

# Palestine Focus

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50¢

Summer 1992

## Editorial: Israeli Occupation 25 Years Is Enough!

June 1992 marks the 25th anniversary of the 1967 six-day war that began Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The same date marks the 10th anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which aimed at nothing less than the military and political annihilation of the Palestine Liberation Organization and thus of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Israeli government was also concerned about the strength of the Lebanese National movement, which indeed drove Israel from most of Lebanon.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), which publishes *Palestine Focus*, is also ten years old; our organization got its real start in mobilizing opposition to the bloody and unprovoked Israeli invasion and to U.S. government support for Israeli aggression. The issue of *Palestine Focus* that you hold in your hand marks another milestone, our fiftieth edition.

PSC activists are marking our decade of work for Palestinian rights. Building on the earlier work of peace and human-rights activists, we have participated in organizing countless demonstrations, delegations, speaking tours, film and slide showings, dinners, musical benefits, rallies, protests, vigils, postcard, letter, and telegram campaigns, coalitions, and other activities too numerous to list. We have raised and sent medical aid to the West Bank and Gaza. We have published and distributed books, pamphlets, brochures, flyers, and this newspaper. We have built grassroots chapters and affiliates in forty cities across the

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Women demonstrate in West Bank

## Interview with Raji Sourani

**"The major violator of human rights in the occupied territories is the occupation."**

*Raji Sourani is an attorney and director of the Gaza Center for Rights and Law. Since our last interview with him in 1986, he has been imprisoned by Israeli authorities; he was one of the first detainees in Ansar 3 prison in the Negev. Palestine Focus interviewed him in February 1992 in New York. Sourani was in the United States to receive the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, along with Israeli attorney Avigdor Feldman.*

**T**here have been a lot of recent developments in all aspects of life, particularly in human rights. Right now, all the violations of human rights by the Israeli occupation are still going on

day by day. And it is being extended to more categories. A daily curfew is still imposed on Gaza every day from 8 pm until 5 am. The expulsion policy has resumed, and we have two expulsion cases: the first included 5 and the second 12 people. Israeli authorities also have resumed administrative detention of Palestinians with increasing frequency. Demolishing houses has resumed, too; in the last three months, 23 houses were demolished.

After the Gulf war, Israeli authorities restricted workers from going to work in Israel. Out of 85,000 people in Gaza who used to commute, only 20,000 are now

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# FOCUS ON ACTION

By Todd May

In nearly nine months of work, the Palestine Solidarity Committee's (PSC) grassroots campaign, entitled Don't Pay for Occupation, has had three focuses: the issue of U.S. loan guarantees to Israel, April 15th tax day, and events around the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation. We are now in the process of summing up some important lessons learned through these efforts and are preparing for the campaign's next phase, which will take us through June of next year.

PSC members, chapters and affiliates generated letters of opposition to the loan guarantees from dozens of localities. Our educational work contributed to the growing opposition to U.S. funding of the occupation, and especially the resistance to financing settlement activity. Many PSC members, however, have noted that the struggle against loan guarantees has, at moments, put us in an awkward position. Our message is that the reason the loan guarantees are wrong is that they go to fund human-rights abuses, the violation of international law, and the repression of the Palestinians. In some places, however, there are people whose opposition to loan guarantees stems from an "America First" sentiment. As the debate about aid to Israel grows, it becomes increasingly urgent that we remain clear about the reasons we oppose the aid.

On tax day we held coordinated actions with the War Resisters' League. We view their participation as a significant step forward in bringing the issue of stopping U.S. aid to Israel to the peace movement at large. Along with WRL, more than seven PSC chapters did leafleting and bannered at post offices: San Francisco, New York, Boston, Chico, Sacramento, Modesto, Youngstown and other cities. As people dropped off their tax returns they received information about the use to which their tax money is being put.

The next focus of the campaign is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza on June 6. In addition to sponsoring public events, PSC is preparing an advertisement to be placed in community newspapers. PSC wants to let potential supporters know that there is opposition to funding Israeli occupation in their local area. We also want people to know that many in their community consider it an important local issue that touches on matters that are very close to home.

Although we can point to a number of successes in the campaign, we have been held back by the weakness in our outreach to other organizations. Historically, PSC has done better around events

Todd May is Chair of The Program Committee of the National Executive Committee of PSC.

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than around ongoing local outreach, although this is not the case with every chapter. Building ties with a broad range of people in our local communities is the only way to ensure the sustainability of the campaign over the long haul. Therefore, PSC's program committee has decided to encourage chapters to work on outreach over the summer. We propose that each chapter pick a sector of the community—for example, peace groups, churches, unions—and focus on developing a plan of outreach to that sector. PSC has ties with many of these constituencies at the national level and can help with contacts.

The fall will see a two-track approach to building the campaign. Student chapters can set up funding and sponsorship for a speaking tour of an activist from the occupied territories. At the same time, community-based chapters can get to know their local Congressional aides, as part of a lobbying effort that we hope to continue into the new Congress. We also plan to address Congressional candidates—both incumbents and challengers—through direct lobbying and through attendance at local campaign events, such as town meetings. The student and community aspects of our work are linked, of course. We hope the speaking tour will encourage people to join our ongoing lobbying efforts, and that the meetings with Congressional staffs and with Congress members will help us to see new avenues for developing the campaign.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1967 war in which Israel occupied Arab and Palestinian lands, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Don't Pay for Occupation Campaign sponsored a major national educational broadcast. The two hour round-table discussion entitled "25 Years of Israeli Occupation: 25 Years of U.S. Support" was held at the Martin Luther King Labor Center in Manhattan, and was produced and broadcast live over WBAI radio.

At a time in which energy for progressive causes around the country has been low, the PSC has been able to steadily expand our efforts through better coordination. We hope to continue this process into the fall and to take the lead in urging the next Congress to stop paying for the Israeli occupation. □

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This is the fiftieth issue of *Palestine Focus*, Palestine Solidarity Committee's national quarterly. This special issue focuses on the twenty-five years of the illegal and immoral Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. With this issue, we are moving to a new format — 8½ by 11 instead of tabloid — and changing our publication schedule to quarterly. We've designed this new format in response to numerous suggestions from our readers, and we hope it makes the *Focus* easier to read and easier for activists to use in their day-to-day work toward a just U.S. Middle East policy. □

Unless otherwise noted, photos are from *Palestine Today*, edited by Kamal Boullata, 1990.

### Palestine Focus

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Twenty-five years. A generation. For at least half the population of the occupied territories, their entire conscious lives. Imagine it.

Imagine you are a thirty-year-old woman in a rural village in the West Bank. Your parents worked in the olive groves owned communally for centuries. At the beginning of the occupation, the Israelis announced that any land for which there was no proof of ownership would be confiscated. But all the land was owned and worked communally; and the few existing deeds dated from the time of the Ottoman Empire.

Your family was lucky enough to retain ownership of an olive grove. You also produced vegetables and raised sheep. But then the Israelis began diverting water to agriculture in Israel. Your father was refused a permit to dig another well. The community became more and more impoverished. Despite having to pay taxes to Israel, few services were provided. There is still no electricity.

## INTIFADA CHRONICLE

By Sharon Rose

The confiscated land lay barren for many years. Then a group of Israelis, accompanied by armed guards, established a settlement. They built large houses and their own roads. Each day school buses carry their children back and forth to school in Israel. The 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 specifically prohibits the movement of settlers into occupied territories.

You're married and have five children. The oldest is fourteen. He has been arrested several times for participating in pro-PLO demonstrations. Recently Israeli troops uprooted three of your hundred-year-old olive trees. They said the trees were used for shelter by youths throwing stones.

When the intifada began, a group of women from the city visited to discuss forming a women's production cooperative. They argued that building the national economy must proceed on all levels. As much self sufficiency as possible must be achieved. After much debate and encouragement from the Unified National Leadership of the uprising, the village elders agreed that the project could proceed. Your cooperative now produces bread and bottled fruit juices. You've learned a lot about

organizing production and keeping records, and you enjoy the collective work with the other women. When a western journalist comes to visit, you can't understand why she views you as courageous. Through an interpreter you tell her, "Life is much harder now than before the intifada began, but I would never wish to go back to that time. I don't know why the Israelis have not yet learned that the more they repress us, the more we want to fight. No matter how long it takes, someday we will realize our dream of independence."

