

THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

10 - 14 August 1981

Colombo

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. Report of the Third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine	1
2. Opening address by the Honourable Tyrone Fernando, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs	7
3. Statement of the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, H.E. Mr. Massamba Sarre (Senegal)	9
4. <u>PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE SEMINAR</u>	14
The Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People	Agwani 15
The Palestinian Right to Self-Determination	Moughrabi 26
Certain Aspects of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	Matosek 36
The Use of Palestinian Waters and International Law	Ataöv 40
The National Identity and the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	Kherad 54
Fundamental Rights of the Palestinians: The Primal Crime and the Ambiguities of Chosenness	Haddad 63
The Palestinian Question and the Human Rights of the Palestinian Child	Abu Khadra 71
Restoration of Human Rights of the Palestinian People: The Role of the United Nations and the Superpowers	Muhammad 87
The Palestinian Question and Asian Public Opinion	Ahmad Auda 108
Old Images, New Perceptions - Opinion Trends in Sri Lanka	de Silva 116
The PLO: The Challenge and the Responses	Safieh 128
5. Message of Mr. Yasser Arafat to the Third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine	136
6. Closing Statement by the Honourable Mr. H. Mohamed, Minister of Transport on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka	138
7. List of Participants	141

1. Report of the Third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

- In accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D, the third United Nations Seminar on the question of Palestine, with its central theme, "the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", took place at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo from 10 to 14 August 1981. Seven sessions were held at which 11 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine.
- The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal); Chairman, Mr. Gerhard Schroter (German Democratic Republic); Mr. Vijay Nambiar (India); Mr. Henri Rasolondraibe (Madagascar); Qazi Shaukat Fareed (Pakistan) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. V. Nambiar acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
- The opening session of the Seminar, on 10 August 1981, was addressed by Mr. Tyrone Fernando, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka who, in welcoming the participants, noted the useful role played by these seminars in acquainting the public with the facts surrounding the question of Palestine, and suggested that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People should examine how the papers presented at the Seminar could be given the widest possible dissemination through the information system of the United Nations. He also drew attention to the Government of Sri Lanka's recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and its full support to the Palestinian cause at all international forums where Sri Lanka had, along with other States, worked hard for the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the processes for the settlement of the question of Palestine. At the same session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee and its work and stressed the importance which was placed on publicity for the question of Palestine and on the necessity to ensure

that all facts surrounding the issue reached the public. Mr. Faisal Aweida, the Special Representative of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, thanked the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the interest it has been taking in promoting the just cause of the Palestinian people and asked the Committee to impress upon the international community the need to find ways and means of implementing United Nations resolutions on the Question of Palestine. At the sixth session, Mr. Aweida conveyed to the Seminar a message from Chairman Yasser Arafat on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. At the closing session Mr. M. H. Mohamed, Minister of Transport, made a statement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka.

4. Five panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme, "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels, the panelists and titles of the papers presented were as follows:

Panel 1. Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People

Dr. M. S. Agwani (India); Dr. Stanislaw Matosek (Poland); Dr. Fouard Moughrabi (United States of America) presented the following papers entitled "The Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People", "Certain Aspects of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" and "The Palestinian Right to Self Determination", respectively.

Panel 2. Legal Issues in the Palestine Question

Dr. Türkaya Ataöv (Turkey) and Dr. Mohammed Akbar Kherad (Afghanistan) presented papers entitled "The Use of Palestinian Waters and International Law", and "The National Identity and the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" respectively.

Panel 3. Human Rights and Palestine

Mrs. Salwa Abu Khadra (Palestinian); Dr. Hassan Haddad (United States); and Dr. Sardar Mohammad (Pakistan) presented papers entitled "The Palestinian Question and the Human Rights of the Palestinian Child"; "Fundamental Rights of the Palestinians: the Primal Crime and the Ambiguities of Chosenness" and "Restoration of Human Rights of the Palestinian People: the Role of the United Nations and the Super-Powers" respectively.

Panel 4. The Palestine Issue and Asian Public Opinion

Dr. Abdel Malik Ali Ahmed Auda (Egypt) and Mr. Mervyn de Silva (Sri Lanka) presented papers entitled "The Question of Palestine and Asian Public Opinion" and "Old Images, New Perceptions - Opinion Trends in Sri Lanka" respectively.

Panel 5. The Nature of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Mr. Afif Safiyeh (Palestinian) presented a paper entitled "The PLO: the Challenge and the Response".

An introductory statement on Israeli settlement policies in the Occupied Arab Territories was also presented by Professor Fouad Moughrabi (United States) as a basis for discussion.

5. The exchange of views with which each meeting was concluded indicated that there was general agreement amongst the participants over a wide range of issues relating to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The discussions covered all aspects of the rights of the Palestinian people and the manner in which they were systematically and continuously violated by Israel. It was agreed that the question of Palestine was at the core of the Middle East problem and was the result of an accumulation of illegalities. This was a concern not merely of the Palestinian people, but of all the Arab people as well as the people of all countries of the world in terms of the moral, political and human issues arising therefrom.

6. In view of the depth of analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar, and in accordance with established practice, they will be published by the United Nations along with the report of the Seminar as a contribution to a wider understanding of the question of Palestine.

7. In discussing the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people the Seminar felt that a near-universal consensus had been achieved in the community of nations concerning fundamental aspects of the question of Palestine. Attention was drawn particularly to General Assembly resolution 3210 (XXIX) which considered the Palestinian People to be the principal party to the question of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Organization as its representative. This resolution, which duly recognized the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, had been adopted by a large majority of the Member States of the United Nations. Realization of an international consensus was a matter of time since the historical process had already been set in motion and the moral and diplomatic balance of forces had shifted in favour of the Palestinian people. It was further pointed out that mere rhetorical support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was no longer an adequate response to the situation. What was required was concrete action by countries to strongly urge the supporters of Israel, especially the United States, to compel Israel to conform to the will of the international community.

8. The failure of successive American administrations to accept the international consensus had encouraged Israel to pursue further its expansionist policies, but enlightened liberal opinion in the United States was now beginning to raise serious questions about the nature of America's relationship with the State of Israel. Israel's colonial practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories as well as its wanton aggression against other Arab countries such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, etc., are contributing to its isolation in the international community and to the erosion of its support in the United States.

9. The Seminar focused on the sad plight of the Palestinian children who were among the most seriously affected by the Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian territories. Specific instances of maltreatment of children by the occupation forces were highlighted along with an account of the manner in which the Israeli authorities interfered with the system of education. The Seminar agreed that the United Nations had a special responsibility to ensure that Palestinian children were not deprived of their most elementary human rights and dignity.

10. The participants in the Seminar agreed that the institutionalisation and practice of discrimination on the basis of race and religion conducted by the State of Israel against the people of Palestine is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to the norms of the international community.

11. The Seminar agreed that there should be no abridgement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined in relevant United Nations resolutions and as accepted by the vast majority of the international community nor any deviation from the fundamental principles which the international community had reaffirmed as the basis of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. These inalienable rights and fundamental principles are:

- (a) The right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced and uprooted;
- (b) The right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty;
- (c) The right to establish an independent State in Palestine.
- (d) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and no solution to that problem can be envisaged without taking into

account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(e) The implementation of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people will contribute to a final solution of the Middle East crisis;

(f) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 is indispensable to all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which takes place under the auspices of the United Nations;

(g) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for Israel to withdraw completely and speedily from all territory so occupied.

12. The Seminar noted that Israel's arrogant defiance of United Nations resolutions, international law and world public opinion had assumed intolerable proportions. Its decision to annex Jerusalem and to move its capital to that City, its unprovoked attack on Iraq and its indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon which had resulted in a large scale loss of life were condemned by the international community including most of the countries who are regarded as Israel's closest friends and supporters. The people of Lebanon as well as the inhabitants of the Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon have long suffered from the continued aggression and barbarous attacks launched by Israel. To put an end to Israel's intransigence, the Security Council was strongly urged to consider recourse action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Such action was required in view of Israel's persistence in ignoring the appeals to reason that have been addressed to it from all quarters. Israel's action was not only a serious obstacle to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East but a most serious threat to international peace and security. One reason for Israel's intransigence was the moral, material and political support it received from countries such as the United States. The efforts by the United States to achieve a partial settlement outside the United Nations framework and without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have further aggravated Israel's intransigent attitude.

13. The opinion was expressed that, by furnishing sophisticated weapons and equipment to Israel, the United States of America was responsible for Israel's aggressive policies which had been internationally condemned. Israel's obvious motivation for its action was the consolidation of the expansion of occupation to large portions of the area, in violation of internationally established principles and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. To accede to such a situation would be to accept a change in the norms of international relations and to jeopardize international peace and security.

14. The Seminar was convinced that the process of changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories through the establishment of settlements/colonies, the construction of the Mediterranean - Dead Sea Canal, the exploitation of scarce water resources for the benefit of the Israeli settlers at the cost of untold hardship to the Palestinian inhabitants, were all clearly intended to achieve complete annexation of the occupied territories in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, a/ and of United Nations resolutions. Contrary to Israel's contention, these actions could not create a right.

15. The Seminar considered specific instances of the hardships resulting from the establishment of settlements/colonies in the illegally occupied Arab territories or confiscated lands owned by Arabs. Attention was drawn, particularly, to the grave situation that had arisen through the exploitation, by Israel, of Palestinian water resources for the benefit of Israel and of the populations of the newly established settlements at the expense of the Arab inhabitants. The use of Palestinian waters was linked with Israel's escalated designs for complete annexation of the occupied territories, and was categorized as a clear and gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

16. Several participants observed that the Camp David Accords represented a denial of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people and the breakdown of this framework represented the failure of attempts to determine by unilateral or partial agreements the future of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 by Israel. No state had the right to undertake any actions, measures or negotiations that could affect the future of the Palestinian people, its inalienable rights and the occupied Palestinian territories without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing.

17. Great stress was placed by the seminar particularly on the importance attached to presenting to the international public all the facts relevant to the question of Palestine in order that the issues would be viewed from a correct perspective.

18. It was recognized that considerable difficulty existed in overcoming the obstacles placed by vested interests in the dissemination of accurate information. These obstacles were mainly the result of a distinct bias against the Palestinian people and open sympathy for Israel shown by the major international news and media networks controlled by Western countries upon which many of the countries of the Third World had to rely for the international news circulated through their own press.

19. The Seminar was convinced that in order to counter the political and historical untruths and distortions which have so far misled world public opinion and accounted for misunderstandings on the situation in Palestine, every effort should be made to step up the widespread dissemination of information and to ensure reliable reporting and balanced coverage as a major contribution to the achievement of a just solution of the problem of Palestine.

20. The participants agreed that Asian public opinion is a valuable pillar of support for the Palestinian cause which forms part of the political ideals and objectives which Asian public opinion believes.

21. Over the years there have been important developments which have resulted in the strengthening of relations between the Arab and other Asian States, and a positive evolution of the attitudes towards the question of Palestine. There has also been a gradual growth in bilateral relations between the Palestinian people represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the people and Governments of Asian States. The growing effectiveness of information dissemination on the Palestine question through the adoption of scientific mass communication methods was a positive step which was evident in the response and the support emanating from all sectors and shades of Asian public opinion for the Palestinian cause. The participants hoped that the media in Asian countries would give more attention to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in order to enable the people of those countries to better understand and appreciate the basic elements of the question of Palestine.

22. It was emphasized that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, had an important role to play in the widest possible dissemination of information and in moulding public opinion through the presentation of all the facts pertaining to the question of Palestine.

23. The Seminar was provided with details of the origins and growth as well as the organizational structure of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its responses to the vicissitudes of political development in the Middle East. The Seminar noted that the Palestine Liberation Organization had unified a geographically and demographically dispersed Palestinian people and was channeling their struggles toward a common goal, the right of return, self-determination and independent statehood. The Seminar noted that an increasing number of countries had recognized the Palestine Liberation

Organization and that besides enjoying observer status in the United Nations and its specialized agencies and being a full member in the League of Arab States, in the Conference of Islamic States and the Movement of the Non-Aligned countries, all socialist countries and a majority of the Third world countries as well as a member of West European countries had officially recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization. Successive Presidents of the European Council of Ministers, had met with the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a party directly concerned in any endeavour for the solution of the Middle East crisis. It was noted also that a vast majority of States had allowed the Palestine Liberation organization to open information and political offices in their capitals.

24. The Seminar concluded its work with an expression of appreciation by the participants to the Government of Sri Lanka for its assistance and co-operation in permitting the Seminar to be held at Colombo and for the hospitality and courteous services extended to them.

a/ United Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

2. OPENING ADDRESS BY THE HON. TYRONNE FERNANDO,
ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON
"THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE"

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all, on behalf of the Government and People of Sri Lanka.

I also bring you greetings and best wishes for the success of this Seminar from the Hon. Shahul Hameed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is unable to be present at this opening session today, as he has to attend the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy in Nairobi.

The subject matter of the Seminar - "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" - is very close to the hearts of the people of my country. What the Palestinian people are fighting for - the recognition and restoration of their inalienable rights - is what many nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America fought hard and achieved. So we feel it is our duty to support and assist in whatever way we can the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve their inalienable rights.

We have very recently witnessed in Lebanon, vividly and at such great cost in human life, the results of the continued denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. These events have also dramatically highlighted the serious implications for peace and security not only of the Middle East region but also of the world at large.

The denial of the rights of the Palestinian people has been a concern of the United Nations, from its inception. Many resolutions have been adopted acknowledging and reiterating the fact that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East requires a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The rights of the Palestinian people to a national existence and the right to possess a state are universally acknowledged. Yet, in spite of such universal acceptance, movement towards a just solution is imperceptible. And in this respect it is a challenge to the United Nations to live up to the ideals of its Charter, and not let it be only a cymbal which we beat in ritualistic fashion.

Working very hard to redeem the trust that is placed in the United Nations, in this regard, has been the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. This Seminar which is now being held in Colombo is a result of an initiative of this Committee during the 34th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I note that this is the third in a series of Seminars being organized in the biennium 1980 - 1981. The first Seminar, on the continent of Africa was held in Arusha, Tanzania in July 1980, the second in Vienna, on the European continent in August 1980, and a fourth will be held on the continent of South America, in Cuba at the end of August this year.

We are very gratified that Sri Lanka has been selected as the venue of the Seminar on the Asian continent.

The Government of Sri Lanka recognizes the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle for the realisation of these rights under the leadership and guidance of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Palestine question is at the core of the Middle East problem and there can be no solution to this problem without a just settlement of this issue. And, further, there can be no durable peace without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in this process.

Sri Lanka has, to this end, extended its fullest support to the Palestine cause at all international forums and along with other states worked hard for according acceptance to the PLO in the processes for settlement of this issue.

These Seminars have a very useful service to perform. It is still very much an uphill task in giving people a true account of what happened in Palestine, how the Palestinians came to be dispossessed of their land and country, the utter degrading circumstances most of them live in, this new diaspora, and their great yearning to meet next time in Jerusalem.

We are all familiar with the biases of the leading media networks on many issues. Interested minorities with vested interests of their own dominate and slant the reporting of what happens in our countries. And we see this very clearly in the distorted views of Palestinian leaders and events they project worldwide.

The Seminar being conducted will provide a much-needed corrective, to straighten the record. These Seminars cover a very wide range of issues, both historical and current. And it will be most useful if these very valuable studies can reach as wide an audience as possible. If I may make this suggestion, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People could consider how wide publicity can be given through the United Nations information system, and through national information systems, to these very topical studies.

I wish you every success in this Seminar.

3. STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON
THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE,
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. MASSAMBA SARRE

While welcoming all of you to this, the third United Nations Seminar on Palestinian Rights, I would like first, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and on my own behalf, to extend to the Honourable Tyronne Fernando, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs who is with us today, and through him, to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, our thanks for their kind co-operation and assistance in enabling us to hold this seminar in their beautiful country. Those of us who have had the pleasure of being here before can readily attest not only to the practical value of the modern facilities at our disposal, but also to the soothing influence that these congenial surroundings will have on our important deliberations in the next few days.

In convening this Seminar we continue to fulfil the mandate entrusted to us by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-fourth regular session in 1979. The results of our two previous seminars have only served to convince us, both of the usefulness of the exchange of views such as we are about to embark on, as well as the importance of the contribution our deliberations will make towards an understanding of the problem of Palestine.

The situation in the Middle East vitally affects not only international peace and security but the interests of the world community as a whole.

It is a problem that has engaged the attention and the energies of the United Nations ever since its creation in 1945. Today, over a generation later, it remains at the forefront of our concern. In that intervening period certain irrefutable propositions have emerged, chief among which are that at the core of the problem of the Middle East is the question of Palestine, and that no durable peace in the region can be envisaged without a just solution of that question. The international community clearly understands that such a solution is of overriding importance.

The history of mankind is replete with tragedies that have befallen peoples in all parts of the world. What we have met to discuss today is one of those tragedies. A tragedy which man has brought upon his fellow man.

In 1947 the General Assembly, in an early attempt to solve this question, adopted resolution 181 which recognized the right of the Arab people of Palestine to have an independent State of Palestine side by side with the Jewish people. Unfortunately, only part of this resolution was applied and only the Jewish State came into being. However, the validity of that resolution, as well as of Resolution 194, adopted in 1948, which decided that those who wish to return to their homes as soon as possible and to live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so, remains unquestionable. Nevertheless, obstacles to the implementation of these resolutions arose at the time of their adoption and since then, the historic development of the problem has only compounded the difficulties in which the Palestinian people find themselves - difficulties which created conditions which were unfavourable to the exercise of their right to self-determination. The dispersal of the Palestinians to the neighbouring States, the occupation by Israel, since 1967, of the whole of that part of Palestine which, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 181, rightfully belongs to the Palestinian people and the state of war between Israel and the Arab States - all these are conditions which have proved hardly propitious to the exercise of the right to self-determination.

Moreover, for many years the international community concerned itself solely with the humanitarian aspects of the problem. However, while this was an essential approach, it clearly was not enough. It is a credit to the indomitable will of the Palestinian people, no less than to the re-awakening conscience of the international community, that after 27 years the United Nations reverted to a serious consideration of the national rights of the Palestinian people. A reflection of this is the fact that, since 1974, several important resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly which deal with the political aspects of the Palestinian problem. Prominent among these are resolutions 3236, adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session, which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and resolution 3375, adopted at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, which called on the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in all efforts for peace made under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with other parties. These resolutions mark the turning point in the United Nations' efforts to restore to the Palestinian people its legitimate rights. When it became evident that its recommendations were not being implemented, the General Assembly established, in 1975, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to draw up and present to the General Assembly a programme designed to permit the Palestinian people to exercise the rights recognized in resolution 3236, taking into account in the formulation of those recommendations "all the powers conferred by the Charter on the principal organs of the United Nations".

From the beginning the Committee, of which I now have the honour of being the Chairman, set itself the task of looking into the question of Palestine and its evolution, impartially and objectively. It kept itself open to all sectors of opinion and attempted to restore equity by highlighting rights that have been overlooked in discussion and trampled on in practice.

In its work the Committee was guided by the following principles:

- (a) The question of Palestine is at the core of the problem of the Middle East and no solution can be envisaged which does not take full account of the aspirations of the Palestinian people;
- (b) The implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty will contribute to a settlement of the Middle East crisis;
- (c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties on the basis of General Assembly Resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375(XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations;
- (d) Inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation of Israel to evacuate speedily any territory so occupied.

Working by consensus the Committee adopted a report which contained specific recommendations, founded on legality and morality, which were designed to facilitate the exercise of the recognized rights of the Palestinian people and to contribute towards a peaceful solution satisfactory to all States and people in the Middle East through the utilization of all the latent possibilities of the United Nations for promoting peace and the strict adherence to international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

In spite of the fundamental equity of those recommendations which have been endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and at every subsequent session, their implementation has been consistently blocked mainly because of the failure of the Security Council to take decisive action due to the negative vote of a permanent member.

Discouraging as these obstacles may seem, the Committee continued to believe that all hope of a peaceful solution is not lost. We continue to maintain our faith in the ability of the United Nations. What is lacking at present is political will; but sooner or later, logic, if not an inborn sense of justice, must prevail. In accordance with the Committee's initiative, my Government last year requested the convening of an emergency session of the General Assembly devoted to the Question of Palestine to counter the obstacle placed by the exercise of the veto of one of the permanent members of the Security Council at a meeting on 30 April 1980. The results of that emergency special session which, incidentally, has only been adjourned and can be reconvened when necessary, was impressive. It demonstrated that a vast majority of the international community is firmly convinced of the need for the restoration to the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. It demonstrated also that the majority of the Western European countries have begun to reassess their stand on this important issue and to adopt an impartial stance based on the facts that surround the question of Palestine.

