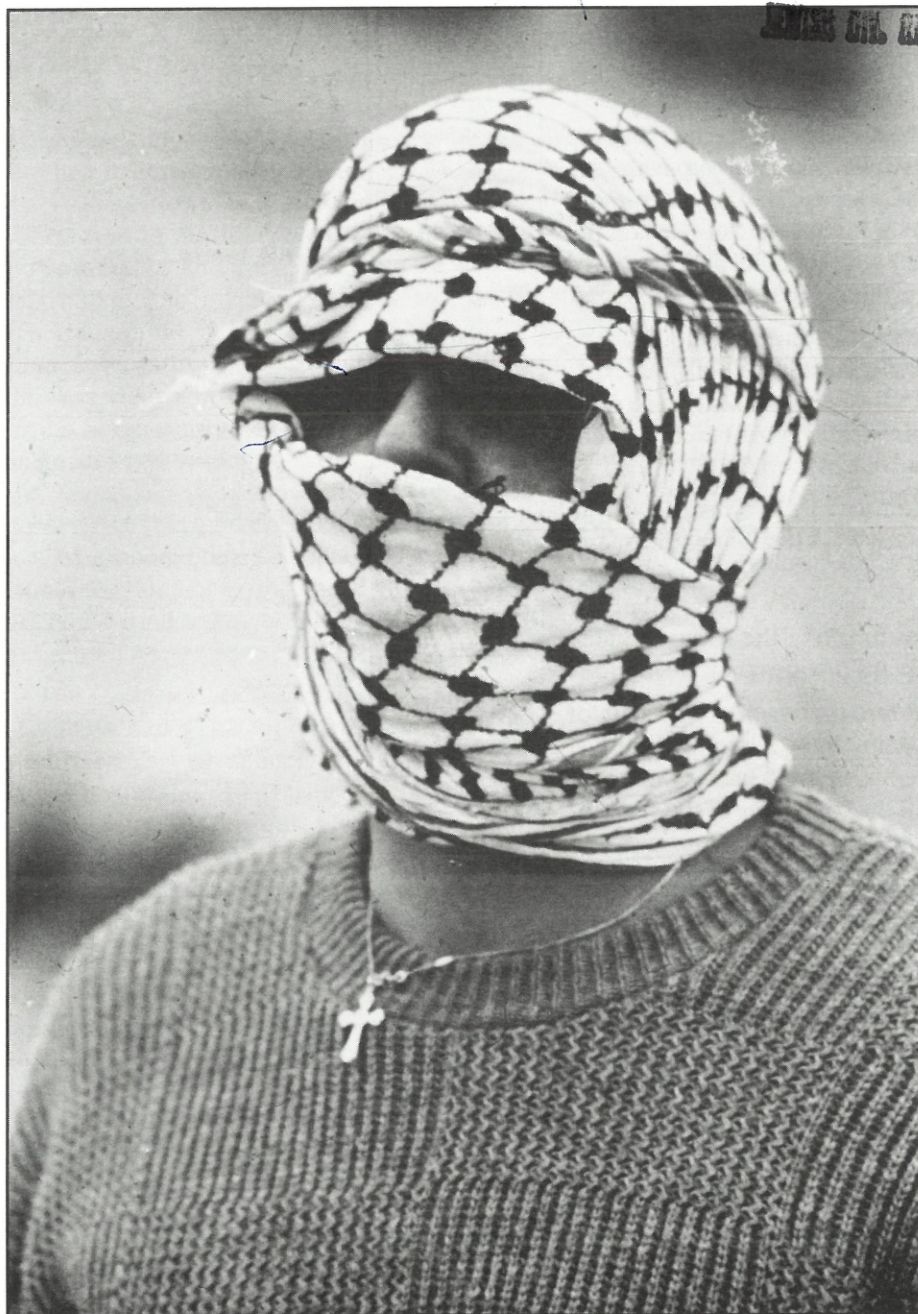


# Palestine Perspectives

Number 50

*The Magazine of Contemporary Palestinian Affairs*

Jan/Feb 1991



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JAN 11 1991

FEB 05 1991

## ☐ Brutalized in Jerusalem

Personal account by a British visitor to Jerusalem who inadvertently has a typical "Palestinian experience"—*page 3*

## ☐ Occupied But Not Conquered

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When it comes to Palestine, the international community gets paralyzed and impotent. The New world order speaks with a "forked tongue"—*page 10*

## INTIFADA ENTERS FOURTH YEAR

\$2.50

## The Jerusalem Massacre

**T**his editorial page has frequently warned that the Israeli occupation is not only oppressive but also life threatening. The Jerusalem massacre of October 8, and before it the Rishon Lezion massacre of May 20 are grim reminders that Israel's murderous behavior is a horrendous fact and not just a frightening possibility.

People usually think of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in terms of concepts such as security, self-determination, mutual recognition, peace conference and the like. But there is nothing abstract about the ordeal of the Palestinians under Israel's rule. People are killed and maimed; their homes are destroyed; families are disrupted. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are hunted outlaws in the Holy Land under the Zionist regime.

The world community by and large has become aware of the fact that the real issue is not Israel's existence but Palestinian national survival. The Palestinians have committed themselves to the proposition that the two are not irreconcilable. Israel's behavior indicates that it has not yet reached the same conclusion. The future of war and peace between Israel and the Arabs depends on who turns out to be right, the Palestinians or the Israelis.

The deeply rooted Zionist belief that the conflict in Palestine is a zero sum game is at the heart of Israel's Palestinian policy. Israel's attitude that its needs and Palestinian rights are mutually exclusive is the real cause of its insensitivity toward the Palestinians and its inflexible denial of their inalienable national rights.

From the beginning the Zionist intention was to live instead of the Palestinians rather than to live with them. As early as 1918, Chaim Weizmann described the indigenous people of Palestine as an obstacle in the Zionist path. In a letter to his son, the Zionist leader who later became the first president of Israel wrote that the Palestinians are "like the rocks of Judea must be removed." Dehumanizing the Palestinians justifies their negation.