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Imagine you're a thirty-year-old man. You've lived in a West Bank city all your life. Your Dad worked in a Palestinian-owned business; your Mom worked at home, or perhaps as a teacher or in an administrative or clerical capacity for the Jor-



Palestinian women confront Israeli troops.

danian civil authority. When you were five, Israeli troops captured the town in the first days of the war. Some neighbors

and relatives fled to the east bank of the Jordan river. Some of them had been refugees in 1948 as well. But your family decided to stay in the home they had owned for several generations. Your uncle was studying in Europe then. He wasn't allowed to return because the Israelis refused reentry to anyone who was not living in the territories when they took over. He can visit, but he cannot stay in the country of his birth.

Israel set up the military administration still in control today. Soldiers patrolled everywhere. They bulldozed the houses of some detainees accused, but not convicted, of organizing resistance, forcing their families to live in tents provided by the Red Cross. The 4th Geneva Convention specifically prohibits collective punishment applied to an occupied population.

You saw groups of men rounded up and taken off in the backs of trucks. Some

never returned.

Arabic newspapers you read every day, like *Al Quds* and *Al Fajr*, have to submit their copy in advance to military censors, and some were permanently shut down. They are not permitted to reprint articles from the Hebrew press. Your teacher was arrested and accused of bombing a military post. The military court sentenced him to twenty years in prison after the prosecutor produced a signed confession. It was written in Hebrew, a language your teacher could neither speak nor read.

The business your Dad worked for shut down. Israeli restrictions prevented the owners from investing in modernizing the plant. That made it impossible to compete with the cheaper Israeli-made products flooding the West Bank market. Although a trained professional, the only job your

father could find was cleaning office buildings in Tel Aviv. The daily commute meant he had to leave home a five a.m. He didn't return until after eight in the evening. (West Bank Arabs are not permitted to remain overnight in Israel.) After graduation from high school, you joined the commuters. Although you hated it, with few other options, you took a construction job in Israel. You wanted to get married, but where could you live? Even if you could afford to build a house, the military authorities rarely issue building permits. So your family built an addition onto their home. You had a daughter and son, now eight and five. Last year the military realized that the addition on your home was "illegal." They bulldozed it.

But the members of your growing extended family, living in the same house you grew up in, are proud to count them-

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selves part of the "Samed"—the steadfast. They have endured the humiliation of occupation, and they have vowed to stay and struggle. Your older brother died in Ansar 3 prison camp because he was denied his hypertension medication. A cousin was shot by an Israeli settler. But then all the families you know have lost someone or have someone in Israeli prison. On February 4th of this year, Mustapha Abdullah al-Akawi, 35, from Jerusalem, died while under interrogation in Hebron Prison. His death occurred less than 24 hours after he appeared before an Israeli military judge showing marks of torture and complaining of severe beatings. You didn't know him, but you still feel his loss as if he had been family. You also feel the loss of your best friend who was expelled to Lebanon because he was a community leader. **Such expulsions directly violate the provisions of the 4th Geneva convention.**

You are not about to tell a foreign journalist the details of the organizational work you have been involved in over the years, but she can see you're proud to be part of the intifada. Despite your obvious fears, you speak with pride of your children ("children of the stones" you call them) who struggle to stay abreast of their studies in makeshift classes, interrupted by long weeks of curfew. Their two cousins lives are interrupted in another way. Every year they must leave the West Bank and go to Jordan because their mother was a Jordanian citizen when they were born. Neither she nor they are permitted to be permanent residents in the land of their birth.

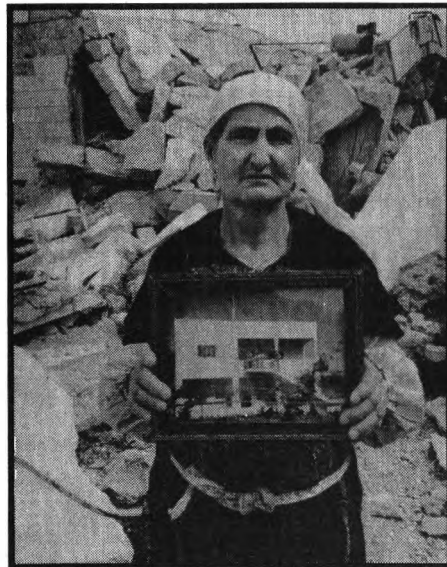
Since the Gulf War, you can only get intermittent work as a day laborer. The subsidy your family used to receive from a relative working in Kuwait no longer comes. He was forced to flee to Jordan. Now there is some hope that the Israeli authorities will make good on their stated intention to ease the restrictions on economic development in the occupied territories. Then perhaps you will be able to find a real job. You tell the journalist essentially what the woman in the village said.

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Imagine you've lived in a refugee camp in Gaza all your life. In 1948 your family fled there from Jaffa, where they had worked in the orange groves for generations. At first they lived in tents. These were later replaced with one or two room structures made of concrete, with tin roofs. A single water spigot serves hundreds of families. Open sewers run down the middle of the pathways between the rows of homes. Your earliest memories are of your

parents' constant struggle to prevent disease. And, when one of the children got sick, to get to the single UN administered clinic serving 50,000 people.

The first thing the Israelis did when they took over was bulldoze hundreds of homes to create wide roads for armored vehicles. The crisscrossing roads cut the camp into isolated units easier to control.



Palestinian woman in front of her demolished house.

The Israelis prevented further housing construction in the camp. Now three generations are crowded into your family's two room home. The walls hold photographs of your family's martyrs. You've never seen a home without such pictures. Your brother was imprisoned in the 1970s for leading a clandestine political group. He died of an untreated heart condition. Two years ago your sixteen-year-old son died of head wounds. The soldiers have orders to shoot on sight anyone with their face masked. Your son was masked and

painting graffiti. Recently you lost another child—through miscarriage when you inhaled tear gas thrown by soldiers to disperse a crowd.

You support the PLO and the Unified National Leadership. You don't think there is a fundamental contradiction between them. The recent 24-hour disappearance of PLO Chair Yasser Arafat led you, like Palestinians everywhere, to reaffirm national unity. Still, you would like to have a voice when major decisions are made. The historic compromise of 1988 was a bitter pill, but you are convinced it was necessary. Your family will never live in Jaffa again. But that is unimportant compared to the necessity of Palestinian self determination in an independent state.

You were skeptical, but allowed yourself a small ray of hope when the PLO agreed to the current "peace process," beginning with the Madrid conference last fall. That hope has grown fainter now. Yet the world has changed so drastically in the last few years. Israel's importance as a strategic ally of the U.S. has diminished. The intifada has empowered the Palestinian people. That cannot be changed. The Israelis are desperate to portray the intifada as over. They have even stated they will open Bir Zeit University, which has remained closed since 1987, claiming that they have the situation under control. On the contrary, you see it as a victory for the intifada's demand that the occupying army stop denying a whole generation its right to education.

The whole Gaza Strip is under curfew now (the beginning of April) after five people were killed and over 80 injured when Israeli Border Police and soldiers opened fire on a crowd trying to prevent the arrest of several young men.

You are steadfast. After all, do you have a choice? □

## THANK YOU

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Is the current clash between the Bush administration and Israel, highlighted by the denial of Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees for fiscal 1992, merely a family dispute that does not affect the structure of the U.S.-Israeli alliance as it has been in effect for some thirty years? Or does it represent a substantive change in U.S. Middle East policy?

Those who believe that no real policy shift has occurred point to the continuing annual flow of more than \$4 billion in unconditional U.S. aid to Israel. While expressing verbal opposition to Israel's settlement drive in the West Bank and the

a greater Israel must be abandoned" and that the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip must end. President Bush's implied criticism of the Zionist lobby in his September 12, 1991 press conference announcing his intention to request a delay of 120 days in considering Israel's loan was also unprecedented. Whereas U.S. policy posed a barrier to peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict from at least the mid-1960s until recently, the Bush administration has devoted considerable energy to convening the Madrid conference and subsequent negotiations despite the limitations and problems inherent in its approach.

change. Those who have regarded the U.S.-Israeli alliance as flowing from Washington foreign policy makers' conceptions of their strategic and economic interests in the Middle East and beyond are more skeptical because the Gulf War and the campaign to impose sanctions on Libya (restricting ourselves only to Middle Eastern examples) demonstrate that the imperial leopard has only slightly modified the color of its spots.

