

palestine perspectives

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International Women's Day



A Lesson for Any "Mediator"



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America's Palestine policy has moved virtually nowhere. From the Roger's Peace Plan to the Camp David Accords, the United States has been adopting the posture that, in effect, a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict could somehow be achieved without the Palestinians; or that a settlement could somehow be imposed on the region that would regroup political reality in such a way that the Palestinians could be short changed of their national rights.

This policy, since 1970, has proven bankrupt. Its bankruptcy is evident in the fact that the Camp David Accords, behind

which the whole weight of America's power, international prestige and media hype went, have been rejected by virtually the whole Arab world. And not one single influential Palestinian has been found, or has come forth to assimilate himself into the so-called autonomy talks to lend them credence.

The reason for America's failure as "mediator" (a revealing self-styled soubriquet in light of US support for Israel) is quite obvious: The United States government refuses to accept a universally accepted fact about the conflict in Palestine: That the struggle of the Palestinians for freedom, statehood and self-

determination is a historical imperative in the region. It is at the heart not only of the Arab-Israeli dispute, but the very heart of Arab history itself. This struggle, now already seven decades old, cannot be reduced to a fragment (as it was in the Camp David agreements) without turning into mockery the whole peace process and the principle of conflict resolution.

Still the United States plods along, afflicted with the fiction that somehow, somewhere, a settlement could be reached and negotiated over the pleas of the Palestinians and over the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Israel's policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians is no less shot through with outright optimism and no less gifted with self-deception. The Zionists in Palestine, after seventy years of trying and failing, actually still believe that the Palestinian people, and the complex historical energy of their movement for freedom, can be subdued. They believe, in other words, that they can maintain their military control over the whole of Palestine and indefinitely deny the Palestinian people two basic national rights: repatriation and self-determination.

Israel's *modus operandi* in Palestine, its mode of interaction with the Palestinians, would be described as comical if it were not barbarous, criminal and racist.

Take the case of a law that grown men, in the Knesset, sat down, and with a straight face, legislated. This law makes it a crime, punishable by a prison sentence and fines, for any Palestinian, or group of Palestinians, to wear attire with the word Palestine printed on it; for anyone to sing Palestinian songs, or at any time to show the Palestinian flag even in the privacy of one's home.

Professor Israel Shahak, writing in the *Christian Science Monitor*, March 3, says:

"But the prohibition goes much further than the formal flag. The four colors of which the Palestinian flag is composed—white, black, green, and red—are prohibited to be used too closely in any painting publicly displayed. It is forbidden to the Palestinian painters of the occupied territories to paint a surrealist flower in which one petal will be white, the other black, the third green, and the fourth red; or alternatively pictures of wildlife with white, black, green, and red flowers too close one to the other.

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In Solidarity With Our Brothers & Sisters in Atlanta

In Atlanta, Georgia, in the past 19 months, 21 black children have disappeared and 20 have been found murdered. Concern among both blacks and whites has mounted throughout the United States. In an expression of solidarity with the Atlanta community and the tragedy they are facing the Palestine Information Office sent the following telegram:

Reverend Joseph Lowery
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

On behalf of Chairman Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization, we express to you and all brothers and sisters in Atlanta our deep sympathy and anguish over the attacks and killings of black children in Atlanta.

We stand with you in full support and solidarity in your struggle against racism, oppression and the murder of innocent children. We pray and hope for justice, peace and security for your children and people.

Palestine Information Office,
Washington, D.C.



Open Letter to President Reagan

Dear Mr. President:

It was with much interest and concern that we watched your television interview, conducted by Mr. Frank Reynolds of the ABC network on March 9, 1981. Our concern is with the remarks regarding the "rebels" of Afghanistan as used by Mr. Reynolds and your correction and comment on the semantics of words, and your insistence that these so-called "rebels" are really "freedom fighters" because they are fighting for their country.

My question to you, Sir, is the definition of "rebel" and "freedom fighter". Do the words have different meanings when applied to different countries? My concern is for the Palestinians. Perhaps I need not elaborate on the subject, but permit me a few remarks of fact:

The Palestinians were forcibly removed from their country to make room for the invasion of European Jews;

The Palestinians have been subdued for many years and are now, through

a new movement, striving to regain their homeland, Palestine; The Palestinian "FREEDOM FIGHTERS" (your terms for those fighting for their land) are literally nailed to the cross and condemned as "Terrorists" by you and your cabinet as well as the United States media. Palestinians are a people, humans, if you please, and entitled to a homeland and an identity.

I respectfully ask you to practice what you are preaching to all countries and all peoples, without bias or discrimination and without the outside influences of our satellite government in Israel. We have hopes of a better world led by the world leaders. Let us hope you will be recorded as one of the fair and compassionate leaders in our history.