The world community played an important role in triggering the chain of events which brought the Palestinians to this point. It owes them something. The Secretary General of the United Nations has pointed the way when he recently recommended to the Security Council the convening of the signatories to the Geneva Convention in order to consider ways of affording some international protection to the threatened Palestinians. His recommendations should be implemented without delay, and they should be the starting point for getting Israel off the Palestinians' back.

Of course, nothing short of self-government and national independence would assure the safety and the well-being of the Palestinian people. In this country this should be a self-evident truth, unless the Declaration of Independence was war propaganda and not a profession of political faith.

In the meantime, however, international protection from Israel's repeated outrageous behavior toward the Palestinians is an urgent necessity. The claim that international intervention violates Israel's sovereignty would be tantamount to condoning its occupation, and the claim that it has sole responsibility for administering the occupied territories would be tantamount, in view of its track record, to abrogating the Geneva Conventions.

Israel obviously hopes that its policies would close the file on the Palestinians and their national rights. Someone should explain to it the impracticality and the inadmissibility of final solutions. ☐

## Palestine Perspectives

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**Palestine Perspectives** is a bimonthly magazine on Palestinian affairs published by Palestine Research and Educational Center  
9522-A Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031

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**Subscription rates:** \$15/year in the United States and Canada and \$25 elsewhere. Add \$10 to checks drawn on banks outside the U.S. Subscribers receive their copies by airmail.

*Signed articles express the views of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Palestine Perspectives or its staff.*

*"If Israel is serious about peace then this racist violence against a whole society must be stopped."*

## Brutalized in Jerusalem

*By Stuart Young*

*This is the actual story of a British citizen of English-Jamaican ancestry who had his moment of terror, a "Palestinian experience" in Jerusalem. It is reprinted from Al-Fajr Palestinian Weekly of December 10, 1990.*

I am writing about a particularly unpleasant experience I had in Jerusalem's Old City on Monday, December 3. I was walking down Suq Khan al-Zeit, the Old City's main market, in the morning when I was grabbed by the arm and spun around by an Israeli border guard who then rammed his walki-talkie into my genitals, at the same time demanding something of me in Hebrew or Arabic which I did not understand. I was naturally shocked at such a polite gesture and told him very clearly in English that I do not speak Hebrew. At this he became furious and struck me a stunning blow across my head. I was reeling with the impact and very frightened. It told him again, very slowly and carefully, "I do not speak Hebrew." He became even angrier and smashed me about my head a number of times. I did not try to avoid his blows because I could see this would only make him more determined to hurt me, and I tried again to tell him calmly that I do not speak Hebrew.

The street was as usual full of people, mostly Palestinians who stood and watched, horrified but powerless to help me. My attacker's two uniformed companions were standing in between with their M-16 rifles at the ready. There was, however, a group of Christian pilgrims who had just stopped to pray at the Seventh Station of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa, where Jesus is said to have walked with the cross to his crucifixion.

My assailant dragged me up a side street away from these possible witnesses and continued to beat me about the head, spit in my face and butt me on the forehead. I kept trying to tell him I did not speak Hebrew, but this only seemed to make him more angry and I was beginning to think he would not stop until I was very badly injured. Luckily, one of the English pilgrims came to my rescue. He managed to explain to my assailant's friends that I spoke English with an English accent, and was in fact English. The two guards told their companion and he stopped immediately, obviously very confused.

I understand now why he attacked me. One of my parents is from Jamaica, the other from England. Many Palestinians in Jericho and the Jordan Valley are of African ancestry, dating from a disbanded Ottoman regiment who settled in the region

*"My experience was only a taste of why Palestinians fear and revile the border guards, police and army."*

a few hundred years ago. My attacker had obviously thought I was a cheeky Palestinian and so acted accordingly. My experience was only a taste of why Palestinians fear and revile the border guards, police and army.

When I went to lodge an official complaint at the notorious "Kishle" police station at Jaffa Gate, I spoke to an officer named Victor, of Indian-Jewish origin. Victor said he was sorry that it had happened and that "it should not have happened...even to an Arab." Sensing my reaction, he quickly added: "I mean there are some good Arabs and some bad Arabs."

Around a year ago the president of the British Black Lawyers Society, who is of Sri Lankan origin, was detained at a demonstration of peace activists. The Israeli police refused to believe he was not a Palestinian and had not stolen his British passport and subjected him to a deeply humiliating interrogation. I have spoken to other Black visitors who also tell of aggressive, humiliating and degrading treatment at the hands of the Israeli government, when they are mistaken for Palestinians.

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*One army officer described it as "beating them so hard they'll stop hating us."*

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In my case, I suffered a perforated eardrum and a very sore head. Had I reacted differently and tried to defend myself, I could easily have been shot and killed. As it was, complete non-violence did not save me from a savage beating.

I find less than credible the argument that the border guards are under a lot of stress or indeed have to react strongly to maintain control over the Palestinian population. During my five months in the region I have seen the Israeli military routinely use extreme force to brutalize the Palestinian population into submission. One army officer described it as "beating them so hard they'll stop hating us."

I feel lucky. I had an advantage which saved my skin. All Palestinians do not. If Israel is serious about peace then this racist violence against a whole society must be stopped. I was lucky—I have an embassy and a government to pursue my protest and help me get justice. Ordinary Palestinians are not so lucky. □

## Occupied But Not Conquered

By Vince Beiser

It is the second night of Simhat Tora. The massacre on the Haram was only a few days ago. The Old City of Jerusalem has been flooded with soldiers all day long. A police truck fitted with water cannons, a huge rectangular insect with giant malevolent antennae protruding from its reinforced head, prowls the area between Damascus and Herod Gates of the ancient walled city. By nightfall, the soldiers are still everywhere, but there is not a single Palestinian in sight. The massive army presence has intimidated them off the streets, effectively confining them to their homes. Now Israeli Jews can feel safe walking through the Muslim Quarter on their way to the Western Wall for the Simhat Tora celebration.