One of the more remarkable aspects of the current clash between the U.S. and Israel is that the reputedly all-powerful Zionist lobby has been utterly ineffective in opposing Bush administration policy over the last year. Congressional "supporters of Israel" mounted only a feeble effort to defeat presidential opposition to Israel's \$10 billion loan guarantee request. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* both editorialized in favor of Bush administration policy on the loan guarantees. In February Representative Larry Smith (D-Miami, FL) criticized Secretary of State Baker for persecuting Israel unfairly when he testified in support of administration policy before the House Foreign Operations subcommittee. Baker's rejoinder that Israel is the only country that annually receives billions of dollars in U.S. aid with no strings resolved the debate with public opinion solidly behind the administration. Many Jewish-Americans, including some large national organizations, support Bush on the loan guarantees though they may be uncomfortable about saying so publicly.

The notion that the Zionist lobby has somehow hijacked the U.S. political system and imposed on it a policy that is contradictory to U.S. interests as defined by the foreign policy elite is most improbable. Until recently, the overall aims of the Zionist lobby, even if not its every tactic and detailed policy position, have been in general accord with the policies of the administrations under whose watch it has risen to such prominence. This has been the fundamental source of the Zionist lobby's power. The reason that strong support for Israel has been so central to U.S. foreign policy since the 1960s is the strategic value of Israel to maintaining American hegemony, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the third world. The slogan that Israel was a U.S. strategic asset became publicly advertised only during the Reagan era. But this concept began to influence U.S. policy as early as the Truman era according to Michael J. Cohen's *Truman and Israel*. Because there was much debate about Israel's role among Eisenhower administration policymakers, relations with Israel were generally good,

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# U.S./Israeli Conflict: Is It Real?

By Joel Beinin

Gaza Strip, the Bush administration has not requested the kind of UN sanctions against Israel that it has rushed to impose on Libya despite the existence of some twenty Security Council resolutions condemning Israeli policy in occupied Palestine. The Bush administration designed the ongoing Arab-Israeli negotiations to accommodate Israel's basic positions: no involvement of the UN; no negotiations with the PLO; no negotiations with diaspora Palestinians; no recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination, no independent Palestinian state. Palestinian views were not accorded similar consideration. Moreover, there have been temporary differences between the United States and Israel before, resulting in "policy reassessments" and temporary suspensions of aid (during the Eisenhower and Ford administrations in 1953 and 1974) that did not alter the long-term trajectory of U.S. policy.

Those who believe that a real change is in the making point to Secretary of State Baker's challenge to the Zionist lobby as early as May 22, 1989, when he told the annual convention of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee that "the idea of

*Joel Beinin is professor of Middle East history at Stanford University and an editor of Middle East Report.*

*The conditions that created the strong U.S.-Israeli alliance have changed.*

These conflicting assessments of the significance of the clash between the Bush administration and Israel are linked to differing understandings of the historic motivations for U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Those who have viewed the Zionist lobby and its extensions—massive Jewish funding of the Democratic Party, the Jewish vote in key states like New York, Illinois, Florida, and California, disproportionately Jewish ownership of major corporate media outlets—as the primary factor in the formation of U.S. Middle East policy are more inclined to see the Bush administration's challenge to the lobby as a sign of signifi-

but not nearly as close as Israel desired. In the 1960s Washington policymakers embraced Israel wholeheartedly as a counterweight to the rise of radical Arab nationalism in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, much until August 2, 1990. As the Iran-Contra scandal revelations, the Pollard spy affair, and other such escapades have demonstrated, Israel's interests have not always been congruent with U.S. interests. Nonetheless, they were close enough so that the strategic relationship was maintained and deepened.

However, the conditions that created the strong U.S.-Israeli alliance have been changing. The relaxation of tensions between the United States and the former Soviet Union, the end of Cold War, the potentially destabilizing effect of the intifada on Arab states that are critical to maintaining the dominant position of the United States in the international oil market, and the need to sustain the alliance that the Bush administration constructed to fight the Gulf War have begun to alter the balance of forces that made Israel such a valuable U.S. strategic asset and have accentuated Israel's current and potential liabilities for U.S. policy.

Consequently, the Bush administration is now interested in distancing itself somewhat from Israel's rejectionist policies and would like to promote a resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict along the lines envisioned by Israel's Labor Party, that is, a settlement that will probably fall short of recognizing Palestinian national rights and in which the PLO will play at best a marginal role. However, it is limited in the extent to which it can do so by the weight of the historic relationship with Israel, including interests that remain in place such as joint development of Star Wars, sharing of intelligence and other matters of strategic cooperation, and the accumulated strength of pro-Israeli sentiment in public opinion.

The recent attacks on the Zionist lobby by Bush and Baker have been efforts to cut the lobby down to size and move toward a more normal relationship with Israel in which the alliance would still be in place but would be governed solely by consideration of U.S. interests (as defined by the Washington foreign policy-making elite) with fewer domestic political constraints. The Bush administration is therefore not a strategic ally of the movement for a just Palestinian-Israeli peace. But its current differences with Israel can nonetheless be used by the movement, and we should seek to deepen the cleavage between Israel and the United States without promoting illusions about the Bush administration's motives and objectives. □

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**Palestine Focus:** Tell us a little about yourself.

**Adam Keller:** I've been a peace activist in Israel since 1969, in various political parties and protest movements. They have all had basically the same idea—that there are two peoples living in this land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan river: the Israeli Jewish people and the Palestinian Arab people. The only way which is both morally right for ending the injustice to both of these peoples and pragmatically right for living in peace is to recognize the rights of these two peoples to self-determination. This could take many forms, but in the practice which has developed since 1967, this means two states more or less according to the 1967 borders.

I've been a member of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace since it was founded in 1976. Its purpose is to foster direct contacts between Israelis and Palestinians, specifically between Israeli peace activists and the PLO, with the intention of creating a channel of communication, with the hope that sooner or later this channel of communication will lead to official communication between the Israeli government and the PLO leadership, which is in fact now happening. In 1983, we decided to establish a regular English-language newsletter, *The Other Israel*, which would talk about our organization and the Israeli peace movement as a whole. I've been the editor, with one exception when I was in prison, since then.

**PF:** A little over a year after the Gulf war, has the Israeli peace movement recovered? Is it as strong as it was, and is it growing or contracting?

**AK:** Yes, the Israeli peace movement has recovered. After 1988, when the PLO accepted the UN resolutions, there was a mood of euphoria in the Israeli peace movement. Then, in the period of the Gulf crisis and the Gulf war, we found a great divergence between us because many Palestinians for all kinds of reasons supported Saddam Hussein—or if they did not support him in the occupation of Kuwait, they were opposed to the U.S. preparation for war against Iraq. Most of the people in the peace movement felt that you make peace with the Palestinians because we have to live with them and they have a justified demand for an independent state, but Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator and occupying Kuwait is unjustified by any

## Interview with Adam Keller The Israeli Peace Movement after the Gulf War

*When the question is "keep the territories or keep the American money," ... many people, even many Likud voters, would not keep them.*

standard. He is dangerous to the whole region, and the sooner he is disposed of the better. That created a very big division between us and the Palestinians.

But still, channels of communication were maintained in this very tense period. And these channels withstood a critical test—during the war the Israeli government arrested Sari Nusseibeh, who is now a member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks and put him under administrative detention without bringing any official charges. Unofficially they said it was because he had been spying for Iraq by relaying information about where the Scud missiles were falling so they could have better aim.

The government expected when they arrested any Palestinian during the war, when the Scuds were falling on Israel, when everyone feared that the next Scud would contain gas, and when there was a feeling of national emergency that brought

people together, that no one would raise a voice in protest. But in fact there were from Peace Now, and Mapam, Ratz, Shinui parties—which were supporting the Gulf War—demonstrations in support of Sari Nusseibeh. They said, if you have proof against him, put him on trial. Otherwise you should release him immediately. The result was that the government temporized by reducing his administrative detention from six to three months, which was quite an achievement in those circumstances. Very likely, if the government had gotten away with arresting Sari Nusseibeh, they would have arrested Faisal Husseini and the rest of the Palestinian leadership.