An important element in bringing about this change has been the willingness of the media to give greater and more objective coverage to the development of the situation in the region. For many years biased reporting had the unfortunate effect of always showing the Palestinian people in an unfavourable light or of completely ignoring them. This is no longer the case. There is a discernible change in the reporting of events in the region - a significant step towards better understanding of the problem. The Committee is convinced that it is essential to present all the facts surrounding the question of Palestine because there is no doubt that once these facts are known the resultant understanding of the question will convince the international community of the just cause of the Palestinian people.

Consequently, the Committee has made every effort to ensure that the facts reach not only those who are willing to listen but also those who have hitherto consistently refused to do so or have been denied access to those facts. It was on the Committee's initiative that, in 1977, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish within the Secretariat a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights which, under the guidance of the Committee and in consultation with it, would prepare and distribute studies on the question of Palestine in order to promote a better understanding of the problem. The Special Unit has prepared several studies and pamphlets which have proved most effective. Moreover, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations has produced, in consultation with the Committee, a film on Palestinian rights entitled "The Palestinian People Do Have Rights", which has reached a wide audience and won acclaim.

The importance which the Committee attaches to this question of information is reflected in the fact that at each regional seminar such as the one which we hold here today there is one panel which deals with the question of Public opinion.

The effectiveness of these efforts has become evident even in regions such as Western Europe where we have witnessed a radical change in public opinion on this subject. We must continue with our efforts to persuade the public in Western Europe and North America to keep an open mind and to look for the facts. This can only be done if the media presents the facts in an objective manner.

An objective presentation of the facts will not only lead to a proper understanding of the problem, but also make it abundantly clear that it is the intransigence of Israel that has made a just and durable solution to the problem impossible. Israel has continued to defy world public opinion and the numerous resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. Over and over again it has persisted in violating the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, through the establishment of new settlements in the illegally occupied Arab territories, through the expulsion of the Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul as well as the Judge of Hebron, and through repressive measures taken against the indigenous population of those territories.

The international community cannot stand by in silence in the face of such violation of international law and defiance of world public opinion. A solution of the problem of Palestine remains urgent. Absence of action on our part will make us equally guilty of the genocidal and colonial policies being followed by Israel.

We scarcely need to be reminded that Israel's defiance of United Nations resolutions, international law and world public opinion has assumed intolerable proportions. Its decisions to annex Jerusalem and to move its capital to that city, its unprovoked attack on Iraq and its savage bombing of Beirut have attracted the condemnation of people all over the world, including those who are regarded as Israel's closest friends and supporters. The international community has even been forced to consider recourse to action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter in an attempt to put an end to Israel's intransigence. Such action cannot be totally excluded if Israel persists in ignoring the appeals to reason that have been addressed to it from all quarters.

Our unceasing and tireless efforts must continue to be made to dissuade Israel from its policy based on arrogance as a result of which it now represents the most serious threat to world peace. Our seminars on the question of Palestine constitute one more step in that direction. What we do here will constitute a major contribution towards a better understanding of the problem of Palestine. These seminars help to shape world opinion and to draw attention to the extremely important question of Palestinian rights. In fulfilling the mandate entrusted to us by the General Assembly we are helping to achieve one of the tasks incumbent on us under the Charter of the United Nations, that of ensuring that the fundamental rights of one of the peoples of the world are recognized. Our participation in this seminar marks a further effort to ensure that the Palestinian people can one day enjoy its political and civil rights on its own soil. This is a noble task, and one of which we can all be justifiably proud.

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of you, particularly the Honourable Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs who has found time to be with us today, and to those of you who have devoted valuable time to preparing papers which will contribute to the success of this seminar. Thank you.

4. PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE SEMINAR

THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

M. S. Agwani

I

Few issues of our times have been subjected to so much distortion and misrepresentation as the rightful claim of the Palestine people to their homeland. Over the years the hard facts about Palestine have been overlaid with thick layers of myths woven from fable and falsehood. The Zionist myth-making seems to have succeeded so well at least in some parts of the world as to embolden them to present their claim on Palestine as "a self-evident fact of life".

But this is not the first time the world has been confronted with "facts of life" which the processes of history, articulated by man's quest for freedom and dignity, have subsequently debunked.

Time was when myths such as the "White Man's Burden" and the "Civilizing Mission of Imperialism" had been trotted out as "facts of life" only to be consigned to the dustbin of history in course of time. And what happened to Hitler's "master race" and its dreams of world domination? The same inexorable processes of history are now at work in Palestine disentangling the fact from the fiction and salvaging the reality from the myth.

Since its inception in the nineteenth century Zionism has thrived on two complementary myths: one meant for the Jew, the other for the non-Jew.

The Jews were told that they were the Chosen People cherishing "the loftiest of the spiritual ideals"; that unlike all other peoples they alone represented a synthesis of race, religion and political community: and that God had entrusted them with a "divine mission."

Ironically, Zionism borrowed these postulates from no other source than the racist philosophers of nineteenth century Europe who turned out to be the forerunners of Nazism and Fascism.

On the other hand, the European Gentiles, without whose active support the Zionists did not expect to fulfil their "divine mission", were told that just because the Jews were like any other people they too should have a land of their own. They pleaded that the ideal site for this purpose was Palestine which they alleged was "a land without people".

The liberal Westerner, eager to atone for the crimes committed by his own kinsmen against the European Jews, saw in this myth a convenient escape, and readily subscribed to it.

But Theodore Herzl, the self-styled prophet of Zionism, knew for certain that Palestine was not a demographic vacuum. Hence the careful entry in his private diaries: "We must expropriate gently the private property on the estates assigned to us. We will try to spirit the pitiless population across the border..."

Such was the outline of Herzl's solution for the "Arab problem" long before Hitler began to talk about "the final solution" in an equally diabolic context:

Consider also the myth of the world Jewry's special connexion with, and hence, claim on Palestine. Here too the Zionists offer two sets of arguments: one meant for the consumption of the secular-minded Gentile, the other designed to stir the religious sentiment of the Jew.

The secular argument demands the resurrection of the kingdom of Judah on the specious ground that it had existed over two thousand years ago. In plain terms, this amounts to a plea for resurrecting ancient population patterns which, if conceded, would call for a redrawing of the world's political map restoring Britain and France to the Celts, Anatolia to the Greeks and America to the "Indians".

But the Zionist would promptly point out that his is a very special case backed by "divine promises" recorded in the Old Testament. And this lends an

entirely new dimension to the whole myth. It implies that the Jews in diaspora have the right to return to Palestine at a time of their own choosing and regardless of the wishes of the then existing population of Palestine.

What is more grotesque, this line of argument attributes to God a proposition which is manifestly vile and immoral. It is, of course, quite another matter that the so-called "divine" right to return to Palestine did not prevent Theodore Herzl from persuading the Sixth Zionist Congress to accept British East Africa as a substitute for Palestine, albeit unsuccessfully.

Coming to a later period - that is after the Zionist had convinced the British Government that the Jewish "homeland" they desired to set up in Palestine would serve the British imperial interests in the neighbourhood of the Suez Canal, and the British had gratuitously conceded that demand in the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 - one spots a far more fantastic myth. This was evidently necessitated by the fact that contrary to the message conveyed by earlier myths, the Western Press had begun to talk about strong Palestinian resistance to the influx of uninvited Jewish immigrants from Europe.

Zionist propaganda organs promptly came forward with a novel explanation that the Arab hostility to Zionism had been artificially generated. The "ordinary Arab", it was argued, was not really interested in politics, but we were being instigated by "a handful of agitators" using Zionism as a diversion to secure their own feudal interests.

Here was a double-edged myth. The Zionist used it to cover up systematic expropriation of the Palestinians. He also manipulated it to pose as the "liberator" of the Arab masses from their "feudal exploiters" - an argument designed to hoodwink the liberal Westerner.

After 1948, this myth was further elaborated to explain away the woes of the dispossessed Palestinians. The latter were shown as being "caged like animals in suffering" to be used as "a deliberate political weapon" by the neighbouring Arab countries. In course of time, so the argument ran, they would refuse to go on being "caged" and insist on their resettlement in those countries.

This last myth had the added advantage of absolving Israel of any responsibility towards the Palestinians whose hearths and homes it had usurped. But the advantage turned out to be ephemeral. Recurrent wars waged by Israel against the Arabs together with its territorial expansion and dispossession of many more Palestinians, brutal suppression of the tiny Arab minority in Israel, and the reign of terror let loose on the Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories, have reduced the credibility of its propaganda to a near-vanishing point.

II

And thus, the truth about Palestine rises from the debris of Zionist myths and stares the world community in the face.

It is, however, necessary to add that next to the Palestinians the peoples of resurgent Asia were the first to perceive the ominous implications of the Zionist onslaught on Palestine under the British auspices.

It is common knowledge that for more than a century and a half before the creation of Israel the driving force behind Britain's Middle Eastern policy was its imperial interest in India. Hence, it is hardly surprising that the Indian national movement should have played a leading role in the Asian peoples' opposition to both Zionism and British policies in Palestine. India's concern for Palestine was voiced by the Indian National Congress and its most eminent mentors, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Gandhi's credentials to speak on Zionism and Palestine were beyond reproach. He believed in the right of every people to live in freedom. In the early phase of his political work in South Africa, he had won the friendship and co-operation of many Jews. He deeply sympathized with the sufferings and hardships of the Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, and in sorrow described them as "the untouchables of Christianity".

In an article published in his own journal, Harijan, of 26 November 1938, Gandhi recorded his considered views on the Arab-Jewish question in Palestine and the persecution of Jews in Germany as follows:

But my sympathy (for the Jews) does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for a national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other people of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood?

Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English, or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today, cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely, it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews, partly or, wholly, as their national home.

The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews, wherever they are born and bred.

As the events in Palestine moved towards a tragic finale Gandhi reiterated his views on the subject in July 1946. He said:

In my opinion, they (the Zionists) have erred grievously in seeking to impose themselves on Palestine with the aid of America and Britain and now with the aid of naked terrorism ... One would have thought, adversity would teach them lessons of peace. Why should they depend on American money or British arms for forcing themselves on an unwelcome land? Why should they resort to terrorism to make good their forcible landing in Palestine? 1/

Jawaharlal Nehru, on his part related the Palestine question to the wider issue of imperialism. Addressing the 50th session of the Indian National Congress, held in 1936, Nehru observed that "the Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine in as much part of the great world conflict as India's struggle for freedom". 2/

As Nehru saw it, England was putting up "Jewish religious nationalism against Arab nationalism" so as to "make it appear that her presence was necessary to act as an arbitrator and to keep the peace between the two. It was the same old game we have seen in other countries under imperialist domination, it is curious how often it is repeated". 3/

Independent India's stand on the rights of Palestine people was rooted in the premises set forth by Gandhi, Nehru and the Indian National Congress during the freedom struggle. An elaborate exposition of the Indian viewpoint is contained in the special note submitted by the Indian representative on the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.

The aforesaid document is of singular importance because it offers a sound analysis of the Palestine problem in the perspective of history. The Balfour Declaration, it said, had no legal validity because the British Government had no legitimate right to make it at the time when it was made. The Mandate, which incorporated the Balfour Declaration, contravened the Covenant of the League of Nations in that the Palestinians were not consulted in regard to the choice of the mandatory. Likewise the stipulation requiring the mandatory to ensure the well-being and development of the indigenous people of the mandated territory was totally disregarded.

Another grievous mistake was made when the mandatory permitted the Jewish Agency, an extraneous body, not merely to collaborate with the administration of the country but "to run its own educational, industrial and economic system for a portion of the population" amounting to "a parallel government". This encouraged the Jewish immigrants to magnify their original demand for a "national home" into the clamour for a full-fledged Jewish state reinforced by the ceaseless terrorist activities of the Haganah, the Irgun, and Stern Gang.

The Indian note also questioned the rationale of Zionism. Ancient association of a people with a land did not create political or legal rights in the present time. Nor is it reasonable to argue that profession of a faith by a person clothes him with any special rights in a country.

The document concluded that the destiny of Palestine should be decided on the basis of self-determination, a principle that forms the keystone of the United Nations Charter. 4/

III

The crux of the Palestine problem today remains what it has always been for the past sixty years: the Palestine people's inalienable right to self-determination. The trampling of this right by the Zionists forms a sad chapter in the history of our times - a chapter written with the blood and tears of the innocent Palestinians.

The assault on the national rights of the Palestine Arabs was mounted by the British in the early twenties to be continued by the Zionists since the creation of Israel in 1948.

The story of the demographic aggression of Palestine under the British auspices is best told by official figures. The British carried out the first systematic census of Palestine in December 1922 which showed that its inhabitants numbered 757,182 of whom only 83,794 were Jews, the rest being Muslim and Christian Arabs.

With the opening of floodgates of Jewish immigration by the British administration the proportion of the Jewish Population in Israel steadily rose from 11% in 1922 to 16% in 1931, 27.7% in 1936 and 31% in 1947. In absolute terms, the number of Jews had increased sevenfold as against a twofold increase in the Arab population.

Zionist immigration in Palestine was soon reflected in the pattern of land-ownership. The area of Jewish-owned land increased from 594,000 dunums (1 dunum equals 1/4 acre) in 1922 to 1.5 million dunums in 1939. Some of this additional acreage came from state-owned lands which the British "rented" to the Jewish National Fund for nominal sums under 90-year leases. The rest was bought by the Fund from absentee owners living in Syria and Lebanon under French mandate.

On the face of it, the land thus acquired by the Zionists did not exceed 6.6 per cent of the total area of Palestine. But for a variety of reasons its real value far exceeded its size. First, this land was located in the most fertile parts of the country along the coastal and northern plains. Second, since a good part of this land was cultivable, the actual acreage under the Zionist control amounted to well over 20 per cent of the total cultivable area of Palestine. Finally, the land bought by the Jewish National Fund became the exclusive property of the Zionists which could neither be resold to the Arabs nor could any Arab be employed on it. 5/

Expropriation of the Palestinians between 1922 and 1947 was followed by outright expulsion thereafter.

The first round of expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland at the hands of the Zionists was initiated well before the middle of May 1948 when establishment of Israel was formally proclaimed. The entire operation was attended by well-orchestrated Zionist propaganda to the effect that the Palestinians left their homes at the bidding of the Arab leaders and "in the hope of returning later to wreak their vengeance on the Jew".

In reality, the Zionists forced the Arabs to quit their homes by unleashing a reign of terror in several parts of Palestine. A case in point was the massacre at Deir Yassin on 9 April 1948 in which 250 old men, women and children were savagely murdered and their mutilated corpses put on public display. The horrid drama was re-enacted at several other places including Huleh, Ramleh and Lydda. As a result of these grisly proceedings thousands of Palestinians were killed and some 800,000 were rendered homeless.

The second round of expulsion began during the June 1967 war and has ever since continued unabated. At the outset of the war, over 100,000 Palestinians were driven out of the West Bank. Senior officials of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) reported that in many cases the Israelis forced the Palestinians out by bombing the refugee camps. In several West Bank towns Israeli loudspeaker vans issued the dire warning: We cannot tell what will happen if you remain! 6/ In all, around 400,000 Palestinians were expelled from the newly-occupied Palestine lands - some of them for the second time since 1948.

Since then, the Israeli government has been pursuing a policy of creeping annexation in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It began with Old Jerusalem soon after the June war. And over the last 14 years, at least 133 illegal Jewish settlements have been established in the West Bank. It is to be recalled that even before the more aggressive Likud coalition had come to power in 1977 the then ruling Labour Party had earmarked 40 per cent of the occupied territory including 90 per cent of the arable land and almost all the water resources of the West Bank, for the proposed Jewish settlements. The Likud has implemented this plan with fanatical zeal on its own and by lending support to Gush Emunim (Faith Bloc), a militant organisation engaged in Jewish colonization of the West Bank.

To date, over 80 per cent of the arable land on the West Bank has already been confiscated from its Palestinian owners. And the number of Israelis already settled on the West Bank exceeds 200,000.

On top of all this, the Israeli military administration in the occupied territories has been aiding and abetting systematic pogroms against defenceless Palestinians. Its relentless campaign of expropriation, terrorization, and physical liquidation of the Palestine people is now too well known to permit complacency on the part of the outside world. Frankly speaking, the tormented land of Palestine stands littered with the Zionist versions of Belsen and Auschwitz.

IV

What, then, is to be done? The Palestinians have of course chosen the only path open to them to uphold their national rights and human dignity - the path of resolute struggle. This struggle is being waged under the banner of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) whose paramount purpose is to restore Palestine to the Palestinians. The PLO reversed the tide of events in Palestine when its commandos put up fierce resistance at Karamah to a regular, and numerically larger, Israeli force of 4,000, supported by tanks, paratroopers and air strikes. The battle of Karamah, on 21 March 1968, was the PLO's baptism of fire and beginning of a determined struggle which it has sustained ever since.

Today, the PLO commands the allegiance and active support not only of the two million dispossessed Palestinians living outside Palestine but of the other million living in captivity.

Intensification of the Palestinians' struggle for their fundamental rights has been attended by a deepening of the world's consciousness about the urgency and justness of the Palestine cause. A tangible outcome of this development is the virtual rectification of the Security Council resolution 242 by an overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly.

It may be recalled that resolution 242 of November 1967 had failed to address itself to the core problem of Palestine which it erroneously equated with "the refugee problem". Seven years later, the UN General Assembly, on its own initiative, examined the whole question afresh. On 22 November 1974, it adopted a resolution affirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including (a) the right to self-determination without external interference, and (b) the right to national independence and sovereignty."

In underscoring these positive development I do not wish to underestimate the role of negative forces. Curiously enough, a Great Power, which professes its concern for human rights, has been, in practice, sustaining the strangulation of human rights in Palestine. I, of course, refer to the United States of America.

It is common knowledge that America has been subsidizing the Zionist state at the rate of \$7,500 a year for each Israeli family. Israel is also the chief recipient of sophisticated American weaponry in enormous quantities and at concessional rates.

Nor is this all. For the past eight years American diplomacy has been working overtime to create confusion and discord in the Arab ranks. In the

beginning, the exercise was conducted under the plausible cover of "step-by-step diplomacy". This was followed by a marathon enterprise in dissimulation at Camp David. And the name of the latest game is "strategic consensus".

In conclusion, the struggle for the national rights of the Palestine people has now entered a decisive phase. The justness of their cause is recognized by people of goodwill everywhere. Even the votaries of realpolitik admit that there can be no peace in the Middle East without a just solution of the Palestine question and that a major war in the region will be catastrophic for the whole world. Above all, the United Nations stands firmly committed to restoration of the Palestinians' rights. In other words, necessary conditions for a real breakthrough do exist. The goal can be achieved by harnessing these conditions to a meaningful and co-ordinated endeavour.

I fervently hope the present seminar will help crystallize our thoughts in that direction.

NOTES

1. D. G. Tendulkar, Mahatma (Bombay, 1962), vol 7, pp. 158-59
2. Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography (New York, 1945), p. 417.
3. Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History (Bombay, 1962) p. 789.
4. Official Records of the General Assembly, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine: Report to the General Assembly, Vol. II, pp. 24-47.
5. (Boston, 1957), pp. 330-31: and Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israeli Dilemma (Syracuse, 1968), p. 18.
6. The Guardian, 13 June 1967.

THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Fouad M. Moughrabi

Various scholars have admirably set forth the legal history and the framework within which the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is to be viewed. ^{1/} In addition, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, of the United Nations General Assembly, has taken a leading role in encouraging research and thinking on this vital subject. The publications of the Committee reveal a high level of seriousness and compassion as well as a pathbreaking attempt to end the years of silence and neglect that surrounded the Palestinian question. ^{2/}

Indeed, one may affirm that by now an international consensus has been achieved in the community of nations concerning some fundamental aspects of the Palestinian question. This consensus may be summed up in the following manner:

I. Recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to return to their homes.

In 1969, the United Nations General Assembly representing all the members of the United Nations recognized the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine. In 1970, another resolution affirmed that the Assembly "recognizes that the people of Palestine are entitled to equal rights and self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations". On November 27, 1974 the Assembly passed Resolution 323 (XXIX) which declared that the Assembly "reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including a) the right to self-determination without external interference; b) the right to national independence and sovereignty". This resolution went on to affirm "the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return".

Other resolutions have repeatedly reaffirmed these basic principles. Furthermore, the Non-Aligned countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and the European Economic Community have issued statements on various occasions confirming this consensus.

