

# Palestine Focus

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## Israel: Reagan's Loophole in Central America

By Steve Goldfield

The escalation of U.S. intervention in Central America in Reagan's second term means that Israel's involvement in the region will also continue to grow. Controversy over U.S. involvement, especially in the form of U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan contras—despite the crumbling of congressional opposition—will also continue to grow. And once again, Israeli arms, advisors, and political and diplomatic support are an important asset to an American administration under fire.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the case of aid to Nicaragua's "freedom fighters," the contras, who have brought terror, destruction, torture, and mutilation of bodies to the Nicaraguan people. Israel's role in arming the contras is, by now, well-documented.

When the Central Intelligence Agency was setting up the contra bands, primarily from former Nicaraguan National Guardsmen who had served dictator Anastasio Somoza, the CIA found itself low in its stocks of untraceable weapons needed for such a "covert" operation. The CIA turned to Israel for help according to *Time*.

An NBC reporter who flew into Nicaragua with the contras on a weapons drop in April 1984 reported that one-quarter of the weapons of the Honduras-based FDN (Nicaraguan National Democratic Force) came from Israel. More than one contra leader confirmed receipt of Israeli arms, though the Israeli government, following its usual practice, denied it had sold arms.

But whereas some attention has been paid to Israel's surrogate role, the role of Israel and its supporters in directly influencing American public opinion has been largely overlooked. Laurie Becklund of the *Los Angeles Times*, for instance, reported that the Working Group for Latin America, a nonprofit group of Republican businessmen, sponsored a tour for Adolfo Calero, leader of the Somocista FDN, who spoke at Jewish temples in Los Angeles. In another article, Becklund reported on March 14, 1985 that "a group of conservative Nicaraguan Jews has begun a national campaign in conjunction with rebel leaders to convince American Jews that the Sandinista government is anti-Semitic and anti-Israel." The allegations, it should be noted, are patently untrue; a 1983 American Jewish Committee survey by Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum dismissed the charge of anti-Semitism against Nicaragua.

Beyond Nicaragua, Israeli planes have made Honduras the air power in the region. Guatemala's armed forces are almost entirely equipped with Israeli weapons from their Galil rifles to even their uniforms and field kitchens. Israeli advisors helped design the pacification program aimed at the indigenous people in the Guatemalan highlands. Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador all have Israeli-installed computers which monitor power usage, a means of locating underground printshops and other activist centers to be targeted by the death squads. Israel has also been helping Costa Rica, which has not had an army since 1948, to rearm and train troops.

***If pro-Israel sentiment were not so entrenched, it would be more difficult for the U.S. government to use Israel as a surrogate.***

In El Salvador, Israel sold 83 percent of the arms received from 1972 to 1980 and helped set up the secret police, who became the death squads after being disbanded in 1979. Hundreds of Israeli military advisors also work with the Salvadoran armed forces. According to former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Thomas Pickering (recently appointed ambassador to Israel), Israel also supplied napalm to the Salvadoran air force, which dropped it on twenty areas of the country in the Fall of 1984. Earlier that year, Fred Ikle, U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, asked Israel "to send military advisers to El Salvador openly, as a demonstration of Israeli participation in the load the United States bears in Central America." In other words, congressional and public support for Israel is so strong in the United States that such open Israeli cooperation somehow helps purify otherwise questionable activities.

As the peace, anti-intervention, and solidarity movements wrestle with the issue of Israeli involvement in Central America (and South Africa), what becomes apparent is that it is the very controversial nature of the issue which makes it so important. If pro-Israel sentiment were not so entrenched, if it were easier to confront politically Israel's role, it would be more difficult indeed for the U.S. government to use Israel as a surrogate.

If raising the "Israeli issue" seems troublesome or politically risky, that is precisely the political advantage for the United States to use Israel to implement policies abhorrent to most of the citizens of this country. So long as some hesitate to face the facts, the Reagan administration and its successors will be encouraged to use the Israeli loophole. □



Middle East contingent in Washington, April 20, 1985.

### Editorial

## Palestinian Camps in Beirut Stop the Attacks!

On May 20, the Lebanese Amal militia launched attacks on three Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut: Sabra, Shatila, and Bourj al-Barajneh. Shortly thereafter, Amal was joined by elements of the Lebanese army, controlled by the government of Phalangist President Amin Gemayel. This terrible bloodletting has created a strange congruence of interests between an unlikely group of forces, which only serves Israeli and U.S. objectives to dominate the region by dividing it along narrow religious sectarian lines. As supporters of Palestinian self-determination, we strongly condemn these attacks.

(At press time a ceasefire was reportedly negotiated. Nonetheless, the refugee camps are still threatened.)

Amal demands the disarming of the Palestinian resistance in the refugee camps in Beirut and throughout Lebanon. Amal wants to end not only the military role of the PLO in Lebanon in defense of Palestinian rights, but its political role as an ally of the Lebanese movement for democracy and secularism.

Amal has fought with the Lebanese National Resistance Front and the PLO against the Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. Amal is based in the Shi'ite community,

predominantly poor and dispossessed Lebanese, long deprived of power in the sectarian confessional state (the system whereby political, social and economic advantages are accorded along religious lines, with the President a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Moslem, etc.). The fight against the Israeli occupation in the south was inextricably linked with the ongoing Lebanese civil war between the democratic forces and the Phalangists, Lebanese rightists who seek to preserve the confessional state they have come to control.

Amal, however, has not challenged the confessional state; instead Amal seeks to improve the position of the Shi'ite community within it. Amal coordinated with but never joined the various secular coalitions, such as the recently formed Lebanese National Democratic Front, whose members led the fight against the Israelis and their Phalangist allies. The attack on the Palestinian camps signals Amal's break with its former allies.

Amal's attacks directly implement the aims of both the Phalangists and the Israeli government in annihilating the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Amal has received arms from Phalangist-dominated East Beirut, and Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir wished them well during his recent

*Continued on page 6*

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# The Peace Movement Confronts the Middle East

In recent years the U.S. peace movement has more actively taken up Middle East issues. Such increased activity deserves both recognition and evaluation. This significant progress, such as the recent national coalition organized for Spring mobilizations on April 20th, comes none too soon. Formidable and urgent issues of world peace, all centering on the Middle East, demand to be addressed.

Congress has acted to freeze the Reagan administration's military budget with one exception. U.S. aid to Israel is slated to rise from \$2.7 billion in fiscal 1985 to well over \$4 billion in fiscal 1986, with an additional \$1.5 billion in emergency supplemental aid also in the pipeline. And while it has not grown as dramatically as U.S. aid to Israel, the U.S. Central Command—designated intervention force in the Middle East—still accounts for five of twenty land divisions in the U.S. armed forces and for approximately \$60 billion a year out of the military budget.

Another important issue facing the peace movement is the alarming growth of Israeli armaments exports—their development made possible with U.S. aid and technology—particularly to regimes in South Africa and Central America. These exports clearly supplement U.S. support to such regimes and the contras in Nicaragua while avoiding the public scrutiny direct assistance from the U.S. government brings.

The peace movement must also take up U.S. aid which finances Israeli nuclear weapons development in partnership with South Africa and Taiwan and U.S. financing of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

standing pro-Israel bias and fear that criticizing Israeli aggression would be "divisive" prevented any mention of the U.S.-financed invasion. The smaller San Francisco demonstration did have a Palestinian speaker.

***Each time the issues of U.S. policy in the Middle East and Israeli aggression have been addressed, the peace movement has been strengthened.***

What ties these issues together is that all of them fundamentally question U.S. government relations with Israel, foremost the massive flow of aid which sails through Congress each year with the minimum of consideration. As yet, the peace movement in the United States has not taken up the issue of U.S. aid to Israel, despite pleas from Israeli peace activists to do just that.