I was among the few people in Israel who opposed the Gulf war, even while it was taking place. We demonstrated in front of the American Embassy in Tel Aviv. At that moment we were a very small minority inside the peace movement. But even the people who were in favor of the war (even those who criticized Bush for not continuing the war), made a very clear separation between that and the fact that they were also continuing to be in favor of Israeli/Palestinian peace and continuing to stand up for Palestinians with whom they were in contact. This was very important also from the Palestinian point of view because it helped to reestablish the contacts.

**PF:** When we talk about Israeli peace activists, whom are we talking about?

**AK:** There are two very broad categories, which you might call moderate and radical, or mainstream and radical or perhaps Zionist and non-Zionist. Basically, you have on the one hand the people who are inside the establishment or on the fringe of the establishment. That is the Peace Now movement (as an extraparliamentary movement), which works closely with the doves inside the Israeli Labor Party, who comprise about one-third of that party and with three smaller allied parties: Mapam, Ratz, and Shinui.

Basically all these people are willing to make peace with the Palestinians but are always taking care not to go too far. What is going too far is dependent on circumstances. A few years ago, saying officially "let's talk with the PLO" would have been going too far. Now, since '88, the taboo on

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## Raji Sourani Interview ...

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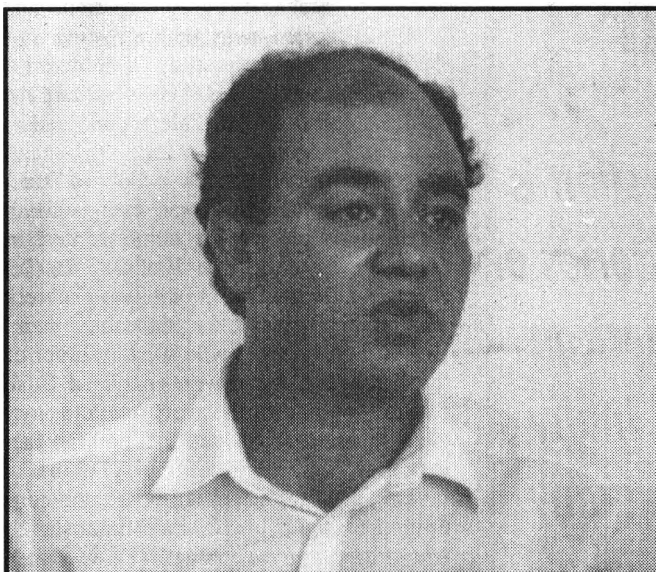
working. The economic situation in Gaza has therefore worsened, especially for the workers, in an incredible way. Unemployment is very high. At the political level, there is also deterioration. People who work in public politics are more subject to repression; the right of expression is more restricted and more limited.

The major political developments happened just before and after the Gulf war, in which the Israelis imposed a full 24-hour curfew for 43 days during the war on the

say right now that the support for the peace negotiations, especially since there have been no fruits or concrete results, has lessened.

### Inside the Prisons

The situation generally in the occupied territories is getting worse and worse at many levels. From the security point of view, they are arresting more people. Right now there are 17,000 Palestinian detainees inside Israeli jails, and the issue of torture is one of the basic issues aside from family visits. During the intifada, we had most recently the Mustafa Akkawi case, 34-years old, a cosmetic salesman, he died on February 4 as a result of torture by the Shin Beit officers. B'tselem, the Israeli human-rights organization, published many reports, especially in the last year, about systematic torture in Israeli jails. We, along with other Palestinian human-rights organizations, supplied them with information. This last case seems to show in a very obvious way that torture is going on systematically, and some



Raji Sourani

*Palastine Focus*

***In five years, if Israeli policy continues, no one will have any reason to discuss anything.***

people of Gaza and the West Bank. Later, there was a sort of depression and frustration among the people about the current peace talks. Palestinians, in general, in the community in the West Bank and Gaza, were involved in a deep debate, but they agreed, finally even those who opposed the Madrid conference to have a democratic and national position on the meeting in order to strengthen the demands of the Palestinians for self-determination and independence.

Right now there is a sort of shift among the Palestinian people about support for the peace negotiations after the Madrid meeting and after two rounds of negotiations in Washington. As a result, I would

pay with their lives.

We in the Gaza Center for Rights and Law last year adopted many torture cases, and we intervened and filed complaints. An Israeli committee investigated torture inside the Israeli interrogation departments. They recommended immediate closure after hearing testimony from some of those who were tortured, but, in practice, none of their recommendations were adopted or respected.

Concerning the situation inside the jails, it is very bad. Palestinian detainees are fighting to achieve minimum rights, which is not rights of political detainees according to the international conventions, but rather to have the same status as Israeli

common law detainees, criminals. Until now they haven't achieved this status, and they are fighting hard to achieve it. One of the major problems is that 7,000 detainees in Ansar 3 since the very beginning of the intifada have not received family visits although it is one of the most important humanitarian issues, which shouldn't be conditioned by any standard. They have not been allowed family visits, so mothers, wives, or children cannot see their husbands, fathers, sons.

This issue has been a subject for struggle all the time. In June 1991 there was a hunger strike after the detainees failed to achieve results. The Red Cross took a public stand on this issue and cut their relations with the Israeli military authorities as a means of pressing them to permit family visits. Just last December family visits were allowed again, and they began with tens of people, just a small number of detainees managed to have family visits.

### The Economy

Concerning the economic situation, it is a matter of waiting day after day. One-quarter of the income in the occupied territories used to come from Palestinians who used to work in the Gulf states and Kuwait. By expelling or deporting thousands of them, many lost their income in the occupied territories. This loss was a major factor in the deterioration of the economic situation. In addition, more than 70 percent of the people who used to work in Israel have been restricted and thus not allowed to go there for work. So they lost their incomes; they lost their jobs and are unemployed now, which brings more hardship for the economic situation inside the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli civil administration spoke about a plan to give a sort of economic assistance to the occupied territories. Actually, this plan was completely cosmetic. It was just a sort of dirty game they attempted. They were speaking about nothing at all serious. Taxation still exists, and we pay the same taxes as Israelis. There's no chance to compete effectively with Israeli industry or agriculture. We are not allowed to export any of our products from the occupied territories to Europe, although we do have an agreement to do so. The Israelis have restricted it to be just symbolic. The economic situation is very bad.

### Settlements

Just recently there was a new settlement in the Gaza Strip. From the human rights and political point of view, it is a

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# The PLO, Israel, and the International Community 25 Years of Occupation — 25 Years of Resistance

By Maha Giacaman Khoury

**O**n June 5, 1967, Israel occupied the remaining parts of historic Palestine: the West Bank and Gaza, after instigating immense provocations that led to the outbreak of the 1967 war. Born and raised in the West Bank, I was a witness to the 1967 war, lived part of the occupation, and shared the hopes of all the Palestinian people that one day very soon, with the help of the international community, the occupation would end. We were confident that the international community would not remain silent and would take action in face of this illegal action.

For occupation is not only deemed illegal by international law, it is also defined as an act of violence and aggression by the United Nations. It is in direct violation of the principles of the UN Charter and the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Twenty-five years have elapsed, and the Palestinian people are still waiting for the international community to take concrete measures to bring about justice and peace by ending the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory of the West Bank and Gaza.

*Maha Giacaman Khoury is a counselor at the Palestine Mission to the United Nations in New York.*

***The will of the international community was systematically blocked by one superpower: the United States.***



Confrontation in Gaza

In the meantime a lot has happened in 25 years. Israel, the occupying power, has practiced the most vicious and brutal conduct ever to exist, ranging from mass and random imprisonment of Palestinians to demolition of homes as a form of collective punishment. Our children have been arrested as political prisoners, tortured, beaten, and killed. Our land has been confiscated; currently it is estimated that 65 to 70 percent of the West Bank and Gaza have been taken. Roughly 255 Israeli settlements are inhabited by about one-quarter million Israeli settlers. Settlement activity continues in a dangerous attempt to change the demographic structure of the occupied West Bank and Gaza by making its Palestinian majority a minority. These activities are in direct violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Our schools and universities have been closed, either officially by a military order or unofficially by placing army roadblocks on the roads leading to it. In this way the Palestinian educational system has been brought to a halt, again in violation of one of the basic principles of human rights: the right to an education.