The United States Government and the State of Israel, two crucial parties to the conflict, so far refuse to accept this consensus. Yet there are indications that even in the United States, informed public opinion no longer supports Israel's contentions as blindly as it had before. Surveys of public opinion by important organizations such as Gallup, Harris and Patrick Caddell's reveal that nearly 60 per cent of those polled nationally since 1975 in fact accept the right of the Palestinians to establish their own separate and independent State and see this as a precondition to a settlement of the Near East conflict. The polls also reveal that even among the American Jewish community, opinion is by far not monolithic; approximately one third of this community believe that the Palestinians are entitled to self-determination and to the creation of their own separate and independent state. There are similar indications that in Israel itself, despite the re-election of Prime Minister Begin, a trend is now emerging, represented by the Peace Movement, that is willing to accept this consensus.

II. Another component of this consensus is the recognition that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Following the recognition by the League of Arab States and by the Summit of Arab Heads of State of this established fact in October 1974, the United Nations General Assembly invited the P.L.O. to participate in its proceedings as an observer. The P.L.O. is now recognized by nearly all international organizations as the representative of the Palestinian people. Its representatives participate in the work of specialized United Nations agencies such as UNESCO, WHO and FAO. Palestine Liberation Organization offices now exist in most Third World countries as well as in the Socialist and the European countries. An office exists in New York to work at the United Nations and an information office exists even in Washington, D.C.

Among the Palestinians themselves there is almost unanimous acceptance of the leadership of the P.L.O. Numerous attempts have nevertheless been made to bypass the P.L.O. and to create an alternate leadership. These attempts, encouraged by the United States, have failed. This failure is dramatically illustrated by the repeated declarations of Palestinian Mayors in the West Bank and Gaza, by opinion leaders, and even by school children that the P.L.O. is their only legitimate representative. At a great cost to their life, the Palestinians under occupation continuously affirm and reaffirm their support of the P.L.O. as their representative. Efforts by the various American Administrations to cast doubt on the representative nature of the P.L.O. have equally failed. Even in the United States, there is increasing recognition within the public as well as among the media and in the Congress that the P.L.O. does in fact represent the Palestinian people, and that the Palestinians are a reality that has to be accepted.

III. A third element of this international consensus is the recognition that no settlement may be achieved without the full participation of the Palestinian people and their representative, the P.L.O., in all discussions, negotiations or conferences. Furthermore, the Palestinian question is seen both at the level of political theory as well as in practice as the core problem in the Near East conflict. This is why the Camp David Agreements essentially failed; they failed to deal with this central fact and pretended that the problem may be settled through regional agreements between states or through minor territorial adjustments. It has by now become a truism that no peace may be achieved in the region without an honest attempt to deal with the core problem of the Palestinian people on the basis of resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly representing the will of the community of nations. As if to underscore this important fact, the recent Summit of Western leaders in Ottawa was completely dominated by the conflict in the Near East and more specifically by the Palestinian question. It is rather ironic that even with the posture of non-recognition that the various American Administrations have maintained toward the Palestinians, the undeniable fact is that every Administration since Mr. Nixon's has been consumed by the

problem and endless hours are spent on how to deal with it.

It is our contention that the implementation of this consensus is simply a matter of time. The Palestinians will achieve self-determination in their homeland. The historical process is already in motion and the moral and diplomatic balance of forces has already shifted in favour of the Palestinians. The notable successes achieved by the Palestinians on the international level, their crucial participation in mediation efforts in the region - between Iraq and Iran for example - their success in establishing viable social, economic and cultural institutions, and above all, their persistence in the face of adversity are crucial indicators that they can neither be willed away nor reduced to silence. The powers of the region as well as the major world powers will have to confront these facts and deal with them.

The failure of various American Administrations to accept the international consensus has encouraged Israel to seek a military solution to the problem. The resulting savagery with which Israel has escalated its attacks against civilian populations in Beirut and in the South of Lebanon may be partly due to the fact that the moral and diplomatic balance of forces has shifted away from them in favour of the international consensus. Isolated in the international community - and increasingly dependent on its only major ally, the United States - Israel steadfastly rejects the moral and diplomatic will of the world community and continues its violations of human rights, its settlement policy and its attacks against civilians in Lebanon.

Enlightened liberal opinion in the United States is now beginning to raise some serious questions about the nature of America's relationship with the State of Israel. A distinction is being made between supporting Israel's right to exist and supporting its colonial practices in the West Bank and Gaza or its wanton attacks against its neighbours. Furthermore, as the State of Israel is reduced, because of its isolation, to reliance on regimes such as South Africa or political forces such as the so-called Moral Majority - in the main quite an anti-Semitic group - its support in America begins to narrow to discredited circles. Alex Cockburn, writing in the Village Voice, June 21, 1981, expresses this trend in the following manner:

If Stephen Biko's heirs erupt in the streets of Soweto again, Israeli-made Uzi submachine guns may well slaughter them. One day it is theoretically imaginable that a squadron of Mozambiquan planes ... will take off from Maputo and fly across the border to South Africa's nuclear reactor (like Israel's not open to international inspection) and possibly kill in the process Israeli scientists and technicians advising the South Africans. And if the South Africans have indeed perfected nuclear weapons, on whom do they propose to drop them? Stephen Biko would doubtless have had some ideas on the matter.

The pattern that seems by now well established links Israel with, in addition to South Africa, such regimes as that of Somoza in Nicaragua, the Shah of Iran, and other similarly discredited entities. By contrast, the Palestinians have established links with those who are struggling against oppression and exploitation. Their struggle has therefore come to symbolize, for millions of people, the revolt of the oppressed against tyranny, injustice and discrimination.

For the international consensus to become a reality, the Arab Governments must attempt to use their enormous political and economic leverage. So far, intra-Arab and intra-regional problems have side-tracked efforts to lobby for a forceful implementation of the resolutions of the international community. Rhetorical support of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination is no longer an adequate response to the facts established by Israel in contravention of the will of the community of nations.

If there is any well-established dictum in contemporary international affairs, it certainly must be the following: that peace based on a just settlement within the framework of United Nations resolutions is definitely in the interests of the countries of the region as well as in the interests of world peace. The Palestinians, in their homeland, restored to the community of nations, will undoubtedly contribute to the development of the region and to international efforts within the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

A brief look at the evolution of Palestinian identity and consciousness as well as the development of Palestinian socio-economic institutions will reveal the extent to which the Palestinian people desperately want to assume their rightful place in the world. Rooted in the culture and history of the region, the Palestinians define themselves as Arabs who have shared with other Arabs their nationalist sentiments and their struggle for independence and unity. They participated fully in the early Arab nationalist movement and injected it with their secular vision. They fought against Ottoman domination, the British mandate and Zionist settler colonialism. They have steadfastly rejected all efforts at the division of their country as well as efforts designed to force them to assimilate in the region. In the contemporary period (from 1917 on) the Palestinians affirmed for themselves what Erik Erikson calls a "negative identity" and what others have called a "politics of rejection". This reaction was logical in view of attempts by the British Mandate and by the Zionist Movement to eliminate them from the history of the region and to reduce them to a minority in their own homeland. So the Palestinians to a large extent, were perceived - even by themselves - as a collection of negative attributes. They have rejected and condemned the injustices committed against them, the attempts to divide their country, their forced eviction from their homes, their exile, their torture, and the blanket of silence that condemned them, adding insult to injury, to non-existence.

The more recent period, following 1970 and the self-critique performed by the Movement, reflects a positive assertion of the self. Again the Palestinian problem assumed centre stage in world affairs. A new generation of Palestinians, highly skilled and politically effective, assumed the leadership of their people. They were better able than previous generations, to present their case to the world.

The evolution of this positive, assertive self was painful indeed; but it represents a massive victory of will against seemingly insurmountable odds. The P.L.O. created an institution which gathers all Palestinians regardless of their ideological differences in a common structure and a joint effort. The movement created representative bodies such as the Palestine National Council where all shades of opinion are reflected and freely expressed in a manner that stands in sharp contrast to the absence of such democratic institutions in the region.

Any meeting of the Palestine National Council, a broadly representative national body in the Arab world, actually debates important matters in a totally democratic way. The P.L.O., its executive committee, Mr. Yasser Arafat himself, and the rest of the leadership are subjected to minute, critical scrutiny. There is no Arab country in which such things can go on.

The P.L.O. has also created trade unions, an extensive social security apparatus which caters to the needs of the poor, the disabled, and the thousands of children of martyrs. They created schools, nurseries, clinics, hospitals, nursing schools, research centres, factories, farms, cooperatives, self-help organizations, and institutes of advanced learning. A team of educators, working through UNESCO, recently completed for the P.L.O. a feasibility study to establish a Palestine Open University. The project is so innovative and so far-reaching in its pedagogical implications that educational standards and curricula in the region will have to change in order to match it. The supreme irony is that at the time when the Israeli Air Force was bombing Beirut, many in the leadership were gathered to discuss, among other things, ways of establishing this Palestine Open University.

The resiliency of the Palestinians and their will to survive are little short of amazing. The politics of rejection is now superseded by the politics of hope and revolutionary transformation. From refugees they have transformed themselves into the most significant political, cultural and social force in the region. As one analyst says: "no Arab community has in so short a period of time - a little less than a generation - reflected so deeply and so seriously as a community on the meaning of its history, the meaning of pluralistic society given the dismal fate of multiethnic communities in the world, the meaning of national independence and self-determination against a background of exile, imperialist oppression, colonialist dispossession" 3/

Palestinian identity has been indelibly linked in various ways to the Zionist Movement and later to the State of Israel. But, unlike other liberation movements, the Palestinian resistance has had to contend with a unique phenomenon. The crimes committed against the Palestinians were done by the remnants of a tortured and persecuted people. The moral outcry against the holocaust in Europe over-shadowed the forcible eviction of Palestinians from their homes and massacres such as Deir Yassin. The State that was confiscating their land was making room for oppressed Jews from Europe. Later, the same State that treated them as third-rate citizens was a haven of democracy and freedom for its own people.

This cycle of contradictions, that enabled one persecuted group to persecute another in the shadows of morality was ultimately broken in 1967. Israel became an occupier, a colonialist power using the same Defense Regulations inherited from the previous colonial power against a recalcitrant people.

From Israel Zangwill, to the late Golda Meir, to Prime Minister Begin, Palestinians simply do not exist - meaning, of course, as a people with an identity. By contrast, the Palestinians fully recognize the reality with which they must deal. The Palestinians have offered a vision of secularism and democracy that includes the right of Jews, among others, to live in equality, peace and tranquility in the region. Furthermore, the Palestinians have carried on discussions with various segments of Israeli society that are willing to recognize their right to self-determination. But the openness of the Palestinians to dialogue is met by rigid denials of their right to determine their own destiny.

The Camp David Framework illustrates this denial dramatically. Instead of asserting the right to self-determination, the Camp David Framework talks about permitting the Palestinians to "participate in determining their own future". Earlier when Mr. Carter declared that the Palestinians need a "homeland" he abrogated for himself the right to cast the first ballot by announcing that such a homeland will have to be linked either to Israel or to Jordan. The failure of the Camp David Framework represents the ultimate failure of attempts to establish "bantustans" or "reservations" for the Palestinians. Ultimately, there is simply no substitute - and this is coming - to recognizing fully and unambiguously that the right to self-determination without external interference is the key to peace in the region.

Self-determination, for the Palestinians, is no mere slogan that hides evil intent any more than a concept to be toyed with in the chanceries of the Great Powers. Self-determination is not a psychological concept that is designed to heal hurt pride and to offer the mere compensation of a flag, a passport, and a title. For the Palestinian people, self-determination has a particularly human and concrete dimension. So what does self-determination mean, at the level of everyday life, for the Palestinians?

Obviously, it means the end of an unacceptable status quo. There are now approximately four million Palestinians, of whom 650,000 live as third-class citizens in Israel - the first class being the Ashkenazi Jews and the second, the Sephardic Jews. One million live on the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli military rule. These people suffer on a daily basis the possibility of arbitrary arrest and detention without charge. The London Times, the Washington Post, as well as Amnesty International, and other international bodies maintain that torture of Palestinians is a systematic policy of the State of Israel. The State of Israel has confiscated nearly one third of the total land area. New settlements are created and approximately 20,000 settlers now live in nearly 130 illegal settlements. ^{4/} A Palestinian farmer wakes up one day and finds a barbed wire fence separating his house from his land, the source of his subsistence. His land is confiscated for alleged "security reasons". He has no legal recourse and no way to object. Nearly every family has had at least one person in prison or in detention over the last fourteen years of occupation. The blowing up of homes is done on a systematic basis. Economic discrimination against the West Bank and Gaza exists under a situation of nearly 170 per cent inflation and seems to be designed to encourage the exodus of Palestinians from their homes. Leaders of the community have been deported and others have been killed and/or maimed in an attempt to silence opposition. Universities at Birzeit, Bethlehem and Nablus are harassed and closed periodically. Teachers are restricted; the schools have to pay import duties on equipment and research materials contrary to the practice applied to Israeli universities; and the staff are constantly threatened with deportation. A recent military order 854 - there are obviously 853 preceding orders - makes it a crime to sing a nationalist song or to exhibit the colours of the Palestinian flag.

Another one million Palestinians live in Jordan. Nearly 75 per cent of them still live in refugee camps. Even though they are permitted to carry Jordanian passports they strongly identify themselves as Palestinians. Some half a million more live in Lebanon, again mostly in the camps or in the shanty towns. They suffer, along with the Lebanese, the daily bombings of the Israeli air force as well as the navy and artillery. The balance are scattered in Syria, in the Gulf States, and in North and South America.

All Palestinians share the experience of exile, uprootedness, and the desire to return to their homes. Those who live in Israel or under occupation suffer from internal exile - the feeling of not belonging even in their own homes. Their literature shows a deep, almost mystical attachment to their land. As Tawfiq Zayyad, a well-known Palestinian poet and Mayor of Nazareth says: ^{5/}

Here we have a past
a present
and a future
Our roots are entrenched
Deep in the earth.
Like twenty impossibles
We shall remain.

Whether a Palestinian is born in New York, in Beirut or in Kuwait, he will identify himself as coming from Haifa, Acre or Jerusalem. Nationalist identification is transmitted from generation to generation and sustains the Palestinian community in its perseverance. Furthermore, history seems to repeat itself with such consistency that the massacres of Tel Zaatar in 1976 become for one generation what the massacre of Deir Yassin was for an earlier one. The exodus of 1967 was a rerun of the exodus of 1948; in March 1978, following the massive Israeli invasion of the South of Lebanon, television produced a rerun of the same exodus. The notion therefore that, as the Palestinians become historically removed from their tragedy they will ultimately forget, is sheer nonsense. The idea that they might get tired and quit is another exercise in self-delusion.

Many of the Palestinians who live in the Arab World have achieved wealth and status. Yet, in their elegant flats in Beirut and elsewhere they keep jars of Palestinian soil to remind them of their roots. The problems of exile and dispersion notwithstanding, the Palestinians have achieved a highly united sense of their national self. To have galvanized their widely scattered population in a dynamic movement of national liberation is a clear indication that this people will not die and will certainly not be swept under the rug of history. For them, the right to self-determination ultimately means the right to live as decent human beings in their own homes, free from outside interference, free to choose their own leaders, and free to establish their own institutions. It also means the ability to alleviate the human suffering, to eliminate the countless personal tragedies, the betrayals, the discrimination, and the prejudice that keep them hovering between their dreams and their reality.

For the region as a whole, peace begins in Palestine and war begins in Palestine. A fair and equitable settlement of this tragic problem is not only imperative, it is urgent. Any settlement must, at the very minimum, honour the international consensus representing the will of the international community. This consensus must be implemented. It is our responsibility to work, each in his own capacity, toward implementing it as soon as possible. The cause of peace and the lives of so many depend upon it.

NOTES

1. W. Thomas and Sally Mallison, An International Law Analysis of the Major United Nations Resolutions Concerning the Palestine Question (New York: United Nations, 1979); "The National Rights of the People of Palestine", Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. IX, no. 4, 1980, pp. 119-130.
2. The International Status of the Palestinian People (New York: United Nations, 1979); The Question of Palestine (New York: United Nations, 1979); Israel's Policy on the West Bank Water Resources (New York: United Nations, 1980); The Status of Jerusalem (New York: United Nations, 1979).
3. Edward Said, The Question of Palestine (New York: Times Books, 1979) especially chapter 3.
4. Ann Lesch, "Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories", Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. VII, no. 1, 1977, pp. 26-47.
5. Enemy of the Sun: Poetry of the Palestinian Resistance, ed. Naseer Aruri and Edmond Ghareeb, 1970.

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Stanislaw Matosek

It is impossible to make any sort of worthwhile analysis of the situation in the Middle East without taking into account an immutable fact: the existence of a Palestinian nation. In a world very often accustomed to seeing the situation in the region in the light and the perspective given to it by Israeli policy, the ideas behind the resistance movement must be presented as a revolutionary, independently Palestinian factor. The Palestinian question is the crux of the Middle East problem and, consequently, no stable and lasting solution can be envisaged in the region which would not take full account of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Arabs currently possess none of the structures of a State. But a "nation on the move" can exist and can have a profound aspiration for a State of its own.

There are at least three basic factors behind the success achieved by the resistance movement.

(a) The changes within the Palestinian movement itself. Up to 1973, the priority given to the military side prevented the Fedayeen organizations from engaging in more varied forms of struggle and from taking coherent action at the political level. The lack of any sort of minimal programme prevented the resistance movement, for a long time, from gaining new allies. Once such a programme was drawn up, PLO was able to win over to its cause the majority of Members of the United Nations.

(b) The next factor, which allowed the resistance movement to assert itself internationally, was the failure of the efforts made by certain Arab countries to impose a solution which, to a greater or lesser degree, suited their interests.

(c) The third and last factor, which explains the ease with which the resistance movement accomplished its diplomatic breakthrough, is the situation in the Western world since the start of the energy crisis. By identifying this crisis with the Israeli-Arab conflict, Western public opinion became aware, for the first time, of the existence of the Palestinian problem and thus gave Western Governments the chance of acting more freely than before with respect to Israel by establishing with the Arab world economic relations capable of mitigating the effects of the crisis. In order for this initiative to succeed without major difficulties, European leaders absolutely need to normalize their relations with PLO, since it is currently the only political force to be listened to by people in all the Arab countries. Through these three factors, the recognition by the vast majority of the Palestinian reality, its national aspect and the threefold claim to self-determination, to independence and national sovereignty and to return, was resoundingly confirmed.

In order better to understand the problem, we must go back in time. The decision of the United Nations General Assembly of 29 November 1947 on the partition of Palestine into two States - a Jewish State and an Arab State linked by an economic union - was the result of the situation which had arisen in Palestine after the Second World War (influx of Jewish settlers over the years, intensification of the clashes between them and the indigenous Arab population which went as far as open armed struggle). Jerusalem was considered as a separate entity.

Following the first Arab-Israeli war, the United Nations decisions on the partition of Palestine were not implemented. Part of the territories which were to have made up the Palestinian Arab State, as well as west Jerusalem, found themselves under Israeli control. This did not, however, mean that the United Nations decision on the partition of Palestine and on the right of Palestinian Arabs to their own State was no longer binding. Nevertheless, in the 1950s and 1960s, efforts were made in the international arena to reduce the Palestinian problem to a question of refugees. The well-known resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 also represented such an approach. After the defeat suffered in the first Israeli-Arab war, Palestinian Arabs were for a long time not in a position to fight for their own rights. At this time, they supported primarily the idea of the liberation of Palestine by the armies of the Arab countries.

In 1964, PLO was founded. The following year, the Al-Fatah Organization took up arms again. The rapid development of Palestinian military organizations goes back to the 1967 war and the military defeat suffered by the Arab countries. Palestinians were persuaded that Palestine could not be liberated by the Arab armies alone. The outcome of the national liberation struggles in the third world countries were also influential in this respect.

The following years saw the development of Palestinian national awareness. The Palestinian movement's success in opposing the Israeli attack at Al-Karameh in 1968 underlined the growing importance of the Palestinian factor in the Middle East conflict. A growing number of States considered that, if lasting peace was to be established in the Middle East, action aimed at solving the refugee problem was not enough. The adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1969 of the resolution confirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people marked a clear shift from viewing the issue as a problem of Arab refugees to viewing it as a problem of the people of Palestine.

The following year, the confirmation of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination represented a new step forward. Under the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 14 October 1974, PLO was recognized as the representative of the Palestinian people and was invited to take part in the work of the twenty-ninth session on the Palestinian question. It subsequently obtained observer status at the United Nations. The establishment of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the hard work of that body made for a global approach to Palestinian national rights and their inclusion in the recommendations of the thirty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. The opinion submitted by the Committee at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly that the Camp David agreements did not take account of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and had been negotiated without the participation of PLO, in contravention of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 of 7 December 1978, deserves attention.

The possibilities open to the Committee for achieving a just solution of the Palestinian problem are of course limited. The decisions taken on the subject in the international forum demonstrate, however, that, if account is not taken of national rights, the Palestinian question cannot be settled.