Music and singing from the direction of the Wall can be heard all over the otherwise silent Muslim Quarter. I walk down the narrow, cobbled surface of Al Wad Road, passing squad after squad of bored soldiers, until I reach the Western Wall plaza.

The entire area is packed with festive Israelis, waving flags, singing and dancing around in circles to boisterous music from a band up on an elevated stage. They are having a wonderful time, on the other side of the wall where 21 people were shot dead and hundreds injured only a few days earlier.

The scene is surreal, and very disturbing to me. It is as though the Israelis have finally conquered all of Jerusalem and subdued its Arab residents and could do with them what they pleased. They can kill 21 Palestinians one morning and the next day force the rest of them to swallow their pain and anger and stay off the streets so that the Israelis can celebrate while dried blood is still spattered all over the paving stones.

I suddenly see Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the settler leader who was sentenced to five months for killing a Palestinian and now free after having served only three and a half months, being hoisted up and carried like a hero on the shoulders of a group of dancers. Flags are waving, people are singing, Levinger is grinning a broad and

delighted grin. I look at his face, at the Wall, at the dome of Al Aqsa Mosque behind it. I make my way through the crowd out of the plaza, start walking back through the Muslim Quarter along Al Wad Road.

I am walking just behind two yeshiva students, approaching an intersection at which four soldiers are standing around idly. Suddenly a shower of stones clatter down from somewhere up above. The yeshiva boys and I scurry for shelter in a doorway. The soldiers bark commands at each other, cock their rifles, flatten themselves against a wall, and shout and jabber in a walkie-talkie. I picture a group of Palestinian kids up on the roofs, throwing these heavily armed soldiers into a commotion with a few stones, and I find myself laughing.

No more stones come down. I continue on my way, leaving the soldiers as they began to search the area under the admiring gaze of the yeshiva boys. I am feeling much better, my mood much brightened by the small but eloquent act of defiance I have just witnessed. Despite water cannons and endless armed patrols, despite Levinger and massacres, the Israelis haven't conquered Jerusalem. *There is still hope where it's easier to occupy than to subdue and conquer*, I thought. □

Vince Beiser is a Canadian freelance writer living in the West Bank

### Justice Under Attack

The latest report on the state of justice in the world has just been published by the International Commission of Jurists. The report, titled "Attacks on Justice: The Harassment and Persecution of Judges and Lawyers," covers the period from July 1989 to July 1990. It includes a substantial section on the sorry state of Israeli "justice."

The report begins with a brief introduction, excerpted below, and lists the names of 13 Gaza Strip lawyers who "along with 80 others" have been prevented from meeting their clients. It also describes various forms of harassment—including arrest, travel restriction, the confiscation of files, and beating. One lawyer, who had been invited by members of the U.S. Congress, was prevented from traveling to the U.S.

#### Israeli Injustice

The detention without charge or trial of Palestinian lawyers in the Occupied Territories, as well as the general restrictions on the right to counsel, are of particular concern. In the past twelve months, tens of thousands of Palestinians were arrested in connection with the *intifada*, while an estimated 3,000 served periods of detention without charge or trial. Administrative detention orders can be issued by the Minister of Defense or a military commander if they believe that security reasons so require. Since August 1989, each order can be issued for a maximum of 12 months, but can be renewed indefinitely thereafter for further periods of up to 12 months.

Thousands of other Palestinians were tried by military courts. An ICJ [International Commission of Jurists] Mission of Inquiry into the Military Court System, which published its findings in December 1989, found severe shortcomings in the procedures used by these courts, including the lack of effective access to counsel. Detainees may be prevented from seeing an attorney for up to thirty days, at which point access is virtually at the discretion of military prison commanders. The Mission also found a "denial of adequate facilities for attorney visits at military prison camps." The Mission of Inquiry found similar problems in the military courts, including the "denial of adequate time for the preparation of a defense," as well as the frequent use of "quick trials." Lawyers in the Occupied Territories have repeatedly gone on strike to protest these and other deficiencies in the legal process. □

## RESISTANCE AND REPRESSION TURN MORE VIOLENT

As the new year approached, and as the world's pulse quickened in fearful anticipation of a looming military conflict in the Gulf, the Palestinian uprising against Israeli colonialism entered its fourth year. And it happened amidst signs that the pressure gauge of the Arab-Israeli conflict is rising.

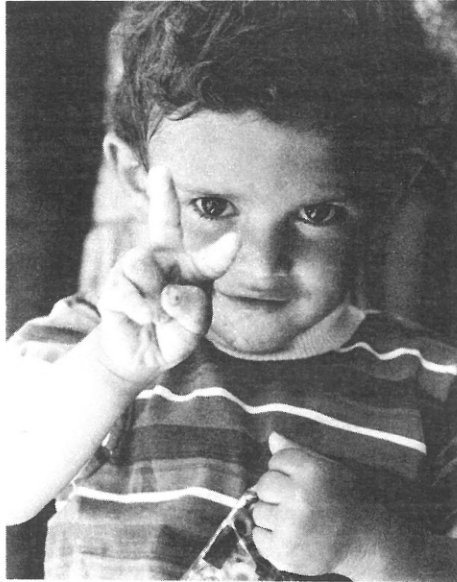
After two outrageous mass killings of Palestinians, first in Rishon Lezion in May and then in Jerusalem in October, the spiral of violence reached new levels. Paralysis in the Security Council, ironically caused by an actual U.S. veto after the Rishon Lezion massacre and by the threat of a U.S. veto after the Jerusalem massacre, has frustrated efforts to give the captive Palestinian community some form of international protection from Israeli violence.

To make matters worse, Washington opposed a nearly universal view that the crisis in the Gulf does not justify doing nothing about the problem of Israeli occupation of Arab lands. The Palestinians increasingly felt that their plight was being degraded from an issue which needs to be resolved to an unwelcome nuisance to be ignored. Their martyrs remained unavenged, and their survivors remained unprotected.