The peace movement's blind spot was mostly painfully evident on June 12, 1982 when one million Americans demonstrated in New York City for peace and an end to the arms race. Neither the political unity of the coalition nor any speakers at this historically targeted the actual war of the moment, Israel's brutal invasion of Lebanon. Long-

Contrast June 12 with the April 20, 1985 national mobilizations in Washington, D.C. and around the country. The peace movement united against the Reagan administration's arms buildup, its interventionist policies in Central America, its cynical "constructive engagement" with South Africa—all within the context of "Peace, Jobs, and Justice." And within this progressive program, "No U.S. intervention in the Middle East" was an integral demand.

No longer could increasing U.S. intervention in the Middle East be ignored—nor could voices speaking of the tragedy of the Palestinian people and their quest for democratic rights and self-determination be prevented from being heard.

Of course, there are those within the peace movement who still refuse to address U.S. policy in the Middle East as part of a consistent and principled anti-interventionist perspective. For example, the leadership of the San Francisco April 20th coalition rejected the national demand on the Middle East. Evidently, some oppose U.S. intervention all around the world—except in the Middle East. Others cite their fear of "splitting" the peace movement with an "irrelevant" issue.

This stance has steadily lost adherents since 1982 as the brutality of Israeli occupation in Palestine and Lebanon has been exposed more and more to the glare of publicity. A strong trend within the peace movement has been increasingly insistent that the hard questions be faced rather than avoided, especially when the stakes are world peace and survival.

This trend appears in major peace movement actions since 1982. The August 27, 1983 20th Anniversary March on Washington called for an end to arms sales to the Middle East. Many pro-Israel Jewish organizations walked out of the coalition—yet the demonstration rejected intimidation, maintained its historic scope, and drew a quarter million participants.

Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign activated a massive response to Reagan's racist and militarist policies, particularly within the Black community. Jackson's vocal support for Palestinian rights and con-

*Continued on page 4*

## FOCUS On Action

By Steve Goldfield

Palestinians, Arab-Americans, and North Americans were quick to protest attacks on Sabra, Shatila, and Bourj al-Barajneh refugee camps in Beirut by Amal and the Lebanese army. On May 21, about 100 people protested outside the United Nations headquarters in New York. Participants included supporters of all groupings within the PLO, progressive Lebanese, the November 29th Committee for Palestine, and other North American organizations. In San Francisco, representatives from 12 Arab-American organizations sat in at the Arab League office on May 23. In Washington, the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) sat in at the Arab League office on May 24. They sent messages to Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karameh, Amal leader Nabih Berri, and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad expressing outrage at the attacks. The same day, Arab-Americans in Chicago sat in at the Arab League office there. On May 28, PLO supporters held a demonstration in front of the Lebanese embassy. On May 31, the Palestine Women's Association (PWA) staged sit-ins at Red Cross offices in Washington, New York, Chicago, Youngstown and Cleveland, Ohio, Houston, San Diego, and San Francisco. On June 12, our Bay Area chapter held a forum on Lebanon in Berkeley; much of the discussion focused on the attacks. On June 14, our Chicago chapter held a similar forum. *Palestine Focus* issued a bulletin on the attacks, and many of our chapters sent telegrams to the Syrian and Lebanese governments.

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On May 11, about 150 people attended an evening of solidarity with Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in New



*Traditional Palestinian Dabkeh dancers performing at U.S. Peace Council forum in San Francisco.*

York. The program included Jeanne Butterfield of the November 29th Committee for Palestine, Judith Chomsky of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), Kevin Kelly of Amnesty International, a former prisoner, the Al-Watan Dance Group, and a slide show with Adrien Wing of the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) as M.C. The sponsors included Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc., American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee-NY (ADC), Committee for a Democratic Palestine (CDP), Di Yiddishe Shvestern, International Jewish Peace Union-NY (IJPU), International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Jewish Affairs, November 29th Committee for Palestine, Palestine Aid Society, People's Anti-War Mobilization (PAM), Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Supporters of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, US Peace Council, Women's Collective on the Middle East, Women Free Women in Prison, and others. More than sixty people came to hear Jeanne Butterfield speak at a prisoners event sponsored by the Palestine Solidarity Committee in Albany on May 9. On June 8, Israeli attorney Felicia Langer, who defends many Palestinian prisoners, and Mamazane

Xulu of the ANC spoke at a November 29th Committee for Palestine event in Brooklyn, New York.

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More on the April 20th spring mobilization: Fayeze Mohamed, from our Portland chapter, spoke at the Seattle rally, calling for the U.S. role in the Middle East to be redirected until it becomes a "just and humane role," according to the *Seattle Times*. Washington: Our contingent included people from Washington, New York City, Albany, Chicago, Boston, Toledo, and New Jersey. We marched with the ADC, Najda, progressive Lebanese, and the American Arab University Graduates. Palestinian lawyer Abdeen Jabara from Detroit spoke at the main rally. Los Angeles: a Palestinian from our committee and a progressive Jew addressed the rally and a Dabkeh dance group performed.

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On May 1, the Nicaragua Support Project (NSP) and the New York chapter of the November 29th Committee for Palestine held an event entitled "Iron Fist, Bloody

*Continued on page 6*

# Under Town Arrest

*Zahera Kamal is the chair of the Women's Work Committee of the West Bank. She has been under town arrest for five years, allowed to travel only to her teaching job in Ramallah during the day and restricted to her home in Jerusalem at night. She was interviewed by the National Lawyers Guild delegation in December 1984/January 1985.*

I have been under town arrest since 1980. In the first four years, the town arrest was in the daytime, but in the nighttime it was house arrest. The order is that I am not to leave home from one hour after sunset until one hour after sunrise. That means a lot. All your activities and your social life are ruined.

I work in Ramallah, I have permission to go to work. It wasn't easy to get. I spent about 45 days without permission to go to work. But because I am an employee of the United Nations Relief and Work Administration (UNRWA), I didn't lose my job and I could go to the headquarters and do my work there. As a physics teacher, to teach without being in the class, just to send papers, was very difficult.

I worked for 45 days like this. I got permission to go to work for 2 days only. After that, I got permanent permission to go to work, but I had to sign two times daily: one at 7:30, the other one at 2:30 at the police station. At first it was at Moscobiyah, the Russian Square. I had to go to Moscobiyah two times daily and come back. That means, I had to pay about more than half of my salary to taxis to take me to the police station and bring me back.

Then, after four years without one hour between the expiration of one town arrest order and the beginning of the next—it's extended every six months, before when I signed the new one that the order is come so that it's continuously going. After four years, I think it was because of the pressure from friends outside and from here, the order was changed a little bit. I cannot now go to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The first one was that I cannot leave Jerusalem. So now I can't go to the West Bank and Gaza. I can move in Jerusalem at any time.

Six months ago I couldn't see you here because in the winter the sun sets at about 4:15 so at 5:15 I had to be at home. This changed in July 1984 because of the elections; they forgot to extend it before the elections so it ex-



Al Fajr

But they didn't find anything that they could bring against me in court. So, they got an order which says that they have to imprison me for administrative detention for six months. They came to the house at about 12 o'clock midnight disturbing all the family and looking at everything. They were looking at books, they wanted to find some papers, an excuse to accuse me of something. But they didn't find anything.

Also, I have files of newspaper clippings. When they saw these things, they took them all and took some books to say that there are some illegal things that they found at the house.

But when I was interrogated, I told them I bought the books from bookstores in Jerusalem. As one who holds

At the end of the second month, they took me again to court to renew the order. At that time, they brought a new lawyer. I know a little Hebrew so I could guess what they were talking about. But while listening, I said that the interrogator isn't translating everything. I want to know everything. So they felt that I know a little Hebrew and brought me out of the room. And the court continued without me in the room for about one hour. They renewed the order for four months.