Yours truly,
S. Sophiae
Flint, Michigan

Mediator. . .

(Continued from page 2)

"The confiscation process itself is also very simple: the governor, or an officer who represents him, enters a gallery or a shop which sells pictures, orders all the paintings and the posters to be shown to him, and points with his hand to the forbidden ones which are then confiscated on the spot. And in some cases the artists arrested as well."

Banning, confiscating and controlling art works in Palestine, and arresting artists, is of course a segment of a broad design of a whole system of oppression inflicted by the Zionists in Palestine on the Palestinians as a people and a movement. In the end all of this says more about Israel than it does about the Palestinians. Israelis, insecure at their failure to subjugate the Palestinians, are lashing out blindly, lunatically, *at themselves*. Like other settler colonial regimes before them in other parts and other times in the Third World, they sense the disintegrative process of their system of oppression and *apartheid*. Their policies have failed. There is a lesson in all of that for any "mediator" of the Palestine conflict.

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International Day of the Woman

Palestinian Women: On the Road to Liberation

Throughout history women have suffered inequality and discrimination based on sex. Today, though women have advanced in many fields, they do not yet enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts. This is no less the case in the Middle East. There, a unique development has given birth to the women's emancipation movement. That phenomenon has effected the transformation of the status of women in the Arab world and evolved as the Palestinian revolution emerged. To understand this, one must trace women's involvement in the Palestinian revolution.

The beginnings of a Palestinian women's movement came in 1917 as a response to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. Despite the social norms and traditions inherent in the region, women were obligated to react to a situation that threatened their families and existence. Consequently, Palestinian women took an



initial step and began to organize. By 1919 the first Arab Women's Association was founded in Jerusalem and by 1921 the first Palestinian Women's Union was established by Milia al-Sakakini and Mrs. Zalkha Ishaq al Shirabi.

A few years earlier during demonstrations, women rode in cars veiled. But by 1929, a group of 200 delegates attended the first Women's Conference successfully implementing several decisions. A delegation of 14 women was appointed to meet with the British High Commissioner to

discuss the annulment of the Balfour Declaration. This represented the emergence of women into public view.

In the 1936 Arab revolt against the British, women played an effective role. They engaged in fund raising in order to buy arms, smuggled weapons and on occasion participated in battle. Latina Ghazal was one woman martyred during the 1936 revolt.

The 1947 Partition Plan brought with it yet another wave of protest from the Palestinian Arab inhabitants. Playing a more varied role, women's participation included digging trenches and organizing secret women's units which provided provisions and medical care to those on the front.

With 1948, came the recognition of the enormity of the tragedy inflicted upon the Palestinian people. Thus, many women turned to education feeling that ignorance had contributed to the dilemma in which Palestinians found themselves.

Education made women more politically conscious and they became involved in political work, thus treading in an area that had long been reserved for men. Furthermore, the post war problems forced women to take the initiative again. Associations dealing with the different problems resulting from the war were established throughout occupied Palestine.

At this point, women began to take

complete responsibility for their role in the revolution. It was a role of their choosing. When Israel occupied additional Arab territory in 1967, a new area opened up where women were needed. As before, the Zionists were met with intense activity. The 1st anniversary of the 1967 occupation witnessed numerous demonstrations, sit-ins and protests by Palestinian women. Thousands of women protested against the Israeli military parade in Jerusalem in 1968, and girl students organized demonstrations throughout the occupied territories to protest against changes in their school curricula.

Fatma Bernawi became the first Palestinian woman taken prisoner. After her imprisonment, 4,000 women followed suit.

The inception of the General Union of Palestinian Women as an official union within the PLO brought increased confidence to Palestinian women. Thus in the wake of the 1970 attacks against the Palestinian population by the Hasemite Kingdom of Jordan, women quickly adapted their activities to the situation thus shifting activities from Jordan to Lebanon and other Arab countries.

The most recent in the chain of events that drastically affected Palestinian perceptions was the 1976 war in Lebanon.

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Palestinian Women: At Work Under Occupation



Women demonstrating against occupation in 1968.

Interview given to Palestine Perspectives by a woman activist, Imm Maher, who has worked with the Society of Enash El Usra for 13 years.

Q: Can you give us a general description of the Society of Enash El Usra?

The Society of Enash El Usra began in 1965 with the birth of the Palestinian revolution. It emerged as an organization dedicated to helping women in the social, political and economic areas.

The Society attempts to alleviate the problems that the Palestinians in the occupied territories face on a daily basis. For example, after the destruction of Beit Nuba, Yala and Immwas, the Society became involved with activities that revolved around that tragedy. It is due to this problem and many others that our Society emerged.

Q: What activities does the Society of Enash El Usra engage in?