### *The Deluge*

In the meantime, the massive influx of Soviet Jewish colonists, subsidized by the U.S. government, continued to feed the Palestinians' fear for their future. In the midst of war hysteria generated by the military build-up in the Gulf, these developments proved to be an explosive mixture. The Palestinians increasingly felt the need to defend themselves, and the Israelis doubled their efforts to subdue them.

The result was a new peak of violence in which scores of people were killed in the closing months of 1990. And the new year was christened with blood. Four Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops on the first day of 1991, an ominous warning to those who believe that ignoring the Arab-Israeli conflict is the proper way to deal with it.



*Many of the victims are children*

### *Fatal Logic*

Israel's Palestinian policy is driven by a self-defeating, and perhaps, a fatal logic. It is a relic of the discredited colonial legacy that some peoples can be made to submit to the rule of others. That is why Israel's rulers have never been able to free themselves of the fallacy that the Palestinians are moved to protest its occupation by agitators.

During the first few weeks of the intifada, Israel's leaders believed that the Palestinian pro-democracy movement could be subdued. They called it "riots" and "disturbances," and they predicted its early end. After more than three years and 900 fatalities, one would think that they would understand the overpowering appeal of liberty. □

### *Analysis...* **The Palestinians and the Gulf Crisis**

The crisis in the Gulf hit the Arab world like a thunderbolt. It also faced it with an assortment of unpleasant choices, not to speak of the prospect of a devastating war and a chaotic aftermath.

In this country, highly publicized scenes of pro-Iraqi expressions in occupied Palestine have been used to propagate the simplistic and misleading view that for the Palestinians it has been easy to take sides in this conflict. Nothing, of course, can be farther from the truth. For the Palestinians, Arab-Arab conflicts are always problematic; but the conflict in the Gulf is particularly costly and traumatic. The Kuwaitis are Arabs whom they don't want humiliated, and the Iraqis are Arabs whom they don't want destroyed.

At first, the Palestinians tried, in cooperation with other Arab parties such as Jordan, to contain the conflict and to limit the fallout by keeping it a domestic Arab dispute. It is unfortunate that stronger and more influential parties, Arab and non-Arab, chose to internationalize the conflict and to escalate it to a world military confrontation. The conflict was injected with new dynamics by introducing new issues which go beyond the occupation of Kuwait. Preparations for war preempted diplomacy, and the problem of Kuwait was superseded by calls for the emasculation and perhaps dismantlement of the Iraqi state.

Israel and its "friends" in Washington led the war parade and played a pernicious role in changing the conflict from one over Kuwait to one over Iraq. Israel and its friends couldn't care less about Kuwait; what troubled them was the fact that Iraq emerged from its war with Iran as a major regional power and as a challenge to Israel's military hegemony in the region.

The Palestinians, and many others in the Arab world, have no interest in the perpetuation of a status quo in the Middle East which ensures Israel's military superiority, and the arrogance and intransigence it encourages. What the Palestinians cheer is not the occupation of Kuwait, but the emergence of an Arab deterrence to Israel, without which there can be no just peace for them.

# Israel Claims Palestine's Water

## Ministry Calls Occupation Agricultural Necessity

Water, we wrote in the September/October issue of *Palestine Perspectives*, will be the next issue in Arab-Israeli relations. "Israel's refusal to withdraw from the West Bank," we said, "is motivated to a considerable extent by its desire to keep control of the West Bank water resources..." We also said that "Israel's invasion of Lebanon, in 1978 and again in 1982, and its refusal to withdraw are partly motivated by its plans to tap the waters of Lebanon's Litani River which the Zionist movement, even before the establishment of Israel, wanted to be the northern boundary of the Jewish state."

We also pointed out that now more than ever Israel will resist peace with the Arabs, which would require it to withdraw from the occupied territories, because it is facing water shortages caused

by over exploitation and the influx of massive immigration. We quoted a spokesman for Israel's water authority, Mekorot, describing Israel's water problem as "catastrophic."

### Dry Facts

Now, Israel's Ministry of Agriculture uses newspaper advertisements to justify continued occupation of Palestine. In a full-page advertisement titled "The Question of Water: Some Dry Facts," published in *The Jerusalem Post International* (August 18, 1990), the Ministry of Agriculture says that Palestinian control of the West Bank would have "an immediate and significantly detrimental effect on the Israeli water supply." It would constitute "mortal dangers" for Israel, the Ministry says, and it "would, in a most tangible way, endanger her continued existence." The advertisement

concludes, in effect, that peace with the Palestinians (because of water, not security threats) destroys Israel. It says: "It is difficult to conceive of any political solution consistent with Israel's survival that does not involve complete, continued Israeli control of the water and sewerage systems, and of the associated infrastructure, including the power supply and road network, essential to their operation, maintenance and accessibility." And of course the land is essential to accessibility to all of that!

### The "Magic Words" Fallacy

Once upon a time, it was fashionable to suggest that peace with Israel was a matter of uttering "magic words." The notion derived from the mistaken belief, encouraged by Israel, that Israeli expansionism was motivated by security considerations. The Zionist movement, however, never made a secret of the fact that its land grab had nothing to do with the Arabs. It had to do with the perceived need to run away from Europe, for "the ingathering of the exiles." The dispossession of the Palestinians followed.

The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture says that even if Israel finds agreeable Palestinians with whom to make peace, the kind of peace which safeguards Israel's interests, who guarantees the behavior of a future leadership? What if Palestinian refugees from Lebanon and elsewhere return to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and they want water? "Relinquishing control over Judea and Samaria," says the Ministry, "will leave Israel without any legal, moral or practical means to prevent the repatriation of almost a million Palestinian residents in refugee camps in surrounding Arab countries, whether by their own free will or by forcible 'transfer' by their reluctant Arab 'hosts.' Such a wave of poverty-stricken humanity would generate an impossible strain on the already over-extended water supply and inadequate sewerage system, endangering even further Israel's vulnerable and fragile source of life."