I went to Neve Terza prison in Ramallah. There I saw my lawyer and we talked about what's going on; I asked him to file a case for me in the high court. We did that and the high court accepted it. They fixed the 12th of September as the date in court. The interrogators and the security service asked to cancel the court appearance. They said they were not going to renew the order again. For me, even if I get out before one day of the six months, it's useful for me. I'm not going to stay for one day longer than I have to. So they said I should be imprisoned for the full six months; if they are going to renew it, they will do it without even having the order. But if I could get the trial, it's good. So, we continued. But one day before the trial they came to Neve Terza and released me. So I spent only four months and a half in prison. This was in 1979.

Six months after that I was put under town arrest. During these four years under town arrest everything happens here. The police came at night and took me to prison for two or three or five days at a time for security reasons. Just to prevent me from doing things. Without any charge, without a judge, without anything, just to Moscobiyah for five days.

Once when they took me to prison for supposed security reasons, I asked them when I would be released; they said when the market opens. What's the relation between me and the markets, I asked. They said you went to the shops and told them to strike. How? Who saw me do that? Even if someone goes to the shops and tells them to strike, I'm not mad to go and do that while I am under town arrest. There are many others that could do that job.

**NLG:** How many people would you estimate are in the same situation as you?

**ZK:** I am the first one that got four years of continuous town arrest. There are many. In 1980 most of the national officers of the national movement, in the student movement, the women's movement, trade unions—most of these people were put under town arrest during the iron fist policy. Many mayors, too. In Jerusalem alone I know of about four people under town arrest. Six more cannot go to the West Bank or Gaza Strip. In Bethlehem there are about three hundred people with similar orders. But actually, it's not the full number. Many, many people can't leave the West Bank and Gaza to go outside. They could come here but couldn't leave the West Bank.

**NLG:** Are there any differences in treatment of a man in your position? Would they use more physical violence or more or less harsh pressure?

**ZK:** I think it is about the same. They came, for instance, in the first four years, because I have to be at home one hour after sunset. They have to check if I am at home or not. So try to think how it would be to have a policeman knocking on the door every day to see if you are at home. Sometimes he comes at sunset, one hour after sunset. But sometimes he may come at eleven or twelve o'clock at night. You are sleeping; you are ill; all the family is disturbed because of this. Also, the people who visit you don't like to come into a house that the police every now and then come to.

There was another lady under house arrest who was pregnant. When they went to her home to see if she is there or not, they found that she had gone to deliver her baby. That's awful for her. She cannot find a place to go to a hospital to deliver her baby. What can she do?

And also the police, the police coming every night—sometimes he doesn't come every night, but you expect him to come—sometimes I was tired and I want to change, to put on a night dress and go to bed, even if I like to go there at five o'clock. But I couldn't do that because I know the police will come and I'll have to change again and go to let him come and see me.

Once I was really sleeping and my brother didn't want to wake me up. When they came he told them that she is sleeping and she is tired. They said "we want to see her." So he said I'm not going to wake her so come. It was terrible. I just felt someone take the cover from me to let them see my face and I opened my eyes and saw them over my head.

Once they took my sister for interrogation because they found her outside Jerusalem and they thought she was me because she looks similar. □

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***"We reject Camp David, and if that's a reason to imprison people, you have to build a big prison and put all the people inside."***

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pired in June but I didn't get the new one in June. It said it started in June but I received it in July. So I had about fifteen days rest.

In 1979 I was interrogated several times. In the West Bank 1979 was a year of different movements because of Camp David. As one of the people in the West Bank, I had to express my opinions to show that I reject the agreement. All the people of the West Bank rejected it but in different ways. Some of them publicly rejected it. Others were afraid to express their opinions in a loud voice. So, they kept it inside to themselves.

But myself I am a teacher. I'm an active woman, a very active woman, and I'm a member of different groups. I express myself in a loud voice in front of the people. When I'm interrogated, I'm not afraid to say that as a Palestinian, I want to build my state and we have the right of building our state. We have the right of expressing our opinions.

That's a law that appeared in the United Nations, and it's one of my human rights. So I'm not doing anything that is against the state of Israel. And they can't accuse me because of this. They can't—everyone dreams of having an independent state. I'm dreaming of that state, too. It's my right. But they don't want us to express these ideas.

At that time, about twelve schools were closed and all the universities in the West Bank were closed for several months. If they didn't want demonstrations, they won't stop them by closing down the schools and closing down the universities. Because of all this, I was interrogated several times.

an Israeli identity card from Jerusalem, I have the right to buy any book that's in Jerusalem, as anyone in Israel. I asked why we are only equal in some things, in paying taxes and in paying everything they want, but we are not equal in our rights to read and buy books that we want.

The court was just a kangaroo court, informal. The only ones present were the lawyer they brought, the judge, the prosecutor, and the interrogator. I asked them to let my lawyer come just to listen as someone who is not going to say anything. They said OK. After awhile I asked them to explain what's going on. They asked the interrogator to translate to me what's going on. They had that trial because in Jerusalem they didn't have the right to put anyone in prison for six months without having the signature of the judge. They wanted to get the judge's signature and brought my papers to show that they were against the state of Israel.

The interrogator wanted to interrogate me for one or two months and wanted permission to do so. He agreed to imprison me for one month. I was in Moscowbiyah prison, a prison for interrogating people in Jerusalem. Interrogation starts for several hours a day. They have some evidence and they are trying to get things. But from the beginning, I told them that I haven't done anything but I am a Palestinian woman who is living here and saying that we have the right to have a state, to say that the PLO is our representative, and that all the people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are saying the same thing. We reject Camp David, and if that's a reason to imprison people, you have to build a big prison and put all the people inside. All the time I kept repeating that.

# The Politics

*Fred Dube was born in Johannesburg; his mother was a school teacher and a member of the African National Congress. In 1953, a student of twenty, he joined the ANC. By the time the ANC was banned in 1960, he had become ANC regional secretary for the province of Natal on the east coast, based in the city of Durban. He was arrested for continuing his work after the banning and sent to the infamous prison for political prisoners at Robben Island, near Cape Town. Soon after his release he left for Britain where he obtained a scholarship to study at Cornell in 1971. Today he is a professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook in the African Studies Program and the Psychology Department. Professor Dube was interviewed by Palestine Focus in San Francisco in May 1985.*



**FD:** That's true. But before you can do that, first of all you have to feed people with the myth of race, talk of them as being whites and the others as Blacks, talk of the so-called white race as being inherently superior to the Black race. And they don't have to prove the superiority except to point at small things that are isolated here and there and suppressing all information about the other group. So the members of the group that is intended to be the victimizer—those that practice racism—see themselves as validly doing the only right thing because these inferiors are, in fact, scabbing on them when it comes to the jobs, for instance.



That's one element of covert racism. But the other element in covert racism is the racism that comes from the so-called social scientists, who begin first of all with a racist belief and then fashion studies which are for no other purpose than to confirm their prejudices. Things such as Blacks are inherently mentally inferior to whites. There is no way through experiments you can test that. People come with so-called intelligence tests and say the results that come out of these things are evidence of intelligence. There is no way you can probe directly into the innate quality, so-called intelligence. You can't separate it from other factors.

If you are a cognitive psychologist, you can look at the experiments; and they are all so flawed that you get surprised that people believe in this nonsense. But the majority of people are not cognitive psychologists and cannot look into these flawed experiments to discover that there is nonsense there.

