

**COMPILATION OF STATEMENTS  
MADE BY EMINENT PERSONS AT THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE  
Geneva, 29 August - 7 September 1983**

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INTRODUCTION

On 16 June 1983, the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine decided to invite to the Conference a group of eminent persons. Its selection was based on the following criteria: the eminent persons must be internationally famous; they should not be Heads of State or Government or leaders of opposition parties; their selection must reflect an equitable geographical distribution and represent both sexes.

Based on these principles, the following persons were invited to attend the International Conference on the Question of Palestine that was held in Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983.

A. MR. ROESLAN ABDULGANI (Indonesia). Former Prime Minister of Indonesia.

B. MR. URI AVNERI (Israel). Editor of Israeli Haolem Hazeh. Co-Chairman of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

C. MR. ELMER BERGER (United States of America). Rabbi. Founder of the American Council for Judaism. President of the American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism.

D. MR. LUIS ECHEVERRIA (Mexico). Former President of Mexico. Director-General of the Centre for Economic and Social Studies of the Third World.

E. MR. MEDOUNE FALL (Senegal). Minister of the Armed Forces. Former Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

F. MS. CECILE GOLDET (France). Medical doctor. Senator of the Socialist Party of France.

G. MR. P. N. HAKSAR (India). Former Principal Secretary, Government of India. Editor of Man and Development.

H. MS. FELICIA LANGER (Israel). Vice President, League for Human and Civil Rights, Israel. Attorney who has distinguished herself for many years as the defender of Palestinians in the Israeli legal system. Author of well-known With My Own Eyes.

I. MR. SEAN McBRIDE (Ireland). Founder of the Irish Republican Party. Former Member of the Irish Parliament. Current Chairman of the UNESCO Study Group on Communication Problems.

J. LORD CHRISTOPHER PAGET MAYHEW (United Kingdom). Politician, Life Peer, writer and director. Member of Parliament 1946-1950; 1951-1974. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1946-1950. Co-founder, Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation. Long-standing involvement in the Middle East.

K. MR. PAUL J. McCLOSKEY (United States of America). Lawyer. Former Member, House of Representatives.

L. MR. MATTITAYHU PELED (Israel). Retired Major General. Professor of Arabic and Arabic Literature, Tel Aviv University. Member of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

M. MR. YEVGENIY PRIMAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

N. MR. EDWARD W. SAID (United States of America). Palestinian. Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, New York. Author of The Question of Palestine and Orientalism.

O. DR. AMAL SHAMMA (Lebanon). American-Lebanese physician present during the siege of Beirut, Summer 1982.

P. MR. TAWFIQ TOUBI (Israel). Palestinian. Member of the Knesset.

The statements of Mr. Médoune Fall and Mr. Sean McBride are not included as the texts of their statements were not available at the time of publication.

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Mr. Roeslan Abdulgani

It is an honour and a great privilege for me to address this International Conference on the Question of Palestine, a conference of the utmost importance, since it is dedicated to the freedom of the Palestinian people and to the peace of the world.

Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to extend my congratulations on your unanimous election. My high respect also to Ambassador Massamba Sarré and Mrs. Lucille Mair for their devotion to the Palestinian cause.

I come from South-east Asia, where in the past the peoples have tasted the bitter experiences of colonialism. We all fought for our national independence. Some through peaceful means, others such as Viet Nam and Indonesia, through armed revolution.

We all love peace, but we all love freedom more. If freedom can be achieved through peaceful means, we are grateful for that. But if peaceful means fail, then we have to take up the challenge of armed struggle which is imposed upon us.

The road to freedom was not a free choice. Some of us could achieve it through peaceful negotiations around the conference tables. Others had to do it through the battlefield.

One thing we have learned from our struggle for independence, namely how precious national freedom is for all freedom-loving peoples, in particular for Asia and Africa.

Motivated by the fact that in the 1950s Asia and Africa were not yet totally free from colonialism, we initiated the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955.

The main purpose was to mobilize the forces of the newly independent nations for the sake of those who were still suffering under colonialism and for the sake of world peace.

Consequently, the Bandung Conference declared its full support to all national liberation movements. Bandung stipulated that freedom and peace were interdependent.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, Bandung declared its full support of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine, and called for the implementation of the United Nations resolution on Palestine and the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question.

The great Mufti of Jerusalem, Al-haj Amin Al-husseini, and other freedom fighters were present in Bandung as observers. During the deliberations and exchanges of views, it became clear that Zionism was an aggressive movement and imperialistic in character. It became clear also that at stake was not the problem of Palestinian refugees who needed refuge or shelter, but that at stake was the lot of the Palestinian Nation, who was deprived of nationhood and statehood.

Long before Bandung the world witnessed the plight of the Palestinian people. When after the second World War, the process of decolonization took place in Asia and Africa, the reverse happened in Palestine. International Zionist forces from outside the area came to subjugate the Palestinians, by terrorizing and expelling them from their homeland.

Indeed, Zionism is a new form and new manifestation of the old classical colonialism. In the words of the Bandung Conference this

kind of colonialism is an evil which should speedily be brought to an end. A world with the evil of Zionism is not a secure world, nor a peaceful world.

Reflecting on the deliberations of Bandung 28 years ago and projecting our view on the situation of today, we still face the very danger of international Zionism.

Actually, this International Conference on the Question of Palestine is a conference aiming at the eradication of one of the basic causes which endanger world peace. Thus, basically this Conference is devoted to peace.

As Lucille Mair, our Secretary-General, pointed out in one of her press interviews, the focus of the Conference is on enhancing international consciousness on the issue of Palestine, and to seek more effective ways of achieving Palestinian rights in the interest of a peaceful settlement.

We are all convinced that the core of the conflict in the Middle East is the question of Palestine; and that both the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem form an indivisible whole and cannot be dealt with or resolved separately.

The Palestinians are not a new nation. From generation to generation the Palestinians have given birth to outstanding statesmen, scientists, traders, business leaders and men of culture.

Since Zionist terrorism they have produced heroic fighters for freedom and justice.

They have been massacred several times, the most barbaric was the massacre in Sabra and Shatila. Nevertheless the Palestinian spirit for freedom and justice could not be crushed. Like all freedom-fighters in the world, the Palestinian personality remains an innate, persistent characteristic that does not disappear from their spirit.

It is an undeniable fact, that all nations must have a homeland of their own. If they are denied a home, people become walking volcanoes. This is not rhetoric, but the reality and the truth.

This fundamental truth has been recognized by all the United Nations resolutions. It is also reflected in the Arab Peace Plan adopted at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference at Fez in 1982, and which was subsequently endorsed by the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in New Delhi a few months ago.

But regrettably Israel with the backing of international Zionism rejects all those constructive resolutions and the Arab Peace Plan. More worse, Israel applied since 1981 a "change in the rules of the game". This terminology of change in the rules of the game was used by the daily "Ha'aretz" of 19 July 1981.

The new rules of the game were illustrated by the 500 people killed in the 1981 bombing raids in Beirut, the systematic intervention in what Defence Minister Ariel Sharon has called: "Israel's sphere of vital strategic interests", such as the violation of Saudi air space and the bombing of a nuclear plant for peaceful purposes in Iraq.

The new rules of the game were also illustrated in the new policy of the occupied territories. The Golan Heights were annexed.

Israeli military authorities fired on unarmed demonstrators, closed universities, ousted elected mayors and committed other brutalities.

In fact, those so-called new rules of the game were not totally new at all. It is the old game in the old spirit of aggressive Zionism with the arrogance of power. If there is something new, then it is in the degree and in the intensity of the brutalities.

In the light of all, this, we have to ask ourselves: Where do we stand now in our search for peace and freedom? Peace for the Middle East? And freedom for the Palestinians?

First of all, before answering ourselves the question, we have to acknowledge that with the Arab Peace Plan a new chapter in the history of Arab-Israeli relations has been opened. Without renouncing her rights, our

Arab brothers initiated a bold imaginative plan to attain a just, durable and comprehensive solution.

Equally bold and imaginative was the response of the PLO which approved the formula of the Arab Peace Plan. This was stated by Mr. Farouk Qaddumi in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia four months ago.

He said that in spite of the Zionist aggression in Lebanon, the PLO did not abandon its conciliatory stance, but, rather, responded to the Arab Peace Plan and approved its formula.

PLO's position did not result from weakness or from the acts of aggression committed against them but, rather, from the belief that justice is on their side.

Again, regrettably, the Zionists did not reply to the Arab Peace Plan in a positive fashion. Nor to the peace plan of President Reagan, based on the Camp David Agreement, in which Egypt's role could be a kind of bridge between the Arab Peace Plan and the American Peace Plan towards Arab-Israeli peace.

Instead, the Zionists still pursued their arrogant and aggressive policy. They expand their arms industry, for export and for their own use. Science in Israel has become more closely linked with warfare, and each

encourages the other. Advanced technology has been a military advantage for Israel in Lebanon last year, but not without limits.

The limits were the heroic spirit of the Palestinian freedom fighters and the Lebanese people.

Israel could attack the PLO again and again, but the prospects of the PLO's extirpation are slight. After each Israeli aggression the PLO acquired more experience in their defence. Moral and political support of the whole world is steadily increasing.

An exception to this is the attitude of the United States, which is always supporting Israel. This attitude creates a dilemma for America. America wants to reconcile two irreconcilable things: first, its friendship with an increasingly recalcitrant Israel and

second, its lucrative ties with the Arab world.

This American dilemma, which is becoming worse because of the latest development in Lebanon and in Israel itself, will be also our dilemma, if we are not looking for wider horizons in our search for peace in the Middle East.

Those wider horizons should be connected with the role of the United Nations. We have to reconcile our individual stand with the United Nations. The United Nations role is essential and paramount, in particular the role of the Security Council with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this context the Security Council should take the initiative to work out and implement all General Assembly resolutions and Security Council decisions, as has been recommended by the Kuala Lumpur Regional Conference, and so eloquently advocated by H.E. Tan Sri Ghazali, the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, before this forum.

The two following principles are the prerequisites:

(a) First, the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territories by force. Consequently all Israeli troops should forthwith be withdrawn from occupied territories, including Lebanon;

(b) Second, the principle of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, for statehood in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

After these prerequisites have been met, the right of all States to secure an independent existence can be ensured on the basis of complete reciprocity.

In the meantime, this Conference should also mobilize the moral force of public opinion the world over, to enhance the international consciousness in the issue of Palestine.

All these suggestions would be effective only if we can overcome our differences. Therefore we should unite our viewpoint and standpoint. The way to peace is a hard and a long way. It demands courage and patience.

There is no shortcut on the road to peace. Shortcut means war. Those reactionary forces who are in favour of that shortcut, let them be reminded that the days of local and limited wars in the Middle East are over. And they should carry the blame of a new scourge of war upon mankind.

And if that shortcut will be imposed upon all freedom-loving peoples, let those imposters and warmongers be reminded also to the

indomitable spirit of freedom fighters all over the world, that they love peace, but that they love freedom more.

Mr. Uri Avnery

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to address this important International Conference.

Let me first submit my identity card: I am an Israeli. I consider myself a patriotic Israeli. As a member of the underground and later as a soldier in the Israeli army, I fought for the creation of Israel. Indeed, it was the battle-fields of the war of 1948 that I first came to grips with the Palestinian question, and I have been involved in it ever since. As an Israeli patriot, I believe that the future and security of my country depended on peace. I believe that there can be no peace in our region, without the Palestinians. I believe that there can be no peace with the Palestinians without recognizing the PLO. I therefore believe that Israel and the PLO must recognize each other, and that direct contact between our two peoples is a precondition to any peace. What peace? Two thousand years ago, a famous Jewish Rabbi was called upon to define Judaism in one sentence. He said "Don't do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you." I would paraphrase this and say "I demand for the Palestinian people exactly the same as I demand for my own people." I want to live in a nation and State of our own, with our own flag, our own passport and the right to choose our own Government, good, bad or very bad. I believe the Palestinians have the right to live in a national State of their own, under their own flag and with their own passport, and have the right to choose their own Government, hopefully good.

Mr. Chairman, where do we stand now?

Let me tell you a short story. Three years ago, I listened in the Knesset to a speech by Mr. Ariel Sharon, then Minister of Agriculture in charge of new settlements. Some of my friends and I interrupted his speech in order to protest against this policy and suddenly he burst out laughing. He said "I shall tell you why I laugh. While you are sitting here in the Knesset, and shout, new ground is broken by the bulldozers in the West Bank, a new stretch of road is being built, new houses spring up."

Mr. Chairman, while we are sitting here in this meeting, on this sunny September afternoon in Geneva, the bulldozers are working in the West Bank, new settlements spring up, new roads are being laid. I am addressing you, with a desperate sense of urgency.

Facts are being created on the ground.

What can be done? This is the real, the only question. We seem to be enclosed by a vicious circle. This was very apparent in most of the speeches made in this Conference. Everybody knows what is wrong and describes it, some in extreme terms, some in a more moderate style. But very few ways for changing the situation have been advanced. What can be done? Economic sanctions? They will not help, they will only make the Israelis rally behind an even more extreme Government. Military action? Israel has unquestioned military superiority. A change in the attitude of the United States of America? One has to be a very optimistic optimist to believe in that. Condemn? Protest?

I do believe that there is one point, and one point only, where this vicious circle can be broken. And that is, Israeli public opinion. Israel is a democracy, he who changes public opinion in Israel, changes government policy, indeed, changes the Government itself. What is Israeli public opinion? Let me try to define it in very schematic, even simplistic, terms, as far as it concerns the Palestinian question. There is one minority in Israel which believes that the West Bank and Gaza should remain forever in Israeli hands, even if the price is eternal war, because that is the word of God. Indeed, many Israelis do not believe in God, but do believe that God promised us this land. Nothing will change this outlook of the people who govern Israel today.

On the other side you have another minority, smaller and less powerful, but important and significant, which sincerely believes in peace. This is the part of Israel which demonstrated after the terrible massacre in Sabra and Shatila. Four hundred thousand people came out in a unique moral demonstration. That would be equivalent to 600,000 Swiss in one place in Geneva, to 4 million Egyptians in Liberation Square in Cairo and to 25 million Americans in one demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Between these two minorities, there is a great majority of the Israeli people who waiver between the two extremes. Why do they rally behind the Government of Begin/Shamir? Why do they support extreme policies, extreme annexationist policies? For a very simple reason. They have been brought to believe that peace is impossible. That even if you give back the West Bank and Gaza, and even if the Palestinian State comes into being, there will be no peace, no solution, no security. Rather, the new Palestinian State will become a base for attack on Israel, 25 km. from my home on the seashore of Tel Aviv. Unfortunately, there is no lack of Palestinian and Arab statements which can be used to strengthen these fears, such as the Palestinian Charter, statements saying that the creation of a Palestinian State is only a first step towards another solution, etc. The selective use of these statements disregarding any others can go a long way in convincing decent and peace-loving people in Israel that the peace we propose presents terrible dangers.

We have to convince the Israeli public that this solution - namely the creation of a Palestinian national State in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with its capital in East Jerusalem, living side by side with the State of Israel in its pre-1967 borders, with its capital in West Jerusalem - is the final settlement of the problem, the basis for a permanent peace.

How do we convince? First of all, by making it absolutely clear that the two principles - that the principle of the right of the Palestinians to a State of their own and the principle of the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security - are twin principles, indivisibly united, the two sides of the same coin. Let there be no equivocation about it. Let this absolute linkage be made clear in every statement, including the one which shall come out of this Conference.

Mr. Chairman, we have listened to excellent statements by Chairman Yasser Arafat and Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO Foreign Minister. They were well balanced, clear to those who are used to reading political texts; but they were not the kind of statements that can move people, ordinary people, to change their minds.

What we need are deeds, gestures, that ordinary people can see and hear and be impressed by. When Chairman Arafat invited me during the battle of Beirut to cross the front line and meet with him, it was a deed. When he received the delegation of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace earlier this year, and when we published a joint communiqué simultaneously in Tunis and Tel Aviv, that was a deed. When he met us here, on Friday, after his moving speech, and expressed his solidarity with the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace by embracing us publicly, this is a deed. Many many more in many different forms are needed. To mention just one important example, the speedy solution of the question of the exchange of prisoners of war would have a strong impact on Israeli public opinion.

Can this opinion be changed? Let me tell you another story. Once after I made a speech in the Knesset very much like this, Mr. Begin stood up to reply and said "You know that out of 120 members of the Knesset, 110 are against every word you said." I answered "Mr. Prime Minister, I know this, and I would be impressed by this, if I did not remember that one week before a visit of President Sadat in the Knesset, 110 out of 120 members objected to giving back an inch of the Sinai." One dramatic gesture, which shook Israeli public opinion to its very depths was enough to change an impossibility to a political fact. This then is the value of the dialogue. An open and public dialogue between patriotic Israeli peace forces and the PLO is an absolute necessity, because it will show people that Israelis and Palestinians can talk with each other, that enemies can become friends, that there is a real possibility for co-existence in our country. On both sides, the enemy has been turned into a devil, demonology has taken the place of rational politics. We have to de-demonize each other if we want to convince people that peace is possible and worth a heavy price. Of course, courage is needed. Indeed, there is no more dangerous profession in the Middle East than the profession of peace-making. Let me remember here the great Palestinian patriot and peace-maker, Said Hamami, with whom I opened the dialogue in 1974. He

was assassinated by Arab extremists in 1974. Let me remember that most beautiful Palestinian leader, Issam Sartawi, my friend and my brother, murdered by Arab gunmen this year. Let me also mention Emil Grunzweig, an Israeli peace activist, murdered in Jerusalem by a hand grenade thrown by Jewish terrorists at a peace demonstration.

This is one of the main facts in the Middle East: There is an absolute and automatic co-operation by the refusal front on both sides, between the Begins and the Abu-Mussas. Every act by Mr. Sharon re-enforces those on the Arab side who wish to destroy any chance for peace and compromise, and any act by an Arab extremist provides ammunition for the forces of war and annexation in Israel. What is still missing, even at this Conference, is a clear, public, open co-operation between the forces of peace on both sides.

I believe that this Conference could help to institutionalize the dialogue. Let the Conference call for an intensification of the dialogue. Let it create a permanent framework to facilitate the dialogue and widen it.

In the battle for peace, we, the peace forces in Israel, and the Palestinian peace forces are the frontline soldiers of peace. Give us the tools and we shall do the job.

Early in my life, I have come to realize that we, the Israelis and the Palestinians, live in the same country, and that our destinies are intertwined for better, for worse. We can live together or we can die together. Let our common love for our country be a base for a life together, each one under his own flag and with his own national identity. Nearly a hundred years ago, the founder of modern zionism, Theodore Herzl, wrote in his diary after the first Zionist Congress, which was held in Basle, Switzerland, "In Basle I founded the Jewish State." Let this great Conference conduct its business and draft its resolutions in such a manner that it will be said in the future: In Geneva there was founded the Palestinian State." And quoting Herzl again, "If you want it, it will be no fairy tale."

Mr. Elmer Berger

### I. The Committee and the obstacle-makers

The invitation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to address this distinguished assembly is a high honor for which I am profoundly grateful. The gratitude is not without an element of personal satisfaction. For more than 40 years my Jewish anti-Zionist associates and I have a public record of opposition to political/national zionism contending it is an undemocratic, exclusivist ideology.

Before the fateful recommendation to partition Palestine and two decades before the Palestine Liberation Organization was born we advocated a democratic State in which neither religious faith nor ethnic origin would be a consideration for full and equal citizenship. Consequently, there is an added element of satisfaction in the opportunity to present these long-held convictions to this international audience.

The Committee's recommendations 1/ and its efforts to have them implemented so the dispossessed Palestinian nation might exercise its "inalienable rights" is distinguished among the multitude of peace formulas by coherence and perseverance. Most of the so-called peace formulas have failed because they have either deliberately evaded the central issue or cynically offered nothing but misleading placebos instead of the strong medicine necessary to heal the central wound of the original denial of this people's right to self-determination. The Committee's commitment to the most fundamental of a people's rights is unmistakable and I am honored by the recognition of the relevancy of my own life's work to the Committee's central purpose.

My reading of the record of this Committee leaves the firm impression that two States Members of the United Nations, acting in concert, have been mainly responsible for frustrating the execution of the Committee's recommendations. They have not once refuted either the facts submitted by the Committee or the principles on which the Committee has worked. The two-stage obstruction has been predicated on strategy or tactics. The obstructionist States have repeatedly argued that Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 or the Camp David framework, or both - if, indeed the two are as consistent as their champions claim - are the only practical bases for a peaceful settlement of the old conflict. The lapse of 15 years for the one formulation and of five years for the other, without anything resembling a "just and enduring peace", suggests users of this rationale must know an uncommon definition of "practical".

In the context of the 1956 Suez War, President Eisenhower said, "Peace is not the absence of war, but the establishment of justice". Those who invoke resolutions 242 and 338, or the Camp David framework or even the Reagan proposals of last September as reasons for obstructing this Committee's recommendations cannot point to even the minimal "absence of war" in the Eisenhower formulation. When strategic and tactical arguments are repeatedly offered as reasons for opposing new initiatives, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion these arguments barely conceal fundamental differences of policy and principles. It is not my purpose here to detail the well-known inadequacies of the celebrated resolutions or the Camp David formula or the Reagan propositions.

On 29 September 1977, Jimmy Carter was contemplating how to revive the stalled international Geneva conference. He was not yet entangled in the amorphous and porous Camp David formula. Still unencumbered by that negotiated confusion, he declared that if the PLO would accept resolution 242, modified to declare Palestinian interests exceeded the original reference to them as "refugees", the United States "would begin to meet with and to work with the PLO". 2/ The statement was ambiguous. But it was an advance over earlier United States positions.