If the Palestinians have what Israel wants or needs, in other words, Israel has the right to grab. That was how Israel came into being in the first place, and that is why magic words do not work. □

## The Reconstruction of Emmuas

*In the September/October issue of Palestine Perspectives, we published an item on the Swiss-based Association for the Reconstruction of Emmuas, one of three Palestinian villages destroyed by Israel after the 1967 war. It has been called to our attention that the Association has a U.S. chapter, and we encourage our readers to contact it for further information.*

### Dear Editor

Thank you very much for publishing a notice about the Association for the Reconstruction of Emmuas in the September/October issue of *Palestine Perspectives*. Your readers will recall that the town of Emmuas was bulldozed by the Israeli army after the June 1967 war and its inhabitants were expelled. Emmuas is the spot, according to the testimony of Luke, at which Christ appeared to two of the disciples after the resurrection.

The Swiss-based Association has a U.S. chapter whose address is given below. Members in seven states have written to Congress on behalf of the people of Emmuas. Also, the Muslim caucus here in Texas has passed a resolution supporting the ex-residents right of return which was sent to Secretary Baker and Senators Bentsen and Gramm.

Those who have never written to their representatives in Congress about the Palestine question and who are interested in Emmuas are especially encouraged to write to me for further information and sample letters so that in these difficult times our efforts may continue.

**John Taylor**

U.S.A. Coordinator

Association for the Reconstruction of Emmuas

P. O. Box 100652

Fort Worth, Texas 761

## SANCTIONS SHOULD BE USED AGAINST ISRAEL

As the world busied itself with the emerging post-cold war "new world order," Israel was busy fending off challenges to its old medieval order. As the rest of the world celebrated the retreat of coercion in the relations of nations, and as it worked to universalize the sovereignty of the law of nations, Israel fought the new dawn and worked furiously to keep it away from its midget empire.

Twice last year, in May and then in October, the truth was brought home to Israel's Palestinian subjects that not only is their freedom denied, but also their lives are endangered under Israeli rule. The massacre of October 8, 1990 in Jerusalem, because it was only the most recent, confirmed what we have warned against many times on these pages: that the Israeli occupation is not only oppressive but also life threatening.

### *The Cover-up*

The Israeli authorities could not and did not deny that the horrendous massacre had occurred. There were too many witnesses and many video films of the gruesome act. When a denial was not possible, Israel had learned from past experiences, a white-wash would have to do. It appointed a commission of inquiry.

The Zamir commission did what was expected of it. *It blamed the victims.* The police acted in self-defense, it reported, when it was attacked by stone-throwing Palestinian protesters in Haram Asharif, who also threatened Jewish worshipers at the Wailing Wall below. The report only faulted the police for not being sufficiently prepared to be able to cope with less force.

Palestinian eye witnesses said otherwise, and their testimony was later confirmed by the investigations of Palestinian and some Israeli human rights

groups. Their reports were later confirmed by video films taken at the time by foreign journalists and tourists.

### *What Really Happened*

On the morning of October 8, a group of Jewish religious fanatics known as the "Temple Mount Faithful" planned to assemble on the grounds of the Haram (the Holy Sanctuary), one of Islam's holiest sites. They also planned to carry with them what they described as the corner stone for the Third Temple which they said they wanted to build on the site of the mosque, which was to be demolished.

Muslim and Christian holy places in Jerusalem have been targeted by Jewish fanatics often before, and the new threat was taken seriously. Enraged Palestinians, Muslim and Christian, streamed into the mosque to protect it. When they were ordered by the Israeli security forces to disperse they refused. The Israeli police fired at the protesters, killing one person and wounding several others. The protesters fought back with stones—plentiful due to the presence of a construction

site in the area—and the police began to shoot indiscriminately.

When the firing stopped, the mosque's yard was littered with the bodies of dead and wounded. The victims left bloody hand prints on the walls of the Haram, to remain after them as testimony to their ordeal.

A new cycle of violence began. Enraged Palestinians sought vengeance, and Israelis and more Palestinians died in subsequent conflict. More and more people despaired of a peaceful end to their endless ordeal, and the intifada appeared to be veering towards violent struggle against a most violent occupation.

### *Stalling at the U.N*

Protection for the people of Palestine became an obvious and urgent necessity. The Secretary General of the United Nations reflected the prevailing sentiment when he reported to the Security Council, at the end of October, that the Palestinians needed some form of protection from Israeli violence. He suggested convening the signatories to the Geneva Convention to develop appropriate recommendations. But the U.S. government, playing its traditional role of protector of Israel's misdeeds, stood in the way. The new world order failed its first test of authenticity. □

### *"The Purity of Jewish Arms"*

Israel wraps its history with a thick layer of myths. One of the most pretentious and misleading of them all is the myth of "the purity of Jewish arms." For too long, Israeli and Zionist publicists and "historians" claimed that the Jewish state uses arms only in self-defense, never against non-combatants, and always with restraint and much anguish in its soul.

This self-adulation, however, has nothing to do with reality. The Palestinians always knew, and those who care can now find out, that since its establishment in 1948 Israel has been and continues to be as one of its founders and former prime minister, Moshe Sharett, described it in his diaries: a savage state.

Its victims—from Deir Yassin to the Holy Sanctuary and all the massacres in between—testify to that. Now, the world has also become their witness.

Israel is still in the habit of blaming the victims; it still complains that by dying they "endanger its Zionist soul." But not much is heard anymore of "the purity of Jewish arms." It is true that "murder will out." □

## Langer Honored

**F**elicia Langer, the Israeli human rights activist who had devoted much of her legal career to the defense of Palestinian political prisoners, was honored for her work last December when she became one of the recipients of the Swedish "Right Livelihood Award." The award was established in 1980 to honor people who make outstanding contributions to the defense of human rights, peace, social justice and the environment.

In her acceptance speech before the Swedish parliament, Langer said "I am carrying in me the pain and the sorrow of the Palestinians, oppressed by the orders of the government of my homeland, a government which like its predecessors has betrayed our dead."