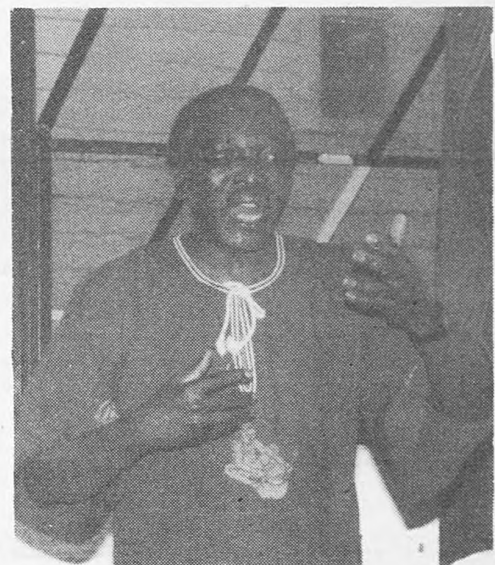
**T**he third part of the triangle is reactive racism displayed by people who themselves were or still are victims of racism. These people claim that when they are operating within the parameters that are set up by racists, they are protecting themselves. But by virtue of doing exactly the same thing that the racists are doing, there is no reason why they cannot be called

racists. People like, for instance, the right-wing members of the Zionist movement and the small, narrow-minded pan-Africanists—all those people do exactly the same thing. If you look at them all, you will find that there are things that run through all of them.

For instance, all of them, whether you want to say it is actual or imagined, the thing of being victims of the "malevolent others" is there. Now because you cannot have the malevolent others without identifying them, you then have to identify the malevolent others. Once you identify them, in order to be able to do something about them or to them, you have to label them in a way that will be distinct from yourself or your group. Once you have labeled them, the effect that the labeling has is that you change the identity of those individuals and replace it with the label.

But that fact of doing things to other people has an effect both on the victim and on the perpetrator. The victim is dehumanized. The perpetrator of racism is desensitized so that whatever he does to his victim—he's no longer doing it to the human being but to the label.

Once you say PLO, the first thing everybody says is "terrorist." What you have done—and all racists do it—is to create in their minds and in the minds of other people



the idea that their victims are not individuals but a lump of something. And they must be seen as this lump and not in the quality that they might have as individuals. It becomes very easy, therefore, to not even think about them as people, because the indoctrination starts quite early. Stereotypes about people become so easy.

**PF:** In some cases, this reactive racism is directed back against oppressors. But in the case of the Zionists you were discussing—although there is certainly racism toward Germans—Jews were never victims of the Palestinians.

Afrikaner nationalists, the thing you see amongst the Ku Klux Klan, the fascists in the United States—that is overt racism.

Covert racism is the most dangerous, in my opinion, of all forms of racism. What makes it dangerous is that it is not immediately recognizable as racism and is practiced by people, who on the outside you would say are not racists. Yet in actual fact they are responsible for racism, they are the inventors of racism, the capitalists. And obviously the reason for it was economic exploitation of others.

They use racism as an instrument of oppression by dividing people, for instance whites would be the first ones to be employed. And the Blacks or other minority groups are not employed. When the whites go on strike in order to improve their working conditions, they get fired. And the same Blacks or other minority groups take their jobs. The whites, instead of realizing why they are so vulnerable in the hands of the capitalists because they are divided as workers, tend to look at the Blacks or other minorities as people who are scabbing on

**“What the Zionists did to the Arabs in Palestine was exactly the same thing that the whites did to us.”**

parts of a triangle.

Overt racism is the open, unadulterated racism which the people who practice it view as a badge of honor—the thing that you saw, for instance, in Nazi Germany, that you see in South Africa today from the

them, thus emphasizing skin color.

**PF:** Is this similar to what is referred to as institutionalized racism or white supremacy, the actual structure of advantages of one race over another as opposed to just the attitudes?

## Editorial...

*Continued from page 2*

sistent opposition to anti-Arab racism pushed public debate on U.S. Middle East policy to a new level.

While the Rainbow Coalition was slanderously attacked for Jackson's positions, millions voted for an overall progressive platform including Palestinian rights during the Democratic primaries. At the Vote Peace rally at the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, "No U.S. Troops in the Middle East" was a key demand. A Palestinian speaker addressed the rally alongside Jesse Jackson, Congressman Ron Dellums, and many others.

**I**n fact, each time the issues of U.S. policy in the Middle East and Israeli aggression have been addressed, the peace movement has been strengthened.

The Washington Office on Africa, a research and lobbying organization with a key role in the emerging anti-apartheid movement, recently disclosed new facts on secret atomic bomb tests conducted jointly by South Africa and Israel. Many would oppose releasing such information because it revealed Israeli complicity with the racist South African regime, a potentially "divisive" fact.

How much weaker would the anti-apartheid movement be if it were barred from focusing on Israel's military, economic, and political alliance with its South African

colonial partner? How much weaker is the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America if that movement does not target Israel's arms sales to Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and the contras when U.S. officials themselves praise Israel as Reagan's surrogate in the region?

Still, Israel's role in the Middle East—and the Reagan administration's financial and political support for that role bolstered by a massive U.S. military presence—remains the most substantial threat to peace in a region universally recognized as one of the leading potential nuclear battlegrounds in the world. How effective will the anti-nuclear movement be if it ignores such a reality?

Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel

Samuel Lewis recently revealed that General Sharon met with him and other Reagan administration officials in 1981 to plan Is-

**“The Peace Movement taken up the issue of Israel, despite the peace activists”**

rael's invasion of Lebanon—six months before it happened. Secretary of State George

# S of Racism

**FD:** It's a transference. Because the real enemy is too strong. You look at the weaker, imagined enemy. You create an enemy. There is no way that Jews can claim to have been oppressed by the Palestinians and, therefore, they are now revenging on the Palestinians who never oppressed them.

**PF:** So you were teaching a course on this sort of topic. And you were also looking into specific forms of racism. Clearly, the aspect that caused the stir was the idea that...

**FD:** How dare a nigger say the superior white race is racist? First of all, I've already said that it doesn't matter which of the three parts of the triangle you are looking at. You will find that there are these commonalities. Many of my students, who came from Zionist families, discovered for the first time that Zionism was never monolithic, not today and not in the history of Zionism.

In fact, there are those who still refuse, as Jews, to accept the present state. These are two different groups—the orthodox Jews and other Jews. The orthodox Jews who will not recognize a Jewish state believe that for a valid state of Israel to exist, that state must be delivered by god through a messiah. Such groups as the Neturei Karta believe this. These, then, cannot accept a state which is delivered not by god but by the works of man because that is not how those who follow the orthodox religion believe about the state of Israel. So, to them, Zionism represents a yearning for a state which will be delivered by god in his time. And that is the only state they will accept.

**PF:** You are now speaking of religious Zionism—which goes back thousands of years—as opposed to political Zionism.

**FD:** That's right. In fact, it goes back beyond the birth of Christ. Then you get political Zionism, brought together—amongst other people—by Herzl in 1897. Even that political Zionism was not monolithic.

**PF:** So you taught this sort of material, among many other topics, in that course.

**FD:** Yes. This was just a small segment of the bigger and larger course that I was teaching. Half of one out of twenty lectures.

**PF:** We know there was a big stir; the academic senate looked into it, the governor of New York state became involved. That's the last most of our readers have heard. What has transpired since then?

**FD:** What transpired since then, first of all, was that my students—when the governor entered this controversy—got very much annoyed; they felt very much insulted because what was implied there was that they were not individuals with their own independent minds. It was considered that they are children who cannot evaluate and think independently. They resented that particularly because this is an upper-level course



Black squatters camp in South Africa (top) and Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank (bottom): Both peoples ghettoized and without rights in their own homelands.

with an average age of about 23. There were also people who were mothers of kids who were students at the university. For it to be said that they can't think independently was ridiculous. So they protested very, very strongly.