The United Nations resolutions on Palestine which this Committee declares it honours - and which the Chairman of the PLO has said are honoured - now include recognition of the Palestinian people's "inalienable rights". The politically moral turpitude, the cynical diplomacies of great Powers, the flouting of international law have all combined to frustrate the implementation of these rights. But the resolutions have established a norm which says the Palestinians are "a people". They may no longer be regarded as fragmented enclaves of refugees, to be either abused or as objects of patronizing benevolences of hand-outs or demeaning asylum in patrionomies other than their own. This Committee's efforts to have these resolutions implemented, it seems to me, are entirely consistent with Carter's September 1977 statement, although this seems no longer to be the position of the present American Administration.

This Carter position appears to have remained viable for no more than 10 days. But that was time enough for the United States and the Soviet Union to issue their joint statement of 1 October 1977. For the first time, that moderately hopeful instrument put the imprimatur of the United States to a document calling for "insuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people". "Legitimate rights" were not defined and "self-determination" was not mentioned. But recognition of "rights" and designation of the Palestinians as a "people" together with abandonment of formulas for humanitarian hand-outs to "refugees" were significant.

If most of the world missed these language subtleties the ever alert word-processors in Jerusalem definitely did not. Their microchips projected on the screen of their programmed computer a command to Moshe Dayan reminiscent of the familiar divine order to the biblical patriarch, Abraham, "Get thee up from thy country and jet to New York" for the purpose, as Joseph Harsch of The Christian Science Monitor put it, (6 October 1977, p. 27), to see:

"whether the State of Israel can control more votes in the Senate of the United States than

can the President of the United States. "

Dayan's uninvited intrusion ended what was probably the most promising trend in United States Middle East diplomacy, certainly since 1967. Subsequently, it was disclosed Carter had gone to New York. He and the then Secretary of State Cyrus Vance sat with Dayan until after midnight drafting what was called a "working paper" for the still anticipated reconvening of the Geneva Conference. The working paper handily disposed of the verbiage which irritated the Begin Government. It divided the Palestinians into what Begin has consistently called "Palestinian Arabs" and "refugees". It made no provisions for participation in negotiations by the entity which the joint declaration of 1 October had identified as "the Palestinian people". Notably absent was any reference to "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians. From that point on, with the exceptions of the General Assembly and this Committee there has been a steady decline in the substantive quality of the various peace proposals accompanied by an escalation of violence climaxing, so far, in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the massacres at Shatila and Sabra. The European Economic Community must also be applauded for at least articulating its belief that "the right to self-determination for the Palestinians, with all that that implies" <sup>4/</sup> is an indispensable part of any promising formula for peace.

## II. More than "the lobby" is involved

For this dreary record the United States must bear a responsibility commensurate with its power and with its claimed potential as the most promising peace-maker. Its failure to advance a peace suggests some explanation other than the generally recognized susceptibility of elected American politicians to the blandishments of the Zionist lobby. And I submit there are a number of such possible explanations. Among them is the inadequacy of Arab, or Palestinian, information programmes focused on both the American electorate and the Washington politicians. In the same category are the derelictions of the American communication media including the almost total black-out of the work of this Committee.

Among more ominous explanations for United States protectionism of the Zionist State was one disclosed in The New York Times on 21 July of this year. A page-one story reported Israel has agreed to a United States request to supply the guerillas in Nicaragua with weapons taken from the PLO during the invasion of Lebanon last year. The sales are "part of an enlarged Israeli role in Central America that was encouraged by the United States", according to the report.

The role of munitions merchant is not new for the Zionist State. It is now the fifth largest of such merchandisers in the world. But public admission that it "launders" weaponry for the United States is something of a new twist. Some of the Congressional aficionados for Israel should be interested to learn the Reagan Administration promotes the bargain-basement arrangement because the White House is "concerned about Congressional limitations" on United States involvement in Central America. Therefore:

"the Administration wanted to establish new lines of support to Nicaraguan rebels in case Congress approved legislation that would cut off covert support for the insurgents..."

Given friends like Israel there are ways to circumvent democratic processes of decision-making in the United States. The Zionist State's role as super-salesman for United States weaponry to Governments whose dedication to human rights and social justice might offend more liberal Americans is, apparently, better known in Israel than in the United States. One whistle-blower" among Israel's liberal, academic community is Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, a member of Haifa University's faculty. In a New York Times op ed article on 6 January 1983, the Israeli academic said, Americans hear a good deal about Israel's partnership in providing:

"a barrier against 'Soviet expansionism' in the region."

Beit-Hallahmi puts a different perspective on the "democratic ally" image. The major part of Israel's contribution to defence against Soviet designs in the Middle East, he says, is:

"combating indigenous radical nationalism like that of the Palestinian movement."

Among customers farther afield he lists Zaire, South Africa, Guatemala, Haiti, Angolan forces in Namibia and Chile. The Israelis not only hawk arms. According to Beit-Hallahmi, they have successfully used "force to blunt the edge of native radicalism". And then he summarizes:

"Consider any third-world area that has been a trouble spot in the past 10 years and you will discover Israeli officers and weapons implicated in the conflict - supporting American interests and helping in what they call 'the defense of the West'. What others regard as 'dirty work' Israelis regard as defensible duty and even, in some cases, an exalted calling... The role of regional and global policemen is something that many Israelis find attractive, and they are ready to go on with the job - for which they expect to be handsomely rewarded."

Part of the reward, undoubtedly, is continued American obstructionism to this Committee's efforts to expedite the Palestinians' opportunity to exercise their inalienable rights.

And finally, in this inventory of rationalizations for the United States/Israeli tactics of obstruction, there are those who - again in either genuine or unforgiveable ignorance or with sheer sophistry - explain the alliance by describing the Zionist State as a democracy sharing cherished and traditional American values. This may be the greatest deception of all.

## III. Zionism and democratic values

Its widespread use and too often uncritical acceptance recommends an examination of the political/State zionism which is the

operating ideology for what is erroneously called a "Jewish State" but which, more precisely, should be known as the Zionist State.

I offer some definitions with a feeling of inadequacy because the phenomena to be defined warrant expositions not abridged descriptions. But I am conscious of the exigencies of time and fearful of abusing the hospitality of this Committee.

There have been - and to some extent there still are - those who call themselves Zionists but who have either stood for a long time, or by a process of disillusion, have come to stand in a tradition of what might be called humanitarian or cultural Zionism. Some of these have had very affirmative attitudes toward what they have regarded as Jewish values. They believed a reunion of a collectivity of Jews with the soil where the spiritual giants of Old Testament prophets spoke would revive something of the spiritual creativity which did give the world a substantial part of its moral and ethical tradition. Their names are household words to those knowledgeable of the problems of Palestine. When first I visited Palestinians in their miserable camps more than 30 years ago, these names opened doors to genuine communication. Ahad Ha'am, Martin Huber, Judah Magnes are perhaps the best known. For none of these believed a Zionist State was essential to the fulfillment of their Zionist hopes. Their political considerations were simply a recognized legitimacy for Jews to live in Palestine in a society which would be pluralistic enough to permit the flourishing of the values which they associated with Jewish tradition. They felt these values and therefore Jews themselves, had been contorted, if not completely corrupted by the Jewish experience in hostile environments in parts of Europe. These men - and many of their disciples - may have been idealistic. Even after the establishment of the Zionist State over the protests of the majority of Palestinians some of them continued to accept their Zionist identification. But they were eloquent critics of its policies of disfranchising, dehumanizing and proscribing the repatriation of Arabs who fled the 1948-1949 fighting.

There is another group which came to Palestine under the impact of the shattering trauma created by Hitler or who had immigrated earlier as refugees from the anti-Jewish attitudes which historically obtained in much of eastern and central Europe. They supported the entry of the later victims of this evil. I make this distinction here because neither of these groups was motivated basically by the ambition to be ideological Zionist State-builders. Their commitment to further immigration was not motivated by competition with the Palestinians over the numbers the Zionist majority needed to establish an ideological Zionist State. In the mental and emotional, anguish of the times many of them were less responsive to Palestinian sensibilities than they should have been and less rational in their appraisal of the extent and justifiable depth of Palestinian bitterness which had been generated by the deceptive means employed by the architects of the Zionist infrastructure to build an exclusivist "Jewish people" Zionist State. For two decades the indigenous Palestinians had experienced restrictive covenants on lands, apartheid-like economic development and the constant derelictions of the British - as the Mandatory power - to enforce the safeguards of Palestinian rights stipulated even in the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate and clearly implied in The League of Nations Covenant. By the middle 1930s and early 1940s the Palestinians were now no longer in doubt that their own existence as a people was in serious jeopardy. The established Zionist apparatus exploited the European tragedy for political purposes. Its propaganda dehumanized the very human reaction of the Palestinians, painting them as anti-humanitarian, dehumanized villains. In the absence of a sophisticated and widely disseminated exposition of valid Palestinian grievances, the conflict was aggravated. The impasse between almost mindless panic, on the one hand, and of rage and despair, on the other hand, was part of the Greek tragedy scripted in the original incursion into Palestinian rights in the limp language of the Balfour Declaration.

The United Nations failed to find any peaceful resolution. The structured Zionist movement determined unilaterally to put the recommended partition plan into operation. The premature termination by the British of their mandatory responsibilities facilitated the terrorists activities of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, in competing but parallel terrorist activities. They created much of the problem this Committee, more than three decades later, is mandated to address.

Many of the non-ideological immigrants were caught up in the inevitable conflict, which has now witnessed five, or perhaps six wars. They would not want me to plead innocence for their part. It is enough to say the Zionist State employed the same distortions of truth as are employed by all war-making States. Every war becomes an act of "self-defence" in the emotional dynamics with which Governments prepare and then sustain the kind of orchestrated public opinion which Governments seek in this era of total war.

In recent months increasing numbers of these non-ideological Zionists have discovered they, too, are victimized by this Greek tragedy. Many of them, often at personal risk, have determined to call a halt to the inexorable cycle of aggression, then war, then no-peace-no-war-and ultimately more war. It is significant, I think, that military personalities are responsible for much of the initiative for new policies in the Zionist State. One of them has spoken to Americans eloquently protesting the extravagant weaponry which the United States appears to believe can ensure Israeli security. General Peled identified one obstacle to realization of Palestinian rights last December when he said:

"...America's lavish aid is...having disastrous effects on Israel's army and its political constitution... The military establishments has grown out of all proportion to our security needs.... I, for one, would like to ask the American taxpayer, 'why are you giving us the rope to hang ourselves' " 5/

The Committee is to be complimented for inviting such people and they are to be applauded for attending and participating in this counsel of peace-seekers. They are also to be applauded for the courage to travel sometime ago to talk to responsible representatives of the Palestinian people. Chairman Arafat responded by recognizing and accepting the distinction between these people and the establishment Zionism which shapes both the domestic and international policies of the Zionist State. Using some Orwellian language currently employed in Washington in another context, peace in the Middle East's central problem of Palestine, could be brought nearer if Washington found a way to provide overtly some "covert" support for this non-ideological Zionism.

#### IV. The Zion of Redemption

There is another category of believers in Zion which requires clarification. Some Jews - and some Christians and most devout Moslems - regard the biblical Zion as a religious sacrament. With some theological differences, they believe a universal, messianic era of human redemption will include the restoration of what the Bible calls "the children of Israel" to a Zion from which there would go forth the moral law. "The word of the Lord" - not Knesset legislation - will resound "from Jerusalem". The Zionist political exploitation of this theological concept is repetitiously and sanctimoniously invoked by Mr. Begin as "the promise". In a most charitable characterization Mr. Begin's version is a half-truth. Any reasonably respectable theologian knows that a moral God makes

no promises of mundane rewards without exacting stringent moral obligations. The authentic, biblical "promise" is, in fact, a demanding contract.

Judaism is a covenant religion. The people was promised the land only if specified moral obligations were strictly fulfilled. Different definitions of those obligations evolved over the centuries. The first promise-covenant in the book of Genesis is composed of primitive conditions. The "seed" of Abraham was to have only one God and to circumcise every male child. 6/ Perhaps seven centuries later, Jeremiah declared a new contract in the name of the Lord:

"I will make a new covenant  
...not according to the covenant I made  
with their fathers...."

The original human obligations were tribal. This one raised moral conduct to the level of individual responsibility.

"In those days they shall say no more 'the fathers have  
eaten sour grapes  
And the children's teeth are set on edge'  
But everyone shall die for his own iniquity." 7/

The Zionist counterfeiters of this prophetic Zion never mention the half of the contract which exacted meticulous, human observance of the divine commands. For one of many examples, they never recall Micah's apocalyptic admonition (IV: 9ff.) :

"Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob,  
And rulers of the house of Israel  
That abhor justice and pervert all equity;  
That build up Zion with blood  
And Jerusalem with iniquity...  
Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field,  
And Jerusalem shall become heaps...."

Men were not competent to make the judgment that they had attained the moral acceptability necessary to make operable the return to the land. That was the divine prerogative. Only if achieved, then with unmistakable signs and wonders, the anointed would be universally recognized and lead the return.

In a recent, excellent survey of attitudes in Israel, The Economist of London provided a contemporary example of this spiritual, non-political, non-territorial Zion. Professor Uri Simon, dean of religion at Bar-Ilan University is quoted as saying:

"The land of Israel has been promised to the children  
of Israel...only if they fulfil the command to become  
a light unto other nations--and not to oppress them..." 8/

Many who equate their Zionized Palestine with the divinely perceived absolutes of Zion are often quick to defend the Zionist State's objectionable policies with arguments of moral relativism. Their State, they say, is no worse than many other States and should not be expected to be better. Most reasonable men would agree. But they would add that the State - and its people - cannot have it both ways.

#### V. Deliberate obfuscation

The propaganda apparatus of the state-building Zionist movement has brain-washed much of the world - including policy-makers whose political decisions are crucial to Palestine and the Palestinians - that these disparate threads are inextricably woven into an authentic and even sacred commitment of all Jews. In this fabrication, Judaism, or even a non-theistic tradition of Jewish ethics, is inseparable from the Zionist system of national rights and obligations pertaining to the Israeli State. The result is a fusion of religion and politics that has produced an undemocratic climate. Whether Jews, Christians or Moslems, those who reject or raise serious reservations about "Jewish people"-State Zionism are labelled "traitors", or to use the more venomous term, "anti-Semites".

The irresponsible allegation is usually a slander employed deliberately to intimidate free debate of legitimate issues. It is another obstacle to realization of the Palestinians' inalienable rights and consequently an obstruction on the road to peace. The tragedy of Palestine endures and is perpetuated because too many of those in decision-making positions are too often diverted by the confusions deliberately cultivated by the Zionist establishment. The diversions wrap the Zionist State in a protective blanket of romanticism, mysticism, dubious theology and sanctimonious protestations of morality. These obstacles to peace will not be removed until this protective blanket is torn away and the Zionist State is made to stand in the witness box of world opinion for a probing cross-examination of the fundamental ideology which conceived the State and still provides the dynamics for both its domestic and international policies. Such an examination need not rely upon individual situations which can be rationalized as aberrations or on any single Palestinian or Arab complaint of aggression to be answered by the automatic Zionist rejoinder of defence and the need for security. The substance for such an examination should be the continuum of policy with which ideological Zionism has pursued its political and territorial objectives on the international scene and also the codified, publicly proclaimed and publicly deliberated domestic laws. It should include also administration of these laws which is extensive enough in space and time to be identified as official policy.

The origins of Israel's discriminatory Zionist nationality criteria are in Theodor Herzl's classic of State Zionism, Der Judenstaat, or "the State of the Jews". Herzl simply decreed, ex cathedra, that Jews are:

"A people-one people." 9/

He dominated the First Zionist Congress in 1897. The Basle Programme was proclaimed there. It illuminated what Herzl intended by using the vague euphemism, "people". The Jews" were to be recognized in international law as a national entity entitled to:

"A publicly and legally secured home in  
Palestine for the Jewish people." 10/



The Zionist organization was born at that first Congress. Herzl predicted the organization:

"will be recognized as, to put it in terminology of international law, a State-creating power. And the recognition will, in effect, mean the creation of the State." 11/

The presumption that all Jews would welcome recognition as a political nationality was false. Herzl found minimal support - and indeed vigorous opposition - among the recognized leadership of Jews in Western Europe. A quarter of a century later Chaim Weizmann manipulated what is probably State-zionism's most profitable deception. He seduced naive and uninformed American Jews into the Enlarged Jewish Agency. He accomplished the mésalliance by coining such obscure terms as "synthetic zionism", "practical zionism" and "non-zionism". Weizmann spoke to anti-Zionists in the language of the non-ideological Zionists. He denied that a Zionist State was essential to the realization of Zionist aspirations. He extracted moral and financial support from Jews who insisted no "Jewish" nationality existed and who relied upon England, as the Mandatory Power, to require Zionist compliance with the clauses of the Balfour Declaration which promised protection of Palestinian rights and respect for the single nationality status of anti-Zionist Jews in countries other than Palestine. In his autobiography, Weizmann later admitted that his new American associates:

"were prepared to dispense a sort of left-handed generosity, on condition that their right hand did not know what their left hand was doing."

What they gave, he added, they considered:

"philanthropy, which did not compromise them; to us it was nationalist renaissance. They would give--with disclaimers; we would accept--with reservations." 12/

Neither then - nor now - does the majority of Jews throughout the world know much about the wheels within wheels in the Zionist movement which claims to represent a so-called "Jewish people". This alleged "Jewish people" had participated in no representative elections. The unilateral assertion of Zionist authority has become scandalous because presumably responsible Governments of democratic States have given a kind of legitimacy to the pretenders by dealing with them or their agents in matters which substantively involve the treasure and identity of their own citizens who are Jews. In the early 1920s, reporting to some of his loyalists who were disappointed that the Mandate did not, outright, establish a Zionist State, Weizmann confessed, "the Jews were against us". 13/ But he perceived that international recognition of the so-called "Jewish people" meant acceptance of zionism's central assumption. The rest, he assured his audience, would follow:

"The value of the Mandate, apart from being a great success of zionism, consists in the recognition of the Jewish people. This is of immense value, which will bear fruit and will open up new perspectives as yet hidden from our weak eyes, while we are engaged in our daily tasks." 14/

Supreme cynicism or supreme hypocrisy, or unforgiveable ignorance permits Governments of today's Great Powers to split hairs over the authenticity of the PLO's representation of a displaced Palestinian nation, while they entertain Zionist potentates claiming to represent a fabricated nationality which zionism calls "the Jewish people".

#### VI. "Jewish people" laws

The arbitrary inclusion of all Jews as subjects in a system of "Jewish people" nationality rights and obligations is the distinguishing element of a category of legislation which is known in the Zionist State as "fundamental" or "basic laws". They are Israel's equivalent of a constitution. A distinguished Zionist jurist, Dr. Nathan Feinberg, has put it clearly:

The right to the national home is granted to the Jewish people as a whole, and not to any part of it, it is granted not to Zionists or to Jews who have settled in Palestine or who will settle there, but to all Jews wherever they may be."15/

Anti-Zionist Jews reject this arrogation. Our efforts, in 1964, persuaded the United States Department of State to declare, "the Jewish people" concept invalid in international law. 16/ The declaration has never been enforced. "Jewish people" nationality institutions, run by and for the Zionist State, operate with impunity, as if they were voluntary American organizations. The establishmentarian, ideological Zionists never intended to respect the Balfour Declaration's stipulated safeguards of the rights of Palestine's indigenous people and the nationality integrity of Jews who rejected Zionist nationalism. Neither of the great democratic Powers most directly responsible for the resulting tragedy ever exercised the political courage to require such compliance. Given Zionist commitment to its vision, the ineptitude and inadequacy of Arab public information and the dereliction of these great Powers, the way was clear for the establishment of a State which would enact this "Jewish people", "basic" or "fundamental" legislation and hold that it transcended the rights of the Palestinians and also ignored the protests and rejections of anti-Zionist Jews. To put a corpus of such laws in place it was necessary to displace substantial numbers of Palestinians and then construct an electoral system in which the remaining Palestinian minority, if they voted at all, could choose only among Zionist parties.

Ian Lustick, an American Zionist scholar, observes that Israel's Arab minority is more than 10 per cent of the population but :

"although more than 40 per cent of the adult Jewish population are card-carrying, dues-paying party members, the total Arab membership in Zionist parties is no more than 6,000 to 7,000. Of these only a few in Mapam participate in serious internal

party debates. 17/

The alternative for the Palestinian minority to avoid reinforcing its own political degradation is alliance with the Communist party which, with what Lustick calls its "anti-Zionist stance", is skillfully isolated from the power centers. Some of the Zionist State's most vigorous champions of human rights have aligned themselves with the party to demonstrate their opposition to the conventional political pattern, although the orthodoxy of their Communist commitment may be suspect. The commitment of the majority of the Zionist State's political parties to historic Zionist ideology with its dominance of "Jewish people" nationality rights is a serious obstacle to any early realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians in either domestic or in international policies. Once again, a United States with greater integrity to its often proclaimed commitment to the self-determination of people could, without doubt, employ some overt covert encouragement, if it so willed.

Meir Kahane is usually described as an extremist, although the term is seldom clarified by stating in relation to what he is extreme. Students of the ideological commitment and of on-going policies of establishmentarian Zionism find little difficulty demonstrating that much of his "extremism" is merely candor which embarrasses the advocates of gradualism. He often articulates clearly what others prefer to mumble in ambiguities while they execute policies to which Kahane gives proper names.

In a recent article - in of all places The New York Times - the unapologetic Zionist addresses the dilemma of how to perpetuate a so-called "Jewish State" and still be identified as an authentic democracy. He concludes:

"A State can be permanently defined as Jewish or as democratic, but never both."