Prisoners are a constant concern of the Society. We make clothes for the prisoners, provide moral support for prisoners' families and provide some financial aid to the prisoners. The Society of Enash El Usra sponsors a scholarship program where prisoner's children, the needy and those with good averages have priority.

The Society also runs small factories for embroidery, knitting and sewing. Secretarial training is provided by the Society for those interested.

Whenever an issue arises the Society of Enash El Usra participates in protest. We are limited, however, because we must remain a social organization or else risk severe repercussions. Thus our protest is composed of telegrams of protest to the military authority, or to Waldheim or to others depending on the situation.

Q: How many members belong to the Society of Enash El Usra?

Approximately 100. The Society welcomes any woman. After she has joined she undergoes a trial period of one month. During that time we make sure she is willing to commit herself to our organization. Of our members, 50% are active while the other 50% are honorary members.

Q: Is the Society of Enash El Usra confined to the West Bank or is it involved in other areas as well?

The Society of Enash El Usra is confined to the West Bank. There are other organizations, however, that concentrate in other areas. And all the organizations belong to a common central union.

Q: Where does the Society receive its funding?

Our financial support comes from three different places. First, as I mentioned before, the Society of Enash El Usra is engaged in cottage industry. From them we receive a small profit.

Second, we receive contributions. Various groups such as Aramco, the United Holy Land Fund and the Arab Women's Union contribute on a regular basis. The Islamic Conference contributed a building for the martyrs' children. In addition, we depend on contributions from the wealthy among us.

Our third source of financial support comes from two annual events. In the course of a year, the Israeli military Occupier allows us only two fundraising projects. Thus we choose between a bazaar or a carnival for one of the yearly events. For the second event we choose between a "Hafla" or a yearly calender.

Another source of contributions is one from the people. In Arab society, when a

family has had a death, it is traditional for neighbors and friends to prepare large trays of "Fatiya" or "Mansaf" for the family. This has been somewhat revised and today, rather than sending the food to the family in mourning, either a whole lamb or money is donated to the Society.

Q: What is the organizational structure of the Society of Enash El Usra?

The Society contains within it an Executive Committee of twelve individuals. Of the twelve, four are officers including a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. This committee makes the decisions. The rest of the members are divided into committees. For example there is an art committee, an educational committee and a cultural and social committee. Each undertakes specific responsibilities. The Cultural and Social Committee, in coordination with Bir Zeit University and contributions from the community, publishes and distributes a magazine.

Q: Is there any particular reason for the exclusion of men from the Society of Enash El Usra?

Yes, initially women were not as active as their male counterparts nor was their participation encouraged. Women in the West Bank felt the struggle against the occupation was as much their struggle as their sons, brothers, fathers and husbands. Consequently, women took things in their own hands and established the Society. It was in one sense a way we could prove to the men in our society that we are just as capable as they of having a significant part in the struggle. Since then men have tried to join us but we have refused them. Recently, they established their own organization called the Friends of the Society.

The Society of Enash El Usra has established a sponsorship program for children in need. The society provides information about a particular child in need and interested individuals may sponsor the child sending any financial contribution possible and corresponding with the child. Thus far, this has been an extremely successful project and it has brought sponsors from around the world. Yet, many children are still looking for sponsors. If you are interested, please write to the following address:

Society of Enash El Usra
Ramallah-El Bireh
P.O. Box 549
El Bireh, West Bank

National Week in Support of Ziad Abu Eain

Demonstrations and vigils in 21 cities throughout the U.S. and 600 telegrams to the U.S. State Department marked Ziad Abu Eain week, March 6-13. On March 20, the Palestine Congress of North America and the General Union of Palestinian Students sponsored a demonstration at the State Department in Washington, D.C.

During the national support week, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Dallas, Texas held a vigil. A vigil in Jacksonville, Florida was sponsored by the Orthodox community. Demonstrators in Detroit and Los Angeles protested the U.S. Government's attempt to extradite Ziad Abu Eain.

The Ecumenical Council of Wisconsin responded to a proposal by Reverend Humphrey Walz, and issued a statement expressing the Council's concern over the case of Ziad.

On March 13, a Palestine Human Rights Campaign delegation of 13 clergy attempted to visit Ziad in jail. The authorities of Chicago's Metropolitan Corrections Center refused entry to the clergy.

These and other actions of the National Week in Support of Ziad Abu Eain are in response to the February 20 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals that Ziad be extradited to Israel.

Ziad, a 21-year old Palestinian, was arrested in Chicago on August 21, 1979 based on an extradition request by the Israeli government. The Israeli government

wants Ziad extradited to stand trial for a bombing incident in Tiberius in May 1979. The only evidence implicating Ziad is a confession in Hebrew by a Palestinian prisoner. There is strong evidence to suggest that this confession was obtained under duress, and the prisoner has twice recanted his statement implicating Ziad.