Another reason why they protested strongly was because the whole thing was a misrepresentation of fact. They attended the class; they could not recognize what was being said was taking place in the class by somebody who never even attended the class. But there was also another element that became involved. The people in academia all over the United States started writing to the governor telling him that he has no business to be involved here in an issue which only academicians would have been handling, particularly the university of which I was a member.

**PF:** How do you assess the long-term effects, both at Stony Brook and in New York state?

**FD:** I don't think it has stopped because there is the Jewish Defense League which still keeps it burning. There is a rabbi there, Arthur Seltzer, who is using this affair to promote himself so he can get more money. There are the so-called intellectuals at Stony Brook, in the natural sciences, particularly in the medical school, who have maltreated my wife. My wife had to resign her position because they started writing so many things and putting them on top of her desk. They harassed her like anything.

**PF:** How do you and the ANC view the relationship between Israel and South Africa?

**FD:** First and foremost, I don't know whether we are being unrealistic in our view of Israel and their relationship with South

Africa. As people who are suffering from racism, our tendency is to believe that people who have had the problem or know the pain of suffering under racism know that racism is something that has to be destroyed. We always looked at the Jews as a whole as a people who know what racism is and how painful it is. And, therefore, we expect them to be on the side of those who are victims of racism. By and large, one can say that the majority of Jews do behave that way. Amongst the so-called whites, the majority group that feels strongly about racism tends to be Jews. We tend to think of the Jews as people who are very sensitive—everywhere.

When we then see Jews on the side of the oppressor, we begin to ask the question whether oppression is only wrong when Jews are oppressed. Racism becomes only wrong when Jews are the victims of racism. Or racism is evil, period. We know for a fact that many of the Zionists in Israel know perfectly well that the present-day government in South Africa was an ally of the Nazis and they fashioned their racism on Nazism. In fact, they have displayed the same kind of Jewish hatred that the Nazis had.

All of a sudden after 1967 they became sweethearts. Simply because now Jews are no longer faced with that venom of hate. That venom of hate is now directed against black people. It becomes very hard to see that. But of course there is also another thing which should have kept us from being surprised. Maybe it is because human beings believe themselves to be rational, but when it comes to tests, they rarely become rational. I don't know whether that is the real reason.

What the Zionists did to the Arabs in Palestine was exactly the same thing that the whites did to us. So why should it be surprising if they are collaborating with other racists? But, nonetheless, there is something in us which does not accept that this should be happening. This is not to say that we do not accept that it is happening, but we do not accept that it *should* be happening, which is a different thing.

They are doing it to the Palestinians. The Palestinians are suffering in the same kind of way as we are suffering. They have been defined out of their selves. Palestinians are no longer even Semites; they are "terrorists." In the same way as we are no longer Africans; we are "Bantus" and in the ANC we are also "terrorists." So we share a lot. With this kind of sharing with the Palestinians, it seems to me it should not be surprising that Israel is a sweetheart of South Africa.

And yet, we know many Jews who are supporters of Israel who find this agonizing and yet have done absolutely nothing about it. □

Shultz and Ambassador Lewis claim they objected to Sharon's plans. More recently, it was revealed that the CIA had set up a

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"counterterrorist" unit in Beirut which was responsible for a car bombing which killed

knowledge. We smell the standard intelligence ploy of plausible denial: "If you should fail, Mr. Sharon, we will, of course, deny any knowledge of your activities."

We can only compare the sincerity of such U.S. government protestations of innocence with its claims of success for the policy of "constructive engagement" in changing South Africa's racial policies. When U.S. complicity with Israeli aggression and occupation is no secret, the peace movement can only destroy its own credibility by pretending ignorance.

When the peace movement targets the link between the Reagan administration's racist policies at home and its alliance with apartheid in South Africa, it seizes moral

high ground. But, in this era of Bitburg, when Reagan embraces fascism in the name of combating the "Soviet threat," the peace movement is substantially stronger when it opposes all forms of racism, whether directed against Blacks, Jews, or Palestinians and other Arabs.

Indeed, much progress has been recorded since 1982, but it has not been accomplished without the conscious hard work of many activists and organizations. Nor is this trend guaranteed to continue. As the peace movement continues to grow in response to Reagan's dangerous policies, the amount of patient education and discussion on the Middle East will also have to increase.

While many still view the Palestinians

through lenses colored by decades of pro-Israel sentiment, we are confident that a consistent movement is being built to challenge such prejudices. As Americans call for peace, for cutting the military budget, and for jobs and justice at home, such issues as the Central Command, U.S. bases in Oman and other countries in the region, U.S. encouragement of the Iran-Iraq war, the huge aid given to finance Israeli expansionism and other manifestations of the dangerous U.S. policy in the Middle East must certainly be opposed.

We have no illusions that it will be easy to consolidate the peace movement around such a position. But the issues will not go away, and they must be faced—the sooner the better. □

## Attacks...

Continued from page 1

visit to London. Right after the attack began, the Israeli army in south Lebanon released more than 250 captured Amal fighters reportedly to join the attack in Beirut. However, progressive Lebanese organizations blocked the roads from the south to prevent Amal from bringing in reinforcements. They also permitted the Palestinian defenders to shell the attacking Amal and Lebanese army units from the mountains. The democratic Lebanese know that after the Palestinians, they are the next likely targets for attack.

Syria, the strongest force in Lebanon, could, if it wished, prevent attacks against Palestinians. Yet Syria has done very little, implying tacit support for Amal's aims. Syria does not want either party to the conflict to win decisively and threaten Syria's influence in Lebanon and in the region as a whole. In 1976 Syria intervened in Lebanon to prevent the Lebanese democratic opposition from dealing a decisive blow to the Lebanese right. Then, as today, Palestinians paid a

terrible price. Then, as today, camps were razed to the ground, their inhabitants slaughtered. The Syrian government must be pressured to exert its full influence to end the attacks and stop them from recurring. While some Arab governments have spoken out, still more pressure is needed.

Who ultimately benefits from Amal's actions? Amal has taken up where Israel left off in 1982 and has met the same deter-

mined resistance which fought the Israelis to a standoff. In fact, the Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation created the political and military context in which Amal launched its attack. While Israel appears to

### The TWA Hijacking

Amal's involvement in the TWA hijacking drama redirected attention away from its attacks on the Palestinian camps. We emphasize our disapproval of actions which penalize innocent American civilians and we are concerned about their fate, but we must look at motives as well as tactics. The American media have seized on the hijacking story but have ignored the underlying realities of Lebanon in their coverage. The media have also shamelessly fanned racism toward Arabs in general and ignored the ongoing state terrorism of Israel and such U.S. acts of terrorism as the recent CIA car bombing in Beirut. Rather than succumbing to hysteria, we must look at the causes of the hijacking crisis.

The hijackers' grievances center on the damage that Israel and the United States

have caused in Lebanon. Even the U.S. government called it illegal when Israel moved Lebanese prisoners over its border. The U.S. fleet—remembered by Lebanese for the terrible and vengeful bombardment by the battleship New Jersey's massive guns—sits off the Lebanese coast. And the 1982 Israeli invasion which killed, wounded, and displaced hundreds of thousands of Lebanese was financed with U.S. aid. At least the same degree of attention given the TWA hijacking must be directed at the suffering of both the Lebanese and the Palestinians.

Nevertheless, we are also critical of Amal for using the hijacking to redirect attention away from their attacks on the Palestinian camps. Both the attacks and the hijacking highlight Amal's short-sighted and dangerous political agenda. □

the Palestinian military and political role in the country, both necessary conditions for Israel itself to control Lebanon. Amal, which fought in the name of ending the Israeli occupation, in actuality is assisting in implementing some of Israel's goals.