And he explains,

"Israel's Declaration of Independence is a schizophrenic document, for it speaks of the establishment of 'a Jewish State in the land of Israel' while, in the same breath offering 'equal social and political rights to all citizens, regardless of religion'. That is clearly an absurdity--a contradiction in terms. A Jewish State, by definition, is one with a majority of Jews who can, thus, establish their own sovereignty and become captains of their own fate. A democracy, on the other hand, allows non-Jews to become a majority and, thus, to turn Israel into a non-Jewish State. The very idea of a 'democratic Jewish State' is nonsense." 18/

The contradiction was - and is - inherent in establishment Zionism. It was not provoked-by any legitimate defence against alleged irrational Arab or Palestinian hatred of Jews. Weizmann, who had often misled Arabs and American Jews by cynically disclaiming the Herzlian objective of a "State of the Jews", subliminally revealed his true aspirations following the displacement of the Palestinians in 1949. He called it:

"A miraculous simplification of Israel's tasks." 19/

## VII. Building the "Jewish people" (Zionist) State

Thanks to the combination of terrorists led by Mr. Begin and Mr. Shamir the Zionist State-builders were relieved of the impediment of a Palestinian population which would have been, roughly, the numerical equivalent of Zionists in the proposed so-called "Jewish State". And the process of building the Zionist State began. It cannot be overemphasized that the exclusivist character of the State is not some temporary accommodation to continuing Arab hostility. On the contrary, a solid case can be argued that the hostility is an understandable reaction to the exclusivity. And the exclusivity is codified in a complete body of law that has been thoroughly deliberated by the State's elected parliament or Knesset.

Some of these laws are well known and require only brief mention here. "The Law of the Return" grants to every Jews anywhere in the world the right to immigrate - unless the Minister of Immigration finds he or she:

"is engaged in an activity directed against the Jewish people." 20/

It is significant that the disqualifying conduct is not restricted to the State, but is extended to "the Jewish people".

The "Law of the Return" was followed by "the Law of Nationality". 21/ It stipulates that a "Jewish people" immigrant automatically acquires Israeli citizenship unless he or she renounces such citizenship within a specified period of time either after acquiring the immigration certificate or entry to the country. The exclusionary criteria for possession of these extra-territorial rights are profession of Judaism, descent from a Jewish mother or conversion to Judaism. The legislation therefore, is either theocratic or racial. It is prima facie evidence that the State regards all Jews--"the Jewish people"--as the "one people" of Herzl and as the nationality constituency of the Zionist State. This extraterritorial legislation provides foreign nationals rights in the State which even its resident, non-"Jewish people" nationals do not possess, let alone the displaced Palestinians. It is therefore, another obstacle to realization of the Palestinians' inalienable rights. A less known law in the "fundamental" or "basic" category is "The World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency for Israel (Status) Law". 22/ It designates the World Zionist Organization as "the authorized agency" to develop and settle the country and to absorb immigrants. It declares "the central task of the State of Israel and the Zionist movement" is to recruit Jewish immigration.

It follows that a State committed to this "central task" cannot, at the same time, be dedicated to achieving a society in which

everyone, regardless of faith or ethnic origin, shares equally in rights and responsibilities.

During the Knesset debate of this law, then-Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion said:

"The sovereign authority of the State is confined to its own borders and applies only to its own citizens. But 80 per cent of the Jewish people are still...outside the borders of the State."

He continued, with unmistakable clarity:

"It is the Zionist organization...which is able to achieve what is beyond the power and competence of the State, and that is the advantage of the Zionist organization over the State." 23/

So the State of Israel stands four-square on the foundations put down by Theodor Herzl. Its Zionist institutions are bound to the conventional government by this "basic" law. They serve only its "Jewish people" citizens. This duality of governing responsibility explains the disparity between what are called "Jewish" land, "Jewish" housing, "Jewish" education, "Jewish" industry, on the one hand, and economic, education, social institutions in the same categories for Israel's disadvantaged non-"Jewish people" citizens, on the other hand. The commitment of the State to employing the Zionist infrastructure to maintain policies of discrimination is so firm that in:

"the early and mid-60's, when financial contributions from world Jewry were at a low ebb, the Israeli government effected unilateral transfers of public monies into the treasuries of the national institutions. Between 1959 and 1967, for example, the Israeli government donated over \$100 million to the Jewish Agency." 24/

(For "national" in this quotation, read "Zionist".)

So, the supposedly free, autonomous Zionist organization is neither. By law and function it is a servant of the State. One of its functions is to deepen and perpetuate Israel's "Jewish people" discriminatory nationalism to the detriment of its non-"Jewish people" citizens, either within the 1967 territory, or in the occupied areas.

A "Jewish people" territorial imperative is also very much alive in the policies of the Zionist State. Representatives of the World Zionist Organization presented a memorandum to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The boundaries they recommended for a Palestine, which they assumed would eventually be a Zionist State, included territory as far north as Sidon, in Lebanon, an arrangement to participate in control of the Litani River water and territory beyond the present West Bank, into what is now Jordan as far as the old Hedjaz railroad. 25/ This original Zionist, proposal had nothing to do with either security or God. The 1919 memorandum is quite earthy. It candidly states:

"The geographical area of Palestine should be as large as possible...(and also) to secure all water resources already feeding the country, but also to be able to conserve and control them at their source." 26/

The recently published "Diaries" of Israel's first Foreign Minister and one-time Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett, suggest there was more to last year's invasion of Lebanon than "Peace for Galilee" or even the annihilation of the PLO. And more than security is involved in the Zionist State's foot-dragging withdrawal from Lebanon. Zionist strategy was proposed at the highest levels 30 years ago:

"to find an officer, even just a major (who could be persuaded or bought) to declare himself the savior of the Maronite population. Then the Israeli army will enter Lebanon, will occupy the necessary territory, and will create a Christian régime which will ally itself with Israel. The territory from the Litani southward will be totally annexed to Israel." 27/

The Zionist State has never been reconciled to any of the borders proposed or accepted de facto in any of the abortive peace formulas. This territorial imperative is certainly another obstacle to the fulfillment of the Palestinians' right to self-determination for the realization of that right necessitates renunciation of territories which are historically part of the Zionist design and which neither the movement nor its State have ever renounced. By pursuing its historic policy of "establishing facts", of fait accompli diplomacy, the State gives every evidence - aided by acquiescence of its great power patron - of a policy of inexorable acquisition.

### VIII. Beyond rhetoric

By now it will be clear that I am neither a politician nor a lawyer and perhaps even less of a diplomat. I did not come here believing I held the magic wand for resolving this intractable problem. I felt comfortable coming here because of the broad construction implied in item 4 of the provisional agenda in the invitation letter of the Conference's Secretary-General - "Obstacles to the achievement of Palestinian rights". Certainly, to my mind, one important obstacle is the inadequate knowledge of so many of the would-be peace-makers about the true character this Zionist ideology which determines so much Israeli policy.

Ultimately, probably only the Israeli people can liberate themselves from the aggressive, racist/theocratic ideology of a nationalism predicated on the "Jewish people"-State concept. The present disaffected, humanitarian and disillusioned Zionists of Israel deserve assistance. We can help by refusing to encourage the dedicated ideologues whose control of the State has been subsidized by American support based upon deliberate ignorance or unforgiveable innocence of the character of zionism.

In his 1 September statement of American policy, Mr. Reagan said, the United States:

"must move to resolve the root causes of conflict between Arabs and Israelis."

The "root cause" is not only the forceful imposition of a foreign political structure upon the indigenous Palestinians. More than one international commission and numerous investigative bodies of the United Nations and private organizations have identified the genetic fault of elevating so-called "Jewish rights" above the elemental, human rights of Palestinians. But most of the diplomatic tinkers have prescribed cures which merely mask symptoms. They have suggested moving boundaries a bit here or there. They have offered the deprived Palestinians placebos instead of proven cure of respect for the dignity and humanity of a politically self-conscious people.

It is very late. There has been too much history to rectify completely the havoc wrought. But in all the three great religious faiths which emanated from this troubled area of the world, there are formulas for atonement and rectifications of injustice. In Judaism one of my favorites is from Jeremiah advising an arrogant and erring nation that neither the brick and mortar of the ancient temple, nor political alliances, nor the numbers or sophistication of weaponry make for the health and security of a nation. Standing in and pointing to the gates of the ancient temple which symbolized the inflated sense of glory adored by king, priest and people, the divinely inspired messenger spoke words which can be addressed with profit to the would-be peace-makers of today.

"Trust ye not in lying words,  
saying, the temple of the Lord,  
the temple of the Lord, the  
temple of the Lord are these.  
Nay, but if ye thoroughly  
amend your ways and your  
doings; if ye thoroughly  
execute justice between  
a man and his neighbor;  
if he oppress not the  
stranger, the fatherless  
and the widow, and  
shed not innocent blood  
in this place, neither walk  
after other gods to your hurt;  
then will I cause you to  
dwell in this place, in  
the land that I gave to  
your fathers, for  
ever and ever'." 28/

That is Judaism - a world apart from State zionism.

To this reminder of the obligations of the covenant with the divine, the Second Isaiah's description of the true Zion restored might be added:

"Thy shall not hurt nor destroy  
In all My holy mountain  
Saith the lord." 29/

#### Notes

1/ See, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, United Nations, Dept. of Public Information/745-40150-February, 1983.

2/ The New York Times, 30 September 1977, p. A-18.

3/ An Associated Press story, on 12 August 1983, reported:

"Washington (AP) - Officials at the State Department considered the feasibility of admitting thousands of Palestinian refugees now in Lebanon into the United States, but have abandoned the idea as impractical."

Although this specific idea was not adopted it is consistent with the original language of resolution 242, with the Camp David "framework" and the 1 September 1982 Reagan statement. It suggests the present Administration still regards the Palestinians as separate - and separable - communities of "refugees" and is still attempting to avoid addressing their "rights" to self-determination as a national entity. (Sarasota Herald Tribune, 12 August 1983, p. 12-A).

4/ Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, op.cit., p. 50.

5/ The New York Times, 30 December 1982, p. 21.

- 6/ Chapter XVII.
- 7/ Chapter XXXI, verse 29ff.
- 8/ The Economist, 30 July 1983, "Zionism Writ Large", p. 31.
- 9/ "The Jewish State", in Theodore Herzl, Ludwig Lewisohn, The World Publishing Co., Cleveland and N.Y., 1955, p. 238.
- 10/ This translation from "the original German" is found in From Haven to Conquest, Ed., Walid Khalidi, The Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1971, note on p. 89. It differs from the version in Nahum Sokolow's History of Zionism where the English version reads "The object of Zionism is to establish for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law". Whatever the minor differences, it is clear Herzl had in mind international recognition of Jews as a nation with national/political rights for a State in Palestine.
- 11/ The Jewish State, op.cit., Lewisohn, p. 253.
- 12/ Trial and Error, The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann, Harper & Bros. (Illustrated Edition), 1949, p. 100.
- 13/ Chaim Weizmann, A Tribute On His Seventieth Birthday, ed. Paul Goodman, Victor Gollancz Ltd. London, 1945, p. 199.
- 14/ Ibid., p. 179.
- 15/ The Jewish Yearbook of International Law, 1948, Rubin Mass. Jerusalem, 1948, p. 18.
- 16/ For a complete legal analysis and background of this declaration of principle, based upon United States Constitutional law, see "The Zionist-Israeli Juridical Claims to Constitute 'The Jewish People' Nationality Entity and to Confer Membership In It: Appraisal in Public International Law", W.T. Mallison, Jr., The George Washington Law Review, vol. 32, No. 5, June 1964 Washington, D.C., pp. 983-1075.
- 17/ Ian Lustick, Arabs in the Jewish State, University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1980, p. 113.
- 18/ The New York Times, 18 July 1983, p. 15.
- 19/ Ian Lustick, op.cit., p. 28.
- 20/ Fundamental Laws of the State of Israel, p. 156.
- 21/ Ibid., p. 254.
- 22/ Ibid., p. 285.
- 23/ The Jewish Agency's Digest of Press and Events, Information Department of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization, Jerusalem, 16 May 1952, pp. 1067-70.
- 24/ Ian Lustick, op.cit., p. 109.
- 25/ J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc. Princeton, N.J. 1956, vol. II, pp. 45ff. See also the map in The Palestine Diary, Robert John and Sami Hadawi, 2 volumes, The Palestine Research Center, Beirut, Lebanon, 1970, vol. 1, p. 125.
- 26/ J.C. Hurewitz, op.cit., p. 48.
- 27/ Livia Rokach, Israel's Sacred Terrorism, based on Moshe Sharett's Personal Diary, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc. Belmont, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 44.
- 28/ Jeremiah, Chapter VII, verses 4-7.
- 29/ Isaiah, Chapter LXV, verse 25.

Mr. Luis Echeverría

Clearly, the principles of the United Nations must be respected.

Obviously, the resolutions on the problem of Palestine must be complied with.

Nevertheless, the clear and the obvious will not be possible if we forget, or fail to consider, the general controversy over the campaign for a new economic order sought by the majority of countries, and nuclear disarmament demanded by the majority of mankind.

At this Conference, frequent reference has been made to Israeli stubbornness over principles and resolutions and unqualified United States support for this attitude.

At this Conference, also, the absence of industrialized capitalist countries indicates clear support for that violation of principles and that failure to comply with resolutions.

Some questions, naturally, arise:

Can a few members of the United Nations thus undermine the Organization and impose the law of the jungle?

Do they ultimately wish might to prevail over right?

In this world crisis, are they the leaders of a blind retrogression?

In addition to specific principles and resolutions, let us pause a moment to consider what lies behind the erroneous position of the countries in question; perhaps this elementary method of analysis will lead us to an explanation and, hence, to a solution of the problems involved in the question of Palestine.

In the struggle for nuclear supremacy, strategic zones are proliferating, in addition to the traditional spheres of influence.

In the struggle for hegemony waged by large industrialized countries which need oil, proximity to and control in the vicinity of large deposits is a clear strategic advantage and an obvious economic advantage.

This leads us to believe that the expansion of economic empires and military Powers is a challenge to the foundations of the United Nations and to the letter and spirit of its resolutions, adopted by three quarters of mankind.

At the Centre for Economic and Social Studies of the Third World, an independent research institution with headquarters in Mexico, we have decided to analyse a large number of phenomena, some of which, such as the situation of the Palestinians in the light of prevailing circumstances, are tragic.

In this context we therefore believe that, given the unfair situation of the Palestinian people and the clear inclination of this Conference, with its appeal for respect for the principles of the United Nations and for its specific resolutions, the majority of the peoples must wage an all-out campaign within the Organization, and among the public, for simultaneous nuclear disarmament and the establishment of an equitable economic order.

Otherwise the current economic war, and the exploitation of the countries of the third world, will continue.

The United Nations, one of the hopes born of our recent history, is endangered by various problems, prominent among which is the question of Palestine.

A perfectible instrument is the "Group of 77", which should now be called the "Group of 125" and which should be renamed, automatically, to take account of the inclusion of other countries, so that the name corresponds to the new number and reflects its requisite strength.

The Non-Aligned Movement must ensure that all its members are really non-aligned and that it becomes a real force able to deal with such problems as the one we have gathered to discuss and, through South-South collaboration, to resolve some basic issues which are part of the problems of the countries which, in academic circles and international forums, we continue to call "developing countries" although their under-development is increasing with the growth of poverty, undernourishment, ignorance, unhealthiness, external, debt and other evils which actually make them "countries in a state of growing under-development".

Let us study then, without forgetting the necessary diplomatic language, the set of conflicts which is a feature of the contemporary world and we shall help to resolve the situation in which the Palestinians have lived and suffered and other problems which also threaten world peace, a major such problem, as we know, being the aggression against the Central American peoples fighting to achieve a life that is economically decent and politically democratic.

Ms. Cecile Goldet

I should like first of all to express the satisfaction we all feel at the fact that, despite considerable difficulties and numerous obstacles, we have been able to meet here today in the hope, sustained by a very firm determination, of seeing a solution emerge to the long and dramatic predicament experienced by the Palestinian people.

This Conference is being held within the framework of the United Nations. This is, indeed, the normal and, in fact, the only framework within which the international community can advance its knowledge of and thinking on the Palestinian problem, can attempt to pass resolutions and try to take action to make them a reality. Even though this framework is fragile, as we know, there is probably no other. For 35 years now, the Palestinian problem has been a major concern of the United Nations, ever since the adoption by the General Assembly, on 29 November 1947, of the "Plan of Partition" calling for the creation of two States in Palestine, one Arab and one Jewish, and the establishment of an international regime for the city of Jerusalem.

The State of Israel was established in 1948 and became a Member of the United Nations on 11 May 1949. Not only did the Arab State of Palestine not come into being, but we find that subsequently, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Palestinian question was dealt

with at the United Nations mainly as a "refugee" problem.

Nonetheless, resolution 242, adopted on 22 November 1967 by the Security Council, does emphasize the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

It is not my intention to enter into an exhaustive review of all the action taken and all the resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council in connection with the question of Palestine. But I would not wish to overlook the role played by such agencies as UNRWA, in coming to the aid of more than two million Palestinian refugees, or UNICEF, or the existence of the Special Committee set up to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the Arab territories occupied by Israel, and particularly the establishment of settlements, although that Committee is far from having achieved its goals.

Mention must also be made of the information and mobilization role taken on by the General Assembly to help make it more widely understood that the Palestinian cause is a just cause, and that once it has become widely known it will carry conviction. Above all, there is the role of the Security Council, the one forum where all the parties must be allowed the opportunity and where they could agree to sit down at the same table.

The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were already recognized in the 1947 Plan of Partition. They have since been confirmed and reiterated constantly in the various United Nations bodies.

However, no matter how justified those rights, one has the feeling that by themselves they cannot, in the actual area, bring movement into a situation that is becoming more and more stalemated, more and more explosive. It is an almost irremediable situation that is steadily worsening for two communities which are, nonetheless, expected to live together and tolerate each other.

The obstacles cannot be dealt with simply by recourse to the law. A different attitude must be encouraged through an exchange of contacts and discussions and through continuous and repeated explanations, in order to dispel accusations of treachery and overcome the prejudice that views any attempt at reconciliation as a compromise and any search for a solution as a sign of weakness.

It is essential to work on attitudes and assumptions in order to create a readiness to accept the law.

Only through a dialogue between peoples, through personal contacts of all kinds, through rapprochements of the kind being promoted by the "Palestine and Israel Shall Live Committee" in France as well as by the Euro-Arab Parliamentary Association, only through action by all those who are trying to bridge the gap between ideas and human beings, can one hope to anticipate the law in order to give it a firmer foundation. For those who agree to take part in that establishment of rights, we believe that the only approach can be on the basis of consent and not resignation, of concession and acceptance and not anger and exasperation.

In that context we welcome the presence of this Conference of a large delegation of Israeli proponents of peace. Their presence is a tangible sign that a dialogue - albeit still too limited - does exist even though, as we know, it is not without risks for those who agree to engage in it.

Two kinds of considerations can shed light on the logic behind this will to enter into a dialogue: philosophical reasons and strategic reasons.

First, the philosophical reasons. We are faced with the apparently insoluble problem of settling a conflict between two just causes. How can we reconcile two apparently contradictory demands without forever jeopardising the future prospects of coexistence, which is so necessary? Not only can violence not contribute a definitive solution to a morally balanced situation, but with violence following upon violence, we see this war spiralling further each day indefinitely, with no way out.

To the violence, we propose the alternative of understanding, which can only be the outcome of a dialogue, however bitter and hard, so that verbal dialectics replace the dialectics of war and murder. A prerequisite for accomplishing this, and one with which I, as a doctor, am very familiar, is listening, listening to the other side, listening in a way that is open to understanding and to possible acceptance, instead of the present dialogue of the deaf in which one participant harps on his fears, his hatreds and his resentments while the other talks in a vacuum.

Next come the strategic reasons. Here it is useful to set up what, in medicine, are called "interfaces", that is, meeting places and areas of contact supported by third parties who are impartial or neutral.

If a Conference of the kind we are attending today can be of any use, in what way can it be useful?

We ought to stop attaching highest priority to the most controversial and the most emotional aspects, which for more than 30 years seem to have made the problem insoluble, and we should accept the kind of searching political analysis that alone can lead to solutions satisfactory to all States.

We must think of the people concerned, of all the people concerned, of all the women, the children, and the men, who have only one life and who waste it - when they do not lose it prematurely - in unthinkable suffering.

I visited Beirut, by chance, only a few days before the beginning of the war, and saw the Palestinian camps and especially the clinics, hospitals and first-aid posts... Thinking back on those facilities that were so rudimentary, those medical supplies that were so minimal, that crowd of children happily running about absolutely everywhere, and then imagining the hell they had to endure, and sometimes today still have to, one feels that the international community must not and cannot remain passive.

Now that we are all gathered together here to try to propose solutions in the midst of the storms of hatred braving in their wake fratricidal strife between persons who only yesterday were in the same camp, I feel that no effort should be spared to see that reason prevails over the fury of war.

The right to life is at stake - the right to a peaceful life, a calm life, a good life - for all the inhabitants of one of the most beautiful areas of the world, the symbolic birthplace of three great religions, all three of which speak of love.

France, together with Egypt, submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council on 28 July 1982, whereby the Council considered that the settlement of the Lebanese problem should contribute to the initiation of a durable restoration of peace and security in the region, within the framework of negotiations based on the principles of security for all States and justice for all peoples. It was proposed to:

- Reaffirm the right of all States in the region to existence and security in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967);
- Reaffirm the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination with all its implications, on the understanding that to that end the Palestinian people would be represented in the negotiations and, consequently, the Palestine Liberation Organization would be associated therein;
- Call for the mutual and simultaneous recognition of the parties concerned.