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat congratulated Langer on the honor she received. "Our Palestinian people," his message said, "will never forget your defense of their just cause and your defense of their prisoners and detainees."

Last year, Felicia Langer gave up her law practice and moved out of Israel, saying that lawyers have no role where there is no justice. She said that she had never been able to ensure due process for her Palestinian clients in Israeli courts [see story in *Palestine Perspectives*, No. 49, Sep/Oct 1990].

Under Israeli rule, Langer said in her acceptance speech, blood is spilled daily and "the Palestinians are a nation without protection." ☐

## Trees Felled By the Iron Fist

### *Israel's Economic War on the Palestinians*

**S**ince the beginning the intifada three years ago, more than 90,000 trees have been among the casualties of Israel's "iron fist" policy. These are fruit trees, which means that their destruction is economic punishment for the rebellious Palestinians. It denies them income and food.

During the course of the intifada, Israel has used a variety of economic pressures on the population of occupied Palestine. These include restrictions on the transfer of funds from abroad, including remittances from relatives, which for many Palestinian families are the principal source of income.

In its economic war on the Palestinians, Israel also used arbitrary taxation and heavy-handed collection methods, it prohibited workers to travel to their jobs, and it placed stringent restrictions on the marketing of Palestinian agricultural and industrial products.

The destruction of fruit trees is a most repugnant form of economic pressure. It cuts the food supply, and it adversely affects the environment. For a country which has taken credit for "making the desert bloom," Israel's war on trees in occupied Palestine is particularly ironic.

The following item on the destruction of trees in the occupied territories is reprinted from *Tanmiya* (#20), the newsletter of the Geneva-based Welfare Association:

#### *The War Against Trees*

**W**hile the preservation of Earth's forests and green cover has become a major global issue, the Israeli army is conducting a determined war against trees in the Occupied Territories. Almost every day brings a short notice in Palestinian newspapers under such titles as the following, culled from *Al-Quds* newspaper in late June and early July 1990: "Destruction of 15 dunums of olive trees," "Uprooting of date trees near the Shuja'iyyah Quarter," "Uprooting of olive trees in Anabta," "Uprooting of olive trees in Bidya," "1,000 trees uprooted in Kafr Na'meh and Ras Karkar."

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*Since the beginning of the intifada three years ago, more than 90,000 trees have been uprooted*

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In the past two years, army bulldozers have uprooted tens of thousands of olive, almond, citrus and other fruit trees, at a loss to Palestinian farmers of millions of dollars. In a monthly bulletin, the Committee for Land Research of the Jerusalem-based Arab Studies Society tallies the uprooting of trees as well as land expropriation and other agricultural issues.

The statistics for recent months tell an eloquent story: January 1990—1,697 trees uprooted, worth \$1.1 million; February—4,483 trees, worth \$2.3 million; March—3,156 trees, worth \$1.9 million; April—1,145 trees, worth \$0.67 million; May—2,552 trees, worth \$1.5 million.

The Israeli rationale for these actions comes under the rubric of "security": trees, the military authorities claim, provide cover for the stone-throwers. This scorched earth policy, however, is obviously punitive rather than preventative. *A Nation Under Siege*, a report published recently by watchdog agency Al Haq, draws its conclusions about the Israeli war on Palestinian trees: "As a form of property destruction unjustified by military necessity, it also constitutes a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention." ☐

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## In Brief

■ **BZU Detainees**—Birzeit University reports that 42 of its students and 4 members of its staff are still being detained by the Israeli occupation authorities. The real number could be larger, however, since the continuing closure of the university makes it difficult to keep track of the status of students and employees.

■ **Silenced**—The Jerusalem-based Palestine Press Service has been prohibited from the distribution of its "Daily Report" by the Israeli censors. The Report is a daily bulletin on events in occupied Palestine, and it is the main Palestinian source of information available to foreign diplomats and journalists stationed in Jerusalem.

■ **Human Rights Award**—Palestinian human rights activist Sha'wan Jabarin was one of the recipients of the 1990 Reebok Human Rights Award, recently presented in Boston.

Jabarin, 30, is a field worker for the Palestinian human rights organization Al-Haq, and he was given the award for his role "despite considerable personal risk" in monitoring and reporting on Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in the occupied territories.

■ **Intifada Casualties**—More than 900 Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops and settler vigilantes, and more than a hundred thousand were injured during the first three years of the Palestinian uprising. The intifada entered its fourth year on December 9, 1990. Also, the Israeli military authorities demolished or sealed about 1,650 homes and uprooted more than 90,000 trees.

■ **Shoot to Kill**—The Israeli Supreme Court upheld the army's orders to shoot masked Palestinian protesters on sight. After lengthy deliberations, the court rejected an appeal against the order by an army reservist, Yo'av Hess.

Israeli attorney Avigdor Feldman said that 144 Palestinian protesters were fatally shot under this "open fire regulation" while the appeal was being considered by the court.

■ **Cruel Punishment**—Israeli military prosecutors have been ordered by the Defense Ministry to ask for stiffer sentences, up to 20 years in prison, for Palestinian stone throwers. So far, maximum penalty has been 10 years.

Under Israel's apartheid system, the order affects only Palestinians and does not apply to Jews.

■ **Soldiers in Prison**—During the first three years of the Palestinian uprising, 127 Israeli soldiers, including 15 officers, spent a total of 4,155 days in prison for refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Israel does not recognize conscientious objection.

### Sniper-Assassins

Israel is using snipers to assassinate Palestinian political activists. The new policy escalates Israeli violence against the Palestinians and makes even more urgent the call for international protection for the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Palestinian sources say that, according to a new policy ordered by Israel's occupation army, snipers are stationed where they can target individual protesters who are then shot without warning or any attempt to apprehend them. The Palestinians say that it is a clear case of political assassination.

In the past, Israel used death squads, soldiers dressed in civilian clothes, to assassinate protesters. The new policy threatens to enflame an already tense situation in occupied Palestine.