The Reagan administration, too, sees an opportunity to achieve its longstanding aim of eliminating any role for the PLO in the region. The attack on the Palestinians in Beirut can only strengthen the hand of the United States and Israel in the current flurry of diplomatic activity. The United States wants to extend its domination of the region by dictating terms to the Palestinians that do not address the issue of self-determination. With Amal leading the attack, however, the United States and Israel are undeservedly taken off the hook, in the media and in public opinion, for the underlying responsibility they share in the tragic suffering of Palestinians and Lebanese.

Given the history of massacres against the Palestinian people, we unequivocally support their right to defend themselves from Beirut to Hebron. Like the Israelis in 1982, Amal held the misguided belief that it could quickly defeat the Palestinian resistance. Once again, the Palestinian movement has demonstrated its determination to survive against seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Once again, the Palestinians are at the center of a decisive battle. Only when the Palestinian people gain their national and human rights will they be able to rebuild their lives secure from massacres and other attacks. □

## Focus on Action...

Continued from page 2

Hands—Israel in Palestine, Lebanon, and Nicaragua." Speakers included a Palestinian woman who compared Israel and South Africa, a supporter of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, a representative from the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), Sheila Ryan of the Claremont Research Center, and cohosts Michael Bar-Am from our committee and Bill Strand from the NSP. A standing-room-only crowd of about 90 people attended the event across the street from the United Nations.

Our Sacramento chapter along with the Sacramento Rainbow Coalition held a very successful event linking Israel with South Africa on May 15. Speakers included Lif-ford Cenge of the ANC, Jane Hunter of *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, Steve Goldfield from *Palestine Focus*, and a GUPS speaker. Jane Hunter also spoke at Portland, Corvallis, and Eugene, Oregon events on Israel and South Africa in May. Steve Goldfield spoke on Israel in South Africa and Central America in Tucson, Arizona on June 6, the third anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and in Denver, Colorado on June 8. In Denver, Don Will, currently writing a thesis on Israel and South Africa, and Gonzalo Santos, coordinator of Rocky Mountain CISPES also spoke. In early May, Professor Fred Dube, interviewed in this issue, spoke in Santa Cruz, on the steps of Biko Hall

at U.C. Berkeley, and at a reception in our San Francisco office on Israel, South Africa, and racism. Our Chicago chapter has been very active in the Divest Now campaign at the University of Illinois.

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The notorious Israeli racist Rabbi Meir Kahane recently toured the United States to raise money and form chapters



PAMI Neville Edwards

of his political party, Kach. On May 20, he came to San Francisco, where not a single Jewish synagogue would permit him to speak. The approximately 300 de-

monstrators outside the downtown hotel where Kahane did speak outnumbered his audience by about two to one.

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Also in San Francisco, on June 6 about 500 people picketed the Israeli consulate to "protest Israel's actions and role as U.S. surrogate in South Africa, Central America, and the Middle East on the third anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the 18th anniversary of the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights." The long list of endorsers included Alliance Against Women's Oppression, ADC, Artists Against Apartheid, Bay Area Free South Africa Movement, Casa Chile, Casa El Salvador, Casa El Salvador "Farabundo Marti," CAFIOT, CDP, CISPES (Oakland-Berkeley), CISPI, Feminist Arab-American Network (Bay Area), Friends of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, Friends of Nicaraguan Culture, GUPS, Guatemalan News and Information Bureau, IJPU, JWSME, Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, Najda: Women Concerned About the Middle East, NCBL (Bay Area), NLG (Middle East subcommittee), November 29th Committee for Palestine, Oakland-Berkeley Rainbow Coalition, PWA, PSA, Port Chicago Campaign, San Francisco Anti-Apartheid Committee, Southern Africa Freedom Movement, Somos Hermanas, and Tadamun. The *Northern California Jewish Bulletin* headlined its coverage: "Anti-Zionism Contaminating the Anti-Apartheid Movement."

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Along with the GUPS, our Austin chapter protested a celebration of Israeli statehood and visit by the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations on April 29. □

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Correction: The conversation with Mayor Bassam Shaka'a in the last issue of *Palestine Focus* was recorded by the National Lawyers Guild delegation.

### PALESTINE FOCUS

(415) 861-1552

P.O. Box 27462 San Francisco, CA 94127

*Palestine Focus* is the national newsletter of the November 29th Committee for Palestine (formerly November 29th Coalition). The newsletter is an activist vehicle tied to an activist movement, yet aimed at a general audience with little background knowledge. We report on activities, not only of our committee, but of other groups; and we provide consistent commentary and analysis of events in the Middle East.

The November 29th Committee for Palestine takes its name from the date declared by the United Nations as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Our task is to spark and support consistent, far-reaching, and effective activity which brings the issue of Palestine before the American people and builds a growing and deepening base of understanding. Our committee organizes to stop U.S. intervention in the Middle East and to cut off U.S. aid to Israel. We educate Americans on the need to support the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to oppose Israeli policies of discrimination which deny the Palestinian people their rights.

Signed articles are not necessarily the opinion of the November 29th Committee for Palestine. Letters, opinions, articles, and other contributions are welcome.

#### Contributing Editors:

Douglas Franks, Steve Goldfield, Linda (Spike) Kahn, Tony Martin, Hilton Obenzinger, Cathryn Salazar, Ur Shlonsky

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PALESTINE FOCUS P.O. Box 27462 San Francisco, CA 94127

By Hilton Obenzinger

"Ever since pre-Islamic days, poetry has been the mass art form of the Arab language. Through the centuries ... the poets have never lost their place of esteem in the minds of the people of the Arab world," explains translator Abdullah al-Udhari in the introduction to *Victims of A Map: A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry* (Al Saqi Books). Featuring the works of three popular contemporary poets—Samih Al-Qasim, Mahmoud Darwish (both Palestinians), and Adonis (Syrian)—this book offers a glimpse of a rich literature barely known to American readers.

The works of these three poets revolve around the suffering of the Palestinians—and, by extension, all Arabs. For example, many of the Darwish poems in this volume were written in response to the situation faced by PLO fighters in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion, and their themes and images reverberate with the powerful emotions of that period. Read the poem by Samih Al-Qasim reprinted below to get a taste of the horrors of massacres and the whole experience of dispossession faced all too often by Palestinians.

Another book, *Palestine and Modern Arab Poetry*, by Khalid A. Sulaiman (Zed Press), offers a guided tour of modern Arabic poetry through an examination of the impact of events in Palestine during this century, describing the overall cultural impact of Israeli colonialism as expressed in Arabic poetry. Clearly, the pain of Palestine and the hopes brought by the resistance permeate modern Arab poetry. The book traces the development of such images drawn from Palestinian realities as the Disaster of 1948 ... the refugee in despair ... the feda'i (resistance fighter) taking destiny into his hands. The book explores the development of symbols for Palestine and the struggle, such as the symbols of the lover and the mother, along with the vital echoes of Biblical, Islamic and mythological characters (for example, the wanderings of Ulysses are often used to represent the odyssey of the Palestinian seeking home). Such a book does not simply survey literary efforts, but provides a portrait of how Palestine is etched into Arab consciousness.

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Another set of images altogether are the "Armageddon" fantasies which motivate many Christian fundamentalist supporters of Israel, including Ronald Reagan. In his introduction to *All in the Name of the Bible*, Rev. Donald Wagner notes that "the president's views indicate a growing popularity of fundamentalist theology, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. While most of the media reports have focused on the revival of fundamentalism in Islam, there has been a remarkable resurgence of political and theological furor among

## Getting It All In FOCUS

### *The Will of a Man Dying in Exile*

*Light the fire so I can see in the mirror of the flames.  
The courtyard, the bridge  
And the golden meadows.  
Light the fire so I can see my tears  
On the night of the massacre,  
So I can see your sister's corpse  
Whose heart is a bird ripped up by foreign tongues,  
By foreign winds.  
Light the fire so I can see your sister's corpse,  
So I can see jasmine  
As a shroud,  
The moon  
As an incense burner  
On the night of the massacre.  
Light the fire so I can see myself dying.  
My suffering is your only inheritance,  
My suffering before the jasmine turns  
Into a witness,  
The moon  
Into a witness.  
Light the fire so I can see  
Light the fi ...*

Samih Al-Qasim

right-wing leadership in Israel, South Africa, and the United States."