It may thus be said that numerous United Nations documents adopted by a large majority of States reflect the inalienability of the rights of the Palestinian people.

In this context, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are as follows:

First, the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent and sovereign State;

Secondly, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force;

Thirdly, the right of PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing in the search for a just solution to the problem of Palestine;

Fourthly, the right of Palestinians who have been displaced and uprooted to return to their homes.

The right to self-determination is a fundamental element of the modern international political order established by the United Nations Charter. It is one of the basic factors of understanding among peoples and nations; in other words, it determines peace. No one can claim that right for one people while denying it to another. This right should be exercised without external interference. It is linked to the right to establish one's own independent State, in Palestine as an undisputed right equal to the right of all peoples to independence. It may be said that the right to establish an independent State is included in the concept of the right to self-determination. It is the duty and responsibility of the international community to enable the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination.

Any settlement must provide for the application of all the principles contained in the Security Council resolutions and, in particular, resolution 242 (1967) which establishes the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in the region.

Despite the decisions of the international community which reflect those resolutions and recommendations, Israel is continuing to strengthen its illegal occupation of the Arab territories and to apply measures aimed at changing the physical nature, demographic composition and institutional structure, as well as the status of the territories occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Jerusalem. Resolution 478 (1980), unanimously adopted by the Security Council on 1 March 1980, affirms that the measures adopted by Israel in the occupied territories and in the Holy City of Jerusalem are considered null and void. Israel's policy of occupation will only increase Palestinian despair and lead to new acts of violence. There is no doubt that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is fully applicable to the occupied territories. The settlement policy is a flagrant violation of that Convention.

There can be no successful settlement of the Palestine question without the participation of the Palestinian people - a people whose sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, should participate directly on an equal footing with the other participants in any negotiation dealing with the Middle East crisis or dealing, directly or indirectly with the question of Palestine.

One positive sign is that in recent years there has been a considerable increase in the number of people who recognize this right. This can be seen from a growing international interest in the Palestinian question, greater solidarity with the Palestinian cause and a constant increase in the number of votes in favour of United Nations resolutions calling for settlement of the question.

Poland supported the 1947 General Assembly resolution on the partition of Palestine. Like many States in the world, we recognized the political realities which existed at that time in the Middle East, i.e. that there were two peoples in the territory of Palestine unable to coexist peacefully within a single State.

The partition into two States seemed to be a sound solution. In the following years, Poland did not submit the problem of establishing the Palestinian State to the United Nations, in view of the unrealistic approach to the Palestinian question on the part of the Arab countries. However, we supported all initiatives aimed at avoiding tension in the region. We actively supported the rights of the Palestinian people when, in 1969, the matter was raised again at the United Nations. We have given our support to all resolutions recognizing the rights of the Palestinians.

Poland's position with respect to the question of Palestine stresses the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the territories occupied in 1967, the restoration of the right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination, including the establishment of its own independent State, and the protection of the sovereignty and security of all States in the region. The political settlement of the question also demands that no one should take measures which might make it more difficult to achieve these goals and that no State should interfere in the internal affairs of the countries or peoples of the region.

The seriousness with which Poland takes this stand and its genuine interest in seeking an over-all and lasting solution to the problems of the Middle East can be seen not only in words but in deeds, through our active commitment. Suffice it to mention the honourable service of several thousand Polish soldiers in the United Nations forces in the region.

THE USE OF PALESTINIAN WATERS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Prof. Dr. Türkaya Atav

Introduction:

The problems concerning the use of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel deserve more attention than they have received in the Western media. They are linked with the dichotomy created by the claim of a people to "return" to a land, exercised at the expense of another's to live and develop in theirs. Some observers declare that the desert now "blooms", only because large tracts of once fertile Palestinian territory has turned into barren wasteland. This paper asserts that under international law the occupying power in Palestine cannot have a free hand to affect such a change.

Expansion and Dependence:

The use of the Palestinian waters by Israel is linked with the escalated designs of the occupying power for complete annexation of the occupied territories and turning them into satellites of the Israeli economy in ways more than one. The Israeli policies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are geared towards reducing these areas to the status of "colonies". When these two areas were occupied in 1967, their economies were already under-developed and labour power greatly undermined by continuous emigration. The economy of the occupied territories became dependent on the dominant Israeli economy, and a dependent specialization was imposed on them. 1/ This specialization was based on products and labour most needed for Israel. A so-called "division of labour" similar to the one between the developed capitalist societies and the under-developed countries is created between Israel and the occupied territories.

This kind of relationship is true in trade, agriculture and industry. Trade between the two has produced an increasing surplus for Israel. The volume of Israeli exports to the occupied territories increased very rapidly. While Israel exported industrial consumer goods to them, it imported from them mostly products which depend on intensive cheap labour.

With regard to agriculture, the Israeli authorities imposed various restrictions on the export of a number of products to Israel while they pressured Palestinians to grow products needed by them. In addition to this unequal transfer of value in agriculture, Palestinian labour is directly exploited inside Israel, where the number of Arab workers is rising steadily. This channelling of Arab labour force to unskilled manual work is accompanied by discrimination in wages, health and other benefits. The rapid decrease in the number of productive workers employed in the occupied territories serves to illustrate the destructive effect of Israeli policy on the economy of the West Bank and Gaza. If there is an increase in the purchasing power of the population, this is not the result of the development of the productive forces in the occupied territories; it is on account of increased employment. But the income earned from employment in Israel is spent on purchasing Israeli goods. Most of the native people are without electricity and water.

Settlements and Palestinian Bantustans:

The occupation of the Palestinian territories and the transformation of their economic structure go hand in hand with colonial settlement. The Israeli authorities planned a full-scale settlement project, beginning with agricultural-military enclaves and followed by urban industrialized centers. In later stages, the Israelis concentrated on changing the demographic composition of the areas by establishing Jewish centers that insulate the Arab population of the occupied territories into smaller pockets surrounded by these new settlements. The Israeli authorities began a campaign of confiscating Arab land as well as cutting their water supplies. These policies, designed to alter the Arab outlook of the occupied territories, are diminutive of the character of Zionism. The destruction of Arab villages, forced deportations, collective punishments, systematic undermining of native culture, denial of basic human rights and confiscation of natural resources are all manifestations of the same character.

The Israeli Government promotes new settlements as a step toward annexation of the occupied territories. Following the first anniversary of the Camp David accords, an Israeli Cabinet spokesman had announced that occupied Arab lands would be made available for purchase by Jewish settlers. The plan for the sale of such territory is a slap in the face to all international conventions regarding the conduct of an occupation force. The promotion of settlements itself constitutes a violation of Article 49 (6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel's policy seems to be designed to "create facts" to render impossible any solution other than incorporation of the West Bank and Gaza with Israel. The native Arabs, on the other hand, recognize the settlements as most threatening because, regardless of their location, size and stated purpose, they seem to be a euphemism for the theft of their land. Among others, Dr. Israel Shahaq, the former Chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights and Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, exposed several times the sort of "Palestinian Bantustans", which Israel intends to create on the occupied territories.

Palestinian Waters and the West Bank:

That concerns us here directly is that each new Jewish settlement has established a complete system, of irrigation besides big water reservoirs in the event of shortage. The water resources of Palestine are being exploited (a) for the under-ground aquifer which feeds the Israeli coastal plain and also (b) to supply the settlements which Israel has established throughout the occupied territories.

Palestine is situated between a sub-tropical rainy region in the north and a desert zone in the south. All the major water resources are concentrated in the north, the most important being the Jordan River and its tributaries, which assemble the rainfall of the Hermon basin.

The physical geography of Palestine is surprisingly complex. In the extreme north, the hills of Lebanon range continue without break to form the uplands of Galilee. The Galilee hills fall away steeply on the east to Jordan Valley, on the west to a narrow coastal plain and to the south at the Vale of Esdraelon. At its western end, the vale opens into the Bay of Acre, but narrows inland to open out again where it joins the Jordan Valley. The lowland area here has very fertile soil. In the north, the plateau erodes into valleys, some of which are fertile. This portion of the land centers on Nablus and Jenin. Further south, rainfall is reduced, streams are fewer and the landscape arid. Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron are the main towns. In the north-east, one reaches an area of semi-desert. In the extreme south, one finds the Negev, consisting of steppe or semi-desert, bounded by the lower Jordan Valley on the east and the Sinai Desert on the west. The low coastal plain stretches from Haifa to Gaza.

Most of the water in the West Bank flows into a huge natural ground reservoir underneath the western hills. Together with supplies from the Jordan River and smaller rivulets, the area has about 650 million cubic meters of water at its disposal annually. However, about 620 million cubic meters of this amount can be used. The rainfall on the western slopes of the West Bank highlands feeds the aquifer beneath the Israeli coastal plain, from where it is pumped to the surface. Approximately 30 percent of the total water Israelis use within the "Green Line", the old pre-1967 border, originates as rainfall in the West Bank. It is asserted that Israel would face economic catastrophe if it lost its access to this rainfall. Hence, a nightmare of Israeli water planners is an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank, which uses its water potential for its own development. It has also been argued that one important reason for the Six Days War had been the Israeli desire to control the water resources.

Since 1967, Israel has drilled deep wells near the border of the West Bank, tapping underground water reservoir. An increasing amount of the West Bank reserves are thus being diverted to the territories occupied in 1948. Exploited to the maximum, any further pumping would put the water level below sea level and thus make it salty. The Palestinian peasants have to watch powerlessly as their wells and springs slowly become salty and finally dry up completely.

These resources are administered by the Israeli Water Commission, headed by the Water Commissioner under the authority of the Minister of Agriculture. The Commission is divided into a number of departments, of which Mekorot (Israel Water Company) is responsible for the construction of irrigation and water supply projects and Tahal (Water Planning for Israel Company) for the over-all planning of water development projects. Mekorot was established in 1936 by the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut. The Israeli Government currently has one-third share in the Mekorot. Tahal was established in 1952 as a company of the Israeli Government, which controls 52 percent of the shares. Where water supplies are not channelled through either of the two, authority rests with the Water Commission Department for Water Allocation and Certification. Since 1967, the Israeli Water Commission has directly controlled the water resources of the territories occupied at the end of the Six Days War. The pre-1967 Israeli water economy was integrated into a central National Water Carrier system, consisting of open canals (the Jordan and the Netupha Canals), tunnels (Menashe A and B, Shimron and Eilabun), water reservoirs (Tzalmán and Eshkol) and a pipeline. This system carries water from the north to the southern areas.

Israel wants to continue this control both because of the danger to water reserves inside the Green Line and because it will be impossible to establish new settlements without such supervision. The use of water is necessarily connected with Israeli positions on aspects of so-called "autonomy" in the occupied territories. After returning from the Camp David talks in the Fall in 1978, Menachem Begin had appointed a committee to formulate Israeli positions in this respect. The committee received a memorandum from the Israeli Water Commission, stating that not only did a free hand in establishing new settlements in the occupied areas depend on continuing Israeli control over the water resources in any "autonomy" scheme in the West Bank, but also that Israeli water needs within the Green Line necessitated the same control. The Israeli Cabinet was likewise advised that Israel ought to have the final say in the use of waters in any kind of arrangement.

The gravity of the situation becomes more apparent when one remembers that the Israeli water consumption increases by 15-20 million cubic meters annually. The difference between the supply and demand is being met through over-pumping, one result of which is that the water resources of Palestine are now threatened by salinity. It is estimated that the future increase in urban population and in standards of living would necessitate the development of close to additional 400 million cubic meters of water toward 1990.

Israel's use of West Bank waters is a clear and gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. On account of such calculated Israeli position, many Arab villages and towns have lost their water. For instance, the banana and citrus groves around the Palestinian village of Al-Auja 2/ in the Jordan Valley have died. Al-Auja is situated near Ariha (Jericho), believed to be one of the oldest continually inhabited towns in the globe. Its inhabitants have been tapping water in the highlands and growing bananas and citrus fruits. These products provided, in the past, a decent living for farmers, most of whom are small holders.

However, the irrigation canals are now cracked; the pipe, built in 1954, to bring the water to the valley and the village, has completely dried up; the fruit trees are sunburnt, and the brown colour of even the pine trees indicate that drought is near. Even the UNRWA, the United Nations aid organization for Palestinian refugees, which runs a camp in this locality, has to get its water by tank car every day.

This radical change was inevitable, because the Israeli occupation authorities have drilled three wells around the water source that gave life to the Jericho oasis. Alongside the canal and also beneath the ground, there are two new pipes which supply water to the Israeli settlements. These pipes are fed by two deep bore wells, with two pumping stations equipped with electric generator and diesel pumps, sucking water at about 250 cubic meters an hour. The third deep bore well was sunk behind a low hill. Consequently, the Al-Auja spring, which irrigated fruit trees to a bright green, even on the hottest days of summer, is now dry. The loss of irrigation first killed about 375 acres of bananas and some 100 acres of citrus groves. The Al-Auja farmers were also used to plant three crops a year of melons and vegetables on 500 acres. But crops thrived in the new Israeli settlements of Gilgal, Na'aran and Yitav, built on confiscated Arab land. The Palestinians carry water on donkey back from the two taps which the Israeli authorities opened to provide limited quantities of water for home consumption. The inhabitants of Al-Auja appealed to the Israeli authorities to stop the pumping away of the water or permit the villagers to drill a new well. The military authorities have declined the suggestions. In the meantime, the Israeli settlements are becoming greener. Gilgal is a small kibbutz, comprising about eighty families. But Israel has made up plans for a total of 8,000 settlers in the West Bank by 1995. This figure is still very small compared to the Palestinian population there. But the settlers control about half of the land around Aoiha, and he who controls the water resources is sovereign over the West Bank.

Likewise, the villages of Bardala and Tal al-Baida 3/ have also lost their water. Bardala is a small hill village, five miles from the Jordan River and ten miles south of Beit Shean. Some of the inhabitants have fled, and those who have stayed depend on a well in the valley below. The well that the Israelis built in 1968 is much deeper than the Arab one and very close to it. The Arab reservoir is now dry, and the Israeli water authority suggested to the village mukhtar that Bardala be connected to the Israeli supply. As farmers, the Arabs cannot survive without adequate water. But they are reluctant to take a step that will make them wholly dependent on Israel.

The springs of a near-by village, Tal al-Baida, have been reduced to muddy ponds. Here, the village leaders have accepted connection to the Israeli system. The Israelis claim that they are helping the West Bankers by passing on their technical skills in irrigation. But this cannot compensate for the loss of water, which is their most precious resource. Prior to 1970, the central spring in the village of Tal al-Baida supplied 80 cubic meters of water per hour. By the summer of 1976, the output of the spring had declined to 5 cubic meters.

The same phenomenon is true with the villages of Jenin, Beit Dibs, Toubas, Salfit, Jiftlik and others. For example, on August 14, 1979, the citizens of Jenin in the West Bank asked for permission to dig wells in their area instead of depending on the well of the village in Arabeh. Their request has been refused. In the village of Beit Dibs, 80 percent of the cultivated land has become arid, while 90 percent of its inhabitants were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. In a press conference held on January 23, 1980, Hashem Saleh, the Mayor of Toubas, warned of the grave dangers lying in the well-drilling activities of the Israeli authorities in the Toubas region. ^{4/} He said that over 140 water projects had been drawn up while Palestinian requests for permission to sink wells were almost invariably turned down. The Mayor elaborated that the Israeli authorities had sealed off 80,000 dunums of fertile land belonging to the Palestinian inhabitants of Toubas. Similarly, wells were being bored to supply a number of villages in the Salfit area, west of Nablus. In 1979, after refusing for twelve years (since 1967) permission for completion of the project, the Israeli authorities themselves finished it; but they have pumped it to the Jewish settlement of Alqana instead.

There are instances where official refusal to permit the improvement of Palestinian agricultural water supply can be explained only by determination to prevent the development of the native people. At Jiftlik, in the Jordan Valley, the farmers are irrigating their crops by utilizing the traditional system of ditches. An American voluntary organization provided the funds to replace the open canals with pipes in order to conserve the water lost on account of evaporation. Although this project did not involve drawing more water, the Israeli Government refused the permit.

Nor is it only the villages that are adversely affected. The town of Ramallah has lost its main source of water, the spring at Ain Samiya. The political consequences are clear: it makes it even harder than it already is to envisage a future, in which Jerusalem and Ramallah will be in different countries. The West Bank municipality of Ramallah has been pressured into agreeing to take some water from the Israeli Water Carrier system. Many Palestinians resisted against this partial integration into the national Israeli water network, since this move constituted one more step in Israeli plans to integrate the occupied areas.

Since 1967, the Israeli authorities thwarted a number of attempts by the Ramallah Water Board to create an autonomous water supply system sufficient to meet the area's needs. For instance, when Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, the Jordanian Government was nearing completion of a project to increase the water supply to Ramallah by digging new wells twelve miles to the west at Shibteen. With occupation, the Israelis ordered the well diggings to stop. While the area became dry, many of the farmers turning to wage labour, the Israeli settlement of Kfar Shuba, within sight of the new desert, has received permission to bore new wells for their own use.

The Gaza Strip, the Golan and Litani River:

In Gaza as well, new Israeli settlements are diverting the water supplies. Israeli colonization in Gaza and the Rafah Approaches is heavy. In the former, there are five (Netzer Hazani, Kativ, Ganei Tal, Morag and Kfar Daron) settlements, additional ones in their way of establishment. In the latter, there are fifteen settlements, in addition to the city of Yamit. The Gazans owe their livelihood to agriculture, citrus production accounting for one-quarter of the GNP. But they are refused the permit to plant new citrus trees, even to replace the damaged ones. Some trees are uprooted as punishment for "offenses". ^{5/}

An important project that will affect the future of Gaza concerns the construction of a Mediterranean-Dead Sea canal. This project is defended on grounds that it is the only effective way of salvaging the Dead Sea. But it also reveals the Israeli intention to annex Gaza. Although approved by the Israeli Cabinet in August 1980, it is not a new idea, Theodor Herzl having discussed the same in his diaries. Israel, however, has renewed investigations in respect to digging such a canal (a) either along the suggestion of Yogal Allon, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, designed to go from Haifa, through the Jezreel Valley to Beit Shean, to a point south of Lake Kinneret, (b) or to follow the northern mountain route from Palmahim to Kalia, or (c) to start in the Deir al-Balah area (the Gaza Strip) to Massada. This costly project may save the Dead Sea, but it is irrelevant to Israel's fresh water consumption problem.

Besides, since half of the Dead Sea, together with its industrial minerals, belongs to Jordan, the canal project provokes political controversy with this neighbouring country, raising legal problems as well, because the massive inflow of water would change the level of the Dead Sea and require adjustments for continued Jordanian mining on the eastern shore of the sea.

Since 1967 the Golan Heights has also been subject to intensive Israeli colonization. The majority of the native Syrian population has been expelled and new Jewish settlements established. Not being abundant in local water supplies, only 20 percent of the Golan Heights water consumption was supplied by local resources, the rest being pumped from Lake Kinneret. The southern region, suffering from acute water shortage, is heavily settled by Israelis.

In the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, the Israeli authorities are tightening control over the Palestinian use of the water. No existing well, owned by the Palestinians, has been allowed to increase its pumping capacity. Water meters have been placed by the Israeli authorities on existing Arab wells to keep a daily check. The control extends even to the purchase of new parts for pumps. The Israelis constantly apply an increase to the cost of water. This added financial burden comes in the context of the worsening economic situation of the Palestinians, who are hit hardest by the chronic galloping inflation. On occasions, the Israeli authorities offer money to Palestinian farmers who would agree to pull down an orange tree on his farm, under the pretext of conserving water resources. ^{6/}

Israel is also interested in the Litani River (Lebanon), which rises in the Bekaa, flows southwards, and then, at a short distance from the Israeli frontier, makes sudden bend westwards and plunges through the Lebanon mountains by a deep gorge. It is necessary to remember here that the boundaries of the projected Jewish state, defined by the Zionist Advisory Committee on Palestine on November 6, 1918, had included the Litani River in the north. ^{7/} It is not surprising that lately Israeli air attacks and troop incursions into south Lebanon have been increasing in intensity and in regularity. The aerial bombardments are specifically aimed at civilian targets. Even as the Islamic Summit Conference was ending in Taef on January 29, 1981, Israeli planes launched one of the most concerted air attacks ever against towns and villages in south Lebanon. Israel renews attacks on grounds that they are spontaneous responses to PLO raids. But international law does not allow the government of one state to invade another state as a reprisal for acts of resistance carried out by people whose territory had earlier been occupied by the first state. ^{8/}

Sovereignty Over Natural Resources:

Several international instruments and decisions condemn Israel's actions in respect to the diversion of Palestinian water resources. Article 17 of the Declaration of Human Rights (1948) lays the basic principle that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property". Article 53 states that "any destruction by the Occupying Power of movable or immovable property...is prohibited." ^{9/} Aspects of the right of property have been considered by the UN General Assembly and given further clarification. The Declaration on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources (1962) ^{10/} deals with aspects of the right to own property against the background of the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources. The General Assembly resolution 1314 (XIII) of December 12, 1958 had already established the Commission on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources. This commission was instructed to conduct a full survey of the status of permanent sovereignty over natural wealth and resources as a basic constituent of the right to self-determination. Resolution 1515 (XV) of December 15, 1960 recommended that the sovereign right of every state to dispose of its wealth and its natural resources should be respected. It was on this basis that the General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) of December 14, 1962 declared that the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned" and that violation of this right "is contrary to the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and hinders the development of international cooperation and the maintenance of peace".