Evidence of Ziad's innocence provided by his attorneys — the recantation of the confession and 14 affidavits of residents of Ziad's home town, Ramallah, that he was there on the day of the bombing incident — have been denied by the courts. Although Ziad voluntarily surrendered to federal authorities in Chicago, they have denied him bail for the past 19 months.

According to the National Emergency Committee to Defend Ziad Abu Eain and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), Ziad is being denied "the basic rights guaranteed to all by U.S. law, and has become a victim of State Department efforts to play politics" with the U.S. judicial system.

"Ziad Abu Eain is being used as the test case by the State Department in its effort to change the 'political offense' exception clause from bilateral extradition treaties," according to ADC. "The State Department, in an intentionally biased manner, is involved in the effort to secure Ziad's extradition to Israel."

Mr. Louis Fields, the State Department's Assistant Legal Advisor for Special Functional Problems, stated in a radio

interview in September 1980: "the act which Mr. Abu Eain committed is a common crime and punishable by the state or in the state in which the crime was perpetrated." Mr. Fields, a government witness in Ziad's trial, has apparently preempted even the Israeli courts in publicly announcing his determination of Ziad's guilt.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee explains the importance of this case: "Ziad is being discriminated against principally because he is an Arab. From the behavior of the State Department and the U.S. Prosecutor, we have cause to suspect that an Arab and even an Arab American can not receive a fair hearing in a U.S. court in a case where Israel or Israeli interests are at stake."

But, ADC also emphasizes that "this case is not only important for Arab Americans. It raises critical issues that should concern all Americans who value democratic rights. The case raises questions regarding, 1) the anti-Arab bias that appears to exist in a number of government agencies; and 2) the right of Americans and all who appear before U.S. courts to receive equal treatment under the law, as well as protection of constitutionally guaranteed rights."

For more information on the case of Ziad Abu Eain, contact the National Emergency Committee to Defend Ziad Abu Eain, P.O. Box 811, Evanston, IL 60204, or the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1611 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Palestinian Women. . .

(Continued from page 4)

There, Palestinian women continue to contribute by playing an effective role as nurse, fighter, social worker, educator and politician.

To date, Palestinian women have a significant role to play in the revolution and do so. Their involvement was consciously initiated though the emancipation movement that resulted was entirely accidental.

At the inception of the Palestinian movement, it dawned upon Palestinians

that victory was possible only when all available resources were used. Women were half of the labor power and a resource that the Palestinian revolution could not afford to ignore. As women were encouraged to participate, their participation filtered into all sectors of Palestinian life. Their increased involvement in the social, economic and political spheres created a new Palestinian woman, one that was more independent, mature and intelligent. It is not at all strange that woman's emancipation was a natural consequence of the revolutionary movement itself. There was not, however, a conscious effort whose aim was emancipation. Rather, women's rights were

an unintended, but welcome, consequence of the revolution.

On March 8, women everywhere celebrated the International Day of Women. It is one day that all women share with pride for it commemorates them, their achievements and their redefinition within all societies. Palestinian women certainly deserve that praise. In the truest sense of the word, Palestinian women, despite Zionism and despite tradition, have achieved and are successfully redefining their position within Arab society.

Prison Walls

"An Appeal to Heaven and U.S. Courts"

The following poem was written by Robert Iza for Ziad Abu-Eain.

In as much as some
apocryphal men
have made once again
their ritual demands,
pieced together
with pieces of flesh,
with myths and with lies
and with pieces of law,
we might have seen before this instant
but we still may look
at this so-called anarchist:
one Ziad Abu Eain,
a Palestinian Arab, 7 seasons in jail,
a boy,
wrapped in butcher paper,
and, as such, extraditable home.

Might fewer lies
and fewer appositions to a boy
have sufficed in this
and left us yet some pride
and divine grace here in America,
the home of the free and the brave
and the decent?

I ask myself in secret
and in shame
what has changed since
one moment ago
when we trusted in God
and believed in our laws,
not in some apocryphal men
who make ritual demands
that the sun be a spotlight,
that our wholeness
and children be broken.

So, perhaps, it is best, after all,
that this butcher so-called,
this boy,
should go home to the valley
where Jesus was born.

Forsaken in a jail cell,
Ziad Abu Eain,
entangled in scribbles of spittle
ex post facto,
wrapped in butcher paper
as a pound of beef,
be gone.

And yet I would spare
at least his human dignity
for your sake and mine.
And I will not press my face
into the dirt
or grovel in silence.
For we are many,
you and I, Americans,
resplendent in our freedom,
humanity and laws.
And if not I,
then you can wipe
the spit from your eye
and find your tongue
and speak the truth
and say,
No, we will not
extradite this boy!