Examining exactly such a phenomenon, Rev. Wagner joined Hassan Haddad in editing the Palestine Human Rights Campaign Special Report No. 5, *All in the Name of the Bible, Selected Essays on Israel, South Africa, and American Christian Fundamentalism*. With chapters such as an expanded version of Rev. Wagner's "Anxious for Armageddon" (recently printed in *Palestine Focus*) and "A Palestinian Christian Response" by Grace Halsell, a

wide spectrum of Christian viewpoints are analyzed. Israeli human-rights activist Israel Shahak contributes a brief but eye-opening sketch of fundamentalist Jewish notions of "purifying" the Temple Mount (which have led to several terrorist attempts against Moslem shrines). Order from the PHRC, 1 Quincy Court, 220 South State Street, Suite 1308, Chicago, IL 60604.

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As opposed to the fantasies which justify colonialism, however, life under Israeli occupation is a harsh reality indeed. *Occupation: Israel Over Palestine*, edited by Naseer Aruri (Zed Press) thoroughly documents "how a society of people with normal aspirations for a dignified existence has been transformed, within the lifetime of the present generation, to one of people leading abnormal lives. They have become either refugees, stateless without political identity; civilian inhabitants under military occupation in eastern Palestine and Gaza; or remnants of the Palestinian majority turned into a minority in Israel, manipulated and controlled by its government. That this entire process was done in the name of 'security,' 'ingathering of exiles,' and 'divine rights' in a world and an age in which secular and pluralist values predominate, is just as puzzling as is the appearance of settler colonialism in the era of decolonization."

With chapters on legal status, Israeli settlement policy, economic consequences of the occupation, Palestinian women, and written by such outstanding scholars as Sarah Graham-Brown, Rosemary Sayigh, Lea Tsemel, and many others, *Occupation: Israel Over Palestine* is comprehensive—a gold mine for study groups. Muhammad Hallaj's concluding essay covers "Alternatives to the Occupation" and throws some light on the major proposals for solutions currently debated within the Palestinian movement.

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The media has been particularly confused and inaccurate during the recent battles in Beirut between Palestinians defending the refugee camps and the Lebanese Amal movement. The *New York Times*, for example, blithely changes reality to fit its preconceptions, referring to Sabra, Shatila, and Bourj al-Barajneh refugee camps as "settlements." How's that for being "even-handed"? If Israeli settlers can colonize the West Bank, then Palestinian "settlers" can now be viewed as "colonizing" Lebanon. Unfortunately for the *Times*, no amount of rewriting history can erase the fact that the Palestinian refugees have been displaced from their own homeland by Israeli settlers. Palestinians are *not* colonizers in Lebanon. Such manipulation needs to be countered by a flood of letters to the editor. □

## Yesh G'vul...

Continued from page 8

very much against the war. But surprisingly, they said to me, if you believe in it, so do I. It's okay. It's your belief so don't go to Lebanon. If you are willing to serve instead of a month in Lebanon a month in jail, it's okay with us. It was a surprise for me. Some other people had more, I won't say violent, reaction, but the most extreme was that we are bringing anarchy to the army. But that was only one or two people in my unit.

**G:** I can confirm this impression. Mostly, the other soldiers tolerate this phenomenon without supporting it. It is very rare for a soldier either to have very great hostility or very great support.

**A**bout the question of selective refusal—the refusal to serve in Lebanon or the occupied territories and not refusal to serve in the army at all—I think you should understand special Israeli conditions, the special position of the army in Israeli society which is very different from the situation in the United States.

The basic position is that most of the Israelis very strongly believe that the existence of the army is vital for them to stay alive. It doesn't matter really if this belief is true or not, but it is quite clear that most of the people in Israel believe that if the army didn't exist or it was weak, the Arabs would come and kill us all. Nobody knows what would happen, but the feeling is that the army is the defender of the people in Israel.



Israeli soldiers in action in Lebanon.

Al Fajr

Also it is an army in which everybody, at least every Jewish male, is serving for most of his life. You serve three years as a regular soldier from the age of 18 to age of 21 and then from the age of 21 to the age of 55 you serve one or two months a year, i.e., for most of your active life you are a soldier on leave for 10 months a year. Until very recently it was completely accepted in Israeli society that this is how it should be and that a man who is not serving in the army is in some way a social outcast. It's not a socially acceptable solution.

The Lebanon war, for the first time, made a significant number of people question this assumption because for the first time it was clear to a large part of the Israeli public that the war in which Israel is engaged is not necessary; it's not a war of defense. That nothing would have happened to Israel if this war had not happened. That nothing will seriously happen to Israel if the Israeli army moves out of Lebanon tomorrow morning. So, for the first time it was felt that the army is not a service in direct defense of your own life, in the life of your family and so on.

When the army is within the borders of Israel, the pre-1967 borders, then it is an army of defense. When it is outside these borders, it is an army of occupation. Of course, it is a symbolic distinction because it is the same army. If you are in the army in Tel Aviv, you are helping the army in Lebanon. But you must make this distinction, because if you are a total pacifist or object totally to service in the army—I know some such people and I respect them—this means completely isolating yourself from the Israeli public, taking a position which is completely unacceptable even to those sections of the Israeli public which are beginning to accept the selective refusal. □

# Israeli Soldiers Refuse to Fight in Lebanon

Members of Yesh G'vul (Hebrew for "there is a limit," or "there is a border"): Noam, Guy, and Adam—interviewed by members of National Lawyers Guild delegation in December 1984/January 1985

N: Yesh G'vul was organized about two or three weeks after the war in Lebanon broke out in 1982. Its basic principle was the petition we signed as soldiers requesting not to serve in the war in Lebanon because we thought that the war in Lebanon had purposes alien to the security and defense of Israel. These purposes were to solve the Palestinian problem by military means and to have a new order in Lebanon. Therefore, we are not willing to serve in that war.

We asked not to be sent in Lebanon, and the petition was sent to the Ministry of Defense, to Sharon and later to Arens and today it's sent to Rabin. The first people who refused were sent to jail for terms of 14 to 35 days and so on. They were tried by their own commanders.

The movement was most significant and most popular if we can use this term around May 1983 when about 20 soldiers were together in jail at the same time for refusing to go to Lebanon. Since then all the time there are people in jail for different terms. Right now, our main issue is around a guy named Max Bloch who is in jail for the third time for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

What the army is doing now is using a recall of soldiers who refused to go to Lebanon. They have a new regulation which enables them to call you again and again to reserve duty if you refuse to go to Lebanon. Most of the time they didn't use this regulation. They used it against one of us six months ago; he was also in jail three times. Another one got three or four jail terms. Now Max Bloch for the third time, this time for 35 days. He has another call for the end of his jail term.



Anti-war demonstration by Yesh G'vul.

The movement itself gained a lot of support and basically its main contribution to the politics in Israel was that we raised the issue of serving in the army not as a holy thing but as a thing to which you can react politically and debate. It's not a sacred thing that when the army calls you you have to go.