Blanket curfews have been imposed for long periods of time, creating enormous problems, particularly in health conditions for many Palestinian families. Hundreds upon hundreds of Palestinians were killed at the hands of the occupying power, Israel. Some were shot with live ammunition or rubber bullets. Some died from tear gas inhalation, beatings, torture in prison,

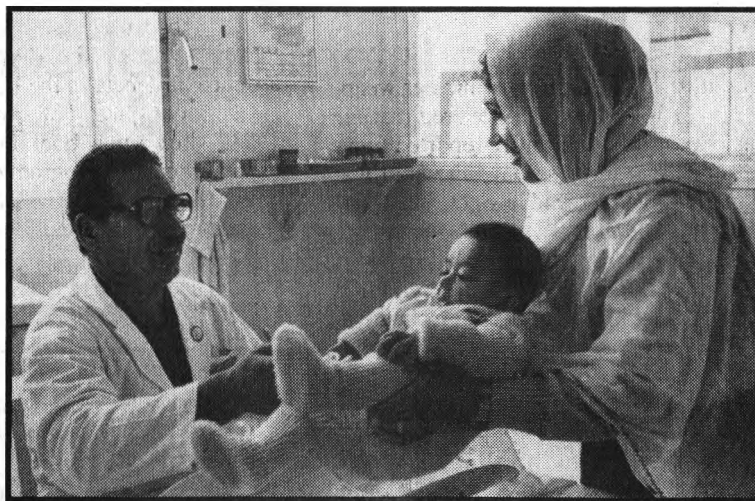
or by summary executions in the street. Family were displaced and rendered homeless.

Amidst all this suffering and pain, Palestinians sowed the seeds of hope, hope to achieve justice and peace. With determination, we practiced our right to resist occupation, foreign domination, and colonialism, as stated in the UN Charter. We organized ourselves in the diaspora and at home. We built a mass movement, an organization, and then the provisional government of Palestine in exile. Palestinians living under occupation formed popular committees that are an integral part of the resistance movement. All told, the collectivity of our resistance and organizing over the years amounted to our past and future, our pain and joy, our support system and security, our democracy and our podium for debate, our differences and unity, our children and women, our politicians and diplomats, our culture and heritage. In essence and humanity, we are determined to continue our existence as a nation led by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The PLO achieved observer status at the United Nations in 1974. Approximately

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40 UN Security Council resolutions have been adopted since 1967 to deal with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Eleven of these deal with building illegal settlements and with confiscation of Palestinian land. Resolution 465 of March 1, 1980, for instance, deemed the building of settlements in occupied Palestinian territory as illegal and called for their dismantling. However, Israel, the occupying power, has not abided by any of these UN Security Council resolutions, all of which are binding.



Children's health clinic in West Bank

In November of 1988, as a concrete result of our intifada, the Palestine National Council proclaimed the

independence of the State of Palestine and took the initiative to propose a mechanism

for achieving a just and lasting peace in the region. The PNC called for an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and parties of the conflict, including the PLO on an equal footing. Subsequently, this initiative was brought up in the UN General Assembly and was adopted almost unanimously with the United States and Israel in opposition.

Time and time again, the United States has vetoed action-oriented resolutions in

regard to Palestine. Since 1972, the U.S. government has vetoed 16 UN Security Council resolutions, all of which requested the Security Council to deal effectively and take concrete measures either to put an end to violations by Israel, the occupying power, or to provide protection to the Palestinian people living under occupation. It is important to mention that Israel, with its long history of violations and its refusal to abide by any of the Security Council resolutions, has never been subject to the provisions of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter as in the cases of Iraq and Libya.

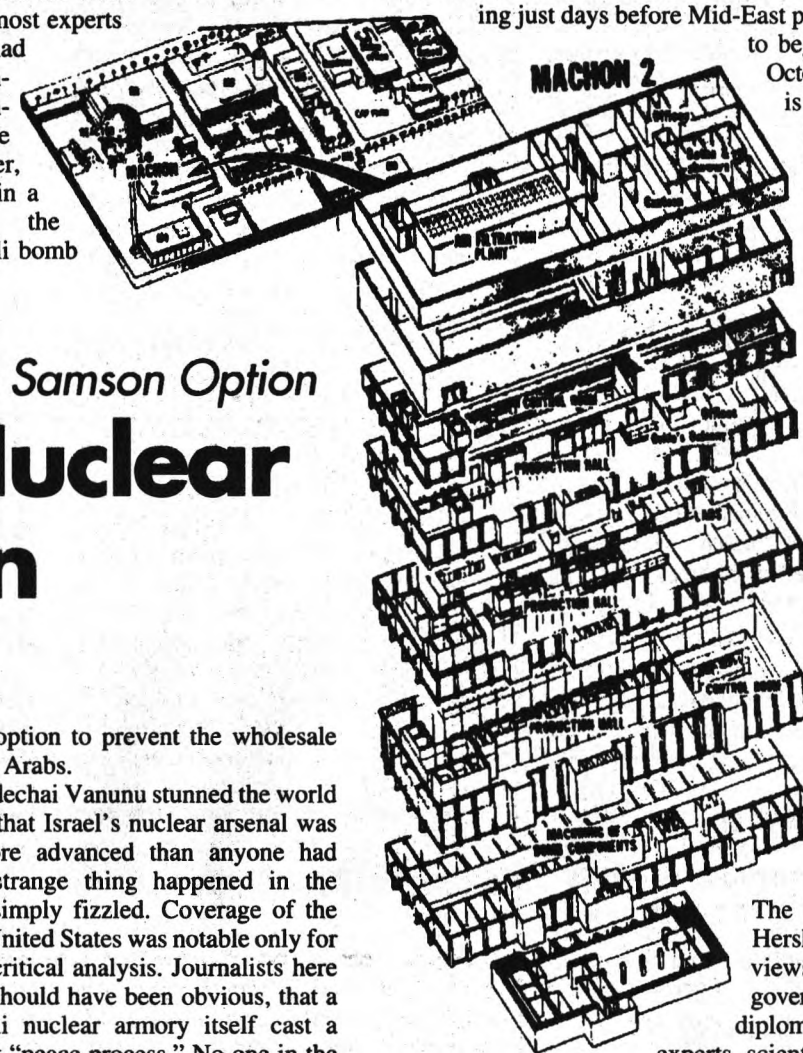
Needless to say, the Palestinian people are denied independence and practice their right to self-determination (as recognized by United Nations) or even international protection not because of lack of support from the international community. Rather, the will of the international community was systematically blocked by one superpower, the United States. This situation raises the question of the democratic interrelationships of countries and the sovereignty of nations within the UN body. That issue needs to be tackled immediately.

The paradox, therefore, lies in the difficulty the U.S. government has in accepting the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause, the right of self-determination and independence for the Palestinian people. It is high time for the United States, as a major player in the current negotiations, to come to terms with these realities and to join the international consensus in endorsing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and in recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The United Nations should be part of the peace negotiations and should not be muzzled. Then and only then will a genuine and lasting peace be achieved in the region. □

By Mark Gaffney

When I set out to research Israel's nuclear weapons program in 1986 I soon discovered that the issue was one of the most under-reported news stories of our time. In those days the cold war was still raging—with no end in sight. The focus of most military experts continued to be the Soviet threat in Europe. Meanwhile an arms race was escalating out of control in the Middle East. For the first time Syria and Iraq had deployed missiles, possibly loaded with chemical weapons, capable of reaching targets in Israel. These stories were widely reported in the West.

By the mid-eighties most experts also believed that Israel had a few nuclear bombs-in-the-basement. Occasionally journalists even spoke openly about the matter, but always they did so in a manner conveying the assumption that an Israeli bomb



## Seymour Hersh's *The Samson Option* Israel's Nuclear Deception

was strictly a last resort option to prevent the wholesale slaughter of Jews by rabid Arabs.

Then in late 1986 Mordechai Vanunu stunned the world with irrefutable evidence that Israel's nuclear arsenal was much larger and far more advanced than anyone had guessed. Whereupon a strange thing happened in the United States: the story simply fizzled. Coverage of the Vanunu revelation in the United States was notable only for its absence of depth and critical analysis. Journalists here chose not to notice what should have been obvious, that a large and growing Israeli nuclear armory itself cast a shadow over the Mid-East "peace process." No one in the US media dared to raise the basic question: what if Israel, emboldened by Jericho missiles and neutron bombs, should simply choose intransigence instead of territorial compromise in return for peace? Such dark thoughts needed to be aired and discussed in 1986, but no one in the U.S. media then or in subsequent years would print or speak them—even if he dared to think them—because the subject was simply taboo.

