than Israel for the dubious honor of policing the Gulf, has conducted joint training exercises with the U.S., involving U.S. electronic surveillance aircraft, used to conduct reconnaissance flights over Iran and Afghanistan.

In their meeting at Aswan on January 8, Sadat and Begin sat by a hotel swimming pool "poring over a huge map of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East," reported the New York Times correspondent, who also noted Sadat drawing "imaginary lines" on the map. One can imagine the grandiose strategies that the two summiteers, both particularly subject to dreams of glory, concocted to subject the peoples of the Middle East to a Pax Americana. Making the Middle East an American suburb (as U.S. strategists once schemed to make the Pacific an "American lake"), is an impossible task in the late twentieth century, but the attempt to do so could lead to more war and conflict in a region that desperately needs peace. Zionism is firmly committed to the former, rather than the latter.

1980s: War or Peace in the Middle East

Indeed, another ominous possibility in the coming decade is an Israeli preemptive strike to alter the balance of power in the area and assert its military superiority. Zionism has historically used war and expansion to "solve" both internal contradictions (like the economic crisis on the eve of the 1967 war) and strategic problems. The savage bombardment of South Lebanon in the six months following the Egyptian-Israeli augurs that this "solution" remains a favored one. Even if Israeli leaders might prefer to expand as part of an "American chain" in the 1980s, they are clearly still willing to promote solo adventures, whether "limited" actions like South Lebanon, or on a wider scale.

At the same time, however, as Zionism grows more militaristic, with its twin pillars the colonization of the West Bank and Gaza and an aggressive expansionist posture toward the Arab World, the possibilities for genuine peace have emerged more strongly. Even inside Israel, some cracks in the Zionist consensus have developed - as the recent demonstration against settlements of Black Panthers, a Oriental Jewish group,

(continued on p. 11)

"In short, the current position of the Israeli government offers no hope whatever of progress toward resolution of the problems of the West Bank and Gaza, the core of the Palestinian issue which in turn is the key to a lasting peace. Not only is no progress in sight, but Israel keeps on expanding settlements on the West Bank, it renews permission for Israelis to buy West Bank land (in circumstances where any such purchases are bound to have an element of coercion), and in southern Lebanon — in the name of retaliation for terrorist raids— it conducts a policy of savage and wide-ranging air attacks that inflict casualties out of all proportion to the occasions. Both in the West Bank and in southern Lebanon, Arabs can hardly be blamed for believing that Israel is engaged in a deliberate policy of expansion and consolidation.

Today Israel is able to continue on its present course only because of continued vast subsidies from the United States. Distasteful as it must be to Israelis, the nation has become a ward— a kind of welfare dependent— of America. The United States is providing annual subsidies out of the public sector that amount to the equivalent of $7,500 a year for every Jewish family— or, in other words, every five persons— and those subsidies will be substantially increased before America finishes paying the costs of Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai."

George W. Ball, *"The Coming Crisis in Israeli-American Relations", Foreign Affairs*, **Winter 1979-80.**

U.S. arms to Israel protested in New York demonstration.

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demonstrates - although, to date, these movements are either small or very limited in their goals. Most importantly, the last decade has seen important gains for the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination, to return to their homes and to establish an independent state. An almost universal consensus has emerged among the community of nations that the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, must be fulfilled. Zionism and the U.S., of course, can continue to ignore this international consensus, but they cannot ignore the force that created the consensus: the struggle of the Palestinian people that has proved that it will continue until the Palestinian people enjoy the same rights as other peoples throughout the world: to live in their homeland in freedom and independence.

Republican Front Runners...

(Continued from page 8)

Reagan has not vigorously campaigned. He is aware undoubtedly that he is the leading candidate from his party. (The current hostage situation in Iran has also put restraints on campaign fervor by all parties.) Reagan's views on the Middle East issue, as well as other usual presidential campaign topics, has not been reported. On August 15th, however, he did write an article to the *Washington Post* outlining what his policy would be on the Middle East if he were elected President.