You have to understand that in Israel up to this war, most of the public opinion was all the time for the wars and agreed with the purposes of the wars and there was no such phenomenon as conscientious objection on the mass level. We had individual people who tried to refuse to serve on different levels but never more than a few people. The biggest group was maybe five years ago, 27 high-school students who refused to serve in the occupied territories. Their group was broken; they couldn't withstand the pressure beside one guy, who served almost a year in jail for refusing to serve in the occupied territories.

The army policy is not to let soldiers like ourselves be judged in a military court because although a courtmartial can give higher sentences it also gives much bigger publicity to a soldier who is charged. We have already mentioned the case of a soldier who refused to serve in the occupied territories. He did insist on his right to be judged in a courtmartial. After he was sentenced four or five times consecutively to 35 days of imprisonment, he did get a trial in a courtmartial. His lawyer was an instructor in the faculty of law at Tel Aviv University and brought out many precedents from Israel, from the United States, from other countries, great complicated legal arguments.

The whole thing got a lot of publicity, and afterwards when he was sentenced to six months in prison, there was a big public outcry. In the end, army Chief of Staff Eitan had to bow to public pressure and give him a pardon.

So I think that what the army learned, from its own point of view, from this case is that it is not worth getting soldiers for refusing to serve in Lebanon or the occupied territories by courtmartial. What they prefer is to have only the trial by the commanding officer, which is given no publicity or only small publicity, there are no spectators present, and so on.

From my own experience, there is no clearcut army policy on how to treat refusal to serve in Lebanon. I think that the army is wavering between two positions. One is that publicity is serving the people who are refusing so it is better not to judge them and not to send them to jail so that they will not get publicity. The other position is that a soldier who is refusing orders and is not punished is weakening discipline in the army so he must be punished. I think that they are wavering between these two positions. Sometimes one of them is the stronger, sometimes the other.

A: One thing which is important at the end of our manifesto, our petition, is that we say we are loyal to the state of Israel and to the army and we are asking for another service, not in Lebanon but in the state of Israel, inside the 1967 border. We emphasize that because the army officials and even some press people are trying to present us as army refusers and not on the case of the Lebanon war, but the case of refusal to serve in the army as a whole. I think this emphasis is important.

NLG: How do other people in the army feel about you?

N: It depends very much which unit you are in. I'm from a certain unit—I call it the Red Army—because most of the people there are new immigrants from Russia. As you may know, most of the immigrants from Russia are right-oriented people and therefore not

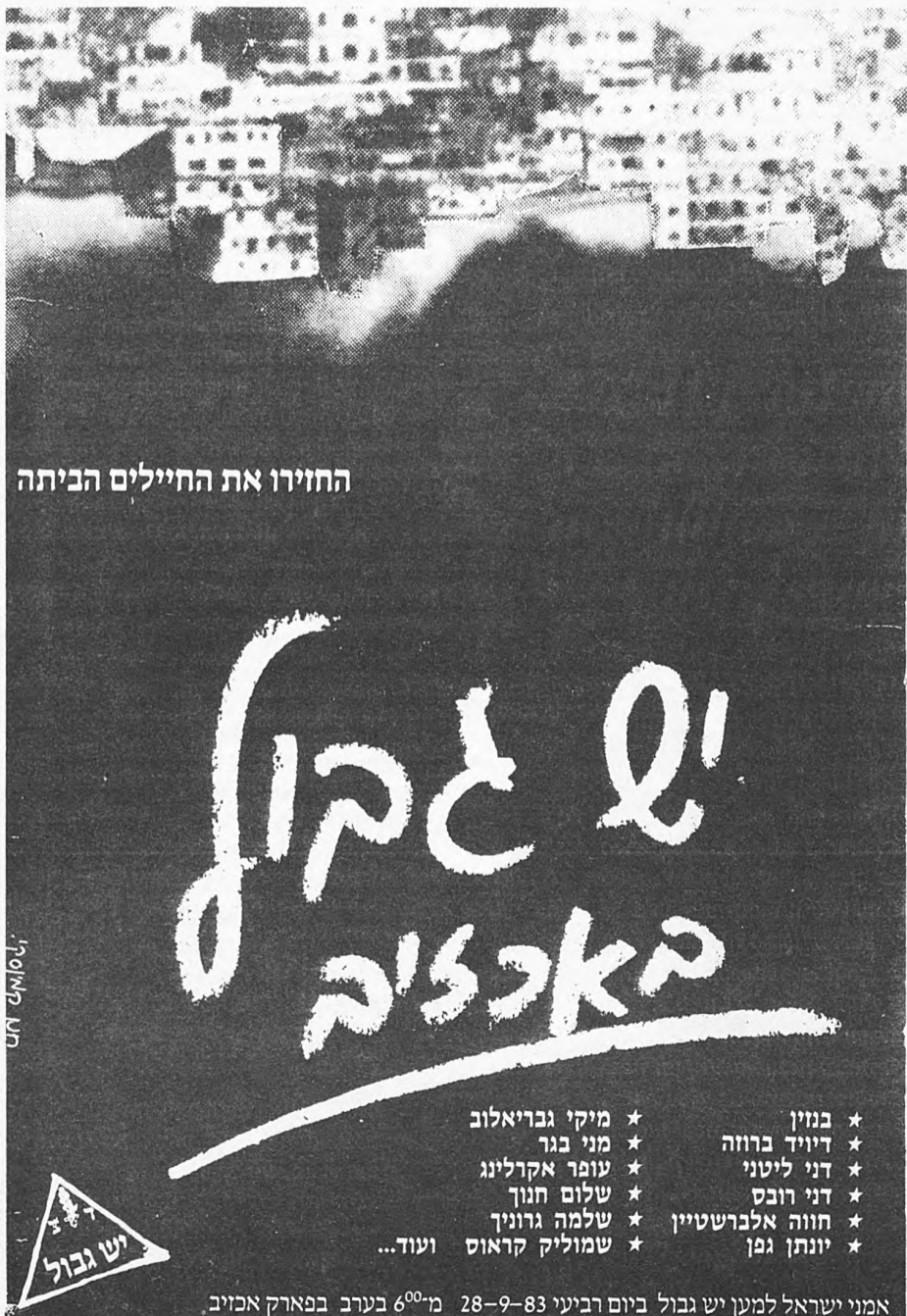
*"We raised the issue of serving in the army not as a holy thing but as a thing to which you can react politically and debate."*

But lots of people refused to go to Lebanon and about 140 were tried and sent to jail. We know of more people who refused to go to Lebanon but weren't sent to jail. Their officers found another job for them to do and they weren't sent. So refusing to go to Lebanon is much bigger than the number who signed our petition or were sent to jail.

That's what we are doing. We have active chapters in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Most of the activity right now is giving support to those people in jail by having demonstrations. Last Saturday we climbed the mountain above the military jail. We raised banners and shouted our support to the people in jail. We had a response from the jail. They also succeeded in getting people from the jail itself to shout back at us the slogans of Yesh G'vul. One of them was sent to confinement in the jail for two days. Yesterday Max Bloch was released from that.

G: There are two levels of military trials. There is one level in which the soldier is judged for disciplinary matters in his own unit by his own commanding officer. It is not a formal trial in the sense of having an attorney and so on. It's just that you are brought into the commanding officer's room and he says you are charged with doing so and so, what do you have to say. You say something. He says I find you guilty or not guilty, and he can give you only 35 days or 70 days according to his rank.

For the offense of refusing an order, in this case an order to serve in a certain place, you can be given a much bigger sentence. But for that you should be given a regular courtmartial which is in procedure comparable to a civilian court with professional judges, an attorney, with witnesses and all the ordinary legal procedure and it is usually also open to the public.



אמנו ישראל למען יש גבול ביום רביעי 28-9-83 מ-6 בערב בפארק הכזיב

"Yesh G'vul in Achziv" benefit concert poster. "Send the soldiers home!"

Hanan Kaminski

Continued on page 7