I would like to emphasize how essential that last paragraph is.

For 40 years we have been witnessing a quasi-permanent state of war with dramatic flare-ups and periods of relative calm.

Yet these combatants who come together only to destroy each other have long pretended to be unaware of the existence of those whom, they are, however, constantly attacking.

Mutual, simultaneous recognition is an essential prerequisite if the Israeli and Palestinian people are to try to live in harmony side by side in independent and peaceful States.

The rights of the one side are, like those of the other, equally legitimate, and to define the Palestinian problem in terms of relative troop strength is to internationalize it and make it an epiphenomenon of the East-West confrontation, rendering its settlement still more unlikely.

I wish, in conclusion, to emphasize the urgency of dialogue and the importance of what has been said and of what will be said, proposed and decided. The urgency of doing everything possible to put an end to a tragic situation, the urgency of finally giving all these people an opportunity to normal, life. That applies to the Israelis, but especially to the Palestinians who are now dispersed, with families separated, mothers without husbands, men alone, children without fathers or completely orphaned - to all those for whom life has for so many years been only a road of fear, mourning, suffering, uncertainty and anguished living.

Here we are indeed talking. And that is very good, because light emerges from dialogue.

On this subject there has already been much, much talk. Will we be able to proceed from words to deeds? That is the purpose for which we are gathered here. Let us hope so. I thank you.

Mr. P. N. Haksar

May I begin with conveying to the President my warmest felicitations on his being elected to preside over this important Conference at a critical time, It is a tribute to his own qualities and commitments as it is to his country's deep attachment to the cause we have assembled here to promote and to serve.

May I also join others who have spoken before me in paying homage to the tremendous sense of dedication combined with courage and faith which our distinguished Secretary-General, Lucille Mair, has shown in organizing this Conference.

Mr. President, I am no certain about the reasons which led the organizers of this Conference to invite certain individuals, so flatteringly described as "eminent". I assume that the idea was to have reactions of audiences to the performances of diplomatic dramas, and I have had the advantage of being an actor for 35 years as an Indian diplomat. And now for the last 12 years I have seen the play as an audience. What I have to say is born out of the interaction between the actor and the audience.

As Lucille Mair reminded us in her address on the opening day, this Conference has survived the evil forebodings of professional Cassandras.

The security arrangements create the impression that we are in a state of siege. But all unbiased and impartial observers of this Conference can see that we have come here summoned by a sense of duty and responsibility towards the maintenance of peace, tranquility, human rights and dignity in this tortured world of ours. That is why, apart from 137 sovereign States, we have also in our midst a large number of non-governmental organizations, distinguished individuals and men of God too.

The problem we have gathered to discuss is, frankly speaking, maddeningly simple. The member States, comprising the United Nations, more specially the members of the Security Council, must give effect immediately to the resolution which created the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.

We must also with one voice, declare that the people of Palestine have an inalienable, and, therefore, a non-negotiable right to have a home of their own, secure and sovereign. We must with one voice pay homage to the courage, self-sacrifice and vision of the Palestinians who, despite all sufferings and tortures and bestiality to which they have been subjected, still have the humanity



to hold an olive branch in their hands which, if seized in time by the people of Israel, would bring them a real and lasting security, peace and well-being.

Cynics amongst us might argue of what use are declarations and resolutions? Has not the United Nations already passed numerous resolutions? Do not the resolutions mock at us for our collective irresolution?

It would be a grievous error to give in to the cynics.

Let us remind ourselves of the time when attempts were made to make it appear that there was no question such as a Palestine question; that there was only a problem of refugees. Gradually but inexorably, Palestine question emerged. The Palestinian people and their struggle gained ever wider recognition in all parts of this earth. Indeed, the response which this Conference has evoked and the regional conferences which preceded it, testify to the truth that the people of Palestine still live, that their struggle and their aspirations command attention and admiration.

The propaganda that the Palestinians are terrorists has lost credibility. Palestinians are a people engaged in a self-sacrificing struggle to establish their identity and to secure a home for themselves in which they can pursue their right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Every day which passes, more and more people recognize the justness of the Palestinian cause.

The cynics and the faint-hearts would be wrong in not grasping the simple truth that in this day and age international arrangements and diplomacy come to grief if the impetuous search for identity of a people is ignored. That has been the story of the triumphant struggle for national liberation of millions of peoples of Asia, Africa and Central and South America. Only those who wish to bury their heads in sand would ignore this vast upheaval of our times.

And yet, practitioners of Real Politik, like the Bourbons of yesterday, learn nothing and forget nothing. They set about making all kinds of designs of defiance of the wishes of the peoples. Inevitably, such arrangements crumble.

Thus the Dutch came to grief when they attempted in 1949 to re-establish their Empire in Indonesia. So did the French at Dien Bien Phu. The Vietnamese then fought for their national identity against the United States of America. The African people triumphed in their struggle for liberation against the Portuguese imperialism which refused to negotiate. One could go on citing example after example to illustrate the point that we are living not in some medieval period or even in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. We are living in an age of turbulence. Policies in defiance of the spirit of our times inevitably crumble. Thus crumbled CENTO and SEATO, and the security system built around them.

The distinguished representative of the PLO uttered a profound truth on the opening day of the Conference, reaffirmed his faith in the power of the people. Diplomats and soldiers are not the main actors in the drama of our age. People are.

Whatever view of history each one of us might take, the striking fact about our century - the twentieth century - is the emergence on the stage of the human history of people in their millions. The distinguished French sociologist of international relations, Mr. Raymond Aron, described us as a "noisy millions". Yes, we are noisy. We are going to be noisier still until we are heard with respect and attention.

If the military hardware, technological gimmickry and money power could be the determinants of the history of our times, we would have had now pax Americana and an American century. The frustrating thing about our times is that power is of no avail when pitted against an aroused human consciousness bent upon asserting its identity. Those who refuse to grasp this fact will I am afraid come to grief.

Times have certainly changed. Those who do not wish to see it, will be doomed by the historical process of change. And that change is triggered by the vast explosion of human consciousness in this century.

Gone are the days when a handful of European Powers could carve out the continents of Africa at the Conference of Berlin in 1884. Gone are the days when one British gunboat up the river Yangtze could be so persuasive. Gone are the days when security could be managed with a system of balance of power. For, the sanction behind the balance of power was the capacity of sovereign States to go to war and the war was waged to achieve some objective. In a nuclear age what objective can be achieved?

Wisdom, statesmanship and even self-interest would dictate the compelling necessity of solving international problems by the application of reason and sense of justice.

The two Cold Wars have dealt a blow to our sense of rightness and wrongness and to our sense of moral purpose. There is a deadening of even human sympathy. And yet as perils we face in our nuclear age mount as economies reel under the impact of monetary crisis, debt crisis, protectionism, increasing unemployment, high interest rates and so on, human beings everywhere, even in the most affluent of States, are beginning to question once again the rightness and wrongness of things. In this revival of human spirit lies our hope of saving ourselves. In it lies our hope that we may take a step back from the precipice over which the world is poised today. In it also lies the hope that the tortured and mangled bodies of the heroic freedom fighters of the Palestine will remind us of the grievous injustice of our times to which the international community has remained so far so achingly indifferent even while pouring out words of sympathy and support.

We must, therefore, view the convening of this Conference in Geneva in the larger perspective of history of our times if we are not to get lost in mere details.

It is not necessary for me to traverse the history of the last 35 years. Others more competent than I have already done so. Numerous books have been written on the subject.

I will content myself in making a very simple point. We have forgotten the simple fact that the United Nations had created two States and that Israel and its powerful supporters have for 35 years been trespassers over the territory meant for the Palestinians. In ordinary civil law, such trespassers would have been thrown out and the possession of the territory rightfully belonging to the Palestinian people would have been restored to it.

The unvarnished truth is that the Palestine problem today remains unresolved because of the global strategic perceptions of the United States of America. Under these perceptions, which are false, Israel together with South Africa are assigned a role of gendarme. There is no dearth of literature, policy pronouncements bearing on United States global interests which is a euphemism for the imperial designs of the United States of America. These designs ante-date the emergence of the Soviet Union as an enemy and as a pretext.

I know that the mass of American people brought up on their 200 year old history cannot imagine that a country of Washington and Tom Paine, Lincoln and Jefferson could conceivably work on an imperial design. That is why successive American Governments have to resort to massive manipulation of the public opinion by inventing, from time to time, a variety of fictions - for example, the domino theory, the missile gaps, the periods of peril, the window of vulnerability, arcs of crises, Palestinians being terrorists, non-alignment being immoral, and so on. There is pathetic faith in the efficacy of propaganda. Everyone knows, or ought to know, that propaganda is no substitute for sound and viable policies.

If one calmly contemplates the situation without pride and prejudice, one is struck by the total irrationality of the policies of the State of Israel as by the attempts made by the United States of America to create the impression that it is in search of solution.

In my view, for what it may be worth, no solution to the Palestine problem is possible on the assumption on which the United States has hitherto proceeded, and if we are to search for an attainable solution, we must firmly base ourselves on the United Nations resolutions on the Palestine question.

The solution cannot be based on just one resolution. One hears a lot about Security Council resolution 242. Last year, during the attack on Beirut, the United States insisted that the PLO should accept that resolution so that the United States Special Envoy, Mr. Philip Habib, could talk to the PLO leaders directly. The United States and some European States say the Arabs must accept resolution 242.

One must realize that the Palestine question was not born in 1967, after the occupation by Israel of various Arab territories, the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and Sinai, in its June war that year.

One must take into account all United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, right from resolution 181 (II) according to which Palestine was divided by the United Nations into two States, Arab and Jewish.

It will be appropriate to go back to that resolution and then take into consideration Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and also 508 and 509 of last year, which call for a complete, unconditional withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from Lebanon.

One must find a comprehensive solution to the problem. Piece-meal solutions will not do. A peace treaty between Israel and Egypt has neither solved the Arab problem nor the Palestinian one. It has complicated it further, and made the task of finding a lasting solution all the more difficult.

The Israeli-Lebanese agreement of 17 May has met a worse fate. It has not been possible to implement any part of it.

The Palestine problem is not going to go away even if the United States manages to pressurize every Arab State to sign a separate peace treaty with Israel. That was the hope of the "step by step" diplomacy of Mr. Kissinger.

The basis for a comprehensive, just and lasting agreement is now known to almost everyone. The principles of it are as follows: that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This is accepted by all the Palestinians, all the Arab States, as adopted by them at their Rabat summit in 1974, and a large number of countries, which have recognized the PLO. Any attempt to bring forward some bogus representatives of the Palestinians or give that role to some other leader or authority, will only be an act of deception and will not succeed. We have witnessed one such abortive attempt in the spring of this year.

The other principle concerns the basic rights of the Palestinians: their right to return, self-determination and setting up an independent State of their own, under the leadership of the PLO.

Unless one takes into account these principles, one can never succeed in finding a solution of the Palestinian problem.

The latest and biggest attempt to destroy the PLO politically and militarily failed miserably. That was the aim of the massive invasion of Lebanon by Israel last year. It did not wage that war in order to safeguard the Israeli settlements in northern Galilee from Palestinian rockets and artillery. The PLO had scrupulously observed the cease-fire, arranged by Mr. Habib on 25 May 1981, and not fired a single rocket or shell at the Zionist settlements for over a whole year, when the Israelis launched their invasion.

The purpose of the Israeli invasion was to destroy the PLO. It took time to prepare and it had the full backing of the United States, as the many statements of the Secretary of State at that time, Mr. Alexander Haig, reveal. The idea of solving the Palestine question by destroying is not a brilliant idea.

The invasion had also the objective to destroy any infrastructure which might lead to PLO's revival in future. Such infrastructure existed only in the Palestinian refugee camps. Hence, the massacres of Sabra and Shatila from 16 to 18 September last year, and the systematic destruction of these refugee shanty towns and also those of Al Rashiediyeh, Ain Helwe and other refugee camps in occupied southern Lebanon. Such destruction will give the PLO the freedom to fight with mobility. Thus a short-term gain by Israel will become a long-term liability.

The MacBride Commission report provides extensive documentation of Israeli Defense Force violations of the laws of war and of the use of high technology to devastate all Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Terrorizing the Arabs into leaving their homes and lands has been a policy implemented with ferocity in Palestinian lands occupied by Israel in the 1967 war.

In 1967, the 1,350,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza represented over half of all the estimated 2,650,000 Palestinians in the world. There are now over 4.5 million Palestinians in the world, of whom those in the occupied West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza

constitute 29 per cent of the total. This dramatic drop (from 50 to 29 per cent of the total) is the major demographic consequence of the June 1967 war, after which at least 700,000 Palestinians were expelled. This was, however, not the only consequence of the 1967 war. Some of the others were:

- (a) A massive expulsion of residents sufficient to stabilize numbers, despite a natural increase rate that has averaged 3.5 per cent per year;
- (b) A distortion in the normal population characteristics of the residual population, due to the selectivity of expulsions and emigration;
- (c) A transformation of the remaining population from a diversified independent society of peasants, businessmen and professionals to a proletarianized and dependent labour army, at the mercy of Israeli political and economic interests.

In occupied Lebanon, the Israelis are repeating this policy towards the Palestinian population, which is almost half a million at the moment.

The process of colonizing the West Bank and transforming its character from Arab to Jewish is being accelerated. This is done by massive land confiscations, by denying Palestinians water for irrigation, controlling their agricultural development and export of products to both Israel and Jordan, placing a limit on their earnings and remittances from abroad (thousands of Palestinians work in oil-rich Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States), increasing the number of Jewish settlements, allowing the settlers to control the Palestinians through intimidation and terror, collective punishment and massive fines for staging demonstrations against settlers and the usurpation of their lands (of late one hears of fines as high as 30,000 shekels or \$800 on each person for demonstrating and throwing stones), poisoning of school girls and allowing soldiers to enter Palestinian quarters at night, to force everybody into the town square, load them on trucks and drive off with them into the darkness, as happened in Halhoul in the last few months, curfews, dismissal of elected mayors, and so on.

A recent military order in the West Bank, No. 1015, regulates the planting of fruit-bearing trees for commercial purposes without a permit. Commercial purpose means anything over 25 trees. That military order allows the Israeli authorities not only to fine the Arab farmer, but also to uproot at the owner's expense any illegally planted trees. Also every farmer who owns a field must, within 90 days of the promulgation of the order, report the fact that he owns the field, its size, its borders, the number of trees on it, their kind and approximate age; if there is a well, how much water was used from it during the previous year, and provide evidence of ownership. This military order was amended by military order No. 1039, which covers vegetables as well.

Military order No. 973 states that if a Palestinian is bringing in money from a "hostile country" (which means the Arab world where thousands of Palestinians work), he needs a permit no matter what the amount is, and he must state the purpose for which he is bringing it in.

Military order No. 974 states that such money must be deposited in a special fund, called the "Fund for the Development of Judea and Samaria". The Palestinian then needs another permit to get it out of that fund.

Jewish settlers in the West Bank take an active role in "maintaining order" by manning road-blocks and by arresting or kidnapping individuals.

There is a propaganda among the Palestinian people to negotiate with Israel and save their land in the West Bank, at the expense of their national rights, because they are sick of occupation.

But it has been difficult to separate land and identity. Any compromise on either of them is considered a retreat on the rights of the Palestinian people.

Military order No. 854 controls universities and order No. 825 secondary school students in the West Bank.

Almost all the major municipal councils in the West Bank, elected on pro-PLO slates in 1976, had either resigned or been dismissed by the Israeli civil administration during the popular uprising in the spring of 1982. Most councils that were not dismissed decided not to co-operate with the civil administration and were replaced by Israeli military officers. Birzeit University closed for seven months last year. In March Jalazone refugee camp was under curfew for a month at a time.

There was the statement by the Deputy Speaker of Knesset that 200,000 to 300,000 Arabs should have been kicked out of the West Bank in 1967. And the statement at Hebrew University two years ago of the then Chief of the Israeli Army intelligence, Aharon Yarly, that there were contingency plans to evacuate 700,000 to 800,000 Arabs, using a state of emergency. The incidents taking place now look like dress rehearsals of that.

A new five-year settlement plan for 1983-1987 of the Jewish Agency announced last September calls for 100,000 additional Jews in the West Bank, 20,000 in the Golan Heights and 10,000 in Gaza. Of the 42 new Jewish settlements to be established in the West Bank, consisting of 21,500 housing units, 24 have already been approved by the Israeli Ministerial Committee on Settlements.

A long-term master plan to Judaize the West Bank, announced by Matityahu Drobles, head of the Settlement Department of the World Zionist Organization, presented to the Israeli Government, proposes opening new roads, totalling 400 km. in length, expanding the existing 75 rural settlements, turning the existing 15 military outposts into civilian settlements, expanding the existing 18 urban settlements, establishing and developing 57 new settlements, developing industrial areas at the rate of 400 to 500 dunums per year, continuing the consolidation of State lands and the acquisition of new land and turning about 20,000 dunums of State land (confiscated Arab lands) into areas for recreation and tourism. The new and expanded settlements in the West Bank are meant to accommodate 1.3 million Jews within 30 years.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon has created massive difficulties for the PLO, but it has not succeeded in destroying the organization, nor has it caused any decline in Palestinian nationalism. On the contrary Arab nationalism and Palestinian nationalism are flowing together. Hence, the Fez Plan and the demise of the Reagan Plan.

The Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon continue to lose men in ambushes. The violent activities of Jewish settlers and village leagues in occupied eastern Palestine (West Bank) are serving to unite the people, making them determined to fight back against the arbitrary break-ins, beatings and shootings. Insofar as the intention of the settlers is to scare people out of the country, there is now less likelihood that these tactics will succeed. This is specially true now that the Palestinians have fewer places to run, with Lebanon closed, the Gulf States less willing or able to accept them and Jordan cutting back on entry as well.

The Lebanon war and conditions in the occupied territories have also contributed to strong feelings of anger against Israel among Palestinians within the pre-1967 borders. The courage of the population in the occupied territories over the last few years has been remarkable.

Youth is now a political category in the West Bank. If you are between 15 and 20 you will be harassed and persecuted just because you are between 15 and 20. Large numbers of young people now pass through and sometimes spend considerable periods in Israeli jails. Many point out that this is a politically educative process which, however unpleasant, forms a more mature attitude towards political actions.

Cannot the Jewish people, if not their leaders who are blinded by Zionist faith, see that every day a child is born to a Palestinian or an Arab mother and grows into consciousness, he or she would unconsciously imbibe the feeling of antagonism and hatred against those who have been unjust?

The art and science of conducting foreign policy lies in reducing the number of one's opponents and not increasing them. Israel practices the opposite art. Israel seeks to counterbalance this by ever increasing military, economic and political reliance on the United States of America. Can such an arrangement be a permanent basis for Israel's security? Can the people of Israel not see that all these 35 years their leaders have not taken them to a promised land but to wilderness, to an increasing insecurity which leads to ever more intense and sanguinary conflicts?

Cannot the policy makers of the United States of America see that there is no wisdom in seeking military solutions to highly complex historical and political problems? Political problems ought not be converted into military problems.

European States seek to salvage their conscience for having committed heinous crimes against the Jewish people and for subjecting them over centuries by supporting policies of Israeli State. However, by the ritual of this support compounds their past guilt of having persecuted the Jews in the name of Jesus by sacrificing the Palestinian people. One cannot atone for the sins by sacrificial rituals performed against Palestinian men, women and children.

The tortured Palestine question calls for some new impulse of true understanding and an act of wisdom based on recognition that there is everything to be gained by acts of reconciliation and in recognizing that the Palestinians have a just cause on their side. This cause will certainly triumph. The only condition is that we must not allow anything to impair our solidarity.

It is said that one can peel an onion leaf by leaf but one cannot skin a tiger paw by paw. We must not allow ourselves the PLO, the Arab States, the non-aligned movement and others - to be skinned leaf by leaf. We can then go forward from this Conference with a firm conviction that in the long and tortured history of humankind involving so many martyrdoms, just causes have always triumphed. The PLO and the Palestinian people together with their Jewish brethren who want to live in peace and good neighbourliness shall overcome all obstacles to a just and lasting settlement. Towards this the United Nations must dedicate itself in the coming days and months.

#### Ms. Felicia Langer

The family of nations elaborated and adopted general rules and maxims of international law during the time of war, as the Hague Convention of 1907, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, among them the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War; other conventions were the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants 1/, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Another instrument of international law is the United Nations Charter, to which every Member State is obliged to adhere. The State of Israel, upon its admission to the United Nations in 1949 had pledged in its communications that, as a peace-loving country, it would adhere strictly to the principle embodied in the Charter.

The United Nations International Conference on the Question of Palestine is convening 16 years after Israel has invaded and occupied Arab lands, among them the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip, and a year after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which claimed thousands of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese victims, tremendous destruction of Lebanon, and an armed occupation of another Arab State.

During all these years, Israel is flagrantly and constantly violating international law, not abiding to the United Nations Charter, acting in defiance of all international norms, as accepted by the family of nations, neglecting arrogantly various United Nations resolutions, annexing Arab Jerusalem and Syrian Golan Heights by brutal force.

During the years of the occupation the Israeli authorities have done their best in order to suppress and to humiliate the Palestinians in the occupied territories, to dispossess them, to break and crush their national identity and aspirations.

On the hills and in the valleys of Lebanon and its refugee camps the Israeli establishment is continuing relentlessly its unholy war of annihilation of Palestinian political and human rights, started many years ago in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, enjoying the full support and blessings of the United States of America, as its patron and accomplice.