This was in contrast to Europe, where Mr. Vanunu became almost a household name. But here the government position was that Israel did not possess nuclear weapons. And so the well-heeled U.S. media took its cue from the official denials and toed the line by steering away from probing questions and anything that might embarrass the administration. As more than one editor told me: "We don't

cover it because our readers aren't interested. Period." Which explains the domestic vacuum, the near total absence of debate in the United States.

This conspiracy of silence was shattered only in late 1991, when a new book by Seymour Hersh about Israel's nuclear weapons program dropped like an over-ripe plum. *The Samson Option* was the fruit of nearly a decade of research. Mr. Hersh told me that he first opened the Samson file many years before, while writing *The Price of Power*. That account of the Nixon-Kissinger years won Hersh the National Book Award.

The *Samson Option* continues in the same vein of excellence. Even the book's release was well-timed, coming just days before Mid-East peace talks were set to begin in Madrid last October. Though Hersh is not trained in nuclear physics, to ensure technical accuracy he was coached by nuclear weapons experts at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington. And to the author's credit — despite an opaque subject — the book reads very well.

The book's main concern, however, is not technical detail, it is the human dimension of this important story. *The Samson Option* is not so much about nuclear bombs as it is about the men who built them, and why.

The book draws from Hersh's many interviews with former U.S. government officials and diplomats, retired CIA experts, scientists and numerous Israeli sources. This depth of first-hand source material distinguishes *The Samson Option* from previous synthetic accounts. For the first time key individuals are on record, affording the reader an unprecedented inside look at how Israel's nuclear agenda helped shape the U.S.-Israeli special relationship and the current Middle East environment-in-crisis. Eyewitness accounts also enabled Hersh to go beyond previous speculations and fill in major gaps in the historical record. The result is a loosely organized book of hologram-like chapters that reconstruct how Israel got the bomb while the U.S. government looked the other way. At times the story is as riveting as a thriller novel.

It is a deeply disturbing book. Sections describe in

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**PSC** Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) is a national grassroots organization working for Palestinian rights and to change U.S. government policy towards the Middle East. Many Americans have responded to the tremendous upsurge of the Palestinian intifada and now question the United States' role in the Middle East. PSC believes that the conflict in the Middle East is a key issue of global war and peace, of U.S. intervention and of justice and human rights. With other groups we are building a broad and growing movement for Palestinian self-determination. This issue is now an important component of the broader peace and justice movement. We need your support, and we invite you to join with us in working to advance the issue of Palestinian rights.

You can help build a grassroots activist movement which can organize for a just peace. Your political commitment, in the form of membership in PSC, will help achieve this goal. As a member, you will receive *Palestine Focus* and our *Members Update* which reports on the latest PSC activities across the United States.

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## Raji Sourani Interview ...

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major violation of human rights and international law, and even of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which adds more complications and more obstacles for the peace process.

So far, 43 percent of the land in Gaza has been confiscated for the use of 5,000 Israeli settlers. Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, 805,000 people live there. In Jabalya refugee camp, which is one square mile, live 70,000 people. So, controlling 43 percent of the land makes the situation intolerable and leaves no chance for expansion in construction or agriculture.

Besides, from the legal point of view, this land which was confiscated is claimed by Israel as state-domain land. But even state-domain land should serve the interests of the people. The land the Israeli military confiscates should be used purely for military purposes. This is not the case here. They are pouring in settlers to create political facts in the area. So the issue of settlements continues, alongside the peace negotiations. In five years if this policy continues, no one will have any reason to discuss anything. The facts will take over, and we will speak of a Palestinian minority living in the occupied territories.

### The Peace Talks

During the three days of the Madrid conference, the Israeli authorities imposed a total curfew in the occupied territories. They resumed demolishing houses; 11 houses were ordered to be demolished. There were mass arrests, including administrative detention. Afterward, expulsions resumed, and settlements resumed after the peace conference opened in Madrid.

All these issues, in an objective way, on the ground do not reflect, along with many other actions, any good faith on the part of the Israeli authorities toward the peace process. Even when Shamir spoke in Madrid, and people heard him explain why they were under curfew, he didn't even recognize the rights of the Palestinian people as a people. He didn't recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. He was rigid and rude to the Arab delegations. The opportunity for Israel in Madrid was incredible. It was the first time in 43 years that they had the opportunity to sit and pursue their dream, which they lived for, to sit with Arab neighbor states. Instead, they demonstrated, and Shamir spoke about false history.

Anyway, the negotiations resumed in

Washington as did the collateral talks. The Israelis raised procedural problems and refused to talk about substance. The Israeli delegation spoke afterward to the Palestinian delegation in a clear-cut way about rights of minorities, about forgetting the right of self-determination and independence, and about autonomy—which excludes land, security, and water—in brief, about Israel wanting to obtain legal and political cover for the occupation. They are not interested in achieving real serious progress with the Palestinian people.

More than that, Israel is saying, Shamir is saying that Judea and Samaria, which are the West Bank and Gaza, are part of Eretz Israel or the land of Israel. Israel right now is imposing facts by building settlements but not yet annexing the land. Israel has no constitution, and at the same time, Israel is the only country in the world which does not have defined borders.

### The Gaza Center for Rights and Law

The Gaza Center for Rights and Law is the only human-rights center in the Gaza Strip. It is affiliated with the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, which is the same status as al-Haq in Ramallah. We prepare documentation on all aspects of violations of human rights in Gaza. We also give legal advice, and we make interventions. We give legal aid. We cover the Gaza Strip, and we also deal with human-rights conditions in the occupied territories

## Israel's Nuclear ...

Continued from page 11

detail how Israeli leaders routinely lied to U.S. officials about their nuclear plans; how U.S. experts sent to inspect the Dimona reactor were repeatedly fooled by an elaborately contrived pattern of deception; how Israeli leaders signed a heavy water contract with Norway they had no intention of honoring; how Israel evaded U.S. and international laws setting up front companies in Europe and Latin America to procure illegal uranium ore and high-tech equipment useful in developing nuclear weapons; how the Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard passed top-secret U.S. satellite photos to Israel, photos that enabled Israel to target Soviet cities with nuclear weapons; how Israel used U.S. foreign aid to

generally. But our main work is in Gaza.

We were established in 1985. In the last year, we have increased both the quality and quantity of our services and information. In the past year we dealt with many cases to try to highlight human-rights violations in the Gaza Strip. We have been receiving 20 to 25 delegations a month of visiting scholars and others interested in human rights in Gaza.

### The Robert F. Kennedy Human-Rights Award

Such an award is not personal. It goes to give legitimacy and recognition to the cause we are fighting for. The major violator of human rights in the occupied territories is the occupation. We are fighting against the occupation. We accept the right of self-determination, and independence is a major goal for us. For me, as a Palestinian, I think this award goes for all those who are fighting and working to achieve this goal, especially for all those who work for human rights in the territories.

At the same time, for someone like Avigdor Feldman, my corecipient of the award, it gives a sort of legitimacy in the Israeli community. Such people used to be excluded and targeted. So, to be recognized in this way is very important for them and gives them a kind of support. For us, it means a sort of good protection for the Palestinians who work in this field. Human-rights activists are targeted, even me personally, and subjected to arrest, interrogation, and administrative detention. So such an award will help us in continuing our work. □

underwrite nuclear weapons research; how Israel's leaders resorted to nuclear blackmail during the 1973 Yom Kippur War; how the vast expense of Israel's nuclear agenda wrecked the Israeli economy—and much more.

Though Hersh's writing style tends to be soft-spoken and non-judgmental, his latest book is a damning account—by any standard—and is required reading for everyone concerned with nuclear disarmament and/or Middle East peace. Indeed, activists should now take up the issue in earnest and challenge the nuclear double standard that continues to poison American politics. □

Mark Gaffney is the author of *Dimona: the Third Temple?*, a 1989 study of Israel's nuclear program published by *Amana Books*. He currently does field work for *National Audubon Society*.