In the article, it is argued that the Middle East is unstable not because of anything relating to Israel and its occupation of Arab land. "The more critical issues dividing the Arab states actually have little to do with Israel." Reagan disagrees with views that the unrest in the Arab world is at least in part a result of the presence of Israel and American influence in the region. He blames the unrest instead on "ethnic and religious rivalries" and on conflicting attitudes between conservative and radical parties regarding social change. Israel, in his mind, is an asset in every possible way and it should therefore be strengthened and supported militarily and economically. Reagan believes that Israel, in contrast to other countries in the area, is a "democratic political system like our own." Israel's intelligence services "provide critical guidance to ongoing regional development," and its "technical know-how... could be used to service American equipment in a crisis." Israeli armed forces and their effectiveness, especially the air force, keep the Soviet Union in constant uncertainty and provide a "zone of danger" to Soviet planners.

Due to the above, Reagan concludes that "it is foolhardy to risk weakening our most critical remaining regional strategic asset." The U.S. should do nothing which would weaken Israel, Reagan argues. Rather, the U.S. should provide Israel with all of its needs, militarily and otherwise, in order to enable it to defend itself and the interests of the U.S. in the area. Reagan naturally doesn't agree that Israel should withdraw from the occupied territories, for this would become "the basis for (creating) a radical Palestinian state on her borders" which would weaken Israel. Israel's role in the Middle East, according to Reagan, is vital to the interests of the U.S., and anything which is interpreted by Israel to be against its interests is therefore not in the best interest of the U.S. as well.

In the next issue of **Palestine Perspectives** *Washington Watch will examine the remaining Republican candidates.*

Amnesty International...

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Civil Guards and the Police, all alleged to have occurred during the year.

The government has consistently denied all allegations of systematic torture and has emphasized that any isolated instances which are brought to its attention are fully investigated, with appropriate disciplinary measures taken in situations that warrant them. To support their case, the authorities argue that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has access to prisoners under interrogation, which is when torture is usually alleged to take place, no later than 14 days after arrest. In only six percent of ICRC visits to approximately 1,300 prisoners, within the past year, were complaints of ill-treatment registered. Amnesty International has received reliable reports that, although the formal rights given the ICRC in the Occupied Territories are among the most favorable that have been granted anywhere, these do not permit the conclusive refutation of torture allegations, as the authorities claim they do. In particular, the ICRC is rarely able to visit prisoners much before the 14th day after arrest and, since torture allegations focus on the first few days of detention, the ICRC visits are often too late to provide convincing medical evidence to support or contradict the allegations. In addition, the ICRC is often unable to locate the whereabouts of particular prisoners within the 14-day limit, and their surveillance of the prisoner's state of health during interrogation is frequently inadequate on these grounds alone.

Amnesty International is particularly concerned with the lack of procedural safeguards protecting prisoner's rights once they are in custody. Suspects in the Occupied Territories may be held incommunicado for long periods of time, with no notification of arrest given to the prisoners family or legal counsel. Several months may pass before a lawyer's first interview with his or her client, and the medical examinations provided for prisoners are cursory and do not furnish the solid evidence needed to protect the prisoner. These elements, taken together, create a situation in which ill-treatment can very easily occur.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called for an impartial, independent commission of inquiry into allegations of torture and ill-treatment but the authorities have so far not responded.

Abu Ein Defense Committee Urges Action

The Ziad Abu Ein Defense Committee (P.O. Box 1347, Chicago, Illinois 60690, Tel. (313) 327-9629) has an excellent new fact sheet out on the Abu Ein case, as well as postcards, petitions and "Free Ziad" buttons. The Committee is happy to announce that Judge Julius Hoffman has been removed from Ziad's case. Hoffman, who became notorious during the Chicago "Conspiracy" trial, was a record contributor to Zionist causes and has links to an arms manufacturing corporation in Israel. However, Ziad has another hearing coming up in February and public protest is necessary to prevent Abu Ein from being extradited to the prisons of the Israeli military occupation. The Committee urges concerned Americans to protest the intervention of the State Department in Ziad's case and to demand extradition proceedings be stopped by writing:

Secretary of State Vance
Department of State
2001 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

K. E. Malmborg
Office of Extradition
Department of State

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يـــا وحدنـــا ـ اوراق من تـــل الزعتر

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