The General Assembly took further decisions on the matter. On December 15, 1975, it condemned the illegal exploitation of the natural wealth, resources and population of the occupied territories. ^{11/} In 1977, the General Assembly considered a report by the Secretary-General on "the adverse economic effects on the Arab states and peoples resulting from repeated Israeli aggression and continued occupation of their territories." ^{12/} After taking note of the report, the General Assembly, in resolution 32/161 of December 19, 1977 ^{13/}, emphasized "the right of the Arab States and peoples whose

territories are under Israeli occupation to full and effective permanent sovereignty and control over their natural and all other resources, wealth and economic activities", reaffirmed that "all measures undertaken by Israel to exploit the human, natural and all other resources, wealth and economic activities in the occupied Arab territories are illegal" and called upon Israel "immediately to desist forthwith from all such measures". It further reaffirmed the right of the Arab States and peoples subjected to Israeli aggression and occupation to the restitution of, and full compensation for the exploitation, depletion and loss of and damage to, their natural, human all other resources, wealth and economic activities." The General Assembly called upon all states to support and assist the Arab States and peoples in the exercise of their above-mentioned rights... and not to recognize or cooperate with or assist in any manner in any measures undertaken by Israel to exploit the resources of the occupied territories or to effect any changes in the demographic composition or geographic character or institutional structure of those territories."

Conclusion

Since the water shortage in Israel is increasing and Israel's settlement policy is expanding, the expropriation of Palestine water is also increasing proportionately. 14/ Israel's attitude towards the future of the occupied territories and its rejection of the establishment of a Palestinian state on them can be partially attributed to the water factor on these Palestinian lands. As W. T. Mallison, Jr., in his "Foreword" to Henry Cattán's brilliant factual and juridical analysis 15/ brings out convincingly, universal international law is a constructive alternative for Palestine.

The international community is coming to realize that the present situation in Palestine is the result of an accumulation of illegalities. The question of Palestine, since its inception, has been one of avoidance of law. This injustice must be rectified. Israel's terms, however, do not contemplate the redress of the injustice done. Moreover, that country continues to act in a way that the expulsion of the Palestinians from their own land becomes a permanent fact.

The usurpation of the water resources of the native Arab people of Palestine is a recent manifestation of the same illegitimate policies. The only way to restore right through means other than a struggle of national liberation is for the United Nations to secure the implementation of its decisions and formulas for lasting peace. As stated in the General Assembly resolution of November 3, 1950, lasting peace also depends on the observance of the resolutions of the UN organs. About two-hundred such resolutions have been adopted in respect to Palestine. The ones quoted in this paper pertain to sovereignty over resources and the rights of the native peoples on their own natural wealth. Actual UN intervention is necessary to put these resolutions into effect. There can be no peace and no justice in Palestine without the legitimate coercion of this international body. The problem of the diversion of the water resources is part of the greater problem of Palestine. Such coercion is politically necessary, and it is also an international obligation.

NOTES

1. Jamil Hilal, The Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Social and Economic Conditions Under Israeli Occupation, (Beirut) FLO, 1976.
2. A leading Norwegian daily Dagbladet published in its June 6, 1980 issue a detailed account on the way the Israeli occupation authorities have been strangulating Al-Auja. "The Desert is Blossoming; the Fields are Drying Up," Palestine, Beirut, Vol. VI, No. 14 (1-15 August 1980), pp. 18-20.
3. "The Politics of Water on the West Bank," Journal of Palestine Studies, Beirut, Vol. VII, No. 4 (Summer 1978), pp. 175-177.
4. Palestine, Beirut, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1-15 February 1980), p. 32.
5. For instance, Israeli forces uprooted on January 26, 1981, orange trees in a grove owned by Gaza municipal council member Dr. Akram Matar. They pretended that a bomb was hurled from the groves, situated on the Gaza-Khan Yonunes Road, on an Israeli car.
6. Palestine, Beirut, Vol. VI, No. 1 (January 1980), p. 94.
7. H. P. Frischwasser-Raanan, The Frontiers of a Nation, London, Batchworth, 1955, p. 101.
8. Faris Glubb, "International Law and South Lebanon," Palestine, Beirut, Vol. IV, No. 9 (May 31, 1978), pp. 8-10.
9. On the flagrant Israeli contraventions of several international instruments on human rights: Ghazi Khurshid, Human Rights in the Occupied Territories: 1971, Beirut, Palestine Research Center, 1973, passim.
10. United Nations, Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments, New York, 1978, pp. 21-22.
11. Abdeen Jabara, Israel's Violation of Human Rights in Arab Territories Occupied in June 1967, (New York) National Lawyer's Guild, n. d., pp. 3-4.
12. A/32/204.
13. United Nations, United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights, New York, 1980, pp. 40-41.
14. Israel's Policy on the West Bank Water Resources, New York, 1980, p. 15.
15. Henry Cattán, Palestine and International Law, London, Longman, 1973.

THE NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Akbar Kherad

The Palestine question and the exercise of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, who have been uprooted from their homeland and deprived of their national rights, following a joint conspiracy of imperialists, colonialists and Zionists, is still a key issue for the settlement of the situation in the Middle East. It may be said without exaggeration that the grave and disturbing situation which persists in the Middle East itself results from the fact that the legitimate rights of the Arabs of Palestine have been flouted by the Zionists, with the full approval and the support of imperialist circles.

The Palestinian problem concerns not only the refugees but the interests and the fate of a whole people, the only people deprived of their legitimate rights in the Middle East, who cannot yet realize their right to self-determination and to the creation of their own State structures in accordance with the norms and principles of international law.

Everyone knows that the Palestinian people, who possess a history that is thousands of years old, are forced to live through a tragedy, one that has lasted for a third of a century already. This tragedy stems from the fact that the Zionist entity robbed the Palestinians of their ancestral lands in 1947-1949 and, particularly after its 1967 aggression, drove them from their homes and deprived them of their homeland) it has transformed a whole nation, proud of its history, into a mass of refugees and subjected it to occupation.

It would be hard to find such an example of brutality and inhuman and illegal treatment inflicted on a whole nation. Nothing and no one could justify the mass murder of this nation. Depriving other nations and other peoples of their native lands and their homes in order to acquire "living space" for its own nation constitutes one of the fundamental characteristics of Fascist ideology, policy and practice. Such are the ideology, policy and practice of Zionism: to find "living space" to the detriment of other peoples.

The Palestinian question is as old as the United Nations itself. The United Nations has been studying it ever since its establishment, just as the League

of Nations had done before it.

An in-depth examination of the question of Palestine since the First World War, and particularly since 1947, shows us that the essence of the Palestinian question lies in the fate of a people and their own homeland - a people who, like all the peoples of the world, have rights which are clearly laid down by the Charter of the United Nations, by various international conventions, declarations, communiqués and commitments and by the relevant resolutions and documents of the United Nations. These rights are the fundamental rights which cannot be alienated and which cannot be ceded to another or usurped.

Taking these considerations into account, I would like to deal here with two points: the national identity of the Palestinian people and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national sovereignty and independence.

I. THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The Palestinians actually constituted the people of Palestine well before the twentieth century.

Over a long period, the preponderant population of Palestine had remained Palestinian Arab. That was why, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of Palestine still included a vast Arab and mainly Moslem majority. According to the estimate made on the eve of the First World War of the Palestinian population as a whole, there were less than 10 per cent Jews there, 10 per cent Christians and 80 per cent Moslems with their own language and culture, which was dominant in Palestine.

At the time when the Ottoman Empire was in decline, the Arab subjects of that empire, who wished their independence, had received from the British Government assurances guaranteeing their accession to independence after the end of the war, within the limits proposed by the Sherif of Mecca. During the First World War, the policy of Great Britain in the Middle East consisted of making contradictory promises to the Arabs and to the Zionists. Sir Henry McMahon promised the Emir Hussein the establishment of a great Arab political community over the whole of the Near East; and to the Zionist Movement the creation of a Jewish national home on the land of Palestine.

The reasons for the promises made to the Arabs was to have the operations of the British Army in Egypt supported by a general revolt of the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire. In return, the British would grant them independence throughout the territory liberated from the Ottoman yoke.

In spite of these promises, the Entente Powers proceeded, amid the greatest secrecy to carve up the Middle East. Thus, on 16 May 1916, according to the Sykes-Picot agreement, France and Great Britain divided up the Middle East. After the defeat of the Allies' expeditionary corps in the Dardanelles and the British offensive in Mesopotamia, the London Government accorded considerable importance to Arab co-operation. On 14 July 1916, McMahon, in his message to Sherif Hussein, affirmed that the independence of the Arab countries was definitively recognized by His Majesty's Government. Following that message, Sherif Hussein undertook to participate on the British side in the war against the Turks, in order to liberate the Arab territories from foreign domination. After that commitment, a series of statements from the Franco-English Government reaffirmed that the Arab countries would be liberated after the war. On 27 May 1917, General Allenby, Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces in the East, proclaimed that all the inhabitants of Palestine must celebrate that day with joy, because they would henceforth be independent and free to choose the Government of their choice. However, Sherif Hussein, having found the text of the Sykes-Picot secret treaty, was surprised and transmitted it to the British Government with a request for explanation. The British Government reassured Sherif Hussein by confirming its earlier promises regarding the liberation of the Arab peoples. On 30 October 1918, with the defeat of Turkey, the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. The British and French Governments, in a joint declaration, once more reassured the Arab peoples concerning their independence.

The Zionist Movement, in turn, in the same way as the Arabs, received promises from Great Britain. This Movement, which was in search of a territory in which to establish the Zionist State, benefited greatly from the support of Great Britain.

The First Zionist Congress, held at Basle on 27 August 1897 under the presidency of Theodor Herzl, declared that "the objective of Zionism is the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine, secured by public law". On 3 September 1897, Herzl declared, with regard to the Basle Congress: "If I had to sum up the Basle Congress in one word, which I shall be careful not to do publicly, I would say at Basle I founded the Jewish State".

Herzl was aware that the Jewish people could not settle in Palestine unless they found a great Power which would take them under its protection. This protection was provided by Great Britain following the discovery, by the head of the Zionist Movement, Chaim Weizmann, of a formula for the synthetic manufacture of acetone to be used for the production of explosives. Weizmann, as a reward, asked Lloyd George to create a Jewish national home in Palestine. That request was accepted by the British Government. Balfour, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, addressed a letter to Lord Lionel Rothschild informing him that His Majesty's Government viewed with favour the establishment of a "Jewish national home" in Palestine and that he would make every effort to facilitate the achievement of that objective. Thus, the British Government, by a statement known as the Balfour Declaration, on 2 November 1917, entered into commitments towards the Zionists by giving the Zionist organization assurances with regard to the establishment of a "Jewish national home" in Palestine, without taking account of the wishes and interests of the Palestinian peoples. For their part, France, Italy and the United States fully approved this Declaration. The motives behind the Declaration and the reasons for the approval of the three Powers did not lie in the fact of the establishment of a Jewish national home but in the wish to safeguard their interests in the Middle East.

It should be noted that the Balfour Declaration mentions the establishment of a Jewish national home and not of a Jewish State. However, that in no way reduces Great Britain's responsibility for the establishment of the Zionist State, because it knew as early as 1897 that the Zionist Movement wanted to establish a State in Palestine and not a Jewish national home. In that connexion, Herzl, at the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basle in August 1903, declared: "Our ultimate objective is the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine endowed with all the attributes of sovereignty. But it would be inappropriate to proclaim it now. It is better to present the matter in the most modest light, referring to the establishment of a Jewish national home, if only in order not to alienate useful sympathies and obtain from one of the great Powers the protection that is essential for the achievement of our objectives". The Arab people of Palestine, aware of the danger of the establishment of a Jewish national home on their land, categorically disapproved of the British initiative.

On 7 March 1920, the Syrian General Congress, condemning the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish national home, demanded from the Allies the full and inalienable independence of Syria within its natural frontiers, including Palestine, on the basis of civic representation.

In spite of this protest, on 26 April 1920, the Allied Powers met at San Remo and approved the Balfour Declaration, deciding to entrust the Mandate for Palestine to Great Britain. The choice of Great Britain as the mandatory Power constitutes a violation of the mandate system, inasmuch as it was laid down, in the case of a class A mandate, that the wishes of these communities, already highly evolved, should be taken into consideration in the choice of a mandatory Power. On 24 July 1922, the League of Nations entrusted the Mandate for Palestine to Great Britain, without any consultation of the Palestinian population. Furthermore, the Arab countries did not belong to the League of Nations at that time and were thus not in a position to give their views on the matter.

As for the Mandate itself, its illegality is on two levels:

- I. The illegality of the Balfour Declaration lies in the fact that Great Britain had, at that time, no sovereignty, no title of ownership, and no right on the basis of which it could offer Palestine to the Zionist Movement without consultation of its population. Hence, it may be said that this Declaration is a violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.
- II. The illegality of the Mandate for Palestine lies in the fact that Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations states that the mandatory Power has an obligation to maintain these territories in their original integrity and hence to respect the full rights of their population. The League of

Nations, by including the Balfour Declaration in the Mandate for Palestine, violated Article 22 of the Covenant to which it owed its existence. Moreover, the Mandate for Palestine was class A, i.e., the mandatory Power was to recognize its provisional independence and provide, within a very short time, for its full independence. Furthermore, according to Article 29 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Mandate itself, the exercise of sovereignty by the Palestinian people was suspended only temporarily. Upon the expiry of the Mandate, that sovereignty should have reverted in its original integrity to its legitimate holder: the Palestinian people. That was not the case. On the contrary, with the waves of Jewish immigration facilitated by Great Britain and the expulsion of the Arab population by force and terror, the Zionists took possession of Palestine in order to found there, not a Jewish national home in accordance with the Balfour Declaration, but a Zionist State. In order to establish a Jewish State in Palestine, the Jewish Agency entered into contact with Truman, who promised the Zionists to use his influence to persuade Great Britain to return its Mandate to the United Nations, which would proceed to a partition of Palestine.

Great Britain, having observed the keen interest taken by the United States Government in the Zionist Movement, requested it to assist in the discharge of the Mandate, sharing the financial and administrative costs involved. In the face of the Americans' refusal to share the responsibilities of the Mandate, the British Government decided to send the Palestinian problem back to the United Nations. With the question before it, the United Nations, on 13 May 1947, created a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). This Committee was entrusted with the Palestinian problem. Upon the appointment of the members of the Committee on Palestine, it could be foreseen that the Zionist solution, because of the choice of members, would be adopted by UNSCOP. However, upon its arrival in Palestine, the Committee was surprised to find a situation very different from that which it had expected; influenced by Zionist propaganda, it had imagined that Palestine was basically Jewish. However, the investigations which it conducted produced the following data:

		Population
Arabs	1,200,000	66 per cent
Jews	600,000	33 per cent
		Land ownership
Arabs	15,066 km	93 per cent
Jews	1,134 km	7 per cent

On the basis of the percentages for population and land distribution, the only equitable solution of the Palestinian problem would have been to create an undivided State, predominantly Arab but in which the Jewish minority was provided with appropriate safeguards. However, on 27 August 1947, UNSCOP established two plans for Palestine:

- I. A federal State with Palestine remaining a unitary State in which Jews and Arabs would enjoy equal rights; as this plan was not in conformity with Zionist aims, the Jewish Agency intervened with the United States Government in order to request it to use its influence and have it set aside;
- II. A partition plan under which Palestine would be divided into three parts: a Jewish State, an Arab State and the City of Jerusalem administered by the United Nations.

The two drafts were put to the vote on 27 August 1947. The partition plan obtained 7 votes and the federal plan 3 votes. Thus, the partition plan was retained in spite of all good sense. The Arabs protested keenly, holding the partition plan unacceptable. However the General Assembly, under the influence of the United States, in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, adopted the partition plan. The Zionists, profiting from this situation, established the State of Israel. Since that time, the Palestinian problem has remained unresolved. From 1947 until 1969, because of the situation of war and the non-creation of the Arab State in Palestine, the legal aspects of the question of Palestine remained in suspense.

For nearly 20 years, the essential question of the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people was eclipsed by the Middle East conflict. During this period because of imperialist-Zionist intrigues, the Palestinian question was regarded essentially as a "refugee problem". Unquestionably, this unrealistic and unjust way of dealing with the question was contrary to the right of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and their inalienable right to return to their homes.

However, the United Nations General Assembly, breaking the first link of the imperialist-Zionist conspiracy, adopted, at its twenty-fourth session, resolution 2535 (XXIV) of 29 December 1969, which recognized that "the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". This resolution also recognized the Palestinians as a people having a national identity and reaffirmed "the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine".

II. THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION

The right of peoples to self-determination is undeniably one of the peremptory norms of international law arising from jus cogens.

World action to preserve and strengthen peace and to promote disarmament and detente is closely linked to the struggle of oppressed peoples to achieve self-determination and both national and social liberation. Peace, a peaceful future and progress by mankind can be guaranteed and ensured in the long run only if those peoples who are still suffering from colonial and racial oppression can also exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

The recognition, exercise and universal application of the right of peoples to self-determination, national sovereignty and independence is one of the fundamental prerequisites for the effective enjoyment of human rights.

The United Nations Charter and other relevant international instruments provide in principle that all peoples and nations have the right to self-determination.

This right was firmly stressed in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which marked the beginning of the universal trend towards the complete elimination of colonialism, and which continues to provide a firm foundation for many United Nations decisions and other international instruments and is a fundamental source of encouragement in the struggle for national liberation waged by colonial and dependent peoples.

This right is also set forth in article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. Similar resolutions on the matter have been adopted by the General Assembly at subsequent sessions.

It is evident that no exception should be made in the case of the Palestinian people, whose demands are solidly based and are of long standing.

The United Nations General Assembly, as already stated, has recognized this right of the Palestinian people ever since it has dealt with the problem of Palestine.

When the United Nations General Assembly was first called upon to consider the question of Palestine, it adopted the resolution recognizing the right of the Arab people of Palestine to an independent State in Palestine, which, without question, amounts to direct recognition of the status of the people of Palestine.

Since 1969, it has constantly recalled the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national sovereignty and independence.

The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have been steadfastly reaffirmed in a series of resolutions adopted since 1970 by the General Assembly, which reaffirmed the earlier calls upon Israel to evacuate the territories occupied in 1967 and to respect the right of return of refugees and which recognized the link existing between the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and the attainment of peace in the Middle East. Thus, in paragraph 1 of resolution 2672 C (XXV) of 8 December 1970, the Assembly recognized "that the people of Palestine are entitled to equal rights and self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations", while in paragraph 2 it declared that "full respect for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine is an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East". Resolution 3089 (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973 also reaffirmed that "the enjoyment by the Palestine Arab refugees of their right to return to their homes and property ... is indispensable ... for the exercise by the people of Palestine of its right to self-determination".

A year after the 1973 Middle East war, when a majority of countries once again called for the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of the item entitled "Question of Palestine", the cause of the Palestinian people for self-determination had made rapid progress. In October, the Arab Heads of State and Government, meeting at Rabat, recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and reaffirmed the right of the Arab people of Palestine to return to their homeland and their right to self-determination. The following month the General Assembly adopted resolution 3236 (XXIX), an essential instrument in the reaffirmation and international recognition of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. In paragraph 1, the resolution reaffirmed:

- (a) The right to self-determination without external interference;
- (b) The right to national independence and sovereignty.

Paragraph 6 appealed to all States and international organizations to extend their support to the Palestinian people in its struggle to restore its rights, in accordance with the Charter. Paragraph 7 of resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 "Requests the Secretary-General to establish contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization on all matters concerning the question of Palestine". Resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 conferred the status of permanent observer at the General Assembly and other international conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations on the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the people in Palestine, with the appearance of which the Palestinian resistance movement, qualitatively, entered a new stage of development and action. This status allows the PLO numerous, unprecedented rights. It enjoys, with the exception of the right to vote, advantages comparable to those of member States in international organizations, the right to receive assistance from the international community, the right to maintain a permanent mission, the right to the protection of the Geneva Conventions. ...