*drawing by Kamal Boulatta

"Differences in Nuance"

On February 26, the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East began hearings on the Reagan administration's fiscal year 1982 aid request to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

The following summary of the hearing is excerpted from the March 1, 1981, Mideast Observer in Washington (P.O. Box 2397, Washington, D.C. 20013).

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Israeli Aid

"If Congress approves the aid levels requested," said Joseph Wheeler, Deputy Administrator of A.I.D., "total aid disbursements for Israel in Fiscal Year 1982 will approximate \$2.8 billion (\$785 million in Emergency Support Funds, (ESF), \$1.4 billion in Foreign Military Sales, (FMS), and approximately \$600 million from the special redeployment assistance package approved in FY 1979). This is about the same level of disbursements as in Fiscal 1981, but a substantial increase over the \$2.2 billion a year average of 1976 through 1980," said Wheeler.

The \$785 million in economic aid will be two-thirds grant and the remainder will be a loan at two percent interest for the first ten years and then three percent for the repayment period of thirty years. Of the \$1.4 billion in FMS credits, \$900 million will be a thirty year loan and \$500 million will be "forgiven" according to the Administration's proposal.

Rather than note that Israel's FMS amount increased 40% last year as it jumped from \$1 billion to \$1.4 billion, Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-NY)—a frequent attendee though not a member of the subcommittee—pointed out that the percent of forgiveness dropped from the 50% level that it had "traditionally" been.

Benjamin Rosenthal (D-NY) said that "people talk in terms of \$600 million to \$1 billion" that Israel would pay for new F-15 jets to "off-set" the proposed enhancement package to Saudi Arabia. Rosenthal asked about the possibility of the U.S. forgiving some of the \$7 billion in outstanding Israeli loans.

Last year Wheeler had estimated that Israel spends about \$150 million on its settlements in territories occupied since 1967. This time, in answer to Paul Findley's (R-IL.) question, Wheeler said that the amount "surely will be up. . . somewhere between \$200 to \$400 million per year."

Also in response to Rep. Findley, Wheeler

estimated the U.S. aid to Israel to be about \$670 per every person in Israel.

West Bank/Gaza

The \$6 million in aid that the Administration is requesting for the West Bank and Gaza Strip is twice what the Administration request was last year, but, admitted Wheeler, it's only half as much as the \$12 million accumulated back-log in project activity.

Asked by Hamilton (R-IN.) if the U.S. private voluntary agencies difficulties getting Israeli approval for projects in the occupied areas is better or worse than a year ago, Wheeler said "better." But Wheeler went on to note that Israel is reluctant to look at regionwide development for the indigenous population. He reported that no progress has been made on a Congressionally requested study of the human resources in the occupied territories and that A.I.D. had even requested Israeli permission for the study. Findley, upset by this revelation, responded: "I cannot conceive of why you would fail to make a request of the Government of Israel. . . You're afraid of an embarrassing confrontation is that what it comes down to? It just seems to me our government has been excessively timid" in seeking "basic information about the status of human beings in these occupied territories."

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Morris Draper—a hold-over from the

Carter Administration—gave the political justifications for the aid to Israel and the West Bank and Gaza.

"First of all," said Draper in his prepared testimony, "this Administration is concerned about the deterioration of the security situation in the general Middle East and Southwest Asian region which is aggravated by aggressive Soviet expansionist policies."

Asked a series of questions about changes in policy from the Carter to the Reagan Administration on specific issues, Draper did a lot of diplomatic sidestepping. He talked about the Israeli settlement activity being "a problem and a difficulty to the peace process" but he would not comment on its legality or illegality. "There are differences of opinion within the Administration," said Draper, "but I'm not about to stand here and tell you that President Reagan made a mistake" when he said that the settlements are not illegal.

On the Camp David process and on dealing with the PLO, Draper said that there is "no change" in the new Administration as compared to the previous one.

On Jerusalem, Draper did say that "there could be differences in nuance" with the new Administration but when asked to be specific he backed away from answering by saying: "I'm not ready to say."

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For Palestinians slight differences mean little.

"Journey to Jerusalem"

The Middle East has been a hot-bed for over 30 years now. Jerusalem, in the heart of the Middle East, has been throughout history, a city sacred to the three major monotheistic religions. Grace Halsell, an author who has covered both Korea and Vietnam as a journalist in the past, recently visited Jerusalem. Her visit became the basis for her new book. In "Journey to Jerusalem" (New York: McMillian Co.), Grace Halsell has contributed a detailed account of her experiences in the West Bank.

Following is an article written by Grace Halsell that includes excerpts from her upcoming book:

Nahla, 16, a tall and slender Palestinian, with dark eyes and dark hair, at first seemed painfully shy, even furtive, like an animal in a cage. She seemed to carry an aura of humility that comes with knowing you are living in a very limited space belonging to others who are more powerful than you. This was my first impression. But as I came to know her I saw strength, a determination, expressed most often in her desire and her need to establish her national identity. "I am a Palestinian," she told me. "And I must live in my Palestine."