One of the fruits of the intifada and the Gulf war has been an outpouring of writing. The first wave of books on the intifada has passed, and now the second wave is breaking on our shores. In this wave, more detailed history and analysis of the struggle is presented. Except for the instant histories churned out in the first months of the Gulf conflict and with the special, excellent exception of Bennis' and Moushabek's *Beyond the Storm* (See *Palestine Focus*, no. 47), few books about the Gulf war have come to print before now. While this list of books below is not comprehensive, their excellence is striking and encouraging.

### The Intifada

*Living the Intifada* [Andrew Rigby, Zed Press, 1992]

Andrew Rigby, a lecturer at the University of Bradford, has produced the first critical history of the Palestinian uprising, now in its fifth year. Although a Gandhian by upbringing, he avoids the trap that many nonviolent activists fall into of condemning any kind of possibly violent responses to violence. He begins the book with an analysis of the background to the intifada, reaching back as far as the Revolt of 1936-1939. Grandfathers in the refugee camps in the West Bank proudly remember this rebellion, which confounded both British and Jewish settler military forces. Rigby clearly identifies the pattern of inter-family rivalries which ultimately condemned this rebellion and the Palestinian resistance in 1948 to ineffectiveness. He discusses

how both Israelis and the Arab regimes used these divisions to keep the Palestinians powerless in the period up to 1967. The intifada swept away the last vestiges of this traditional leadership inside Occupied Palestine.

Rigby clearly lays out the structure of the intifada. First comes the face of the intifada most outsiders think of, the confrontations. Second is the structure of health care and the medical response to repression. Rigby then moves on to the struggle over education and devotes a substantial portion of the book to the economic portions of the intifada, both the

efforts to build a Palestinian economy and the Israeli response to it. One of the victories of the intifada was to challenge the international image of Israel, and the media strategy of the Palestinians is cov-

# GETTING IT ALL IN FOCUS

By Bill Hofmann



Women and children of Beit Sahour preparing for a peace march with Bishop Tutu. Penny Rosenwasser/Voices from a "Promised Land."

ered in some detail. He also describes the response of the Israeli peace movement to the intifada. *Living the Intifada* is an accessible yet scholarly work which doesn't hesitate to discuss the problems of the intifada along with its triumphs.

### The Gulf War

*War After War* [City Lights Review, Nancy J. Peters, ed., City Lights Books, 1992]

The first round of written response to the Gulf war was overwhelmingly political. The need for explanations and analysis

was clear. However, a captivating element of the resistance in the streets to the war was the creative element. Activists in San Francisco will remember an affinity group of musicians in whiteface on tall stilts and collectives of artists with huge masks and puppets which brought a strong visual component to militant resistance.

City Lights Books, for years a center of creative engaged publishing, dedicated their annual review to an examination of the Gulf war. Published, appropriately enough, on Tax Day 1992 it is, in the words of editor Nancy J. Peters, "a forum for thinkers, writers and artists who are part of a dynamic community of dissent and resistance." It opens with an experiential essay by *Palestine Focus* contributing editor Hilton Obenzinger and a history of the Gulf by editor Steve Goldfield. The moves moves on with a wide collection of art and writing, both traditionally and nontraditionally political, from a diverse group of contributors, from Alan Ginsberg

("Just Say Yes Calypso") to Noam Chomsky, to performance artist Karen Findlay, to novelist Maxine Hong Kingston. The list of contributors is overwhelming, as is the collection's sheer creative energy.

Another book on the subject is the recently published *A Just and Lasting Peace: The U.S. Peace Movement from the Cold War to Desert Storm* by Roger C. Peace III. The book is a good resource for anyone seeking a chronicle of post-World War II peace activism. Write to The Noble Press, Inc., 213 W. Institute Place, Suite 508, Chicago, IL 60610.

### Peace Activism in the Face of the Occupation and War

*Voices From a 'Promised Land': Palestinian and Israeli Peace Activists Speak their Hearts* [Penny Rosenwasser, ed., 1992, Curbstone Press]

*Walking the Red Line: Israelis in Search of Justice for Palestine* [Deena Hurwitz, ed., 1992, New Society Publishers]

These two books, at least on the surface very similar, fill two very different needs for activists for a just U.S. Middle East policy. Penny Rosenwasser, a producer and broadcaster at Pacifica radio station KPFA in Berkeley and special

Continued on next page

events coordinator for the Middle East Children's Alliance, has done an important service in *Voices from a 'Promised Land.'* Her book, a compilation of radio interviews made during several trips to Israel and Occupied Palestine, effectively humanizes the many different sides of the issue. Not a theoretical work in any way, it has a very direct activist focus in each of its interviews.

From conversations with Veronika Cohen, an Orthodox Jewish woman who has organized Palestinian-Israeli dialogue groups, to interviews with Michel Warschawski and Roni Ben-Efrat, two Israeli Jews who have served time in Israeli prisons for their journalistic efforts in support of Palestinians, Rosenwasser focuses on their concrete, day-to-day efforts, and on the hopes and feelings of these divergent elements in the peace forces in Israel. One particular element that makes this book valuable is its abundance of interviews with Palestinian activists from the occupied territories. It is rare indeed for Palestinians to be allowed to speak for themselves to an American audience. Rosenwasser provides a valuable range of interviews, including interviews with a Palestinian Israeli woman activist, Nabila Espanioli, and interviews with many Palestinian women activists. These interviews are very much contemporary and topical. They are "newsy," and definitely betray their origin as news feature pieces, but this very attribute makes them accessible.

#### *Walking the Red Line: Israelis in Search of Justice for Palestine*

Deena Hurwitz, a Middle East program staffperson with the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, California, and a staffperson with the Middle East Witness program, has compiled a very different book. While it also has a personal touch that is often missing from compilations of essays (a biography and photo precede each essay), it is a serious effort to present a spectrum of political discussion, including both the personal and the analytical, which represents the Israeli peace movements. This book has special value because of its effective elaboration, through the choice of essayists, of the strong distinctions between the different forces in the Israeli peace movement.

Compiled after the Gulf War, the repercussions of the Gulf War both on the Israeli peace movement and on Palestinians is a common theme of this book. Essays by both explicitly religious and explicitly Zionist authors effectively elaborate both the range of opinion and limitations of the mainstream, Zionist portion of the Israeli peace movement. A special treat

#### *Besieged: A Doctor's Story of Life and Death in Beirut* [Dr. Chris Giannou, 1992, Olive Branch Press/Interlink]

June is not just the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. It is also the tenth anniversary of the second Israeli invasion of Lebanon (the first was in 1978). June 6, 1982 was the beginning of "Operation Peace for Galilee," a brutal invasion spearheaded by then Defense Minister, now Housing Minister Ariel Sharon. It was also the beginning of the American peace movement's hesitant willingness to address the issue of U.S. policy in the region. The nightly news coverage of Israeli bombardment of Beirut put the first chink in the armor of Israel's image as the David of the region, facing down the Arab Goliath.

The war was replete with horrors. But when one speaks of the horrors of the Israeli invasion, one horror stands clear. Late in the evening of September 15, 1982, Israeli troops surrounded two small Palestinian refugee camps in West Beirut: Sabra and Shatila. They allowed their allies, the proto-fascist Phalangist militias, into the camps, where under the light of flares provided by the Israelis, they massacred or kidnapped more than 3,000 Palestinians. This horror sparked an official investigation (and cover-up) and massive demonstrations in Israel. It was the beginning of the end of Israel's occupation of most of Lebanon (Israel still occupies a "security zone" in southern Lebanon).

Throughout the region, foreign medical volunteers work alongside their Palestinian and Arab counterparts, struggling to provide both basic health care and emergency medical services to

is the inclusion of a powerful essay by the Israeli Druze author, Salman Natour, and an interview with Rev. Canon Riah Abu el-Assal, a Palestinian Christian cleric living inside Israel. Too often when American activists speak about Israelis, the substantial minority of non-Jews living in Israel become invisible, with the equation of Israeli equals Jew. A series of articulate pieces by radical activists like Stanley Cohen, a South African-born professor at Hebrew University and Roni Ben-Efrat, activist and editor, are excellent both for their lucid analysis of challenges facing activists, and of the limitations of the Israeli peace movement.

poor refugees. Dr. Chris Giannou, a Canadian surgeon, worked with the Palestine Red Crescent Society in southern Lebanon during the Israel invasion. In October 1985, he asked to be posted to Shatila camp's small hospital.