The policy of deportation, tortures of detainees, mass arrests, collective punishments, arbitrary killing of civilians, among them children, humiliation and degradation of Palestinians in their daily life has been executed by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories during all these years. The right of privacy of family and home and the right to reunification of the family are not respected in the occupied territories, and the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly were similarly denied. Israeli restrictions on freedom of the Palestinian Press printed in Jerusalem are notorious.

The Palestinian trade unionists had been frequently imprisoned, tortured and forbidden to continue their trade union activities. Even the right to freedom of movement within the occupied territories is subject to the arbitrary will of the occupation authorities, and hundreds were subjected to an administrative order, confining them to their houses, or their towns or villages. The lives of whole communities are frequently affected by prolonged curfews, which became a usual phenomenon, especially recently; the Israeli armed settlers are frequently attacking the unarmed Palestinians, and the victims are put under a curfew, as it happened recently in Hebron, while the attackers, actually encouraged and supported by the Government, which supplies them arms, remained unpunished, as did those who killed unarmed Palestinian civilians, even children.

The colonization of the occupied territories, in defiance of the Fourth Geneva Convention, is gaining a new momentum, leading to an annexation de facto of the Palestinian lands to Israel. According to Miron Benvenisti (former deputy mayor of Jerusalem) in his interview to the newspaper Jerusalem Post of 10 September 1982, under the title "De facto dual society", more than half of 5.8 million dunums of the West Bank land (outside Jerusalem) is now under Israeli control.

Moreover, Israel had taken over the total underwater resources of the occupied territories and is totally controlling ground water sources, suspending frequently permits for digging new water wells and controlling the quantity of water of each well; the result of such a policy is that a large sector of the population is compelled to seek work in Israel as unskilled labourers, with the result that the West Bank had become dependent on Israel even for agricultural products.

The Israeli settlers have now a special Municipal Unit and a separate, favourable Municipal Jurisdiction, while the vast Arab municipalities were dissolved, the mayors fired and replaced by Israeli military staff, interfering brutally with the municipal life of the inhabitants, restricting all possibilities of development.

The evil practices of the Israeli occupiers are familiar to me due to my work as a lawyer, who used to represent thousands of Palestinians in the occupied territories during all these years, and also nowadays; I would like to scrutinize shortly some of them, as follows:

#### Deportation

Deportation is strictly and absolutely forbidden by the Fourth Geneva Convention (article 49) and the Universal Declaration (article 9). Israel has, nevertheless, maintained an open policy of deportation, which was clearly aimed at depriving the Palestinian population of intelligent and active leadership. Thousands were deported during all these years; the Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul, Fahed Kawasme, Mohammad Milham and Sheikh Rajab Tamimi are the most recent victims of this policy, strongly condemned by the family of nations and by many peace-loving Israelis. The threats of mass expulsions of Palestinians from the occupied territories are even more frequent nowadays. The Israeli practices in Lebanon point out clearly, that the real objective of the Israeli establishment is to get rid of as many Palestinians as possible, replacing them with the Israeli colonial settlers. Such policy is consistent with the "Guidelines" of the Likud Party, which were approved by the majority of the Israeli Parliament in 1977, stating: "The Jewish people have an eternal, historic right to the land of Israel, the inalienable inheritance of its forefathers".

#### Maltreatments and tortures of detainees

Such practices are prohibited under customary international law, as codified in numerous international documents, including the Universal Declaration (article 5), the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Nevertheless, the use of torture is a common practice by the Israeli investigators. I have seen with my own eyes many victims of torture with marks on their bodies, and was active, together with other progressive people of Israel, organizations and parties, especially the League for Human and Civil Rights in protesting these crimes and trying to stop them.

The last victim of torture whom I have seen, and whose torturer was revealed and, hopefully, will be put on trial, was Walid el Arda, a young teacher from Jenin; he was tortured in order to extract from him a confession that he inspired an organized "poisoning hysteria" in Arrabeh and Jenin, this spring, which he flatly denied. Only because of his exceptional endurance and steadfastness and due to a very rare chance I had to show his wounds to a military judge, Walid has survived. As a result of this action the police failed to obtain a false confession from him in order to prove to the whole world that Palestinians themselves organized and inspired a "poisoning hysteria", in order to "discredit" the "liberal" Israeli occupation. But how many Walids lacked such a chance and remained maimed physically and mentally for the rest of their lives, or died in the wake of tortures and maltreatment, occurring also nowadays in Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin and Gaza.

#### Collective punishment

Collective punishment has become a trademark of the Israeli occupation, although it is strictly forbidden by the Hague and Geneva Conventions. In the course of these actions almost 20,000 homes have been demolished, while thousands of women and children have remained roofless.

The other instances of collective punishment are those imposed on whole cities, such as prolonged curfews, causing sufferings to entire population of villages and towns. In the West Bank curfews lasting from several hours to several weeks affected at least 19 towns, villages and refugee camps.

The refugee camps Dheisheh near Belt Lehem, Al Amati Camp near el Bireh and Balata near Nablus suffered severely from prolonged curfews, during which the authorities were raiding and searching houses, confiscating books, magazines and cassette tapes with national songs. The soldiers were also gathering the men of the camps (from 14 to 90) and made them stand in the streets, during the cold nights. Round-ups of Arabs, usually of men and boys, occurred frequently during 1982, following mostly an incident of stone throwing at Israeli military vehicles. People are usually detained for some hours, mostly kept outside during a cold night, without any shelter, cursed and humiliated, many times physically abused, and forced to do demeaning work. I was several times an eyewitness of degrading treatment of pupils suspected of involvement in a demonstration or a "security incident", in

Ramallah, Nablus and Jerusalem.

### The Palestinian prisoners

The prisons are terribly overcrowded with dark cells, sometimes without any fresh air. The prisoners receive insufficient food, suffer from lack of movement and clothing of a bad quality; medical care is far from being satisfactory; because of malnutrition, lack of vitamins, lack of sun and fresh air, the poor hygiene conditions, many prisoners suffer from eye diseases, rheumatism, anemia, hemorrhoids, lost of weight, tooth and gum diseases, ulcers, weakness and nervous disorders. Palestinian prisoners are often punished arbitrarily for singing national songs, or even speaking loudly, or expressing opinions against the hard prison conditions, by confinement in a narrow solitary cell, by cancelling family visits, walks, and many times by beatings and other physical abuses. The prisoners protested against such practices in the prisons of Beer-Sheba, Nablus, Nafha and Jenin (by strikes), and now in the women's prison, Neve-Tirza.

The greatest shame is the Ansar Concentration Camp in South Lebanon, in which thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners are held, in subhuman conditions who do not enjoy any recognized status, and are called "the brought in", in the official jargon, people without names and identity, as the occupiers want to regard them.

The occupation authorities decided to also wage a cultural struggle against the Palestinians. Hundreds of books, among them classics, are forbidden to be possessed or read in the West Bank and Gaza. Hundreds of such possessors have been charged and convicted in the military courts. We, "the people of the book", are forbidding another people to read and to paint pictures according to their ideas and wishes, in a deliberate attempt to control not only their bodies but also their minds, in violation of the norms embodied in the Universal Declaration.

Secondary education is hampered by all possible means. There is an actual military takeover of the Palestinian universities, restricting the few freedoms remaining in the Palestinian educational institutions, as a weapon against the national aspiration of the Palestinian people. According to order No. 854, all institutions of higher learning now fall under the jurisdiction of the military authorities as to their licences and permits given to students and faculty members to join the institutions, and tens of university teachers (foreign) were expelled, because they refuse to sign a political statement against the PLO.

Additionally, the universities, especially Bir Zeit and El Najah, had frequently been a target of army attacks and harassments.

The Minister of Defence is now implementing an iron fist policy in the occupied territories together with the heads of the civil administration (opposed by the inhabitants), aimed at perpetrating and sanctioning Israeli occupation.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip cannot remember such bloodshed among the civilian population, mostly children, nor such brutal interference in the everyday life of the population. After the elected mayors of El Bireh, Nablus and Ramallah were ousted from their posts, in March 1982, the municipal councils were dissolved, and Israeli "mayors" appointed in their place.

Until these very days the mayors Bassam Shaka'a and Karim Khalaf, who were severely injured in an attempt to assassinate them in 1980, are restricted in their movements, and so is the mayor of El Bireh, Ibrahim Tawel. Mayor Shaka'a and his family are annoyed, bothered and harassed by the occupier constantly, while the criminals are free.

A wave of protest was the reply of the population to these steps. Thirty-one new graves of killed Palestinians marked this new policy, hundreds of injured between March and October 1982, another token of an immense cruelty of the occupiers.

Nowadays the practice of free shooting of demonstrators or just "suspects" is continuing and there are persons newly wounded and killed by the settlers and soldiers; the mayor of Hebron was fired and the municipality dissolved, while the recent murderous attack on the Hebron University, which claimed three victims and tens of wounded, constitutes a new peak of the crimes of the occupiers.

The preamble of the Universal Declaration spoke of:

"The equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" and declared it to be "essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law".

There is no rule of law protecting the Palestinian human rights in the occupied territories, and therefore they are compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, as described above, to lead a battle of survival on their lands. The oppressors themselves are responsible for this rebellion and its tragic results, because of their stubborn denial of any rights to the Palestinian people, a people whose third generation is growing up in refugee camps, a people who will not surrender. Day by day more and more Israelis recognize this fact, condemning the occupation, regarding it as a disaster to our people and its future and to our country, sometimes even more than to the victims of the conquest, refusing to serve in the army in Lebanon and in the occupied territories. They realize that we are paying for it with corruption, galloping inflation, the arms race, growing dependence on the United States of America, and the image of being "Sparta" of the modern times - a country in which fathers are burying their sons. As to the Palestinians, I am defending now the second generation of Palestinians, a fact which is symbolic both for their heroism and continuous sufferings.

Thousands are demonstrating in Israel within the ranks of the "Peace Now" movement and other movements against the atrocities in the occupied territories. Israeli soldiers and officers are testifying about the violations of human rights and warning against them. University professors, students and others are appealing to Israeli public opinion to stop the fascist practices in the occupied territories, declaring that the silent majority is an accomplice to these acts. More than once, the poor have demonstrated under the slogan "money for the slums and not for the settlements", on which the Government is wasting billions of dollars, eagerly supplied by the United States of America, tempting the Israeli population to settle in the occupied territories, by offering them astonishingly cheap "cottages" and villas there, advertising it without even mentioning that they are placed in the occupied territories. "Israel gobbles up West Bank land with suburbs" - says the Christian Science Monitor of 10 November 1982, continuing, that "Large chunks of the occupied West Bank, home to 800,000 Palestinians, are in the process of becoming suburbs of Israel's metropolitan areas". Expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank has been greatly facilitated by a new process of land seizure that makes available to Israeli authorities 55 to 65 per cent of West Bank land, according to M. Benvenisti; ..."the land is

seized and declared State domain...the 'second blade of the scissors' is land use planning...there are areas, especially the region surrounding Jerusalem where Arab construction is totally or almost totally restricted..."

The internal crisis in Israel and the decline in moral standards in the wake of the injustice and discrimination administered in the occupied territories were predicted and foreseen by peace-loving Israelis from the very beginning of the occupation; they warned that the occupation, by its very nature, would corrupt the occupier. The war in Lebanon, the atrocities there against the civilian population, Israel's responsibility for the massacre in Sabra and Shatila camps proved that the warning were not an exaggeration. Day by day we are witnessing more and more proofs of moral degradation among parts of Israeli society. The most recent example of it, which does not need any comments, was supplied to us by the newspaper Maariv of 10 August 1983; the paper informed us that the big businessmen from Tel-Aviv district found a very interesting way of protecting their lives from the underworld criminals, with whom they have connections, and who attempted several times to blow up their cars; the businessmen are ordering their Arab workers or servants (from Gaza, usually) to drive their cars for a short drive, every morning, in order to ascertain that there are no explosives in them.

Thousands of Israelis understand now, after the Israeli aggression in Lebanon, that this policy is leading to a catastrophe and that there will be no peace unless the Palestinian people is granted its legitimate rights to establish a sovereign State in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, alongside Israel; those are the real patriots and the best sons of our country preferring prison cells instead of oppressing the Palestinians.

The Palestinian people under occupation cannot enjoy their fundamental rights, so long as they are denied the right of self-determination, which became a guiding and a general principle of international law and is contained in the United Nations Charter. Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Charter mentions, as one of the Charter's aims, the development of "friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". Moreover, according to the positive International Law of Treaties, 29 May 1969, article 53, the principle of self-determination is not only valid as a treaty-made law deriving from the United Nations Charter and the International human rights conventions, and as a customary law but also constitutes a norm of peremptory general law, ius cogens.

According to this norm all nations of the American, Asian and African continents, which were under the yoke of colonialism, have been liberated and are now members of the United Nations.

The right to self-determination of the Palestinian people includes the principle that the future of the Palestinian people could only be decided with its full participation in all efforts through its sole representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization; the right to self-determination includes the right of the Palestinian people in exile to return to their homeland or to receive indemnities, according to their own choice, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948, which is binding upon Israel as a State Member of the United Nations.

Massacres, murders and enforced homelessness, directed against the Palestinian people in Lebanon, the ordeal of the 16 years of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza show clearly that there can be no security and protection for the Palestinians except by them alone, on their soil, exercising their legitimate right for independence, for which they have been struggling relentlessly and heroically for years.

There can be no peace and justice in the Middle East, with no justice to those displaced, tormented and tortured, to the Palestinians.

The family of nations is called to put an end to the tragic plight of a people under the sun, deprived of all human rights in the last decades of the twentieth century.

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<sup>1/</sup> The International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

#### Lord Christopher Paget Mayhew

I am grateful for the honour of being invited to address you: though I regret, as you do, that it should be myself on this podium rather than the Foreign Secretary of my country. We can all understand why the United States Government is not participating here: it was not given permission to do so by Israel. But the European Community has given a strong, positive, independent lead in the past, notably in the Venice Declaration, and remains fully committed to Palestinian self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza. These Community Governments should be full participates in this Conference, giving a lead in forwarding the objective which they share with the overwhelming majority of delegations here.

Why are they not fully participating? Not because they are unwilling to differ with the United States or Israel. They have done so before and could do so again. Nor is it primarily because their Venice initiative was weakened by uncertainties and divisions in the Arab world, and in the PLO, though this is certainly true.

A major reason, I believe, for the Community's present low profile on Palestine is the realization that in spite of some determined efforts it has been unable to change the disastrous policies of the United States.

Nor, with respect, have any of the Governments here represented been any more successful in this so far.

It is pertinent to ask, however, how far is the United States Government itself able to change its policies on Palestine. As everyone knows, it is highly dependent on the United States Congress, which in turn is highly dependent on the pro-Israeli lobby.

American senators and representatives will readily admit - to those who, like myself, often discuss the subject with them - that the

United States Congress seldom deals with the Palestine problem on its merits. They will explain frankly how, if they fail to support the Israeli line they lose not only votes and media support but decisive campaign contributions. Indeed, they explain that these contributions may then be switched to their opponents, so that they lose twice over.

This financial dependence of the United States Congress on the Israeli lobby is a major obstacle to a peaceful settlement, and the degree of dependence is growing worse. A leading Israeli paper, Ha'aretz, of 25 May 1983 described what is happening:

"The financial lever is again with the Jews, thanks to a regulation which makes it possible to bypass the limits set on individual donations. This is done by establishing Political Action Committees (PACs) which ... can distribute money they have themselves raised as they see fit. By November 1982, the Jews were operating scores of PACs. These, for instance, put \$750,000 at the disposal of Dick Durban of Illinois, helping him to defeat Paul Findley who had been a congressman for 22 years and one of Israel's most active and effective enemies.

"...There may in the end be hundreds of Jewish PACs... Since advance money is important to candidates, because it enables them to plan ahead, the Jews are already active in all fifty states. Among other things, they have already set up camp alongside the six possible candidates for the Presidency within the Democratic party".

This Israeli report confirms common knowledge. Congressional dependence on the Israeli lobby is a major reason why, when Israel invaded and ravaged Lebanon, the United States did nothing. It explains why, after the Israelis had invaded Lebanon and killed and injured scores of thousands of innocent civilians, and had let loose the Phalangist murder squads in Sabra and Shatila, the United States Congress rewarded them with the biggest grant of military and financial aid in their history.

On most issues, the United States Congress is its own master, and deserves respect; but on Palestine it is financial corrupt. It has, in effect, been bought by a foreign Government.

However, if we censure the United States for the chaos and violence in Palestine, we cannot in fairness overlook the regrettable performance of some Arab Governments, and the harm done to the Palestine cause by divisions in the Arab world. It was not an American President who helped to disrupt the PLO in the Bekaa Valley. They were not American or Israeli gunmen but Arab gunmen who murdered our honoured friends Said Hammami and Issa Sartawi and other brave champions of the Palestinian cause. And why are one or two African countries now considering renewing relations with Israel? Is it because they like and trust the Government of Israel? Or is it because they dislike a particular Arab Government?

in a newly-published history of the Crusades, the author, Mr. Anthony Bridge, has written:

"The Muslims began to realize that if they were to regain the lands they had lost, they would have to patch up their quarrels and unite to do so."

That was 800 years ago. It is the same today. And the divisions have the same causes today as they did then - prejudice between Sunnis and Shiites, jealousy between the same rival Arab capitals.

If therefore we look for the main obstacles to a peaceful settlement, we look first to the Israeli Zionists, and to their foolish and unprincipled American allies. But these are not the only obstacles. Those who want a just and peaceful settlement must have the realism and courage to oppose the forces of rejectionism, violence and disruption on the Arab side.

Meantime, the plight of the Palestinians is very grave indeed. There is no need to spell out the weakness of their position, or recite yet again the hardships, injustices and humiliations they are sufferings nor to foretell the fresh horrors to which they are still exposed in Lebanon.

If one were to judge simply by the facts as they are today, without reference to the deeper processes of change in the Middle East, it would be possible to despair of the Palestinian cause. It is when we look more deeply, with a longer perspective, that the victory of the Palestinians is seen to be certain.

By oppressing the Palestinians, zionism inevitably condemns Israel to international ostracism, insecurity, ruinous defence expenditure and prolonged military conscription. It accentuates its demographic problem - the exodus from Israel, which has already led 20 per cent of all Israeli citizens to live permanently abroad, the differential birthrate inside Israel and between Israel and the Arab world, and the increase of assimilation in the Jewish diaspora.

And all the time, Israel is being caught up and in some respects surpassed by the Arabs in financial and economic power. Even in the United States, there are ominous signs for Israel. Its hold on the media and on public opinion is becoming less secure. There is a widening gap between the national interests of the United States and the demands of the American-Israeli alliance. We have an example of this here. The alliance demands that the Americans should not attend this Conference. But is it in the United States national interests to isolate itself in this way from 137 States Members of the United Nations? Is it in its interests to irritate and embarrass its European NATO allies? To alienate the entire Arab and Moslem world?

Israel should note, however, this fact of history: that the American people tend eventually to assert themselves when they are being led far astray, and to use their power to call a halt.

If Israel continues its policies of expansion and colonial oppression, relying solely on its military superiority and her influence in Washington, it is laying up for itself a terrible reckoning in the years ahead.

I believe I shall be speaking for the overwhelming majority of my 800 fellow-parliamentarians in the Parliamentary Association on Euro-Arab Co-operation if I say that this is what we hope from this Conference: that the final declaration should be clear, practical and based on a full consensus. As we demand the full implementation of all the rights of the Palestinians, so we must acknowledge explicitly that this can only be achieved if we also accept the right of all States in the region, and that includes the State of Israel, to existence within secure and recognized frontiers.



On this, as on other, more immediate issues, our guide must surely be the wishes of the West Bankers. To give a specific example - the West Bankers, for very good reasons want UNRWA to survive, just as, for the same reason, the Israeli Zionists want it to go bankrupt. In this sector of the anti-Zionist struggle, the Gulf-States are the best equipped to do battle. Let them do so; and if anyone raises political or ideological objections, they have the final, crushing answer - "It is what the West Bankers want."

After all, it is they who are the main victims of Zionism. It is they who are being humiliated, robbed, beaten up, shot.

For all of us, their friends, communist and non-communist, North and South, Shiite and Sunni, black and white - let the wishes and the freedom of the West Bankers be the focus of our united efforts. Then the Palestine cause cannot fail.

Mr. Paul J. McCloskey

I am honoured that you have asked me to address this Conference as a private United States citizen, particularly as a 15-year veteran of the United States Congress and as one who as a marine served in the first United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Korea in 1951. And yet, it is perhaps fitting that this Conference be addressed by a private citizen of the United States. As Mr. Kaddoumi of the PLO said, it is to the private citizens of the United States, not the current policies of the United States Government, where the Palestinians look for justice. I suspect that every delegate here would agree that the fastest way to achieve Palestinian self-determination and a Palestinian State is by changing the minds of 200 million private American citizens who until recently have provided, through their Congress almost automatically increasing sums of money from the United States to support Israel's invasion of Lebanon and Israel's settlements on the West Bank and Gaza.

So long as this United States assistance continues regardless of what Israel does, there seems little change to curb Israeli violation of United Nations resolutions or to achieve justice for the Palestinians. The battle for justice in the Middle East may therefore be won or lost in the minds and hearts of the American people. Many of you have said this to me in the past several days. This may be the single greatest reality which underlies this whole Conference.

If, for example, after Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982, the United States Congress had cut military assistance to Israel under the same law which we invoked to cut aid to Turkey when Turkey used United States weapons to invade Cyprus in 1975, I suspect that there would be no Israeli soldiers in Lebanon today and no rapid building of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. The massacres at Sabra and Shatila may well have been prevented.