Before staying a while with Nahla and other Palestinian refugees in a camp on the West Bank, I had always wondered: Who are they? Why year after year do we see pictures of them, standing at an outdoor spigot drawing water? Why are their camps not dismantled, and new and better quarters built? Why did they get into this situation? Obvious questions with difficult answers.

The first time I enter the refugee camp in the Israeli-occupied West Bank where Nahla and her family live, I feel I am entering some medieval ghetto. I walk along a narrow alley, skirting an open sewage ditch. I pass tens of dozens of one-and-two-bedroom houses, each leaning on the other for support. I am in a ghetto without streets, sidewalks, gardens, patios, trees, flowers, plazas or shops—among an uprooted, stateless, scattered people who, like the Jews before them, are in a tragic diaspora.

Nahla's father, Bashir, her mother Samantha, a brother Zayid and his wife, and another brother, Ahmad, a university student, and I all share one room. This one room is the only home Nahla has ever known. A closeted hole in the floor provides a toilet. Nahla has never known the convenience of a tub or a commode, nor does any member of her family enjoy that greatest of all luxuries, a room or even space into which one can, for an hour or a few

moments of each day, retire, and in solitude meld mind, body, and soul.

One morning I walk with Nahla to her school. She leaves me in the office of one of the administrators, a Palestinian who earned degrees in Boston and Chicago universities. We talk over small cups of Arabic coffee.

"Overcrowded classrooms are our worst problem. We have not been permitted by Israeli authorities to build new schools since they militarily occupied this area in 1967. Our school population has more than doubled. Consequently, we have to use our

Syria, the Persian Gulf countries, and in scattered groups throughout the world.

"About half of the Palestinian people living outside Israel are still considered refugees, and about 20 percent continue to live in refugee camps. I see the psychological effect of the prolonged stays in camps: there is a hatred that builds on a lack of freedom. Israel forcibly produces a generation of tongueless people, and we will, in the end, speak with fire."

Nahla, he continues, helped stage a demonstration on the school grounds. "This was when the Israelis arrested the mayor of



schools on double shifts.

"Censorship is another problem," he continues. "We made a list of 117 textbooks we think necessary. But the Israeli government censored 52 of these."

I glance around his office, bare except for his desk and three chairs. I see no wall decorations, no photographs, diplomas or books. What, I ask, does he need most? It is a perfunctory question, and pencil poised, I await a perfunctory answer, such as, "We need more books." But he is done with discussing school needs as such.

"Our freedom. Our freedom," he replies fervently. "We are a people exiled and held under a yoke of tyranny. About three million of us now live in exile—in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon,

Nablus, Bassam Shaka. Nahla and other students marched, carrying a placard, 'We are Palestinians. We must be free.' Six armed Israelis stormed onto our grounds and fired shots around the students. They arrested Nahla and a dozen other students and held them in jail for two days."

Later, as Nahla and I walk back to the refugee camp, I ask whether she was humiliated about being in jail. "No," she replies. "Nowadays it is a badge of honor to fight for our freedom."

The walls of her one-room home have one decoration, a drawing of an olive tree. "The olive tree has strength because of its long, tough roots," she says. "The color green and the olive trees represent our future. We have roots here. This we know is our homeland."

MORE LAND CONFISCATED

Despite worldwide condemnation, the Israeli authorities continue to establish new settlements on expropriated Palestinian land. Last week, Israeli forces fenced off 60 dunums of land of Beit 'Amr and Beit Jala villages in the Bethlehem region. In Hebron, the Israeli authorities have seized 7,000 dunums of Palestinian land. The Israeli settlements of Ras Surif and Elon Shuvut annexed land of Beit Skaria village near Bethlehem and the western part of Beit Skaria (some 700 dunums) was confiscated last month. In early March, the Israeli authorities announced their decision to seize 11,000 dunums of land east of Jerusalem in order to enlarge the Maaleh Adumin settlement complex.

In the last four months Israeli authorities have seized 60,000 Dunums of West Bank land for settlement. An Israeli official admitted to the *Jerusalem Post* that 24,000 dunums of West Bank land had been expropriated in the same period.

Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, head of the Ministerial Settlement Committee, declared that (by the end of June) there would be 85 Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

In the coming fiscal year, 45 percent of the Agriculture Ministry's budget will be devoted to settlement in the occupied territories. This sum of 739 million shekels (120 million U.S. dollars) will be augmented by further contributions to the overall settlement budget by the Housing Ministry, the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization.