*Besieged* is the story of his 27 months in Shatila camp. It is a personal account of the War of the Camps, the struggle between the Syrian-supported Amal militias and Palestinian forces. It is an account of the great sacrifices that Palestinian refugees make in their struggle to maintain. It is also a gripping account of the ingenuity and sacrifices of Giannou and his Palestinian coworkers. Unlike the doctors of M.A.S.H., Giannou was in the middle of the war zone. A major portion of the book is a description of day-to-day life before and during the 134-day siege of Shatila camp, the preparations and the improvisations of dedicated people. For this reason alone, *Besieged* is a worthwhile and riveting account. Giannou also, through stories and anecdotes, does a better job than any other author I've encountered in explaining the complexities of Palestinian and Arab factionalism. Shatila Camp was a microcosm that reflected the Palestinian refugee experience. In a 200-yard by 200-yard area lived 3,500 Palestinians, members of all factions both in and outside of the PLO. He describes one family as the "epitome of the Palestinian political 'stew': the father the leader of the pro-Syrian Saiqa, the wife an officer of DFLP, and the son a fighter with the Arafat loyalists." Through the siege, however, the members of all the factions were thrown together, and most rose above political differences to unite around their shared Palestinian identity. □

**Also worthy of notice** is the new issue of *Middle East Report*, which focuses on "Palestine and Israel in the New Order." The special issue brings together reports from Palestinians and Israelis and provides a provocative discussion of the opportunities and perils confronting their societies and a probing look at the implications of U.S. policy in the region. *Palestine Focus* readers can have this special issue free with a one-year subscription at 25 percent off the cover price. Send \$20 to MERIP, 1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 119, Washington, DC 20005. □

## Editorial ...

*Continued from page 1*

United States. We have not been alone. Other organizations have taken up similar projects and worked with us. The Gulf war finally made Palestinian rights a mainstream issue in the peace and social justice movement in the United States, weakened though it is now.

We are proud of our achievements, but we are also aware of how much remains to be done. Above all, we recognize that the 25-year-old occupation continues, with its torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions,

## Adam Keller Interview ...

*Continued from page 7*

the explicit reference to the PLO has been removed.

Another issue which divides moderates and radicals is the question of whether to refuse military service in the occupied territories. Peace Now has always taken the position that although you may be opposed to the occupation, you should obey orders because the orders are given by a democratically elected government and by disobeying these orders you will subvert democracy. The other argument is that when you are in the occupied territories themselves, it is better that you are there rather than a right-wing soldier and you could, by your presence, ameliorate the situation a little. That's not a 100 percent false argument from my point of view. Still I refused to serve in the occupied territories, and I went to prison because I refused to serve in the army altogether.

That is the position of Yesh G'vul, which is part of the more radical peace movement. In addition to the soldiers are the Women in Black, human-rights groups like Women for Political Prisoners, and Workers Hot Line, which helps workers from the occupied territories.

**PF:** What impact have the Ethiopian and Soviet Jewish immigrations had on peace activism?

**AK:** The immigration has not had a major impact on the peace movement, but it has had many effects generally on Israeli society. The Palestinians felt very threatened, which is very understandable. On the other

hand, the Israeli government saw the immigration as a great opportunity to accelerate the settlement activities. But both the fears of the Palestinians and the hopes of the Israeli right wing were a little premature. The basic effect of the immigration wave is to sharpen the great economic and social crisis in Israel. Israel does not have the resources to absorb these people.

In 1992, Israel was refused \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees to finance its accelerating program of constructing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. More peace talks are planned, but conditions for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza have deteriorated sharply and no

hope for genuine peace is presently on the horizon. The normal \$4 billion in U.S. aid to Israel continues to flow and feed the forces of Israeli intransigence as it finances the continued occupation.

One-quarter of a century is much too long to suffer occupation and the accompanying denial of national and political rights. And U.S. government financing of occupation through U.S. aid to Israel has also gone on for much too long. PSC's Don't Pay for Occupation campaign continues. We are determined to organize opposition to occupation and U.S. funding. In this election year, our national leaders must be made to answer for their actions. □

purely moral reasons. We could show until the next century that occupying the Palestinians is ugly, horrible, morally corrupting, and so on. Still, we would get the support of some intellectuals, of some good-hearted people. The majority would say "as long as it is working, as long as we get profit out of it, why not?"

To get the majority to support relinquishing the territories, we need to show that it is in their selfish interests. I don't think the U.S. got out of Vietnam because it was immoral to continue the war, but because most of the American people were sick and tired of the war. The same is true of Israel in Lebanon. The cost of remaining in Lebanon was too high for the average Israeli, and the average Israeli felt relieved that Israel withdrew. The same is true for the occupied territories. The peace movement as a whole represents about 10 or 15 percent of Israeli people. And the hard core of the right wing—the settlers in the occupied territories, the people who are politically committed to "greater Israel"—are also about 10 or 15 percent of the Israeli population. The majority is in the middle.

They are very pragmatic, and they could shift one way or the other. I include in this group most of the voters of the Likud Party, who have nothing in principle against Israel keeping the occupied territories. They don't even call them occupied territories, but Judea and Samaria. But you could say that they are fair weather hawks. They would like to keep it, as long as the price is not too high. But when the question is keep the territories or keep the American money, keep the territories and have economic crisis, or give up the territories and have economic recovery, then I think that many people, even among Likud voters, would not care to keep them. □

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Peace Now demonstration.

That means that Israel has to get very much help from outside. When there are political strings attached to this help, such as with the loan guarantees, I think it is making it possible for the peace movement to say "you have to choose—either immigration or the occupied territories—they don't go together."

**PF:** So where is the Israeli peace movement after 25 years of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza?

**AK:** The terms of reference in Israel are basically that we can't hope to convince the majority of the Israeli population by moral arguments. In this, Israelis are no better and no worse than any other people in the world. In every given population, only a minority will do something for



# Questions for Candidates

By Bill Hofmann

National elections are approaching, and we at *Palestine Focus* thought that candidates for national office should be asked where they stand on important issues of human rights and peace that face national leaders.

1. *Should recipients of U.S. foreign aid be held to minimal standards of human and political rights, and if so, why do we ignore consistent violations by our top recipient of aid: Israel?* Background: Israel routinely censors Palestinian media, tortures Palestinian prisoners, holds Palestinians for months without charges, and denies Palestinians any basic human, civil, or political rights.

2. *Do you oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons? Since the United States is a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and since U.S. law prohibits aid to any country which is in violation of this treaty, why do we ignore Israel's widely-acknowledged stockpile of nuclear weapons, even as we help the United*

*Nations remove Iraqi nuclear capability?* Background: Israel has even helped other countries, such as South Africa, develop nuclear capability.

3. *What should be the role of the United Nations in the post-Cold War world? President Bush, with almost universal support of the American political establishment, used the UN as a forum for condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Later he used Security Council resolutions as justification for the U.S.-led intervention in the Gulf. Should we apply all Security Council resolutions about invasions with equal force? Is the United Nations the appropriate venue for peace negotiations and discussions of the illegal Israeli invasion and occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan Heights (condemned in UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338)?*

4. *In a world in which political intransigence is falling out of favor, should we be rewarding Israeli intransigence? If South Africa has legalized and contemplates sharing power with the African National*

*Congress, why does Israel refuse to talk to the chosen representatives of the Palestinian people: the PLO? Why does Israel refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the United Nations to resolve disputes and ignore UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call for Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967?*

5. *What should U.S. leaders do about arms sales and arms technology transfer?* Background: Israel has long served as a silent partner in U.S. military policy both in the region and around the world. When President Carter was forced to remove military support for the corrupt Somoza regime in Nicaragua, for instance, Israel stepped in, shipping arms up the the last day.

You can ask candidates these questions at candidate's nights, on call-in talk shows, at personal appearances, or in one-on-one meetings with candidates, elected officials, or their aides. These questions can also be used by organizations which endorse candidates (such as Democratic clubs and labor organizations). In posing these questions, don't assume that the candidate will answer them *wrong*. They are all questions which any candidate who professes support for international justice and human rights should be able to answer in a positive way. They can also serve as talking points to be used to educate leaders about a just U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. □

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