Because the goals of this Conference can best be achieved by a change in American public opinion, I hope you will not mind if I advance a few suggestions as to how this Conference can act to change American public opinion. This is presumptuous on my part, but I hope you will forgive me for passing on to you the experience of 15 years in the American Congress and ten election campaigns. I do this in part because it has taken me so long to learn about the cultures and the political systems of the countries you represent, and I have found, in turn, that many representatives of foreign nations are unaware of two basic principles of the American system of government. Indeed, many Americans are unaware of these two principles. They are almost secret principles - kept secret by politicians, and even sometime, at least as involving Israel, by an American press, which as you know has very few Arab reporters, newspaper publishers or television commentators.

The first of these secrets is that Congress, not President Reagan, presently controls United States foreign policy. The second secret is that some 2 per cent of the American people presently control Congress on our foreign policy with respect to the Palestinians.

Our system is not the type of parliamentary democracy that you see in the United Kingdom or France or Japan or Israel. Our system rests on an election every two years of those representatives who alone are given the power under our constitution to levy taxes, declare war, or grant money.

It is not the President who gives three billion this year to Israel, only the Congress can authorize that money. If the Congress decrees that Israel will receive 65 modern fighter bombers, the President must comply. The President in turn cannot sell the AWACS to Saudi Arabia or cruise missiles to Jordan if the Congress forbids it. Note what happened last year when Israel invaded Lebanon last June.

The Israelis broke four solemn and specific agreements with the United States of America:

- (a) In invading Lebanon with United States supplied weapons, they violated not only the United States Arms Control Law but a solemn agreement that Israel would use these weapons only in self-defence;
- (b) When Israel used the cluster bomb (CBTJ) it violated a second solemn agreement that that terrible weapon would only be used if Israel was attacked by the regular forces of two or more nations, and that cluster bombs would never be used in built-up civilian area. (When I met with Chairman Arafat in West Beirut last July, I found United States cluster bomb shells all over the streets of West Beirut including in the courtyard of a Lebanese hospital which housed 800 mentally retarded children.);
- (c) When President Reagan proposed his Peace Plan on 1 September a year ago, a plan which sought a freeze on the West Bank settlements, as had been contemplated in the Camp David agreement, Prime Minister Begin rejected the proposal entirely and announced that he was accelerating the pace of development of those settlements;
- (d) And finally, worst of all, when Ambassador Habib prevailed upon Chairman Arafat and the PLO military forces to leave West Beirut, promising that the women and children and old people left behind would be protected, Israel violated that agreement, and moved into West Beirut, cordoned off the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and in the same words as used by Adolph Hitler 40 years ago, ordered in the Phalangists to "purge" the camps.

The United States marines were ordered in to protect the Palestinians against Israelis and their allies, the Phalangists.

Yet, in spite of these almost incredible violations of commitments by Israel, a few months later the United States Congress voted even more money for assistance to Israel than President Reagan had requested.

It is no wonder that President Reagan has not yet been able to cut off aid to Israel. The Congress would not permit it.

Now, it is true that the American public opinion which for 35 years had been sympathetic to Israel, moved strongly towards justice for the Palestinians during those dark days in the summer of 1982. Despite this shift in public opinion however, Congress, with hardly a dissenting voice, subsequently increased aid to Israel.

You ask why. The answer is simple, but it is not known to very many people, even in the United States of America. This is the second great secret of our political system. Public opinion does not move Congress until it is translated into political action and involvement. In our political system, a small group of people, perhaps 2 per cent of the entire American public, today control the American political system. If they care deeply enough they can wield greater political power than American presidents.

This seeming contradiction occurs because most members of the United States Congress are elected by 2 to 4 per cent of the people who vote. If a congressman would ordinarily win his seat in Congress by a vote of 52 per cent to 48 per cent, a shift by 2 per cent of the electorate who vote on one issue alone can change a victory into defeat.

This result is enhanced during a period of antagonism toward the Government and public apathy such as has existed in the United States since the disillusionment of the Viet Nam war and Watergate. If only half of the American people care enough to vote, then the 2 per cent minority which cares deeply becomes equal to 4 per cent of the vote, enough to defeat most candidates for Congress.

If that minority also retains a deep sense of insecurity and fear, resulting from the holocaust and years of anti-semitism; if that minority by virtue of its hard work, family solidarity and individual efforts, has achieved leadership in the fields of banking, law, movie making, and particularly radio and television networks, no congressman dares challenge that minority.

Democracy thus is not run by either the President or by the majority opinion of the people. Today the decisions of the United States on the Middle East are determined by the Congress, which in turn, is controlled by the power and dedication of that 2 per cent of the American people who support the organized Jewish political effort on behalf of zionism. That dedicated effort by 2 per cent of the American people has also furnished eight Jewish senators out of 100 United States senators and 33 Jewish congressmen out of 435 United States congressmen.

Political power in America is thus there for those who care deeply enough to take it. The Jewish community in America cares, while the Arab American community has thus far been disorganized, divided and confused by the same divided views which characterize the Arab world itself.

The result has been that when one Member of Congress, Paul Findley, spoke out for recognition of the PLO on the floor of the Congress last year, he was defeated by the single-minded and powerful financial effort of the Jewish community throughout the United States sending money and effort into his congressional district. The effect on other members of Congress was substantial. At least 30 members of the Congress told me privately that they agreed that Prime Minister Begin's policies were a disaster, not just for the United States but indeed for Israel, yet all said also that they dared not say so publicly if they wanted to be re-elected.

This should give you some idea as to what this Conference is up against if it is to successfully change American public opinion so forcefully that individual congressmen can speak out for the Palestinian cause.

There is one step, however, that this Conference can take, a step which, more than any other, could both change American public opinion, and give President Reagan the power to recognize the legitimacy of the PLO.

Let me speak for a moment about American public opinion.

Like opinion in any country, American public opinion can often be wrong. Americans can be deluded, they can be deceived, they can be biased. American public opinion can be shaped by historic identities with one people and with historic distrusts of different philosophies which are not always understood. Americans are not always quick to try to understand foreign cultures or foreign religions or foreign interests.

But there is a basic fairness in the American people, and sooner or later that sense of fairness and free press and free expression and the freedom to assemble and petition for redress of grievance and injustice will lead the American people to insist on justice.

Fundamentally, you must establish in the minds of the American people that the Palestinian cause is just and the Israeli cause is no longer just. To do this, to appeal to the inherent feelings of the American people, requires a step I am afraid this Conference is unwilling to take.

That step is simple. It involves only, in this international setting of the United Nations, that the Conference recognize all the United Nations resolutions. This includes the original partition resolution 181 (II) of the General Assembly in 1947; it also includes Security Council resolutions recognizing Israel. Israel is required by United Nations resolution 242 to withdraw from the territories occupied following the 1967 war, for example; the second and balancing provision of 242 grants Israel's right to exist free from fears or threats of force.

It is understandable that Palestinians from Jaffa, Acre and West Jerusalem will rebel from a recognition of Israel which denies them the right to return to their homes in peace and dignity. It is understandable that Arab leaders are unwilling to state clearly and unequivocally that, if a Palestinian State is to come into being, the price that must be paid is the recognition of an Israeli State. I do not speak of the fairness of this question for Palestinians. But I do speak to the essential emotions to achieve that fairness which can cause a change in the minds and hearts of the American people. I would therefore please that you end this Conference with an unequivocal and clear recognition and acceptance of all United Nations resolutions relating to the Palestinian question,

including resolution 242 in all of its parts. If this Conference should take that single step, I believe you would find a definite change in the attitude of the American people and the acceptance by the American people that the Israelis also accept that clause in resolution 242 which requires withdrawal by Israel from the West Bank, Gaza; the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

The single step I speak of involves nothing more than adding two clauses to paragraph 3 of the draft Declaration (document A/CONF.114/L.3, dated 12 August 1983).

Where paragraph 3 reads: "The International Conference is, furthermore, convinced that peace and stability in the Middle East region can be achieved provided the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, defined by the United Nations General Assembly, are universally recognized and then secured and implemented.", a second clause would be added: "Equally necessary is the right of Israel to exist with its pre-1967 borders as defined by the Security Council".

And where the second sentence reads: "Positive and effective action by all concerned is necessary for the purpose of enabling the Palestinian people to attain these rights, including the right of self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State.", the words "and to assure the Israeli people of their right to live in peace within their pre-1967 borders' would be added.

In conformance with this change I would also suggest inserting the word "East" before Jerusalem in paragraphs 6(c) and 6(d).

The greatest danger facing this Conference is the temptation to self-delusion. Here we talk only to ourselves. It is easy to say that which is agreeable to the countries represented here.

But the success of this Conference will lie not in what we say to each other, but in what the Conference says to the American people, to the European nations, to the Israelis and to the Palestinians in the occupied territories and those scattered around the world.

To the people of the United States, if the message is twofold - justice for the Palestinians and security for the Israelis within their pre-1967 borders -, this Conference will have opened up a broad new debate in the United States, the fairness of which can change American public opinion, and ultimately the actions of the United States Congress as well.

I would plead with you, therefore, to adopt the simple change I have recommended to make this Conference's Declaration one of fairness and truth rather than one of partisanship.

To my Palestinian friends, I hope you will understand my position. We have often talked how it would be in Israel's best interest to turn away from Begin and his policies of aggression and discrimination. I hope you can understand my belief that it will best serve Palestinian interests if you can clearly and directly say that which is so often privately admitted, that Israel as a State is entitled to exist within its pre-1967 borders as you are entitled to a Palestinian State on the West Bank, Gaza and a capital in East Jerusalem.

In the nations which have declined to attend this Conference, and indeed, in many of the countries who are attending only as observers, it is being said that nothing constructive can come from this Conference, that it is one-sided and biased.

I would ask you to prove these doubters and faint-hearts to be wrong. By balancing the rights of Palestinians and Israelis, you not only demonstrate statesmanship, but you start a small movement towards ending the fear which has caused so many fine people, Jewish and non-Jewish, to support the Israeli Government even when it has been terribly wrong.

Fear and hatred are the two greatest barriers to reasoned negotiations between human beings. In our time it is an understandable fear on the part of the Jews and an understandable hatred on the part of the Arabs. By showing a lessening of the hatred by those who support the Palestinian cause we can hope for a lessening of fear on the part of the Israelis and their supporters.

The stakes are very high. In a relatively short time Arab leaders can expect to control nuclear weapons as the Israelis do today. The bitterest of enemies must realize, as the United States and USSR have come to realize, that neither side wins a nuclear war. The nuclear destruction of Jerusalem, Mecca, Tel Aviv and Damascus, Haifa and Riyadh does not bring justice for the Palestinians.

The issue is not our individual pride or the temporal approval of our friends and countrymen. The issue is whether young Palestinians can hope to grow up in peace and dignity, on the West Bank, in Gaza, Jerusalem and Israel itself. This is what self-determination is all about.

Mr. Mattityahu Peled

It was a great honour for me to be invited to this important Conference and I want to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Mair for having found me deserving to be invited as an "eminent person".

I need hardly tell you that your Conference is probably one of the most controversial ever convened by the United Nations. The Israeli Government considers it as an affront to itself and denounced it as soon as it was proposed, and was supported in this, as in many other issues by the United States of America. The opposition to this Conference was in Israel practically universal, and even important groups of the peace forces in Israel took exception to it. It was felt by many Israelis, whose dedication to the cause of peace cannot be doubted, that this Conference would be no more than a massive anti-Israeli demonstration leading to no concrete steps towards peace.

My own evaluation of this Conference was quite different, and the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace not only subscribed to my position but further decided to send a delegation to participate in the Conference as an NGO. Our decision was severely

criticized in my country and we had felt that we had to explain to the public our decision, which we did at a press conference in Tel-Aviv a few days before leaving for the Conference. We gave three reasons for our decision. First, for a long time we have been maintaining that the problems of the Middle East and especially the Palestinian problem have to be dealt with by the United Nations. Security Council resolution 338 not only laid down the principle but indeed provided the mechanism for dealing with the problems of that region. I consider it as one of the most unfortunate developments in the recent history of the Middle East that, due to narrow-minded considerations, the United States brought an end to the Geneva Peace Conference and has assumed sole responsibility for the peace process. Since then the situation in the Middle East has been constantly deteriorating. Rather than search for a comprehensive peace, in co-operation with the Soviet Union and with the active participation of all the parties involved, the United States of America preferred a series of bilateral negotiations conducted under its supervision. Apart from leading the Middle East from one crisis into another, this procedure enabled both Israel and the United States of America to ignore the Palestinian problem in an effort to work out a pax americana in which the Palestinian people would have no place. The futility of the effort is now all too obvious.

This Conference certainly cannot revive the Geneva Peace Conference but I believe that it can help in drawing the attention of the world to the need of handing over the responsibility for the peace process in the Middle East to the United Nations.

The second reason for coming to this Conference, as we had explained before leaving, was that it would enable the PLO to present the Palestinian case in its full dimensions and impress world public opinion with the urgent need to recognize it as a full and legitimate partner to the peace process. I have felt for a long time that the most dangerous illusion relating to the current situation in the Middle East is that peace could be achieved without admitting the centrality of the Palestinian problem. This illusion is responsible for the disappointing results of the Camp David agreement, just as it is responsible for the disastrous invasion of Israel into Lebanon. Both these adventures had at their roots the assumption that the peace process could develop towards its final goal if only the Palestinian problem could be sidetracked. I hope that this Conference would help to persuade people all over the world that his assumption is fallacious.

Our third reason for wanting to participate in this Conference was our hope to be able to reconstruct during the ten days of its duration some kind of working relations with the PLO. I should perhaps explain that the main goal of our Council, indeed our raison d'être, is taking the problem of relations between Israelis and the PLO from the mere verbal level onto the practical level. Only a few months after our Council had come into being we succeeded to establish contacts with the PLO, beginning in July 1976, which went on since then, developing all the time and encompassing an ever-growing number of individuals on both sides. The importance of this activity was that it helped humanize the other party in the eyes of its original opponent, as well as enabling each side better to understand the problems and difficulties faced by the other. These contacts have a long and exciting history, some of which can already be read in books on the Middle East. The participants in these contacts were constantly harassed by extremists on both sides, with the Palestinians running the risk of death for their dedication to the cause of peace. Yet, despite all these difficulties the links between Israelis and the PLO kept developing until they have finally culminated in the meeting of a delegation of our Council with Chairman Arafat.

The story of our relations with the PLO cannot be told without mentioning the name of that great Palestinian patriot and indefatigable peacefighter, the late Isaam Sartawi, a dear friend and trusted comrade who fell in the cause of peace. It was due to his courage and determination that over the years so many Israelis began to think of the PLO in terms of a great organization bearing a heavy responsibility for the destination of the Palestinian people. His death was received in Israel, by both friend and foe, as a tragic loss. And soon after this tragedy the sad developments inside the Fatah organization had taken place, making the continuation of our links with the PLO so much more difficult. We were happy to see the integrity of the PLO preserved in spite of all the difficulties and the leadership of Chairman Arafat emerging intact from the crisis. And by the time we received the invitation to come to this Conference we had hoped that the tremendously important work of building bridges over the chasm separating our two peoples, the Israeli and the Palestinian, could now be continued.

Mr. Chairman, I feel I should at this point explain the urgency of the resumption of our disrupted contacts with the PLO. I believe this problem is the concern of all those who wish to see peace established in the Middle East.

As pointed out already by a number of distinguished speakers in this Conference, the tragedy of the Palestinian people is rooted not only in the situation it is in but also in the manner this situation is handled by both enemy and friend. The enemy, both Israel and the United States of America, is trying to eliminate the Palestinian as a viable national entity in the most ruthless ways. The friends, alas, very frequently appear to be capable of administering no more than soothing words. Listening to some of these utterances one cannot help recalling the famous lines written by the Palestinian poet Burhan al-din al-Abbushi:

Shall we for ever fool ourselves to trust,  
Each time a crook calls "long live Palestine",  
That he is moved by sincerity?

The disparity between the aggression against the Palestinian people on the one hand and the support this people is getting on the other is one of the most glaring aspects of the Palestinian tragedy.

Very frequently the question is asked: how can one bring about an end to the hostility against the Palestinians and open up the road towards a settlement based on justice? The answer is invariably to bring about a change in the attitude of the countries most directly responsible for this hostility. I hope that the wise words delivered yesterday from this podium by Congressman McCloskey would be carefully studied by one and all. All those who really care for the fate of the Palestinian people should realize that there can be no more important target for them than winning over the sympathy of public opinion in the countries responsible for their miseries. A far-reaching change in public opinion will bring a change of policy. Public opinion in my country favours our Government's anti-Palestinian policy because the Palestinians are seen as a mortal enemy. And let me say immediately that I support wholeheartedly the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination on the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, because I feel confident that there is no mortal enmity between our peoples. I wish you would believe when I tell you that there are many Israelis who firmly believe that there can be no future for Israel without resolving equitably the Palestinian problem. But these same Israelis are convinced that our Government is right when it claims that the Palestinians under the leadership of the PLO are determined to destroy Israel. For many years we have been arguing against this utterly stupid position with only very limited success. Our main difficulty, please believe that, is that we can adduce only scant "hard evidence" to prove our claims. For every statement of a reconciliatory nature made by the PLO, our opponents adduce two stating the contrary. Sometimes the race for quotes assumes a theological nature but in the process we lose the attention of the public. Winning over public opinion requires a far more sophisticated approach; this is a process which calls for very thorough thinking and a systematic approach.

We frequently hear the argument that such a campaign to win over public opinion should be put off until other very urgent problems are taken care of. This would be a convenience temporary solution if the situation of the Palestinians living in the occupied territories was static. But unfortunately this is not the case. Every day you postpone the campaign over public opinion in Israel, Palestine, your Palestine, is shrinking. I do not have to tell you the story in detail, I am sure you know it. But let me report to you what I have heard from a very admirable Palestinian living on the West Bank. He said to me only recently: every day I get up in the morning and look out through the window I realize that Palestine is in the process of disappearing. It is up to you to determine how alarming is the situation and what should be your priorities. Many believe already in Israel and elsewhere that the situation in the occupied territories is nearing a point of no return. I am not among them, but their numbers are increasing daily.

I know that there is a convenient way of running away from the difficulties of the present into the dreams of the future. In one of his last interviews given to an Arabic weekly the late Isaam Sartawi gave a vivid description of the temptation to escape into the future in order to avoid the hard decision of the present.

But if a decision to cope with the problems of the present is to be taken then let me assure you: we of the peace camp in Israel are willing to do our utmost to help you to change public opinion in Israel. Some expression was uttered in this Conference regarding the hope that the peace forces in Israel would increase. I think the likelihood for such an increase is considerable, but only if their existence will be recognized and appreciated.

What I found disturbing in the course of the Conference was, for example, the lack of explicit realization that the struggle for peace is indivisible, and is being carried out on all sides simultaneously. Many addressed themselves to the atrocious massacres in Sabra and Shatila. I do not deny that Israel is directly responsible for this crime. But there are two facts which come to mind the moment this crime is mentioned and which were ignored until this morning. The one is that the Lebanese Phalange participated in the killing and the other is that the largest demonstration protesting against the Israeli Government on account of this crime was held in Israel. I am deeply grateful to Chairman Arafat for having acknowledged in such an open-hearted manner the role of the peace forces in Israel on that occasion, but I cannot help wondering what the silence over these two important facts during the Conference up to this point has signified.

Let me bring another example. A great deal has been said here about Israel's presence in Lebanon. I believe that Israel should pull out of Lebanon immediately and unconditionally. Many other Israelis take the same position. Young Israelis, in increasing numbers, prefer to go to jail rather than participate in an unjust war and fight the Palestinians whose rights we so haughtily deny. But the Israeli army is not the only one that is fighting the Palestinians, yet we do not hear of soldiers serving in other armies choosing to go to prison rather than fight the Palestinians. I do not mean to say that the Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in Lebanon do it in order to be recognized; they do it because they are convinced that the presence of Israel in Lebanon is immoral and illegal. But we could see many more Israeli soldiers refusing service in Lebanon, if only they could be persuaded that peace with a Palestinian State was possible.

I am convinced that the future well-being of Israel is tied to the future well-being of the Palestinian people, and this is the reasons, one of the reasons, I came here.

I hope that my presence in the Conference will contribute in a small way to the attainment of the three goals I enumerated. But only the future will tell us to what extent this Conference would contribute to that.

As to the work in Israel I am pleased to say that Chairman Arafat's public acknowledgement of the importance of our activities will considerably enhance our chances to win over many more Israelis to our position. But what is of the greatest importance to my mind, is the unequivocal acceptance of the principle of international legitimacy by the leader of the PLO. It is this kind of assurances that many Israelis, peace-seeking Israelis, have always found lacking in major political statements of the PLO.

Having said that I would like to add that a great deal more could have been achieved during this Conference in terms of elaborating concrete measures aimed at increasing the support for peace in Israel. Far be it from me to level criticism. I realize the enormity of the task facing the Palestinian leadership, but on a practical level I must emphasize that a great deal remains to be done, and the sooner we get to concrete ideas and the steps to implement them the better will be served the cause of peace. Unlike many others who are present here today, I am going back home to see the Palestinians suffering and I know we can conduct a more energetic struggle supporting their resistance to aggression and oppression. But this cannot be effectively done so long as no direct links are established between us, Israelis and Palestinians, both in the occupied territories and abroad.