UNIONS FOR ACADEMICIANS FORBIDDEN

The Israeli authorities last week issued an order forbidding the registration of an employees union for academies in Nablus.

Prior to the publication of the order, the military authorities detained a leading candidate for the Union leadership, Wa'el Al Qadi. They interrogated Al Qadi on his union activities and on his opinions regarding the military government's decree 854.

Decree No. 854 permits increased Israeli interference in the educational affairs of the occupied territories. Teachers, staff and students in schools and universities throughout the West Bank are resisting this interference.

Public school teachers in the West Bank, are continuing their strike for equitable pay
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"... aggressive and treacherous policy. . ."

BOMBARDMENT OF SOUTH LEBANON CONTINUES

Israeli forces launched 12 separate attacks on south Lebanon during February. These included five artillery bombardments of Sidon, Nabatiya and its neighboring villages. There were also five amphibious or naval attacks, including one landing along the coast near Beirut while several attempted landings were foiled. Naval bombardment hit Qasmiya and other coastal villages.

The major Israeli attacks were heliborne operations against the villages of Kfour and Zifta, in the Nabatiya area. In four-hours of fierce battles between the Palestinian-Lebanese Joint Forces and the Israeli attackers, three commandos and two civilians were killed, four Lebanese civilians wounded, and three homes destroyed. Israeli losses were estimated at 15-20 killed and/or wounded. Total casualties in February are estimated at seven killed and eleven wounded, all but three were Lebanese civilians.

In response to continued Israeli aggression, the Lebanese charge d'affaires at the United Nations, (Fakhri Qadiyah), on March 3, conveyed a message from the Lebanese Government to the president of the Security Council asking for the convocation of the council in order to discuss the recurring Israeli attacks against Lebanese territory.

Commenting on the attacks against cities and villages in the south, Prime Minister Shafiq al-Qazzan on March 12, said: "Once again Israel has proved its adherence to its aggressive and treacherous policy. It takes every occasion to remind us of its presence

and that of its agents, who resort to savage shelling operations aimed at preventing the supply of Ash-Shafa water to our citizens."

"By this cowardly action Israel adds a new spot to its black record of unethical and inhumane actions. The shelling to which the cities of Sidon and Tyre and some villages were subjected is a new reason for condemnation. This shelling must shake the conscience of the civilized world which continues to issue resolutions that it cannot implement."

ISRAELI DIPLOMAT LEAVES TURKEY

In accordance with resolutions made at the Islamic Summit Conference in Taif, Saudi Arabia, Turkey has reduced its diplomatic relations with the Zionist state. The Israeli charge d'affaires left Ankara, leaving a second secretary as head of Israel's diplomatic mission in Turkey. Turkey took the decision to implement the Summit's resolution despite strenuous Israeli, U.S. and NATO pressure.

ELLIAS AYOUB SUES UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

On March 11, the Federal District Court in Columbus, Ohio tested the First Amendment and Due Process Rights of foreign students with the case of Elias Ayoub. The INS has been seeking to deport Elias Ayoub for what they label "subversive" activities. Thus, Mr. Ayoub is suing the INS for restoration of his student visa. The results of his case will have a lasting effect on the rights of foreign students in the U.S.

"PALESTINE DAY" IN CAIRO

February 26, the first anniversary of the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel, was commemorated by opposing groups by distributing one million Palestinian flags throughout the Egyptian capital. The Egyptian Lawyers' association sponsored a demonstration, raising the slogan "Palestine is Arab, down with Zionism." An Israeli flag was burned and the Palestinian flag raised over the Lawyers' Association building. A statement issued by the Association emphasized rejection of normalization before complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and the restoration to the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights to determine their own fate, to return to their country and to establish a state on their land. The lawyers also affirmed their full support for the Palestinian revolution and its sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

ARAFAT RECEIVES FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat met with the Romanian Foreign Minister Stefan Andrei and his delegation in Beirut at the end of February. The Romanian delegation stated it will do its best to promote the Palestinian people's just demands particularly the establishment of an independent state.

Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Majlis Jojjat al-Islam Hussein Haqani arrived in Beirut from Saudi Arabia and met with Chairman Arafat.

In late February Chairman Arafat also met with a visiting Iranian delegation including Majlis deputy Jallaluddin Farsi and Shariat Madari, a member of the Cultural Revolution Committee of the Islamic Republic.

PLO OFFICE IN JAPAN

The Japanese government granted the PLO official diplomatic status and on March 5, the Palestinian flag was raised over the PLO office in Tokyo. The PLO representative in Japan announced that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat will visit Japan for the first time this year.

QADDUMI TOURING EUROPE

PLO Political Department Head Farouk Qaddumi began a tour of European countries by meeting with Austrian Chancellor Kreisky on March 5. Qaddumi will meet with other Austrian officials to discuss the PLO's position on the Middle East crisis.

ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION MEETS ARAFAT

A 13-member delegation of Italian parliamentarians visited Lebanon in early March. The head of the delegation, composed of representatives of the Christian Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party, stated they are pressuring the Italian government to recognize the PLO. The parliamentarians discussed the continuing Israeli aggression in south Lebanon with Lebanese and Palestinian officials. On March 6, the delegation met with PLO Chairman Arafat.

On their departure, the Italian parliamentary group issued the following statement:

"We have become acquainted with the current situation and have confirmed the

PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL TO MEET IN APRIL

PLO spokesman Abdel Mohsen Abu Mayzar, in an interview with a Qatar newspaper, explained that "the formula for national unity will be the main issue to be discussed by the Palestine National Council in order to expand the role that can be played by the PLO on the national, Arab and international levels. The PNC will discuss the formation of a new PLO Executive Committee that will reflect the common concern over having proportional representation for the Palestinian resistance groups, thus bolstering the Palestinian leadership's ability to be up to its responsibilities."

PLO OFFICE IN CSSR UPGRADED

Czechoslovakia has upgraded the level of diplomatic representation of the PLO office in Prague to that of an embassy.

Mr. Faruq Qaddoumi, head of the PLO Political Department, now on an official visit to Czechoslovakia, has signed the joint Czechoslovak-Palestinian protocol for the next 5 years. During his meeting with the Czechoslovak deputy foreign minister, Mr. Qaddoumi discussed bilateral relations and ways of promoting them.



Italian Delegation in Beirut.

conviction we had when we arrived to Lebanon. It is important for us to say that no solution in the area can be achieved unless the Palestinian and Lebanese issues are settled. It is important for us to say too that there will be no solution to the Middle East problem without the participation of the Palestinians, particularly the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We condemn Israeli aggression as we condemn all other aggression. We support the people's struggles for liberation. We support all peoples who struggle for freedom and we hope that next time when we come to Lebanon, and to Palestine too, the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples will have achieved their sovereignty, dignity and freedom on their soil and we will work to move Europe in this direction."

ARAFAT MEETS WITH NON- ALIGNED PEACE MISSION

Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, Chairman Yasser Arafat this morning met with the commission appointed by the non-aligned movement at its meeting in New Delhi. The commission, comprising Cuba, India, Zambia, and the PLO, is working on ways to end the Iranian war.

Arafat exchanged views with the members of the commission about the Iraqi-Iranian dispute. In particular, they discussed the latest developments on the ground and in the political sphere. The foreign ministers of Cuba, India and Zambia, together with Mr. Qaddoumi expect to visit Tehran and Baghdad in the near future.

Differences in Nuances

(Continued from page 8)

The PLO

In response to a question by Millicent Fenwick (R-NJ) about the amount of contributions that Saudi Arabia makes to the PLO, Draper would not give a dollar figure but did say: "They do make substantial contributions."

Draper also revealed that, for a period of "many years", the U.S. has sought the Saudi's help in moderating "terrorist" activity in the area and that "the Saudis believe that the mainstream [PLO] group Al-Fatah has been a moderating influence."

Note that the Saudi view, as interpreted by Draper, differs from Alexander Haig's view of Al-Fatah as he expressed it at his confirmation hearings. Haig called Al-Fatah "a pretty tough, hardcore group of terrorists."

★ ★ ★

U.S. government pressure on Saudi Arabia, and Haig's "terrorist" rhetoric are designed merely to discredit the PLO to the U.S. public. The U.S. government's position toward the PLO has been consistently opportunist: the PLO is a "terrorist" organization for the purposes of domestic consumption to justify an increase in military aid to Israel. But the U.S. government secretly turns to the PLO to help provide security for U.S. citizens in Lebanon, and in freeing the U.S. hostages in Iran.

The PLO is not funded by Saudi Arabia. It is supported by thousands of Palestinians.

The PLO provides jobs, education and health care to the Palestinian people, as

their representative. The U.S. Congress and the Reagan administration are not ignorant of this political reality. They would only like to keep the American public misinformed, for knowledge is the first step toward justice.

Unions. . .

(Continued from page 10)

and for the abolition of Decree 854.

The strike is supported by municipalities, unions and other institutions in the occupied territories.

The occupation authorities placed under town arrest, the mayors of Al Bireh and 'Anaeta. Two days earlier, Israeli forces had stormed the Al-Bireh municipality, where a meeting was being held to discuss the teachers' strike and the expropriation of 4000 Dunums of the region's land.

Palestine Perspectives welcomes any contributions from its readers. We encourage you to write us about any contributions, suggestions or requests you may have.

Due to a printing error, we failed to give credit to Mr. John Running for his fine photograph on page 8 of the February issue of Palestine Perspectives.

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