For greater clarity and in order to determine how these rights should be implemented, a committee was established under resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975. It was requested "to consider and recommend to the General Assembly a programme of implementation, designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise the rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX)". Resolution 3379 (XXX) of the same date equated Zionism with racism and racial discrimination.

The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was thus officially recognized by the international community. Similar resolutions have been adopted in subsequent years, including the resolution of 29 July 1980, by which the General Assembly, recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3237 (XXIX) and all other relevant United Nations resolutions pertinent to the question of Palestine, reaffirmed the inalienable rights in Palestine of the Palestinian people including the right to self-determination without external interference, and to national independence and sovereignty; and the right to establish its own independent sovereign State.

It should be noted that international recognition of the Palestinian people and their inalienable right to self-determination, sovereignty and independence has also been accorded outside the United Nations. As well as by the General Assembly, these rights have been recognized in resolutions adopted at conferences of non-aligned countries and at Islamic conferences, which reflects the commitment of the international community.

Yet, despite this basic commitment by the international community, American imperialism and the Zionists, by concluding separate deals to the detriment of Palestinian and Arab interests, have sought to eliminate the Palestine liberation movement, to legalize the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and to condemn the Arab people of Palestine to eternal exile. This blatantly violates the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions and other relevant United Nations instruments and is clearly incompatible with the generally recognized principles and norms of international law, including the right of peoples to self-determination.

It should be noted that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national sovereignty and independence has been established beyond question. It remains for the international community, in particular the United Nations, to take specific, definitive steps to ensure implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to carry out its role and discharge its obligations to provide that people with its own independent State.

The people and Government of the Republic of Afghanistan, in accordance with their firm support for and revolutionary solidarity with the fraternal people of Palestine and their legitimate struggle, under the leadership of their sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, are ready to wholeheartedly support any effective steps to ensure the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent national State in Palestine.

We are certain that the just cause of the Palestinian people will triumph.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS: THE PRIMAL CRIME AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF CHOSENNESS

Hassan S. Haddad

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign, an organization formed in the United States recently, adopted the following slogan: "Palestinians Have Human Rights Too". This is obviously a truism. Or is it? It looks as if we have been desperately trying to convince the American people that the Palestinians are also human beings. Why, one asks, should we strain so much to bring this message to the American people? Why, we wonder, do the American people, and the West in general, show any reluctance in seeing the obvious, and persist in denying the Palestinians the full measure of human rights?

The fact that we have had to bring this simple truth to the American people and to struggle to make our readers and our listeners aware of the fact that the Palestinians are also entitled to a full measure of humanity - this fact points to a serious defect in the attitude of Americans towards the Arab-Israeli conflict - a defect that goes beyond lack of information, Zionist political and economic pressure, or plain social bigotry.

I will attempt to investigate the fundamental reason for this apparent moral and political gap in the conscience of the West. This is going to be a diagnosis only, not a prescription for a cure.

This symptom has two sides to it. On one we find an almost irrational support of Israel (at the outset, I should point out that I am separating the term

Israel, from that of the term Jews) and on the other side an equally irrational denial of the Palestinians, their rights, their humanity, their persons. These two elements of the problem are closely inter-related, and can not be easily and successfully discussed separately.

We could attribute this attitude to the spirit of colonialism in the West which has had a long history of denying the rights of colonial people, and which lingers on here and there. But colonialism, especially the endemic and extreme kind, cannot be explained only in political and economic terms. There is another dimension to it which goes beyond the practical aspects of political power and of exploitative economics. This added dimension, which sometimes exceeds the rational consideration of self-interest, and turns even against its user, is of a mystical-religious nature, whether it be called the White Man's Burden, the Civilizing Mission, the Manifest Destiny, or the Sacred Covenant. Once this mystical element enters into the colonial venture of nations, the subjected people of this venture suffer the most extreme forms of denial of rights, dispossession, even extermination. It is this mystical, religious element in the Zionist colonization of Palestine that is basically responsible for the dehumanization of the Palestinians by denying them fundamental rights.

The religious factor in the creation of Israel and in the disenfranchisement of the Palestinians is more pronounced and much more prominent than in any other colonialist experience in modern Western history. Although all colonial movements have a large dose of mystical components, and the treatment of the indigenous Indians displays a large measure of it, the Zionist movement has a religious core without which it would be formless. Zionism owes its form and its content to the mystical-religious foundations in the Bible. It is there that the possession of land by one party is deemed as an act of piety, and the colonization of Palestine as a climactic event in sacred history. It is in these religious foundations that the policy towards the indigenous population is given a divine finality. The original inhabitants of the Holy Land have to be considered non-persons, to be shunned, denied, expelled, dispossessed, deprived of livelihood and of life.

Since this religious tradition is also shared by Western Christendom, both the promise to the Jews and the denial of the non-Jews, that is the Palestinian Arabs, have a wide-spread acceptance. This acceptance is not found only among the rank and file, but also among many thinkers, writers, theologians, priests, teachers, politicians and presidents. It is well established by a long tradition, by a respect for the scripture without questioning, and, among a growing number of conservative Christians, by an odd interpretation of prophecy and a professed belief in a godly plan involving the reconstruction of Israel which takes precedence over human considerations, pity, or fair play. It is this aspect of the Palestinian problem that is the most difficult to come to grips with. It bears some more exploration.

The Primal Crime

Let us explore the American model of a colonial venture dealing with indigenous population - a venture which had a mystical-religious aura. Robert Bellah, in his book, *The Broken Covenant* (pp. 36-37) describes the attitude of White America towards the indigenous population:

Thus at the very beginning of American society there was the primal crime against the Indians ... For a long time, indeed for centuries, the new settlers failed to appreciate the fact that the people they found here lived in a different dream. Whether the Indian was seen as noble or as horrid savage, he was treated as if he were a character in the European dream, as if he had no dream of his own ... This failure to see the Indians in their own terms was only the cultural side of a denial of humanity that was also expressed in economic and even biological terms. Thus Indians were deprived by the new settlers, not only of the inherent human right to have one's culture understood and respected, but they were ruthlessly deprived of land and livelihood and all too often of life itself. This was the primal crime on which American society is based ... We must ask what in the dream of White America kept so many for so long, so many even to this day, from seeing any crime at all. For that we need to consider the ambiguities of chosenness.

The primal crime in Bellah's thesis consists of the denial of the humanity of the Indian explicit in depriving him of his fundamental rights. He correctly points to the "ambiguities of chosenness" as the cause for the callousness that permeates a society which refuses to see, or is incapable of seeing, any crime at all in this behaviour.

We only have to exchange the terms America and Indians with the terms Israel and Palestinians to realize how much the biblical concept of chosenness, of covenant, is responsible in both cases for the primal crime of denying fundamental rights to indigenous inhabitants of an exclusively claimed land. The prototype of chosen White America, of Apartheid South Africa, and of modern Israel is biblical Israel. And the figura of the despised and dispossessed Indians, of the African Bantus, and of the modern Palestinians is also biblical. It is the Canaanites, the indigenous goyim, whose existence on the land was not to be tolerated by divine order. They were, as it were, cynically chosen to bear the eternal curse that serves as explanation and justification of the primal crime.

The Ambiguities of Chosenness

The American example of chosenness is, at best, a mirror image of biblical Israel. But modern Israel is claimed as a direct descendant of the biblical one, a continuation and a fulfillment of a historical entity based on a divine election and a sacred promise of land. Accordingly, the chosen does not have to justify his favoured position or to apologize for his disregard for the rights of others. His position is predetermined by a divine order. The primal crime, if it exists, is not of his doing.

While Zionist thinkers also attempt to present Jewish nationalism as a modern movement based on conditions that existed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the fact remains that, ideologically, ethnically and territorially this modern movement is primarily based on the biblical prototype of Israel. The name "Zion" focuses on the territorial definition of Israel in the Bible. The name "Israel" reflects the intertwining of racial and territorial elements sacralized in the Bible. Consequently, when Zionists speak of their historic right to Palestine, they refer by necessity to a history and to a historical philosophy found in the Bible and the Rabbinical literature. To deny the "historic right" of the Jews to Palestine is to challenge the scriptures. This is an article of faith to some Jews and Christians, and it also serves as an effective public relation tool to influence the Christian world favourably towards Israel and unfavourably towards the Palestinian quest for fundamental rights.

That the Bible is at the roots of Zionism is recognized by religious, secular, non-observant and agnostic Zionists. Thus, Moses Hess, who preceded Herzl and who is considered one of the spiritual fathers of Zionism, recognized and preached the principles of interdependence of religion and nationalism in Jewish life (see his book, *Rome and Jerusalem*). To him Jewish religion was, above all, Jewish nationalism. Ben-Gurion was often biblical and mystical in his writings and speeches, calling the Bible the "sacrosanct title-deed to Palestine" for the Jewish people "with a genealogy of 3500 years". (Ben-Gurion, *The Rebirth and Destiny of Israel*, p. 100). With a sacrosanct title-deed to a piece of land, Ben-Gurion was explaining that he did not have to conform to regular, mundane rules of behaviour. In an address to an international conference, he declared that "the Jewish vision of redemption has two aspects: the ingathering of the exiles and the continuation of the Jewish people in its land as a chosen people, and as light to the nations". (Ben-Gurion Looks at the Bible, p. 111). This statement contains and transcends all the claims of colonialists, from the Crusaders' cry of "God wills it" to the American settlers' boast of Manifest Destiny, to the Afrikaans' pretension of covenant.

The biblical concepts of promise of land, choice and covenant are suprarational, sacralized concepts producing a sacred historical right exclusively for the Jews and exclusively in Palestine. This concept places the indigenous population of Palestine, the Arabs of today as were the Canaanites of biblical time, in a double jeopardy. They are summarily deprived of human rights by the claim of exclusive election of the Jews by God, and deprived of their property by the exclusive promise of the land to the chosen ones.

The biblical ban on any form of co-operation with, and understanding of the indigenous goyim was clear and often repeated in the texts. It was made a condition of God's continued patronage of Israel. The following quotation from the book of Deuteronomy (7:1-6) illustrates the point:

You must not make a treaty with them or spare them. You must not intermarry with them, neither giving your daughters to their sons, nor taking their daughters for your sons; if you do, they will draw your sons away from the Lord and make them worship other gods. But this is what you must do to them: pull down their altars, break their sacred pillars, hack down their sacred poles and destroy their idols by fire, for you are a people holy to

the Lord your God; the Lord your God chose you out of all nations on earth to be his special possession.

It is easy to see that this ancient text does not vary much from current Israeli official policy and from the attitudes of the Israelis generally towards the Arabs of Palestine.

A narrow interpretation of the scriptures, which is common among many Jews and many more Christians, makes the destiny of Israel and that of the Palestinians mutually exclusive. Just as the American Indian had to be removed by European settlers because of cultural and religious prejudices, the removal of the Palestinians is considered a sine qua non for the purity, welfare and security of the Jewish State. One party had to disappear to make room for the other, not for the lack of room, not because they could not, but because they should not live together. Thus the decision to remove the Palestinians and to deny them their fundamental rights was not one motivated by political, economic, or social considerations only, but by an added dimension of religious, mystical conviction, one that, by its nature, is unreasonable and uncompromising. Its total dogmatism is placed at the doorstep of the Lord Himself. In practice, modern Israel seems to have wholly adopted the biblical blessing and the biblical curse; the blessing exclusively reserved for the "holy race" the chosen people and the curse placed in eternity on the indigenous goyim, be they called Canaanites or Palestinians.

The blessing and the curse are the two sides of one coin, that of Israel as a State divinely reserved for one favoured race. To admit that the Palestinians have rights in that land - to some even admitting that they do exist at all - is one way of denying or questioning this exclusive divine patrimony. Hence, the refusal of all Israeli governments on the right and on the left, to recognize the Palestinians and the P.L.O. cannot be explained only in terms of political advantage or political expediency. American concurrence with that position is likewise attributable in part to that same religious conviction.

For Israelis, to recognize Palestinians and their rights is tantamount to an admission of committing the primal crime. In view of the experience of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis, who also believed in their own sacred destiny and in a racial curse placed on their non-arian neighbours, any suspicion of similarity between Nazi and Zionist philosophies and behaviour would create a crushing burden of guilt. To be safe from damaging the effect of this analogy, some Zionists have convinced themselves that the Palestinians do not really exist (a land without people), or that they are really of a lower quality of people, that they are all terrorists who kill women and children. But most of them still find refuge in biblical mythology. For if one accepts the principle of the divinely favoured person, one needs only a short step towards accepting the principle of the divinely cursed and dispossessed person.

On the American and Western side, the biblical anchor of pro-Israeli sentiment justified Israel's actions in claiming Arab territories and in striking at the Palestinians. This comes from a commitment of faith, as A. Roy Eckardt puts it. To raise questions about such commitment amounts to heresy to some conservative churchmen. It is this aspect of the problem that explains the American claim of a "moral commitment" to Israel.

The Theology of the Territorial Imperative

The concept of Promised Land is tied closely to that of the chosen people. Without the land, according to the biblical territorial theology, the covenant with the Jewish people would be incomplete. It would have no earthly basis. An important part of the Torah and the Prophets would lose their relevance. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Chief Executive Officer of the International Association of Conservative Rabbis, commenting on a proposed Vatican document concerning relations with Judaism, welcomed in particular the document's proposed "recognition of the reality of the State of Israel", its assertion that Jewish fidelity to the Old Covenant between God and the people of Israel is "linked to the gift of land, which in the Jewish soul, has endured as the object of aspiration that Christians should strive to understand and respect". (Christian Century, Jan. 24, 1970, p. 39). The Rabbi's preoccupation with "God's gift of land" preempted any reflection on his part as to the injustice that might be dealt to those who already dwell on the land. Rabbi Nissim, Chief Rabbi of Israel in 1968, was direct and unequivocal in his assessment of this question. He said:

The Land of Israel was, with its borders, defined for us by Divine Providence. Thou shalt be, says the Almighty, and there it is; no power on earth can alter that which was created by Him. In this connection it is not a question of law or logic; neither is it a matter of human treatment or that sort of thing". (Hayom, June 7, 1968).

It is clear that the biblical attitude towards the Promised Land is behind Israel's policy of "land redemption" consisting of dispossessing Palestinians and restricting ownership and development of property to Jews only, of the constitution of the Jewish National Fund, and of the official settlement policy in "Judea and Samaria".

The seizure of the property of the Arabs is demonstrably based on arbitrary choice of race sanctioned by biblical precedence. The history books of the Bible contain examples of that same policy, especially the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. It is clearly and openly not based on right, legal or moral, but on a suprarational entitlement of one party and the mysterious disenfranchisement of another. In the book of Deuteronomy (6:10), it is made quite obvious that the Lord had decreed that the land and everything on it was given unconditionally:

The Lord your God will bring you into the land which He swore to your forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He would give you, a land of great and fine cities which you did not build, houses full of good things which you did not provide, rock-hewn cisterns which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant. The biblical right to the land is quite absolute.

Consequently, the denial of any right to any people but the chosen one is likewise absolute. The ultra religious take this road without any apologies. However, many so-called liberal Zionists have worked diligently on an apologetic system to justify the Jewish claim to Palestine without having to go all the way to deny the rights of the Palestinians.

From these sporadic pangs of conscience among liberal Zionists and some Christian theologians grew such theories as the two-rights theory, the Jewish cultural home theory, and the let-them-live-among-their-own-kind theory. Martin Buber, the famous Jewish humanistic theologian and philosopher, extended a hand of peace to the Arabs and supported the Brit shalom of peaceful coexistence. But his religious writings are replete with elaborations on the biblical concepts of the Promised Land and the Chosen People. His complete insistence on the eternal relevance of the biblical covenant, the chosenness of Israel, and the consecration of the Land of Israel to the Mission of the Jews to the World, controverted the universal aspects of humanism. If, according to this theology, the Land of Israel was elected by God since the beginning of time to be the home of His chosen race, then His recognition of the Palestinians is but a matter of tolerance, not of complete acceptance on equal terms.

This attitude is also found among Christian apologists for Israel. The renowned American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr was one of those. His total support of Israel was based mainly on theological deliberations and some feelings of guilt. His sense of justice and his Christian compassion, however, made him sensitive to the plight of the Palestinian Arabs. He therefore recommended that they be well-treated, compensated, and settled somewhere else other than in Palestine their original home. Niebuhr's sense of justice was restricted by his theology. His discrimination between what is right for Jews and what is right for non-Jews was caused by his attachment to the biblical doctrine of covenant interpreted closely as linking, in a mystical way, the Chosen People to the Promised Land. The Palestinians, although deserving pity, are primarily a hinderance to the fulfillment of sacred destiny.

Christian Zionism and the Palestinians

Niebuhr's political theology can be dubbed as Christian Zionism. He is of the mild, moderate variety compared to another breed of theologians and preachers whose power and number is on the rise. Evangelical fundamentalists are spreading the gospel of the priority of Israel in the Divine Economy on an increasing number of pulpits, radio and television stations all over the United States and Canada.

Niebuhr's Christian Zionism is squarely based on the biblical view of history. Israel, the ancient and the modern, according to this view, is a biblical category, one of the mysteries of man's historical existence. In an article in the Nation (Feb. 21, 1942, pp. 214-16) written during World War II, he defended the right of Jews to Palestine as a "collective right". He attacked "modern liberals" because their "individualist and universalist presuppositions and illusions" have prevented them from seeing "obvious facts in man's collective life". The "collective survival impulse" of the Jews is a matter of historical justice, he said. To him the alternative would be collective extinction. The collective will of the Jews, he maintained, requires expression in a homeland for the Jews. Although Niebuhr admonished Zionists for some individual (not collective) acts of brutality, he could not see that this would

diminish their collective right to Palestine. All this collectivity conferred by him on the Jews never once reminded the eminent theologian that Palestinians may have a collectivity of their own. The biblical foundations of his theopolitics would preclude such an even-handed approach.

The increasing preoccupation of the fundamentalist Christians with the text of the Bible dealing with history and with prophecy keeps Israel on their minds and in their sermons. Most Christians, therefore, cannot escape confronting the issue of the relevance of the State of Israel to their beliefs, hence taking a stand, mostly a negative one, toward Palestinian fundamental rights. Rejecting any relevance of the question of Israel to their religious life might require strenuous theological exercises. Accepting it, on the other hand, is accepting on faith the total and absolute authority of the Biblical text. Either way, Israel is a question of concern to most American Christians. Their awareness of the Jewish State, its problems, wars, and enemies exceed their awareness of any other country.

To the majority of fundamentalist Christians, the Jews have not accepted Christ, therefore their prayers cannot be heard. Yet these same people support Israel wholeheartedly because they believe that the creation of the Jewish State is a sign, according to biblical prophecy, that the Messiah is coming. In fact the event of Israel's existence to them is a condition of that coming. The Jew may not be totally an acceptable person in his current state of non-belief, but he is still a chosen one who will eventually be saved. No such status is accorded to the Palestinians. They are hopelessly locked into a negative role; they are non-persons, and non-persons have no claim to rights. Their greatest misfortune is that they constitute a stumbling block in the road of salvation. The term "terrorist" given to Palestinians constantly by fundamentalist ministers such as Jerry Falwell, take an added meaning. It contains eternal evil connotations. An evil that is as predestined and absolute as the chosenness of the holy race and the salvation of the true believers are predestined and absolute.

An advertisement placed in 1976 by a large group of churchmen, mostly Baptist, in many important newspapers, illustrates very well this absolute discriminatory attitude. It says in part:

Because the Jewish people are the people of prophecy they are the people of the land. And we, knowing Him who made the promise, totally support the people and the land of Israel in their God-given, God-promised, God-ordained right to exist. Any person or group of nations opposed to this right isn't just fighting Israel. But God and Time itself.

How, one might ask, can the Palestinians claim any right, compassion or justice, when they are fighting Israel, God and Time itself?

THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN CHILD

Salwa Abu Khadra

In November 1975, the General Assembly of the United Nations established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The mandate of this Committee was to recommend a programme designed to achieve respect for those rights and their implementation in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

The Committee recommended a plan of action (A/31/35), which may be summarized as follows:

1. Repatriation of the Palestinian refugees in two phases:
 - (a) The refugees of 1967 - immediate repatriation;
 - (b) The refugees of the period 1948-1967 - repatriation or compensation in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1949;
2. The complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories occupied in 1967 and scrupulous observance by Israel of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civil Persons in Time of War;
3. The establishment of an independent Palestinian entity;
4. The adoption of further arrangements to ensure full respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, taking account of resolution 3375 (XXX) and the need for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region in accordance with all relevant resolutions.