In conclusion let me say that we have all learned a great deal about each other over the years. I am sure that both the PLO and the peace groups in Israel have a better idea now as to the difficulties facing us and the possibilities open to us. The present situation seems very grim indeed, because the alliance between the United States of America and Israel against the Palestinian people seem so powerful. But with the kind of leadership given by Chairman Arafat to the Palestinians, and the determination of the peace forces to fight with all their strength for the liberation of the Palestinian people I feel confident that we shall see peace and justice in our days. Let me quote my great Palestinian friend, Isaam Sartawi, just once more and repeat what he had written to us on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of our Israeli-Palestinian Peace Council: "Sooner than most our enemies believe we shall see our two nations, the Palestinian and the Israeli, living next to each other in peace and friendship."

Mr. Yevgeniy Primakov

The United Nations International Conference on the Question of Palestine has shown complete unanimity on the need for an urgent settlement of the Palestine problem; this ideas was reflected in practically all statements.

Such an urgent settlement is clearly necessary for both moral and political reasons. From the moral standpoint, the very attempt to deny the right of self-determination to a nation of 4.5 million people with a distinctive, historically-developed national character is monstrous. In the past the United Nations supported the right of the Jews living in Palestine to self-determination. It is quite clear,

however, that the self-determination of one people cannot, and must not, be realized at the expense of another. This point, incidentally, was reflected in the General Assembly's decision to divide Palestine into two States, a Jewish one and an Arab one.

In addition to the moral criterion, the political reasons for an urgent settlement of the Palestinian problem have recently become increasingly acute. It has become self-evident that without this there can be no political settlement of the Middle East conflict as a whole. Quite recently, when the Camp David agreements were being worked out, we were assured repeatedly that the situation in the Middle East had stabilized, when all the while the situation there not only failed to stabilize but was growing increasingly dangerous. Symptomatic of this is the emergence of so-called "satellite" conflicts. Evidence of this is the protracted bloodshed in Lebanon, the real significance of which cannot be appreciated without understanding its organic link to the entire unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, no one can dispute the fact that genocide is becoming a real threat to entire peoples. It has already become a reality for the Palestinians. The world will never forget and never forgive Sabra and Shatila. Genocide has become a bloody reality for the Lebanese as well.

Who is responsible for this situation? This is not an idle or academic question. Without a clear reply it is impossible to design or implement measures to solve the Palestinian problem and achieve a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Of course the ones directly responsible for the tragedy of the Palestinians are the ruling Zionist circles of Israel, whose objective is unchecked territorial expansion through the confiscation and occupation of Arab lands. It is not hard to understand that a policy of annexing the Arab territories seized in 1967 is accompanied by the criminal expulsion of the Arab population by the illegal construction of Jewish settlements on the West Bank of the Jordan and in Gaza, by measures to limit the activity of higher Arab educational establishments so as to induce young Palestinians to leave their country, by acts of repression and terror against Palestinian leaders, and much more.

At the same time, it must be stated as categorically as possible that the reason why the Palestinian problem has not been solved and why there has been no comprehensive Middle East settlement is the activity of the United States in the Middle East. It is not only because Washington supplies Israel with the most advanced weapons, thereby providing material support for the latter's expansionism, it is also because - and I would like to stress this in particular - it is precisely the political approach of the United States which has stalemated a Middle East settlement and is preventing any solution of the Palestinian problem.

It is well known that the United States staked its hopes on a series of separate and distinct agreements. This is the essence of the United States approach. The calculation is simple. It is a policy designed to keep the separate Arab States from joining the common struggle to stop Israeli aggression. The United States policy originated in the Camp David agreement, followed by the agreement between Israel and Lebanon. The model for a separate deal was established at the very outset in the so-called "Reagan initiative".

It is no coincidence that, instead of the promised "detente" in the Middle East, "pacification" and "progress towards peace", the signature of the Camp David agreement was followed by the declaration of Jerusalem, including its occupied eastern part, as the "eternal and indivisible" capital of Israel, the adoption by the Knesset of the law annexing the Syrian Golan Heights and the removal of practically all restraints from the process of settlement of Arab lands by Israelis. The separate Camp David agreement was followed by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, as a result of which the bloody crisis in that country reached its climax.

Time has shown that the United States gamble on a partial solution in undermining and destroying the prospect for a comprehensive settlement. I would go even further: the United States partial solutions are actually anti-Palestinian, because they are aimed at achieving the appearance of a settlement while denying the Palestinian people its right to self-determination.

There is still another aspect of the Middle East policy of the United States which reveals its negative character. It can be stated quite categorically that the United States subordinates its policy on the Palestinian problem and on a comprehensive Middle East settlement to the interests of a global confrontation with the USSR and its allies. United States Secretary of Defense C. Weinberger, describing current United States military approaches and concepts, said that they were designed to ensure tough opposition to the USSR at the global and regional levels simultaneously. It is precisely these aims that are served by United States-Israeli "strategic co-operation", United States military presence in the Sinai and in Lebanon and the establishment there of a network of United States military bases, and the manoeuvres of the "rapid deployment forces". How can a policy dominated by such aims be expected to serve the interests of a just peace?

Is there an alternative to the United States destructive policy of partial and separate deals in the Middle East? The United States says that there simply is not. The Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and the overwhelming majority of Arab States, as well as the members of the group of non-aligned countries and, last but definitely not least in this case, the Palestine Liberation Organization insist that there is such an alternative. Indeed, even serious experts in the United States and the other Western countries acknowledge this. The alternative to separate deals is the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, one based on principles which will not result in the elimination of all the factors underlying the Arab-Israeli conflict. With this in mind, the following must be achieved:

Withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all the occupied Arab territories;

Realization of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;

Guarantees for the security and independent existence of all States and peoples in the Middle East; this naturally refers to both the Palestinian people and Israel.

In fact, there is already a broad international consensus on the principles of a settlement.

However, machinery is needed in order to put into effect these just principles, which must be implemented as a "package", without separating them from one another, since only the comprehensive elimination of all the causes of the Middle East conflict can lead to genuine and lasting peace in this region.

The question of machinery now obviously has top priority in the process of reaching a Middle East settlement. It could take the form of an international conference on the Middle East. I should like to stress three factors which seem to be important in order for such a conference to succeed.

First of all, the true representatives of the Palestinian people must take part in its work. The Palestine Liberation Organization is

such a generally recognized representative. Is not the legitimacy of the mandate given to PLO by the Palestinian people apparent when even after 15 years' occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli administration failed in its efforts to find and establish there a counterweight to the Palestine Liberation Organization? The PLO has enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, the recognition and support of the Arab countries and the overwhelming majority of the States of the world. Is the unprecedented and cordial reception accorded here in Geneva to the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, not clear evidence of this?

Second, the international conference must oppose the current United States practice of pursuing its vital interests by trying to monopolize - or, to be more precise, to manipulate - the process of political settlement in the Middle East. Besides the Arab countries, PLO and Israel, the conference must also be attended by the Soviet Union and the United States because of the special responsibility of these two Powers for keeping the peace in the present world situation. The States of Western Europe, Africa and Asia, as representatives of regions contiguous to the Middle East, might also participate in this conference. The United Nations can play an extremely important role in all of this.

Thirdly, of course, such a peace conference on the Middle East, the urgency of which is beyond question, must be properly prepared. The present United Nations forum on Palestine might make a genuine contribution to the practical implementation of these goals for which we have gathered here by proposing to start immediate preparations for such a peace conference.

It is harder to do this today than it was yesterday and it will be harder to do it tomorrow than today.

Mr. Edward W. Said

For most of the twentieth century, Palestine has been the focus of an extraordinary amount of debate, conflict, historical change and human suffering. As a geographical place Palestine is of course saturated with cultural and religious significance. It has special importance for three great monotheistic religions; in the West, Palestine and Jerusalem, its capital city, have long been considered central to human experience, as the Crusades and the whole modern history of colonial competition in the Orient attest; in most of the non-European, post-colonial world Palestine is symbolic of heroic struggle, sacrifice and tragedy; for Jews, Palestine is now Israel, a place where Biblical prophecies are fulfilled and where an independent national and sovereign State for and by Jews is now in existence; between Israel and the United States of America a "special relationship," unusual in its kind, was developed, with the result that the United States has been the site of unremitting antagonism between its native, mostly Muslim and Christian Arab inhabitants and, since the 1880s, an incoming population of Jews determined to settle and create a new Jewish State. As such then Palestine has drawn to itself not only the dynamics of Arab nationalism and Zionism, but also a complex web of other forces, from anti-colonial resistance to national renaissance, from liberal vision to religious fundamentalism.

Today, only one group of people, members of the Arab community, refer to themselves as Palestinians, and to their homeland as Palestine.

Today, the Palestinian people constitutes a dispersed and dispossessed nation comprising no less than three major groups, all of them existing in forms of life that are a direct result of the destruction of Palestinian society in 1948. First there is the group of 650,000 Palestinians who are Israeli citizens, and who have been characterized as the victims of internal colonialism; second, the 1.3 million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza who since 1967 have lived under an Israeli military occupation whose designs, apart from a stated policy of collective punishment, also include the obliteration of Palestinian national institutions and their replacement with an apparatus of quislings and mercenary collaborators; third, the Palestinians in exile, originally a group numbering upwards of 800,000 driven out by the Israelis in 1948, and now numbering about 2.1 million, who live principally in the Arab world, but who are also scattered throughout Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia.

Divided by geography and the widely divergent circumstances of the politics ruling their lives, the Palestinians are nevertheless united in their increasingly powerful sense of national identity and destiny. From the ruins of Palestine they have emerged as a world and regional force of considerable dimensions, at the very moment that their collective existence - despite its many accomplishments and achievements - is more imperiled and more threatened than ever before.

Anyone who believes, however, that Palestinian nationalism can be either stopped or reversed by massacres, invasions, military occupation, or calling them, in Menachem Begin's odious terminology, "two-legged beasts", or "terrorists" - all of which, taken together, now comprises the sum total of official Israeli and Zionist policy towards the Palestinians - is very much mistaken. Such oppression and state terrorism, as history has shown, simply increases the national will, intensifies the struggle, escalates the violence. It should also make clear who the real rejectionists are, who and what the obstacles to peace are, where the problem lie.

It is no accident, for example, that the massive campaign waged against Palestinian national institutions - schools, universities, municipal councils, newspapers, etc. - on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 was conducted by Israel simultaneously with a war against Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. "It has now been 30 years, from the time of our Independence War [in 1948] until now, that we have been fighting against the civilian [Arab] population," said General Mordechai Gur, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army in 1978. This was a candid admission that makes smoke out of the Israeli claim, repeated constantly, that Israel pursues a doctrine of "purity of arms", one scarcely knows who acts in more bad faith, Israeli propagandists or their Western supporters, for whose moral appetites the blood of innocent Palestinians cannot be spilled enough.

The essential thing, however, is to remember that the question of Palestine is best understood in terms of the people of Palestine, for it is the people who have kept the question alive, and it is they whose collective will makes the question of Palestine the concrete thing that it is. It is their history that has been, for the most, part, circumvented, blocked, and denied. Consequently, it has been possible in certain quarters to argue that the Palestinians are only refugees, or only terrorists, or only a non-existent fiction.

Whereas, of course, Palestinian history has an integrity and coherence that, despite much travail, have maintained themselves for much of this century. Moreover the Palestinians - partly because of the remarkable history of their land, as well as its world-wide significance - have played a regional role of inestimable importance and also an international one. Without the Palestinians the

contemporary history of the Third World, to say nothing of Europe and America, would have been a different thing entirely. On the fact of it, this may seem anomalous, or at least curious, since given their small number and the fact that they are non-European, there is a disparity between the fact that they are a small people of modest accomplishments, and, on the other hand, the immense influence of their cause. For to view the question of Palestine merely as a matter of irredentism or of land-ownership is completely to miss the powerful struggle between differing value-systems, world views and ideological energies that makes the question of Palestine the thorny and bristling issue that it is.

Nevertheless, I think, the opposition between zionism as embodied by Israeli policy and the Palestinian world view as embodied in Palestine National Council resolutions since 1974 is fundamental and clearcut. On the one hand, Israeli policy is based on an exclusionist, even paranoid vision of reality in which Jews and non-Jews are separated in all things, great and small. On the other hand, the Palestinians more than any other national group in the Middle East, have struggled to put forward a vision based on the co-existence of equal national communities in which no community can dominate another simply on the basis of race, religion, or creed. It is precisely this effort, and not its success or failure, that has been spurned and rejected totally by official Israel as a matter of principle.

Let me be very concrete. The turbulent map of today's Middle East is essentially but not exclusively the result of the presence there of Israel, which - it is estimated by a 1983 official United States Government study (General Accounting Office) - has been the beneficiary of well over 20 billion dollars in United States aid. Israel has been an enormously disruptive presence, with millions of human lives skewed and distorted beyond redemption simply because its aggressiveness, its ruthlessly used power, its heedless contempt for its surroundings have been imposed, with the help of the United States, on the region. Unlimited support of Israel has committed the United States to Israeli policies that are unique, not only because they are so detailed and fundamentally consistent, but also because they are still unknown to much of the world, including the supporters of Israel. For, whereas it is acceptable to speak with revulsion about South African apartheid as a system of discrimination between the dominant minority whites and suppressed majority blacks, it is still virtually impossible to say anything very critical about zionism which, so far as the Palestinians falling inside Israeli rule are concerned (known juridically only as non-Jews), is in its own way equally discriminatory. Certainly zionism as an ideology is not monolithic, and certainly it must be said that a great many Israeli and non-Israeli Jews, Zionists and anti-Zionists, have been forthright in their criticism of Israeli policy. But in the main, it is true that as it has come to bear upon the daily life of Palestinians today, zionism furnished the world view - Jewish exclusionism - that is used by Israel to justify its policies ideologically and philosophically. Thus, for example, whereas any Jew anywhere can claim citizenship in Israel according to the Law of Return, people born in Palestine, but non-Jewish, have no such right. Non-Jews cannot enjoy full rights in Israel, a State which is not the State of its citizens, but the State of the Jewish people, wherever Jews may be. Israel thus is in a sense more of a State than any other in the world, since it possesses a strange form of extraterritoriality; more to the point, Israel is the only State in the world which, although created by the United Nations and recognized by the world organizations as having the same rights and obligations as any other State, does not have any legally declared international boundaries. Ninety-five per cent of the land in Israel is held in perpetuity for the Jewish people, which thus means that once declared absentees or illegally in possession of "Jewish" land, Palestinians are stripped of their land and consequently lose any rights to own land.

Many States reveal the extent to which legal techniques have been employed - brilliantly in most cases - to perpetuate the enforced distinction between Jews and non-Jews in the Jewish State (i.e. The Jewish National Fund, the land and water authority, etc.). In all cases of course these distinctions are backed up by armed might.

Because of such practices, the Palestinian Arabs are habitually viewed as an essentially negative quantity; to most Israelis they have become the synonym for whatever is unpleasant, stupid, ugly, dirty and evil, the more easily to lock them up, beat them, humiliate them, massacre them when necessary. Even scholarly academic authorities on Arab society and culture derive their view of the non-Jewish world from Zionist discriminations, so much so that Professor Moshe Sharon, Chairman of the Department of History of Islamic Countries, says in The Jerusalem Post (14 June 1983) that "every Arab is a propagandist" and that "Arab-Islamic monolithic culture and society are based on the idea of exclusivity and self-assuredness"; and this, by the way, from someone who ascribes unquestioningly to the distinction between Arab and Jew, in which Jewish territory, Jewish homes, Jewish life, Jewish sheep are confidently, assuredly considered to be things apart from all others. Or we might wish to look at the views of another of Menachem Begin's allies, Gershon Solomon, an Orientalist with a Ph.D. from Hebrew University, and who heads the Temple Mount movement whose goal it is to drive Muslims from the Aqsa and Omar Mosques in Jerusalem in order to rebuild the Third Temple and restore the Mount to Jewish ownership. Not only does this man speak with the tacit support of people like Ezer Weizman, Begin, and Yuval Ne'eman - cabinet ministers, past and present, all - but he can also easily imagine an Israeli invasion of Mecca and Medina, one result of which would be "synagogues inside the holy Moslem centre" (Koteret Rashit, 19 May 1983).

Force and a desperate minority sense of the world: these characterize official Israeli attitudes to the world. Unfortunately, they are infectious and easily communicable to the surrounding region, so that when, for example, Oded Yinon proclaims one of the goals of Israeli strategy in the 1980s to be the breakup of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt into new mini-ethnic and confessional entities, his ideas correspond to a wave of such minority secessionist sentiment in the Arab world. Surely Lebanon is a case in point, as are other States. Then too the national security idea of Israel - its militarism, its justification of the cruelest and most unjust state practices against individuals in the name of national security - has, alas, bred similar reactive tendencies in Arab States. I speak here both as an Arab and as a member of a Christian Arab minority: the picture is an appalling one, and, while I am not sparing in criticism of Israel and zionism, I can be no less exigent in my criticism of the Arab and Christian derivative equivalents of zionism.

Without saying these things candidly, truth, morality and justice are abrogated. Let us concede that our world is imperfect and evil, that all nations commit indecent acts, that most small non-white peoples are oppressed. Is that all we can say about the question of Palestine today?

No, not all. There are specific moral and political imperatives for the world community to take up boldly and courageously. The Palestinian people today are faced with nothing less than ethnocide, and perhaps for the first time in the history of nations the rest of the world is able, quite literally, to watch the process in all its horrible detail. Ignorance is no longer an excuse. With the United States and many other nations, Israel has determined to reduce the Palestinians to a people without a narratable history, without a national institutional identity, without effective political presence. Hence Palestinian archives are either despoiled or stolen and, what is more insidious, Palestinian history is re-written so as to remove the strong nationalist factor from it entirely: Palestinians are "Arabs", dwellers in Eretz Israel, inhabitants of Judea and Samaria, etc. In turn, policy is based on this view of history, the better to be able to disperse Palestinians, to grind them down further into actors undistinguishable from their surroundings. Various countries have made no secret of their desire to transport Palestinians elsewhere, to reduce their number, and more crucially, to prevent concentrations of Palestinians from ever coming about. So we note the existence not only of detention centres like Ansar (a virtual concentration camp), but also of settlement policies in the occupied territories, where Arab centres of population are



both separated and enclosed by a grid of Jewish settlements. The essence of all this is to prevent Palestinian life from ever having continuity and integrity.

On all fronts, in every country where Palestinians are to be found, there is it seems a collective official notion that they are systematically to be trimmed down in status. In the long run of course such projects cannot succeed, but they can create enormous suffering in the meantime. So far the question of Palestine is concerned then we have the paradox of expressed solicitude for the Palestinian plight co-existing with every means of making sure that this plight will end by terminating the Palestinian will to survive as a national community.

On moral and political grounds this is intolerable to Palestinians, although of course it can be made palatable to the world so long as the actual condition of Palestinians remains undeclared and unrecognized. It is already much easier to speak in a miscellaneous style of Palestinians than it is to be specific about the actual circumstances of their lives.

Here therefore the production of concrete information becomes the first imperative of this Conference, and what could be more concrete than for the United Nations to set about counting the Palestinians. To this day, in whatever country they live, Palestinians are known by the government of the country as Palestinians, yet no official figures are acknowledged or revealed. I wish to say in public here, in front of this assembly of delegates from a majority of United Nations Member States, that the absence you witness of the exact aggregate number of officially counted Palestinians is a symptomatic and profoundly significant absence, by no means a mere oversight or accident.

It is worth remembering the history of efforts to count the Palestinians; the failures of these efforts attest to the collective governmental will not to acknowledge the Palestinians as possessing exact bodies, places of birth and residence, genders and other demographic data.

Could it be that there exists a common worry about counting Palestinians for fear that once demographically identified, the Palestinians would then be acknowledged as having a national existence of their own?

At meetings in March 1973 and then in March 1975 the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) recommended that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in co-operation with Arab States conduct a comprehensive count of the Palestinian people. At the Arab League Conference on Population Activities in the Arab States (11 May 1975) it was voted that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities respond to the PLO's request and produce a Palestinian census within and without the occupied territories. Again in May 1976 the ECWA member States affirmed (resolution 3/28) the need for a census of the Palestinian Arab people; this was reaffirmed from 6 to 8 June in Damascus at a meeting of PLO and Arab statisticians. An Economic and Social Council report calling for a census was adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978).

Despite all this, however, only desk work was undertaken. Thus demographic projections have been done, but no permission for enumeration was given the United Nations by the States concerned.

That is where things stand today. Everything in this world, as we know, is political to a greater or lesser degree. With the Palestinian people struggling valiantly against all odds and on all fronts, it behooves us to recognize the fact that any position taken or not taken about the question of Palestine is a political act, any action taken or not taken in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle is also a political act. As a Palestinian, and speaking entirely as an individual, I must register here my profound distaste for those Western and other States who, while proclaiming their sympathy and concern, go out of their way, whether by means of ambiguity or of outright hostility, to undermine all United Nations efforts to undertake serious international work on the Palestinians' behalf. These are political actions on the lowest level. But the United Nations, and this Conference in particular, has a higher calling and in addition to its mission, it has moral rights, obligations, indeed. Of these the passing of resolutions is naturally one, but the passing of resolutions with some built-in mechanism for implementation is also one. We will not resolve or settle the question of Palestine here. But we can take the essential beginning step by trying, for the first time in modern history, to make a concrete and accurate count of who, where and how many the Palestinians are, in order thereafter that their political voice be heard and their representative's representativity be universally accepted. I urge you not to avoid your corporate role which, in taking up the challenge of a census and other direct means of implementation, bestows the morally binding and unassailable stamp of the world community on an issue that has engaged the world for a long time, but which for too many years been a scandal of meanness, the ugliest violence, and the most hideous of hypocrisy. I am sure that, if they could, most of my brave compatriots scattered all over the globe but steadfast in their commitments and faith, would join me in urging you to take the momentous first step in righting the unconscionable injustice done to them.