■ **Druze Object**—There is increasing opposition to the conscription of Druze youth in the Israeli army. In December 1990, thousands of signatures were collected from the small Palestinian Druze community against service in the Israeli army.

■ **Weeding Out Goyim**—Israeli Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, demanded strict controls on Soviet Jewish immigrants to "weed out the goyim" among them.

Peretz says that 30-35 percent of such immigrants are "non-Jews" who enter Israel because they are married to Jews.

■ **Students Punished**—Six Haifa University students, five Arab and one Jewish, were suspended from their studies for celebrating the anniversary of Palestinian independence. *The Other Israel*, newsletter of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, reported that the charges against the students were that they "held aloft pro-Palestinian placards and chanted slogans against racism."

■ **Water Shortage**—Israel's need for Palestinian water is being used to justify continuing occupation. A number of Israeli hydrologists recently submitted a report to the government saying that Israel is using up its water resources 15 percent annually faster than they are being replenished.

*The Jerusalem Post International* said that it is "a cause for sober consideration by those advocating a return of the administered [i.e. occupied] territories is that no less than 40 percent of Israel's fresh water is derived from aquifers beneath the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

■ **Expulsion Imminent**—The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported in December that the Israeli government is preparing a plan for the expulsion of the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. The plan, prepared by the Defense Minister, the paper said, is "fully supported" by Prime Minister Shamir, and the expulsions "would start soon."

■ **Broken Families**—The Palestinian human rights group, Al Haq, is preparing to launch a campaign on behalf of families divided by Israel's restrictions on the freedom of movement. It is compiling statistics, case studies and other factual information to support its appeal for family reunification.

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*Palestine in the Security Council***New World Order Speaks With Forked Tongue**

**T**he much heralded New World Order, it is already clear, was born suffering from an acute case of tunnel vision. Advertised as the rebirth of international legality, it turned out to be remarkably tolerant of lawlessness and flawed by double standards. Praised as a courageous stand against bullies, it turned out to be a haven for bullies with the "right" victims.

A few months ago, when the New World Order was first unveiled, it was loudly cheered as a new dawn in the relations of nations. The end of the cold war, and the new solidarity of the great powers, many believed, would magically transform the United Nations into the international instrument of peace and justice it was meant but never allowed to be. The new solidarity of the powers, many believed, would make security and justice accessible to the weak and the oppressed among the nations.

Hopefully, it will turn out to be true that the end of the cold war would make action on behalf of peace and justice possible where it was not. Undoubtedly, in some cases that would happen. But it is naive to believe that all peoples would be equal beneficiaries.

Some conflicts have not been spin-offs from the cold war, and East-West rivalry has not been the obstacle in the way of their resolution. Such conflicts require a new international morality, not just a new East-West *modus vivendi*. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is such a conflict.

*The Case of Palestine*

**I**t was not Soviet intransigence which obstructed the world community's efforts to end Israel's occupation of Palestine. It was never East-West tensions which stood in the way of Palestinian independence. International support for Palestinian national rights, in fact, was one of the few important international political issues which bridged the East-West rift. Communist and capitalist states supported Palestinian self-determination. Warsaw Pact and NATO members called for an end to Israeli occupation. Eastern and Western Europe favored the convening of an international peace conference. And the entire world deplored Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights.

The cold war was not the problem in Palestine, and it was not the reason why Israel managed to frustrate all attempts to bring about a just peace. The problem was, and continues to be, Washington's deviation from the international consensus

on Palestine, its inability to see it except through Israeli eyes. That is why the end of the cold war did not and cannot end the Arab-Israeli stalemate.

This is the reason, mystefying to some, why the New World Order has been speaking with a forked tongue during the past few months. And this is the reason why the Security Council, much praised for its recent harmony and vigor, becomes so discordant and impotent when the question of Palestine comes before it.

*World Conflicts Under New Management*

**S**ince the Gulf crisis exploded in early August 1990, the U.N. Security Council has been working overtime grinding out resolutions for the "new world order." Its resolutions on the Gulf are on everyone's mind, thanks to large armies and fleets which converged on the region to uphold them. Resolutions on Palestine, however, collect dust on the shelves of the U.N. glass palace in New York.

It is not that the world community does not care or does not wish to confront the problem of Israel's defiance. But the ever-present U.S. protectionism of Israeli misdeeds and its repeated threats to veto meaningful resolutions on the issue have compelled resolutions to be watered down, to remain toothless, and to be buried in the bulging and inactive files of the world organization. As the rest of the world was cajoled and threatened and bribed to conform to the wishes of the new management of the world order, Israel was given immunity from constraints.

Two weeks after the Security Council "deplored" the Israeli government's decision to deport Palestinians, Israel deported them anyway. It continued to ignore the Security Council's resolution to permit the investigation of the Jerusalem massacre, and it persisted in its adamant refusal to participate in an international peace conference to deal with its conflict with the Arabs. In fact, Israel remains unchallenged in its dubious status as the holder of the world's record in the number of U.N. resolutions in its trash can.

Israel clamors for war against Iraq to free Kuwait, but it refuses to talk to free Palestine. It cheers the amassing of an awesome war machine in the Gulf, but it opposes the presence of a few international observers in the land it occupies. It blurts out hysterical cries against Iraqi arms, but it continues to justify its monopoly on nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Everywhere change motivates the peoples of the world, but Israel is inspired by the illusion that history stops at its doors.

The surest way to lose a privilege is to abuse it. The United States is privileged to inherit a historic opportunity to preside over a kinder and gentler and a more just world order. The opportunity should not be thrown away to please Israel. □

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## Germany Helps Palestinian Refugees

### UNRWA Complains of Continuing Israeli Harassment

The German government has made a special contribution of DM 2 million (about \$1,282,000) to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in response to an appeal by the agency's Commissioner-General, Giorgio Giacomelli. The new contribution is above and beyond the regular \$6.3 million German contribution to the 1990 UNRWA budget.