The Committee recalled the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by force and stressed the consequent obligation of total and speedy evacuation of any territory thus occupied.

No action was taken by the Security Council. Thus, the General Assembly, in resolution 34/64 A of 29 November 1979, expressed its regret and concern that the recommendations of the Committee had not been implemented and once again requested the Committee to make appropriate suggestions to that end.

The Israeli entity has taken no account of those regrets, expressions of concern or warnings, whether emanating from the General Assembly or from the Security Council. It has repeated its attacks and acts of aggression against occupied Palestine and southern Lebanon, in towns as well as in refugee camps, disregarding United Nations resolutions and rejecting them with insolence and arrogance.

Although the Charter of the United Nations provides for a whole range of enforcement measures to ensure respect for the resolutions of the Organization, no measure of this kind has so far been taken.

Enforcement measures would, unquestionably, induce Israel to submit to United Nations resolutions, as was the case in 1957, at the time of the aggression against the Suez Canal, when President Eisenhower stated that the United Nations had no other choice than to put pressure on Israel to force it to implement the resolutions calling for its withdrawal.

Unfortunately, the attitude of American leaders vis-à-vis the bellicose aggression to which the Palestinian people and the land of Palestine are continually being subjected has changed radically. It has become selfish and partial, which allows Israel to enjoy unprecedented support and ensures it a veto against any resolution condemning its violations of the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Convention which might lead to the adoption of enforcement measures.

The United States seems to wish to give the Zionists its total support in the construction and maintenance of a State on the land of another people and to disregard the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, some of which were drawn up with the assistance of United States representatives, such as General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 and Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

The State of Israel was established with a plan for expansion and hegemony over the neighbouring Arab States, in accordance with the interests of certain Western Powers. The United States is responsible for the impasse in the Middle East, because it has helped the Zionist entity to become an unrivalled Power in the region by its financial and economic assistance.

Since the Palestinian people is an obstacle to the realization of the Zionist ideology, their extermination, annihilation, deportation and integration in the country of exile and the subjugation of their will to fight in defence of their rights, all serve to ensure the realization of Begin's plans for a "Greater Israel".

The first Zionist leaders launched the slogan: "A land without a people or a people without a land". 1/ (tables 1, 2 and 3).

"This is how the policy of Deir Yassin was imposed, that tranquil village whose whole population was savagely massacred, men, women and children,

and not even the unborn child in its mother's womb was spared". The massacres and expulsions had one aim initially, the establishment of the State. "There can be no Zionist colonization and there can be no Jewish State without the displacement of the Arab population, the confiscation of land and the erection of barriers." 2/

Racial discrimination came in the wake of the State. In order to maintain and develop this State, a new tactic was needed. The Arabs were treated harshly and cruelly.

"In order to force them to leave by every means, it was necessary to raze villages and demolish houses: mass deportation, expulsion and the confiscation of land" - all possible means became legal, as did the Judaization of everything: land, culture, names, places, education and history. Thus, the Palestinian Arabs felt themselves strangers on their own lands, having no national rights to a State or other entity.

It must be Israel and not Palestine. It must be Galilee and Samaria and not the Palestinian West Bank. The citizens must be Israelis and not Palestinians Begin, the one who prepared the Deir Yassin massacre and the recent savage bombing of civilians in Lebanon, seems to be of the opinion that it is necessary to annex the territories and reduce the population by carefully conceived and implemented immigration. The figure of 385 villages destroyed by Israel is given by Israel Shahak. 3/

Begin's 1977 plan distinguishes between the fate of the population and that of the land. The situation of the Palestinian people in exile is completely different. They suffer from infringement of human rights in another form, because of their dispersal and their statelessness. This unique political situation, which has lasted for more than three decades, has even more disastrous consequences for Palestinian children than for adults.

The children born in exile in camps, who have grown up as refugees, who have studied in the crowded classes of UNRWA schools, who have waited for the end of the month to receive their meagre food allowance and who still have no recognized identity - these children (who have never seen their homeland) currently constitute the bulk of revolutionary freedom fighters.

They struggle for the exercise of their national historic rights and so that their children can enjoy the rights proclaimed in the international Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959.

In all countries, children enjoy some of their rights. The young Palestinian, whether living under occupation or living in exile, is almost totally deprived of them. The situation is slightly better for the latter. Measures have been taken on his behalf in the field of health, education and social welfare. The Palestine Liberation Organization, through its various research, planning and education institutions and centres, carefully organizes programmes relating to all areas of life. The importance which it attaches to young Palestinians actually relates to the national interests; only thus can it ensure the quality of the future of the nation and its capacity to survive and prosper.

"Palestinian children and their families have been the victims of aggression, emigration, expulsion, discrimination and exploitation, acts of oppression which have made their youth an ongoing preparation for defence and war."

Palestinian children are therefore sensitive to the tensions of exile and occupation. They experience this situation and share the ordeals of their parents and the deprivation of freedom of their community. Their environment engenders outbursts of aggressiveness, suppressed hatred and a desire for revenge, which are the consequences of subjection to this new form of colonization, namely, the Judaization of the country. The ordeals of war and instability condition their existence. The aggressiveness and tensions are very violently felt and are normally directed against the oppressor (the enemy) who is occupying the land and who has taken possession of the homes. Thus, a stone becomes a grenade in the young person's hand, and the stick is a substitute for a gun. Demonstrations, nationalist slogans and songs and the hoisted Palestinian flag express their natural reaction in defiance of the occupiers. (Security, an indispensable condition for a child's development, does not exist in the life of a young Palestinian.) 4/

If he lives in the occupied territories, a young Palestinian may see his house blown up at any time, and, if he lives elsewhere, he may also see it bombed at any time.

"The ever more numerous ordeals which a Palestinian child must face each day - bombings, expulsion, destruction of property, demolition of houses, arrests and famine - force him to mature and to leave his childhood behind early. Instead of the games with which all children throughout the world amuse themselves, he learns to distinguish the sound of enemy war planes from that of civilian aircraft, he listens to the news and becomes familiar with the various kinds of weaponry ... his mind is concerned not with laughter and amusements but with survival and return." 5/

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted in November 1959, was given practical expression by the proclamation, in 1979, of the International Year of the Child. The Declaration affirms the rights of the child to be given opportunities and facilities to enable him to develop in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity (principle 3), to receive an education (principle 7), to be protected against practices which may foster any form of discrimination (principle 10) and to be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation (principle 9). All the other principles emphasize the right of the child to love, to care, to opportunities, to development and to happiness. The Declaration also states that the child shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.

The attainment of these ideals remains the goal of the international community, but, owing to the exceptional circumstances in which they find themselves, Palestinian children living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the Israeli régime also come up against other difficulties: "They must live with military occupation, and it is an experience that is unknown to the majority of children in the world". 6/

The following is a breakdown of the population by age group:

<u>Number of inhabitants at the end of 1977</u>	<u>West Bank</u>		<u>Gaza Strip and northern Sinai</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0-14	316 000	46.4	209 100	47.5
14-29	183 400	26.9	123 100	27.8
30-44	77 800	11.4	50 300	11.4
45-49	60 500	8.9	37 700	8.5
60 and over	<u>43 300</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>21 100</u>	<u>4.8</u>
	<u>681 000</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>441 300</u>	<u>100.0</u>

It may be seen from these figures that nearly one half of the population is under 14 years of age.

The question of education therefore assumes very great importance.

Educational services

Many reports have given an account of the situation of the educational services and the extent to which the rules imposed by the Israeli occupying authority have influenced the education of Palestinian children, but no-depth study has ever been made of the moral and mental impairment of the children's personalities.

"The educational institutions are managed by the occupying authority [official schools or government schools], by private bodies or by UNRWA." 7/

"In general, the schools follow the Jordanian curriculum of education in the West Bank and the Egyptian curriculum in the Gaza Strip." 8/

In his report on the situation of the national education and the cultural life of peoples in the occupied Arab territories, the Director-General of UNESCO notes that "the government schools in occupied East Jerusalem had their curriculum modified to conform to that applied in the Arab schools of Israel, and the Israeli textbooks used in Israel for its Arab schools were introduced in these government schools." 9/

"The Israeli authorities began to print expurgated and amended versions of the existing Jordanian textbooks used in the West Bank before the occupation.

"The list of titles reprinted by the Israeli authorities for use in West Bank government schools shows that a number of geography and civics books and the school atlas prescribed in the Jordan curriculum have been dropped. ... The texts themselves are often identical, although several books have phrases, paragraphs or complete chapters suppressed." 10/

It was claimed in the survey for the period 1967-1980 prepared by the Israeli Minister of Defence that, since the start of the Israeli military administration, the educational system had been allowed to operate according to the prevailing formula in each area (of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip).

"The Israeli administration has in no way interfered with the 'Arab national system'. The only difference is that the anti-Israeli slanders contained in the textbooks were eliminated." 11/

It was stated also in the survey that, between 1967-1968 and 1977-1978, Israel banned only 14 Jordanian textbooks and 23 Egyptian textbooks. 12/

However, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA stated in his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session (New York, 1980) that, of the 95 textbooks approved by UNRWA for West Bank schools, 82 were approved by the Israeli authorities, who authorized the importation of only 15 of the 69 textbooks approved for schools in the Gaza Strip, while four textbooks were still under consideration. 13/

In a study, ECWA states that the education policy of the Israeli occupying authority seriously limits the acquisition of knowledge regarding Palestinian culture and history. The occupation authorities delete from the curricula everything which relates to Palestine, love of one's country, patriotism and national identity. References to the Arab contribution to the human culture and history are censored. Atlases where the name of Palestine appears are replaced. All ideas which are regarded as incompatible with Zionist and Israeli concepts are banned. 14/

The normal growth of the number of Palestinian students has been slowed down by the disruptions caused by occupation and Israel's policy of annexation: the confiscation of fertile lands, the establishment of settlements, control of water production for irrigation and diversion of the country's economy for military needs. According to Fathiya Nasru, whose study entitled Education in the West Bank Government Schools is quoted in the report of the Group of Experts, "enrolment figures in the first grade, that is, the first year of primary school to the total population had decreased from 3.2 per cent in 1968/69 to 2.7 per cent in 1974/75 ... thus indicating a potential lowering of the literacy level of the population". 15/

According to the Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1978, the number of educational institutions increased from 821 to 1,000 in the West Bank, an increase of 21.8 per cent, and from 166 to 270 in the Gaza Strip, an increase of 38.5 per cent, during the first 10 years of occupation.

According to the ECWA 1968-1977 Statistical Abstract, the number of establishments grew by 33 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic, by 32 per cent in Egypt and by 78.6 per cent in Jordan. 16/

The position of the Zionist entity on the expansion and the efficiency of schools in the occupied territories is controversial; despite denials, several Israeli newspapers, such as The Jerusalem Post of 11 April 1980 and Ha'aretz of 20 March 1980, have claimed that "Israeli occupation authorities discouraged efforts by the inhabitants of the West Bank. and the Gaza Strip to found new schools or to expand existing ones".

The occupation authorities have not applied the pre-1967 law on compulsory schooling.

They have enacted a law stipulating that students who have been arrested or imprisoned shall not be re-admitted to school without the approval of the military government.

Israeli acts of aggression aimed at Palestinian schools are now a well-known fact. In August 1978, Time magazine showed photographs of criminal acts committed in the Beit Jala school. Israeli soldiers, after closing the doors and windows of the building, threw tear-gas bombs into the classrooms. Terrorized, the children jumped from the third floor and a number of them broke their legs; those who did not jump were found unconscious. The Beit Sahour school met the same fate. The Israeli soldiers who were present deplored that situation, which they called "a Nazi act", affirming that some of the children were only 8 to 10 years old.

On 9 April, Israeli military forces attacked the Bir Zeit University and seized the identity cards of 22 students. They also attacked the UNRWA teacher training centre at Ramallah, using tear-gas, clubs and knives. Twenty-four students were wounded, four seriously, and 42 students were arrested during the mass demonstration organized to commemorate the anniversary of the Deir Yassin massacre and to protest against the Israeli decision to expropriate hundreds of dunums of land in order to establish six settlements there. 17/

On 12 April, the occupation authorities closed a secondary school at Safa for an indefinite period. On 1 May, Zionist soldiers attacked the Anabta secondary school; one student was killed and two others wounded. 18/

On 9 June, Zionist soldiers shot three bullets into Taghrid Al-Butma, a 20 year old student, who was going to Bir Zeit University, killing him. 19/

Those are incidents which have repercussions on the atmosphere in which Palestinian children live.

With regard to educational conditions in the occupied territories, the Group of Experts notes in its report that "it would appear that the occupying authorities ... have created and sustained a feeling of insecurity among teachers and students in all educational institutions. The experts were told of constant harassment of students and staff". 20/

Mr. Hanna Nasser, President of Bir Zeit University, stated on the occasion of a visit made to American universities in 1979, following the closure of Bir Zeit University on 2 May 1978, that he had been deported without trial in 1974, while one of his colleagues, Professor Taysir Aruri, had been detained without charge or trial for 45 months and that the University had been closed several times.

"The students in the Department of Education are refused access to the data necessary for research work, and those who wish to do field work in the schools are prevented. The University's acquisition of non-political academic works and Arab newspapers is subjected to considerable restrictions. The customs exemption in force before occupation is no longer respected. Work permits for foreign faculty are issued only after several months of waiting. The University's community work programmes have been set back considerably". 21/

It should be noted also that military order 854 empowers the military administration officer in charge of educational questions to issue teaching permits to academic university or institutions and that such permits are issued or withdrawn in accordance with security considerations, in which police and military organs are involved. This officer may also withdraw teaching permits from individuals who have been condemned for security-related offences or who have been placed in administrative detention or prevent permits being issued to such persons. Freedom to teach and freedom to receive an education in occupied Palestine must depend on the military officer in charge of educational questions.

In its study "Social programmes and data in the ECWA region", 1980, the Commission touches on another aspect of the life and schooling of Palestinian students: "Students attending various levels of schooling are often compelled to drop out of school in order to supplement the family income as a result of the absence or loss of the father, the separation of families and the high rate of inflation". "Young students are recruited for unskilled jobs in various ways, including harassment during examinations in order to make them fail".

[illegible]

Arabs	453,000	91	649,000	92	977,498	70	1,210,922	70	1,400,000	70	156,000
Jews, including	47,000	9	58,000	8	445,457	30	528,702	31	600,000	30	
Emigés			(322,454)		(23)						
			(1,936)		(305,991)						

- * "Give the land without people to the people without land" (Zionist leader Israël Zangwill).
- (a) Two years before the creation of the Zionist movement at the first Zionist Congress in 1895 at Basle.
- (b) Two years after the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration, whereby the United Kingdom promises to make Palestine the national home of the Jewish people.
- (c) Before the outbreak of the 1948 war and the creation of the Zionist entity.
- (d) After the creation of the Zionist entity.

Table 2
USURPATION OF LANDS IN PALESTINE BY THE ZIONISTS (1895-1967)
(AREAS IN DUNUMS – PERCENTAGES)

	1895		1919		1939		1944		1947		1948		1967
	Dunums	%	Dunums	%	Dunums	%	Dunums	%	Dunums	%	Dunums	%	
Total	26,320,000	100	26,320,000	100	26,320,000	100	26,320,000	100	26,320,000	100	26,320,000	100	All of Palestine is occupied by Israel
Owned by Arabs	26,212,900	99.5	25,670,000	97.5	24,786,600	94.4	24,588,700	93.5	11,457,096	43.5	5,948,320	22.6	
Owned by Jews	107,100	0.5	650,000	2.5	1,533,400	5.6	1,731,300	6.5	14,862,904	56.2	20,371,680	77.4	
Number of Jewish settlements	14		71		231		259		Partition of Palestine by force and war				

Table 3
NUMBER OF ZIONIST SETTLEMENTS ESTABLISHED ANNUALLY DURING THE PERIOD 1895-1980

Year	1895	1919	1939	1944	1947	1948	1949	1967	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1979-1983
Number of settlements	14	71	231	259	Partition of Palestine	War		June war	October war	30	30		70	28	...	84*

* Estimate given in the master plan for expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (1979-1983), quoted by the World Zionist Organization, Rural Settlement Service, Jerusalem 1978. This figure represents the establishment of 46 proposed new settlements and completion and expansion of 38 others under construction or already in existence.

Table 4
COMPARISON OF SALARIES DRAWN BY TEACHERS IN ISRAEL AND IN THE WEST BANK ON
1 JANUARY 1981, IN ISRAELI SHEKELS

Qualifications	Years of experience	Gross salary in Israel	Net salary in Israel	Gross salary, West Bank	Net salary, West Bank	Percentage difference between Israeli net salaries and West Bank salaries	Average percentage difference between Israeli salaries and West Bank salaries
B.A.	1	3 382 7	2 549 9	2 120 8	1 839 0	38.6%	57%
	10	4 826 6	3 301 2	2 370 9	2 000 6	65.0%	
	20	5 786 9	3 722 2	2 709 6	2 208 9	68.0%	
Qualified teacher	1	3 061 6	2 341 9	1 787 8	1 604 5	45.9%	64.7%
	10	4 429 2	3 102 5	2 087 4	1 813 3	71.1%	
Graduate of a teacher training school	20	5 349 2	3 547 5	2 370 9	2 000 6	77.3%	

Note: According to Elziona, Israeli salaries were to increase by 60 per cent

Recommendations: The result would be an increase in the gap between the salaries of Israeli teachers and those of West Bank teachers

NOTES

- "Give the land without a people to the people without a land", Zionist leader Israel Zangwill. See, for example, Yigal Allon, Ha Sepler Ha Palmach; Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny of Israel; Menahem Begin, The Revolt. Stay of the Irgun.
- Yesha Arjahu Ben-Pirai, Yediot Aharot, 14 July 1972.
- See Guy Derthur, Le racisme de l'Etat d'Israël, Paris, 1975.
- Bassem Sarhan, The Arab Children - Generation of Liberation, p. 98.
- Ibid.
- Report of the Group of Experts.
- Report of the Group of Experts, p. 33.
- Report of the Group of Experts, p. 33

9. Eighteenth session of the UNESCO General Conference, 1974, Paris: UNESCO 1974 (18 C/16) p. 19.
10. Report of the Group of Experts.
11. Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, 1 July 1979 – 30 June 1980, Supplement No. 13 (A/35/13), New York, 1980, p. 13.
12. Ministry of Defence of Israel, Co-ordinator of Government Operations in Judaea and Samaria, Gaza District, Sinai, Golan Heights, A Thirteen-Year Survey (1967-1980), p. 13.
13. Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, 1980.
14. ECWA, Beirut, "Social programmes and data in the ECWA region" (Beirut, 1980), p. 9.
15. Report of the Group of Experts, p. 34.
16. Percentages calculated on the basis of the figures given in the 1968-1977 Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (third session, Beirut, 1980).
17. Najla Nusseir, report of the General Union of Palestinian Women on Palestinian children under occupation, 1979. (For Zionist settlement of Palestine, land confiscation and the establishment of settlements, see tables 1, 2 and 3 annexed hereto.)
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Report of the Group of Experts, p. 36.
21. Mr. Hanna Nasser, message addressed to American universities, 1979.
22. See International Labour Organisation, action taken on the resolutions adopted by the International Labour Conference at its fifty-ninth to sixty-fourth sessions, supplement to the report of the Director-General, International Labour Organisation, sixty-fifth session, 1979.
23. Israeli Democratic Women's Movement, 1975.
24. Report of the General Union of Palestinian Teachers to the fifteenth Palestine National Council, held at Damascus in 1981.
25. Statement by the Israeli representative (Shulamith Khenin) at the World Congress for a Peaceful and Secure Future of All Children, held in Moscow in September 1979.
26. Ibid.
27. My Eye-Witness.
28. Ghattas Abou Atyieh, Status of the Palestinian Child in the Occupied Land, 1979, p. 7.
29. Palestine Refugees Today, UNRWA Newsletter No. 89, June 1979, Vienna (Austria).
30. Romesh Chandra, President of the World Peace Organization, New Perspective Magazine, 6 March, 1978, 1979.

RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SUPERPOWERS

Sardar Muhammad

The Palestinian people are in a state of dislocation and dispersion for the last 33 years. Their statelessness has denuded them of human rights, and their subjugation/dependence has deprived them of the commonly accepted standards of civilized being and living. They live in perpetual dehumanizing conditions, and are in constant danger of their lives. The fruits of human civilization, social and political progress as expressed by the world community in the form of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have failed to reach them.