Dr. Aural Shamma, M.D.

One wonders what is easier to talk about - war or peace. To talk about war means for somebody who has gone through many years of civil war and one terrible year of a major international conflict, that one has to remember all the suffering, all the sacrifice, all the uselessness of the death and destruction that took place.

The worst part about attending to such a conflict is the basic knowledge that that kind of suffering is useless, unjustifiable, and totally preventable. The worst part is knowing that you have no match to meet the challenge of a modern war. As a physician, I knew nothing in the world in the form of medical talent or medical expertise could match the expertise of the machinery of war that faced us.

But probably, the worst feeling about going through a war like the one the Lebanese and Palestinians had to go through last year in the summer of 1982, was the realization that such a war need not have taken place, need not have been acceptable to some, need not have been justifiable to some, need not have been condonable to some if it were not for one basic fact. And that is that the lives of the people who died, who suffered, who were mutilated last year, were expendable, were quantifiable. It was possible to count numbers and put them into an equation. So many lives for the attempt on a single diplomat, so many more lives for safe

borders for another country.

And numbers became very important last year. The great discussion as to how many people actually died in Lebanon only attests to that. It is as if to those forces who could justify that invasion and that war and the destruction and the killing, who could condone it, who could accept it, it was very important to know how many people did die. Because, in an equation, maybe 20,000 would be considered too high, but if one could reduce the numbers down to 5,000, then it would be a good war, an acceptable war, a justifiable war.

But when I remember those days, I don't remember a single woman, man, or child, who watched a member of their family die as helplessly as us doctors watched them die, who could say that the loss of that loved one was justifiable, that that family member was expendable, that that person was replaceable.

But the unfortunate truth is that we are of the Third World, there can be prices put upon our lives, and we can be made part of an equation.

But that is war. And in talking about peace, or relative peace, it is important that we do not forget that some people suffer during peace time too. Out of all those people who suffered during last year's war, there is one group who continue to suffer, though less dramatically and less graphically, during times of relative peace. And in my country, in Lebanon, that group of people happens to be the stateless Palestinians.

Their suffering stems from the fact that they are stateless, not that they are refugees; that they are stateless. That they live in a State that is not their own, that they must fact what is an acceptable legitimate right of their host State, to enforce laws. And while that State, namely Lebanon, exercises its sovereign right to enforce laws, along the way, the stateless Palestinians lose all their personal rights.

That is very evident if one looks at the life of a Palestinian in Beirut today. A Palestinian who wants to work will have his job opportunities severely reduced by new labour laws that have been imposed by ministerial decree.

A talented Palestinian lab technician cannot work because that is no longer allowed. A young man, who for years had owned a small jewelry shop, must close it because that is no longer allowed. And among the male population of Palestinians, the ability to find meaningful employment is very low, not only because of legal limitations set by the Government, not only for Palestinians, but for all non-Lebanese, but also because obtaining a work permit has become so difficult that most institutions would rather not take the trouble and employ them.

For those families where there are no men, where it is the woman who must be the supporter - and there are so many Palestinian families without men supporters, who have lost husbands, fathers and sons, who have either been killed or have disappeared - there is little opportunity for that woman to learn a trade, and if she does, she will face even worse problems in trying to find a job and meaningful employment.

For a mother who needs to have her children placed in a day-care centre so that she could work and support them, there are none. The laws, both new and old, that are being enforced, as I said, justifiably so in the view of the Lebanese Government, on building, make it impossible for nurseries destroyed during the war, to be rebuilt, or to relocate inside or outside the camps. The reasons are building permits are nearly impossible to obtain, or the land may be disputed. The net result is that there are no nurseries for children and the mothers must stay at home.

The same building restrictions applied to homes. Many Palestinians living in the camps who have not been able immediately after the war to rebuild, live in bombed-out homes and are now not capable legally to rebuild and improve their dwelling.

I can tell you of Im-Aziz, a Palestinian grandmother who lost her husband and four grown up sons - they disappeared a year ago - and who lives in two rooms of what remains of her home with seven daughters and daughters-in-law and 11 grandchildren. They have no supporters and no hope. Like many others, they live on hand-outs, when funds are available.

The same process applies when a Palestinian needs medical care. The Lebanese law states very clearly, and this is an old law, that non-Lebanese cannot practice medicine on Lebanese soil unless they fulfil very rigorous conditions. In addition, non-Lebanese are not allowed access to government hospitals, non-Lebanese entering private hospitals have no access to subsidization of their medical care either by the Ministry of Health or other funding agencies, and must pay every penny of the way. Of course for most Palestinians, that is not possible.

In what remains of the Palestinians' own hospitals, the PRCS hospitals in Beirut, they must find medical care in the face of a severely depleted medical staff. Neither Palestinians nor foreign volunteers are permitted to work in those hospitals and Lebanese physicians to date have not stepped forward to take their places, at least not in the numbers or with the expertise that is needed.

What this means is that, in a country that is a leader in care in the region, a Palestinian premature baby will have to die; a Palestinian boy with severe burns will have to live with his scars; a Palestinian with extensive disease who cannot be treated in Red Crescent hospitals will find no treatment elsewhere.

Now all this happens in times of "peace", as the Lebanese Government exercises its right to establish its sovereignty and enforce a rule of law. True, all this can happen to any non-Lebanese, but any other non-Lebanese would have a State that can negotiate with the Lebanese State to alleviate those conditions. The Palestinian has no State to negotiate for him with the Lebanese Government or with any government in the world. No organization short of a State can do that. The same thing can happen to Palestinians anywhere, the example of Lebanon being only the most recent, the most blatant.

It is as if one says that if Palestinians are not allowed to achieve their national rights of establishing a State of their own, their personal rights as individuals, wherever they live, can never be protected.

It is as if one says that being right is not enough, that right is not might, that right without might is no right at all. That is a hard lesson to learn.

Before I came to this Conference, a friend of mine, a prominent Palestinian psychiatrist in a North American city asked me what I was coming here for. I told him. He asked how long was the Conference. I told him. He just stared at me. "Ten days to discuss Palestinian rights? I should take you only two seconds to get up to the podium and say that 'if you are a Palestinian, you have no rights'."

I would hope that in the world community represented here, one would find the collective moral courage that would prove my friend wrong.

Mr. Tawfiq Toubi

I have the honour to address the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on the Question of Palestine, as its guest, representing the forces of peace from Israel.

The convening of this International Conference is no doubt an important contribution to efforts for promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine helping to establish peace and security in the Middle East.

While wishing this Conference every success in its work, I wish to condemn the Israeli Government for its boycott of this Conference. Israel's official absence and its negative attitude towards United Nations peace-making efforts, while undermining the foundation upon which Israel was established 35 years ago, namely the United Nations resolutions; this boycott stands at the same time in opposition to the real hopes and aspirations of the Israeli popular masses for reaching a just peace and a secure future.

For 35 years, the Israeli-Arab conflict have been a source of permanent tension, a hotbed for five destructive wars, undermining the security and welfare of the peoples of the Middle East and endangering world peace. The Arab people of Palestine have been the main victim.

Instead of abating with the passage of time, the Middle East conflict is beaming more inflammatory with recurring eruptions and tragedies.

The years following the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and other Arab territories, while failing to liquidate the Palestine problem - the root of the conflict - as intended in vain by the ruling circles of Israel, have brought more wars culminating by last year's unfinished savage war of aggression against Lebanon, against the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

While this massive use of force was intended by the Israeli-Zionist ruling circles as a knock-out blow at the Palestinian Arab peoples' national right for self-determination and close the fate of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Israeli colonial domain, it proved to be only a boomerang. The war of genocide against the Palestinian people in Lebanon has asserted once again that no display of force in our epoch can liquidate the Palestine problem and deprive the Palestinian Arab people of their natural right to an independent and sovereign State in accordance with the principles and spirit of United Nations resolutions on the Palestinian problem since 1947.

Every objective effort to solve the question of Palestine and reach a stable and just peace in the Middle East, also in the year 1983, cannot but be guided by the basic factors, developments and situation in Palestine - namely the existence of two peoples aspiring for separate independent national existence - a situation that guided the United Nations General Assembly in adopting the historic resolution of 29 November 1947, 35 years ago, calling for the elimination of the British Mandate, and granting the two peoples of Palestine - the Arab and Jewish peoples - independence within two sovereign States that should co-exist and co-operate.

The fact that the Arab people of Palestine were prevented 35 years ago from exercising their right to self-determination and constituting their independent State as the Jewish people in Palestine did, does not abolish this right so much as when it was forcefully denied by the tripartite unholy alliance. The British and American imperialists triggered the 1948 war in order to prevent the carrying out of the United Nations resolution in full and redivide spheres of influence; the Zionist leadership and the Arab reactionary rulers, especially the then British protégé King Abdullah, who acted together in unison as confirmed later by the secret meetings early in 1948 with Golda Meir, Dayan and other officials. Through military operations they prevented the formation of the Arab Palestinian State, dividing its territory amongst them.

While formally accepting the United Nations General Assembly resolution of November 1947, the Zionist leadership and the provisional Government of Israel headed by Ben-Gurion acted overtly and covertly to prevent its application upon the Arab people in Palestine.

The Palestine Jewish people's administration, to become later the Israeli Government, refused by a majority vote upon insistence by Ben-Gurion during its 12 May 1948 session when debating the declaration on the proclamation of the State, refused to define Israel's official boundaries.

It is a classical position of the Zionist leading circles to keep Israel's borders undefined in order to expand them by force and settlement whenever an opportunity arises. This expansionist policy of Israeli rulers was demonstrated against in 1967, and is being again unmasked in the war against Lebanon.

It is interesting in this connection to hear M. Dayan addressing a youth meeting of the "Ihud Hakvutzot Vehakibutzim" on 5 July 1968, more than 20 years later:

"...in your time and life you have to assist in extending settlement. You are not obliged to finish this task. But God forbid that you should say 'this is the limit, up till here, up to Degania, up to Meflasim and Nahal-oz and no more (names of border settlements).' This process of expansion has gone on for about 100 years. You must add your share today; we are sitting in an

area from the Suez up to the Golan Heights, and we are advancing step by step, from the ground of realities, to attain the targets set by us".

Israeli forces in 1948 and 1949 acted according to a plan to occupy maximum Arab territories, calling them "liberated" territories and saw to it that the minimum number of their inhabitants remained. In this process, the Israeli leadership resorted to mass massacres like Deir Yassin and to mass expulsion of Palestinian Arab population as the case of expelling the 50,000 inhabitants of Lydda and Ramleh upon direct orders of Ben-Gurion as confirmed by Rabin's book published in 1979. Lately, the deputy speaker of the Knesset, Meir Cohen, expressed regret that the Israeli authorities did not resort in the 1967 war to the same tactics as in 1948 in order to bring about mass expulsion of Arab population from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

All this helped undermining the ground for an independent Arab national existence alongside Israel in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Exploiting cleverly rejectionist, extremist and reactionary slogans by certain pro-imperialist Arab leaders against the existence of the State of Israel in its early years, the Israeli official leadership, since the inception of the State, have consistently opposed and undermined United Nations resolutions and efforts to bring about a settlement based on solving the tragic problem of the refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 calling for repatriation or compensation if opted for, and mutually respecting the rights of both peoples to self-determination.

Early signs of readiness of Arab countries to build peaceful relations on the basis of United Nations resolutions and recognizing Israel's existence were distinctly turned away by the Israeli Government, rejecting any repatriation of refugees and any settlement, taking into consideration the right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination.

Between April and September 1949, the Lausanne Conference took place under the patronage of the United Nations Conciliation Commission with no result, due to Israel's opposition to United Nations resolutions calling for a Palestinian State, and repatriation of the refugees.

Even when defending Israel's application to be admitted to the United Nations, Israel's representative, Abba Eban, on 5 May 1949 refused to commit Israel to support United Nations resolutions on the Palestine Arab State and called for settling Palestinian refugees in Arab countries.

The Arab countries, together with the non-aligned Afro-Asian countries at Bandung Conference in April 1955, unanimously called for peace on the basis of the United Nations resolution. It was Israel's Government that rejected the stretched hand.

In his speech on 1 May 1965, the Egyptian President Abdul-Nasser announced that he stood by the Bandung resolution to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict on the basis of the United Nations resolution of 1947, but it was Israel that rejected for years such a proposal.

Well remembered are proposals of President Bourguiba of Tunisia in 1965 to hold Israeli-Arab negotiations on the basis of the 1947 United Nations resolution. Minister for Foreign Affairs Abba Eban declared in an interview to the Jewish Observer in April 1966 that "Israel cannot accept the proposal to conduct negotiations on the basis of the 1947 United Nations resolution. This proposal is not new; the Arabs suggested it a number of times in the past at the United Nations and in other international forums, and Israel rejected it."

Many other Arab peace initiatives and feelers were proposed but rejected stubbornly by Israeli leaders.

These consistent positions of the Israeli ruling circles against United Nations resolutions have not only barred before the people of Israel the road to peace and enforced upon them isolation and continued warfare with their Arab neighbours, but have as well created with imperialism - British, French and now the United States of America - a relationship of dependence and mutual interest in opposing the process of national liberation, independence and free development of the neighbouring Arab national movement and the Arab countries, making Israel's ruling circles a military and political tool of imperialism not only against the neighbouring Arab countries, but also on a global scale in Africa and Latin America as symbolised by last year's Memorandum on Strategic Understanding between Israel and the United States of America and the coordinated support to reactionary regimes and dictators by supplying arms and experts.

With such an adventurist policy, Israel's consecutive rulers have plunged Israel into a chain of aggressive and unjust wars as in 1956, 1967, 1973 and now the unfinished war of aggression against Lebanon in 1982. These wars caused serious political, economic and social damage and material losses, but without realizing any of Israel's trumpeted aims of achieving peace, security and normal relations with its neighbours, which were in fact a cover for expansion.

This policy of expansion and stubborn denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people, condemns Israel to live only on bayonets and guns amongst the neighbouring Arab countries endangering in the long run its very future.

During the 17 years of occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territory since the June 1967 war, the Israeli rulers demonstrated more adventurously their complete disregard to the many relating United Nations resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

United Nations missions and emissaries were turned back snobbishly, empty-handed. United Nations commissions were refused entry to the occupied territories.

By annexing Arab Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, by extensive land expropriation and wide colonial racist settlement in the occupied territories ignoring international conventions, by instituting a rule of colonial oppression and terror, by throwing thousands in jails and deporting others, Israeli rulers hope to realize the strategic aim of finally eliminating the rights and even the very national existence of the Palestinian people in order to annex finally all the occupied territories as designed by the Begin Government and declared as an official aim in the guiding lines of the Government placed before the parliament.

In pursuing this predatory policy, the Begin Government has received the backing of the United States Government in opposing and

sabotaging United Nations resolutions and international efforts aiming towards a just and stable settlement. The absence of the United States of America from this Conference is very demonstrative and stands to condemn the United States record on the question of peace in the Middle East and on the question of Palestine.

United States vetoing, early in August, of the Security Council resolution condemning the abhorrent massacre of Arab students in Hebron, joined with actual support of Israeli colonial settlement in occupied territories, is a new crying demonstration of the United States' determination to support outspoken aggression and to undermine United Nations efforts for a just peace. Instead of the Security Council resolution 338 and in place of the promising framework of the Geneva Middle East peace conference promoted by the United Nations and co-chaired by the United States and the USSR, which raised great hopes for a just and comprehensive peaceful settlement, the United States Government, together with Begin and Sadat, resorted to separate deals and partial settlements known as the Camp David accords.

In accordance with the Camp David separate deal, Israeli forces will continue to occupy the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Instead of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State alongside Israel, there comes the so-called autonomy plan of Begin as a preface to total Israeli annexation and to eliminate completely the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Egypt was detached from the Arab countries giving Begin's Government a free hand. The step by step tactics under American imperialist patronage and under the cloak of Camp David, have brought the region to a new war in Lebanon, to a new tragedy to the Palestinian people symbolized by the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. This policy of separate deals under United States patronage has also brought a new plan - the notorious Reagan plan, for liquidating Palestinian rights, and a new separate semi-colonial deal - the United States-Israeli-Lebanese capitulatory agreement - if imposed on Lebanon, means a certain new war against Syria.

However, the heroic opposition and resistance of the Palestinian people led by its sole, chosen and legal representative, the PLO, as recognized and confirmed by the United Nations, and also of the Lebanese people have brought to failure these designs against peace and against the Palestinian people. The just cause of the Palestinian people have gained greater support and wider recognition in the world and even in Israel itself.

Gone are the days when previous Prime Minister Gold Meir would ask where are the Palestinians? Who are they? Nowadays notwithstanding the intensification of the policy of oppression, colonial settlement and total annexation and the growth of extremism and chauvinism in Israel under the rule of Begin's extreme right Government, more people in Israel recognize that no real peace can be achieved if it is not an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreed upon with the Palestinian people and negotiated together with the PLO.

The forces of peace and progress in Israel standing up in solidarity with the just cause of the Palestine Arab people oppressed and denied their national rights and fighting against the expansionist and aggressive policy of the Zionist ruling circles in our country, have always stressed that a just peaceful settlement is one that is based on recognizing and respecting the right of both peoples the Palestinian Arab people and the Israeli people for independence and sovereignty within two States co-existing peacefully side by side as prescribed by United Nations resolutions. The ruling circles of Israel who categorically deny the basic right of the Palestinian Arab people to self-determination, to live independently in their own State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while the Israeli people are exercising their independent life within their own State, hold the historic responsibility for blocking the road towards peace.

On opposite and different grounds stand the representatives of the Palestine Arab people, the PLO, when by supporting and accepting the resolutions of the United Nations, the Arab countries' peace programme on Palestine adopted at the Fez summit conference, and the Middle East peace plan proposed by the late Soviet President Brezhnev, confirmed and upheld by the sixteenth national council of the PLO with these positions upheld, the cause of just peace gains new impetus and new allies amongst the people in Israel. And the more these courageous positions in support of just peace are upheld, the more isolated become the ruling circles of Israel, and the forces of peace in Israel will grow stronger in their difficult effort to change the balance of forces within Israel in favour of the cause of just peace.

It is our deep conviction and life-long experience have proved that refusal to recognize the State of Israel, whether from tactical considerations or on other grounds, only play into the hands of the Zionist leaders of Israel who demagogically claim that the Arabs aim at throwing Israel to the sea, while they have in practice been throwing the Palestinian people into the desert.

It is our deep conviction that the cause of just peace in the Middle East and the cause of world peace are closely interlinked and interwoven with detente and international co-operation. While the explosive situation in the Middle East is a source of danger to world peace, efforts to exclude the United Nations and the Soviet Union from efforts to bring about a just and stable settlement and enforce United States patronage are only detrimental to the cause of peace and futile at the same time.

The governmental crisis in Israel is not a personal issue of Begin as being depicted; it is an expression of the political, economic and social crisis deepened this year by the failure of the war of aggression against Lebanon. There is no way out of this grave crisis, even if the Labour Alignment forms a government, unless an end is put to the common policy of "national consensus", and a real change of policy towards peace is made. This means immediate Israeli withdrawal from all of Lebanon, and opting for peace with the Palestinian people based on withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in June 1967 and recognize the right of the Palestinian people for an independent State alongside Israel. Without adopting a policy that will lead to an Israeli-Palestinian peace which will bring the two peoples to co-exist in two independent States, with mutual recognition, then the crisis in Israel will grow deeper, and will deprive the people of Israel of stability and security and drive the region to new wars and bloodshed.

Every sincere person knows that, when the Geneva Middle East peace conference was held in December 1973, a fresh breeze of hope enveloped our region and the world. Hopes were again revived when the Soviet Union and the United States made public their joint declaration on October 1977 on the Middle East and the Palestinian problem.

An objective review of the position of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council will clearly show that the Soviet Union has been most principled and consistent in upholding the resolutions and positions of the United Nations on the question of Palestine and on the Middle East conflict, in supporting the cause of just and stable peace and the legitimate rights of all peoples and States in the region for sovereign and secure existence.

It is my proposal that this Conference comes out with a call for the immediate reconvening of the Geneva Middle East peace conference co-chaired by the USSR and the United States under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General and with the participation of all parties concerned including Israel, the concerned Arab countries and the Palestinian side represented by its sole and legitimate representative, the PLO.

This is the most practical and correct step to remove the question of Palestine and the related burning issues from the crater of an erupting volcano to a workshop for real creative efforts towards peace and security for all.

When so many suspicious and unrealistic steps have been proposed or dangerously tried, it is high time and most essential that this suffering region of ours try the principles of the United Nations Charter and United Nations resolutions concerning our region, the interpretation of which would mean:

- (a) Immediate and unconditional Israeli forces withdrawal from the whole of Lebanon;
- (b) Full withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied in June 1967, West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights and dismantling of all the Israeli colonial settlements, built in opposition to international conventions and against United Nations resolutions;
- (c) The Arab Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and establish its own independent State in the West Bank (including Eastern Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip, led by the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people;
- (d) Ensuring a just solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with the United Nations resolutions which recognize their right to choose between repatriation and receiving compensation;
- (e) A peace agreement to be drawn under the auspices of the United Nations which will respect and guarantee the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States of the region, including the prospective Palestinian State and the State of Israel, and their right to live in peace within recognized and safe borders, free from any threat or use of force;
- (f) All States, party to the peace agreement, to express their commitment that any remaining or ensuing issues to be solved in the future only by peaceful measure, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

It is our deep conviction that only by applying this programme will the peoples of our region including the Arab people of Palestine and the people of Israel enjoy a safe, secure and peaceful future. May this International Conference be a historic landmark on our road towards this goal.