Additional contributions made by Germany in 1990 include funds for social services at Aqabat Jaber refugee camp in the West Bank, for sanitation projects in refugee camps in Syria and the West Bank, and for a women's center in Am'ari refugee camp in the West Bank. UNRWA sources say that Germany was also one of several countries which have already indicated that they would contribute to a new hospital that the international refugee agency plans to build for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip.

UNRWA also received additional contributions from the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the Soviet Peace Fund and the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.

#### Harassment Continues

UNRWA reports continued harassment of its staff and institutions by Israeli occupation troops. Another school for refugee children in the Gaza Strip was closed down in November, bringing the number of closed UNRWA schools to seven. The Bani Suhaila junior high school near Khan Yunis had served about a thousand girls.

Several UNRWA employees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been beaten or detained by Israeli soldiers. In Jenin, an UNRWA bus was commandeered by troops who forced the driver to transport them to an army camp.

A more serious incident involving Israeli harassment of UNRWA personnel in the Gaza Strip occurred early in December when, according to a press release by the United Nations Department of Public Information, "UNRWA staff members were physically abused by the Israeli border police." Three staff members of the international organizations were attacked by Israeli soldiers on December 6 because they inquired about the arrest and beating of a refugee youth. "One international staff member," said the U.N. press statement, "was shot at with blank ammunition, another sustained a fractured thumb when hit by a rock [thrown by a border policeman], and the third was struck in the chest with a rifle butt."

These incidents occurred in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA Commissioner General, Giorgio Giacomelli, protested these and other incidents of harassment to Israel's United Nations representative in Vienna.

Israel has never made a secret of its resentment of any form of international presence in occupied Palestine, since it affords some degree of protection to the Palestinians. ☐

## French Group Calls for Peace Conference

Several French associations, grouped as "La campagne pour la paix," appealed to members of the Security Council to convene a peace conference on the Middle East. Such a conference, the group said, is needed not only to resolve the Gulf crisis peacefully, but also to ensure Middle East stability by dealing with Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Syrian Golan, and the south of Lebanon. A peace conference on the Middle East, the group said in its appeal, is also needed to free the world of "the war mentality."

The U.N. General Assembly recommended such a conference in 1983, but Israel and the U.S. opposed it. Recently, the U.S. threatened to veto a Security Council resolution providing for such a conference. ☐

### *Palestine Perspectives*

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*"Taint people's ignorance that does the harm; 'tis their knowin' so much that ain't so."*

Artemis Ward

◆ The Palestinians have been victimized by disinformation more than any other people. They have been dispossessed and displaced; they have suffered repeated massacres; their human rights have been ruthlessly and systematically violated; and their national rights have been denied. Even their existence has been questioned and disputed!

Yet, the Palestinians have risen above their pain and made conciliatory moves to resolve their conflict with Israel. But they are still defamed as villains and enemies of peace. ◆

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## The "Prisoners of Zion" Become Its Prostitutes

*Natasha: "Some do it for a carton of fruit juice"*

*In Israel, they call new Jewish immigrants "olim" to suggest that Jews who move to the Jewish state are also elevated morally. Literally, to make the "aliya" means to "ascend."*

*It is ironic, therefore, that women Soviet Jewish immigrants have become the principal "asset" of the prostitution market. It is estimated that 10-15 percent of all Israeli prostitutes are recent Soviet immigrants who are driven to sell themselves to live. They are typically professional people who have fallen through the cracks of the Zionist dream.*

*The following is a brief excerpt from a lengthy report on the fate of such women, originally published in Ma'ariv of October 19, 1990:*

### *On the Streets*

**T**he state's new hewers of wood and drawers of water settle down to any work with a smile on their lips and tears in their hearts. In Russia they worked for the state and here bosses exploits them. The mathematician is now a waitress working for two shekels (one dollar) an hour. The unemployed pianist gives lessons for five shekels. Girls give themselves to men for less.

### *Natasha*

**S**he has pale, almost transparent skin and she stands at the entrance of the "Mississippi Restaurant" coaxing passersby to sit in the white plastic chairs overlooking Ashdod's "Miami Beach." When you ask her "What can you offer?" she blushes and replies in a meaningful voice, "Whatever you want."

Natasha is only 18, almost a child. She works nine or ten hours a night and receives 20 shekels. Where she works is not a place where good tips are given, certainly not without giving something in return. Natasha knows that she is being exploited.

"So what?" someone responds to a remark that I had made. "In the fifties, Moroccan women did it; now it is Russian girls. It is always the same; they have to eat."

It hurts, I am told, but they see the abundance in the shops and they want to be like everyone else. And for that, they need quick money.

Next to the white tables, Natasha says that she knows Russian girls live this way. "Five shekels?" she laughs. "Some do it for a carton of fruit juice." □

### *To Our Readers*

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## *"Jews of Silence"*

**I**sraeli novelist A. B. Yehoshua accused American Jews of "ethical insensitivity" because of their reluctance to speak out against Israel's "iron fist" policy in occupied Palestine. "My greatest disappointment in the past few years," he said in an interview published in the September/October 1990 issue of *Tikkun* magazine, "was watching the ethical insensitivity of American Jews."

Yehoshua lashed out at Elie Wiesel. After winning the Nobel Prize, he said, Wiesel had a moral obligation to speak out. "I watched with amazement," he told the liberal Jewish magazine, "how the world honored Elie Wiesel as somehow a prophet of morality, and how simultaneously Wiesel managed to fail to criticize Israeli policy in the [occupied] territories. Elie Wiesel, after winning the Nobel Prize, had a moral responsibility to speak out against the policies of the State of Israel while Israel is trying to impose on 1,700,000 Palestinians a permanent position of non-citizenship."

The Israeli writer said that Wiesel had admonished other Jews who failed to speak out against oppression, "But he is now a Jew of silence."

In the past, he said, American Jews were sensitive to oppression "only because it was in their interest... It is the existential situation that creates the values, and when the situation changes, the values change."

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