The world community has reached a consensus on the common standards of acceptable international conduct by using the forum of the United Nations and expects this body to enforce these measures for all peoples of all nations. The super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - as the repositories of the greatest military and economic power, and thereby the wielders of dominant influence in world affairs, continue to play an important role in setting the tone of the outcome of deliberations, debates and discussion of United Nations organs. By and large, it is their power and influence, both within and without the folds of the United Nations that determine the effectiveness of the decisions and resolutions of the various organs of the world body. Their policies of economic and military aid, and diplomatic and political support help or hinder the implementation of consensus of the world community on human rights.

Against the above backdrop, this article is an attempt to describe and analyse the extent of deprivation of the human rights of the Palestinian people and the policies of Israel in this regard. The foregoing objective is intended to be achieved by focusing on:

1. Standards of civilized being as decided upon by the world community in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the efforts of United Nations organs to implement them with regard to the Palestinian people;
2. The role of the super-Powers in providing and/or forestalling the human rights of the Palestinian people, both within and without the United Nations; and
3. Suggested ways and means for the removal of obstructions in the way of the realization of human rights for the Palestinian people.

I. The Problem

1. The Palestinian people

The Palestinian people have been in the "diaspora" since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Britain got the mandate over Palestine from the League of Nations on 24 July 1922 ^{1/}. Earlier, on 2 November 1917, through the Balfour Declaration, Britain had promised the Zionists "the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people". ^{2/}

Britain, as the mandatory power, facilitated large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine. At the time of the issuing of the Balfour Declaration, the Jewish population in Palestine numbered some 56,000 against an Arab population of 600,000. At the end of 1946 Palestine contained 1,887,000 people of whom

625,000 were Jews. 3/

Failing to resolve the conflicting moral-legal claims of the Palestinians and the Zionists, which over time had become political issues as well, Britain turned over the whole Palestine question to the United Nations. The eleven-nation United Nations Special Committee on Palestine recommended the partitioning of Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an internationalized Jerusalem. The General Assembly adopted the notion of partition on 29 November 1947. 4/

Immediately war ensued between the Palestinians and the Zionists. On 15 May 1948, the proclamation for the establishment of the State of Israel was issued. The involvement of neighbouring Arab States in support of the Palestinian people catapulted the conflict in Palestine between the rival nationalisms into a contest between the Arab States and Israel.

The outcome of the Arab-Israel war of 1948 produced far-reaching modifications in the original United Nations partition plan. The Palestinian Arab State envisaged by the plan failed to emerge. The armistice agreements between Jordan and Israel, and between Egypt and Israel of April 1949 and February 1949 respectively, gave Israel some 2,500 square miles which she formally annexed to the 5,600 square miles allotted to her by the partition plan. Transjordan acquired 2,200 square miles, which she formally annexed, transforming herself into the State of Jordan. Egypt retained control of the Gaza Strip, some 135 square miles. 5/

The non-materialization of the Palestinian State produced major reshuffling of Palestine's population. Chased by the Irgun terrorists, over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled from their homeland: Lebanon received 80,000, Jordan 400,000, Syria 70,000 and the Gaza Strip 150,000. Some 120,000 remained under Israeli control. 6/ The General Assembly resolution of December 1948, declared the expelled Palestinians as refugees, with a right to return or compensation.

The Middle East war of June 1967 brought about further territorial and demographic changes. Israeli forces captured the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from the Arabs, placing 1 million Palestinians under the control of the occupying forces. The number of Palestinians living in Arab States crossed the mark of 1 million.

The Zionist expansionism has rendered more than a million Palestinian people homeless. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip about a million have been placed under the direct control of Israel.

2. Israel and the occupied territories

The occupying power of Palestine, Israel, is a parliamentary democracy. It claims to maintain high standards of "justice" and civilized life.

The occupied territories are under military government. Armed forces, rather than civilians, are responsible for law enforcement and public security. The residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are largely subject to military orders, which deny most human rights to the Palestinian people. The Government of Israel has consistently violated the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, pertaining to the protection of civilian population under military rule. Rather, it adamantly maintains that these territories are not within the purview of the said Convention.

The Palestinian people living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip enjoy very little normal civilian life. Arab newspapers are published under strict censorship. There is no freedom of speech and expression. Municipal elections were permitted in 1972 and 1976, but the one scheduled for spring 1980 was postponed indefinitely. Beyond this political activity and organization is banned.

The occupying authorities have increasingly applied stringent measures toward the Palestinian people. Israeli interrogators routinely ill treat and often torture Arab "security suspects". Torture is used to extract information as well as to pacify occupied territories. The purpose appears to be to bring home to the Palestinian people in the occupied territories that it is least painful to behave passively.

The Palestinian people in the occupied territories have been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, including deportation. The severity and frequency of such occurrences has increased following the death of six Jewish settlers in Hebron on 2 May 1980. Twice severe curfews were imposed in Hebron, causing extreme hardships to the residents. Males in villages and refugee camps have been rounded up and held outdoors for extended periods of time as a form of general punishment of the inhabitants. The Mayors of Hebron and Halboul and the Qadi of Hebron were deported to Lebanon on charges of inciting people to violence. 7/

Excessive force has been used to quell or disperse protest demonstrations. In November 1980, troops deliberately fired at the legs of demonstrating youths and wounded 16 boys and girls. 8/

The Palestinian people have been subjected to administrative detentions in gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention under which administrative detention is not permissible beyond one year from the "general close of military operations." Though administrative detainees have recourse to appeal, it is rarely exercised, as appeals have never resulted in a reversal of the decision of the military authorities.

Alleged security offenders are tried by the military courts. Though the accused can engage a counsel for his defence, the convictions are mostly based on confessions obtained through coercion and torture. 9/ No appeal against the military court's verdict is possible.

The military authorities enter private homes and institutions in pursuit of security objectives. During the May-June 1980 crackdown, several breakages, despoliations and beatings took place. Settlers taking advantage of the situation engaged in vandalism and looting. The soldiers plundered the homes during the military search of the village of Silvad in December 1980. 10/ In violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention the houses of individuals believed to have been involved in terrorism have been demolished or sealed up, and families displaced. Between July 1967 and August 1971, Israel demolished 16,212 homes and deported 1,130 known "agents of subversion". At least 23 homes were demolished in 1980, and at least six other homes were sealed up on security grounds. Near the site of the 2 May 1980 attack, Israeli authorities blew up a number of commercial establishments. 12/

Extremist Israelis frequently indulge in terrorist acts against the Palestinian people. On 2 June 1980, the Mayors of Ramallah were maimed by bombs allegedly set for them by Jewish extremists. 13/

Israel has restricted economic development of the occupied territories on both commercial and political grounds. It is keeping the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as captive markets. In contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention's Article 49, Israel has established more than 100 non-military settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Land appropriations for settlements have adversely affected the livelihood of many Arabs, compelling them to quit farming and become day labourers. Palestinian agriculture and livestock has been adversely affected due to the exploitation of limited water resources in the West Bank by the Jewish settlers.

The occupying authorities closed several schools, including Bir Zeit University, for extended periods. In July 1980, the military governor assumed the power to dismiss university students, bar professors and revoke university charters.

The policies and practices of Israel toward the Palestinian people clearly demonstrate the degree to which the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and mutually agreed upon human rights are being violated by Israel in the occupied territories.

Having discussed the background of the problem, the problem of the Palestinian people's human rights and the Israeli violations of human rights of the Palestinian people, it is intended to explain in the following section the framework of human rights as well as the efforts made by the world body to enforce the same in respect of the Palestinian people.

II. Human Rights and United Nations Initiatives in Respect of the Human Rights of the Palestinian People

1. Interpretation of the concept of human rights

The issue of human rights has assumed increasing importance in the past one century or so. Slavery has been abolished. Rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities are protected. Acts of barbarity and genocide on the subject people do not go unnoticed, unchallenged and unreprimanded.

The concept of human rights is understood differently by people pursuing different socio-economic goals. In the West, the emphasis is on the political dimension i.e., the right to vote and hold public office, rights of freedom of speech and assembly, personal protection against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and the right to a fair public trial. In the developing countries the achievement of economic and social rights, such as the meeting of basic human needs for adequate food, clothing and shelter, takes precedence over political rights like sharing in the political process. Communist doctrine does not confer individual rights. Human rights are defined collectively in terms of the needs of the State, which are considered paramount.

Traditionally, national governments have been considered responsible for ensuring proper enjoyment of and protection against any violation of the rights of the people. But the conviction that the violation of human rights is the responsibility of the world community has brought in international organizations to achieve this end. Human rights provisions have been included in the United Nations Charter, which specifically makes mention of the protection of human rights. The preamble reads:

"We, the people of the United Nations determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,..."

Among the purposes of the establishment of the United Nations, Article I includes:

"To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion;"

And Article 55 emphasizes:

"With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

... universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights drew up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948. The thirty articles of the Declaration cover the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The General Assembly proclaimed it "common standards of Achievement in human rights for all peoples of all nations". It is indubitably an authoritative interpretation of the human rights provisions of the United Nations Charter and is the basis for most of the subsequent United Nations actions in the field of human rights.

2. United Nations initiatives and the human rights of the Palestinian people

Actualization of human rights, as embodied in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the responsibility of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies. The United Nations organs have taken certain concrete actions in respect of the human rights of the Palestinian people, which are briefly discussed below.

The human rights of the Palestinian people were spelled out, for the first time, in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. ^{14/} The resolution is a major reassertion of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. It defines, in the operative paragraph, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as follows:

"the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, the right to return to their homes and property... the right... to regain its rights by all means ... (the right to be represented as) a principal party in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East,"

An important implication of the General Assembly resolution is that it legitimizes armed struggle, by the Palestinian people, against the occupying power to liberate their homeland.

In the following years the General Assembly repeatedly reaffirmed these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975; 31/20 of 24 November 1976; 32/40 of 2 December 1977; 33/28 of 7 December 1978; 34/65 of 19 December 1979; and 35/169 A of 15 December 1980; all under the agenda item "Question of Palestine".

Concrete measures were initiated by the General Assembly in its thirtieth session (1975) in the direction of implementation of its resolution in respect of the rights of the Palestinian people. By its resolution 3375 (XXX), the Security Council was requested to take the necessary action to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its rights. By its resolution 3376 (XXX) the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was set up and entrusted with the task of formulating a programme of implementation of its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, and thereby enabling the Palestinian people to exercise the rights contained in that resolution. The Committee was specifically to maintain international concern for progress toward a just solution of the Palestine problem.

The Committee submitted its report to the General Assembly on 21 July 1976, making recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. 15/ It proposed a two-stage plan for the return of all the Palestinian people to their homeland. In state I, Security Council resolution 237 (1967) was to be implemented. The Palestinian people displaced as a result of the 1967 war were to return to Palestine with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross and/or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. State II was to be carried out through the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (1948) pertaining to the rights of the refugees of return or compensation. The Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the new Palestinian entity, as well as other concerned States, were to be associated with this operation. The following guidelines were laid down by the Committee for the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity:

1. The Security Council should establish a timetable for the complete withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied in the 1967 war.
2. The Security Council should provide temporary peacekeeping forces to facilitate the process of Israeli withdrawals.
3. The United Nations should take over all evacuated territories to be handed over the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian people.
4. Upon the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States involved and the Palestinian people, should make necessary arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), the Security Council, in 1976, debated the issue of political rights for the Palestinian people. The draft resolution introduced by six non-aligned countries expressly affirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as proclaimed by the General Assembly. It stated that, for a just and lasting peace, Israel should withdraw "from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967". 16/ The Security Council failed to adopt it because of the United States veto. Under the agenda item "The question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights" the Security Council again discussed the issue of Palestinian rights in June 1976, 17/ and October 1977, 18/ but again the draft resolutions were killed because of the United States' negative veto.

In view of the importance of self-determination as a basic human right and as the prerequisite for the exercise of all other human rights, the Commission on Human Rights adopted two resolutions in 1978. The Commission in its resolution 2 of 14 February 1978, entitled "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation" affirmed "the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and the establishment of a fully independent and sovereign State in Palestine". It further affirmed their right to return to their homes from which they had been uprooted and displaced. It called for a return of all Palestinian refugees as a component of their right to self-determination and recognized their right to regain their rights by all means in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. 19/ In resolution 3 of 14 February 1978, under the same title, the Commission reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence, territorial integrity, national unity and sovereignty without external interference. 20/

In December 1978, the General Assembly, in its resolution 33/29, called for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem, in which the Palestinian people attained all its inalienable national rights. It declared that peace must be based on Israel's "withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories". 21/ In resolution 33/28 of 7 December 1978, the General Assembly asked the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people to keep the situation under review; urged the Security Council to take a decision on the Committee's recommendations; and asked the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights continue to discharge the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly resolution 33/28. It emphasized the need for "full attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, and with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization". 22/

At the request of the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, the Security Council met on 30 April 1980, to consider the question of continuing violation by Israel of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as well as the recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly. However, the draft resolution introduced by Tunisia reaffirming the rights of the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable national right to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent state in Palestine, the right to return home, could not be adopted because of the United States' veto. 23/

The General Assembly, in its resolution 35/169 A of 15 December 1980, deplored that the Palestine problem was still unresolved. It reaffirmed that the goal of attainment of just and lasting peace in the Middle East could not be realized without ensuring the inalienable rights of return and the right of self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine for the Palestinian people. 24/

The United Nations has been concerned with the socio-economic and cultural rights of the Palestinian people. The Secretary-General's report of October 1977 25/ led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 32/161 of 19 December 1977, specifying the following economic rights of the Palestinian people: 26/

1. "... the right of the Arab States and peoples whose territories are under Israeli occupation to full and effective sovereignty and control over their natural and all other resources ..."
2. "... the right of the Arab States and peoples ... to the restitution ... and full compensation for the exploitation, depletion and loss and damages to their natural, human and all other resources ..."

The General Assembly has criticized and condemned the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territory which has worse economic and social consequences for the Palestinian people. It set up a Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of Occupied Territories by its resolution 2443 (XXII) of 19 December 1968. The annual reports of the Committee provide wealth of information on Israeli breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

Our discussion of the United Nations role for the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, clearly brings out the following two points:

1. The world community has not remained indifferent to the plight of the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories. It is now almost a decade that the concern has been expressed in clear terms for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people through the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, every year;
2. The record of the two main organs of the United Nations - the General Assembly and the Security Council - with respect to the restoration of the

rights of the Palestinian people should be of special interest to the students of international organization as well as cause for concern to those who are interested in a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. While the representative body of all peoples of all nations - the United Nations General Assembly - has supported the cause of uprooted and oppressed Palestinian people, the Security Council, the preservative of big Power interests, has failed to translate the General Assembly concern for the lamentable plight of the Palestinian people into some meaningful action.

From the foregoing discussion, it would be evident that though many measures had been initiated by the United Nations to implement the provisions of its Charter in respect of human rights and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the case of the Palestinian people, nothing has come about so far. The resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Commission on Human Rights have turned out to be nothing more than nice documents wanting implementation.

In the next section we intend to shift the focus of our discussion to the role of super-Powers on the question of human rights for the Palestinian people.

III. Super-Powers and the Human Rights of the Palestinian People

Factually speaking, both the United States and the Soviet Union cast their votes, in the General Assembly in November 1947, for the creation of the Zionist State in Palestine. They conferred recognition of statehood on it in the immediate aftermath of the issuing of the proclamation of its establishment on 15 May 1948.

The creation of the State of Israel in Palestine rendered thousands of Palestinian people homeless. Although the Palestinian problem is there since 1948, the super-Powers, by and large, did not show much concern for the plight of these displaced persons till the morrow of the Arab-Israel war of June 1967. Apparently they were content with the refugee status of the Palestinian people till the issuing of the National Charter by the Palestine Liberation Organization in July 1968, and the Jordanian crisis of September 1970. They regarded them mainly a United Nations responsibility, with a right to choose between return or compensation.

The shock of the events of 1967 politicized the Palestinian problem and converted the Palestinians from refugees to a people with national rights. Hijackings and attacks on persons and places brought them in sharp focus of world attention, including that of the super-Powers.

1. The United States

The United States feels a strong moral and political commitment to the survival and political independence of Israel. Israel's security and well-being are a top priority concern of policy-makers in the United States. The United States policy toward the restoration and realization of the human rights of the Palestinian people has been mostly guided and dictated by her commitments to Israel.

The United States has so far refused to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization, the spearhead of the Palestinian people's struggle to liberate Palestine and establish their independent sovereign state. Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State of America, capitulated on the issue of Palestinian participation in the Geneva Peace Conference in December 1973, when Israel refused to go to Geneva if the Palestinians were present.

The United States-Israel pact at Geneva, initialled at the time of the signing of Sinai II, by Egypt and Israel, bound Washington to continue to adhere to policy whereby it would not recognize or negotiate with PLO ^{27/} and promised Israel the right to veto the participation of PLO in any future peace conference in Geneva. In the United States-Israeli Memorandum of Agreement, it was agreed that the United States would prevent efforts by others to bring about consideration of proposals detrimental to the interests of Israel. ^{28/}

These commitments by the United States have led to Washington's unqualified diplomatic and political support to Israel on all issues including the question of human rights of the Palestinian people. This has been both inside and outside the United Nations. The United States has cast mostly negative votes on draft resolutions introduced in the General Assembly opposed by Israel. In the Security Council, the United States has consistently vetoed almost all draft resolutions impinging upon Israel.

The United States cast a negative vote in the Security Council and killed the draft resolution pertaining to the rights of the Palestinian people introduced by six non-aligned countries in January 1976. ^{29/} The draft resolution contained provisions affirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It demanded Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories as a prerequisite of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This performance was repeated by the United States in June 1976 and October 1977, when the issue of Palestinian rights under the agenda item "The question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights" came for discussion before the Security Council. ^{30/}

A draft resolution, pertaining to the rights of the Palestinian people, introduced by Tunisia in the Security Council, was vetoed by the United States on 30 April 1980. The draft resolution had demanded an affirmation from the Council of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent sovereign State of Palestine. ^{31/}

The United States has made huge inputs of economic and military aid to Israel ^{32/} (as is clear from table 1). This has made Israel intransigent and obdurate. The American policy-makers say that the aid is aimed at making Israel flexible in her policies through strengthening her security and economy. But, in actual fact, the more strong militarily and economically the Israelis become, the more obstinacy, intransigence and obduracy they exhibit in their policies toward the Palestine question.

The receipt of most advanced weapon systems from the United States has given the Israelis a feeling that they can sit tight, perpetuate occupation and thereby continue trampling the rights of the Palestinian people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with impunity. They have developed an aura of conquerors about themselves. The United States has made Israeli defence virtually impregnable and offence uninterceptable through a supply of most advanced weapons in her arsenal and by creating a strategic weakness in the Arab front through the withdrawal of Egypt as a result of the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty of March 1979.

Thus, by and large, the United States policies toward the Middle East and its problems are an obstruction to the materialization of the rights of the Palestinian people. The United States has criticized Israel's settlement policy in occupied territories as immoral and illegal. It has objected to the annexation of Jerusalem, occasionally has blamed Israel for ill-treatment of the residents of occupied territories, but the impact of its over-all policies has been detrimental to the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people.

In analysing the role of the successive administrations in Washington toward the rights of the Palestinian people, one wonders why a country whose internal policies on human rights are so praiseworthy has not reflected the same in the case of the Palestinian people. Apparently, one plausible interpretation of this is the United States Government's total commitment to ensure the continued existence of Israel under political pressure produced within the country.

2. The Soviet Union

From the spring of 1968, the Soviet mass media and the Government increased their interest in the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Contacts were maintained with PLO through Egypt. In the aftermath of the June 1967 war, the Soviet Union became sympathetic to the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of PLO, paid his first visit to Moscow in 1972.

The Soviet Union, in the post-October 1973 Arab-Israel war period, began to insist that any political solution to the Arab-Israel conflict must include the fulfilment of the "national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people". It implied that after the Israeli withdrawal a Palestinian sovereign entity should be established in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Moscow increasingly sought to prove the indispensability of PLO in any Arab-Israel settlement. At the same time the Soviet Union tried to augment the political strength and significance of PLO.

In a joint communiqué, on 15 November 1973, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia endorsed the Palestinian people's demand for a national entity. ^{33/} And in June 1974, Soviet sources stated clearly that "the national legitimate rights of the Palestinians" which Moscow supported, meant an independent state. ^{34/}

The Soviet Union, with a view to facilitating Palestinian participation at Geneva, demanded a new interpretation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). They wanted to make it acceptable to the Palestinian people. An article in *Izvestia* said, for example, that the Geneva Peace Conference would convene with the participation of PLO only on condition that the Palestinian question be defined "as a political question, as a question of security, the lawful national rights of the Arab people of Palestine and is not confined to the refugee problem". ^{35/}

Arafat, during his November 1974 visit to Moscow, officially met Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin. TASS announcement of the meeting between Kosygin and Arafat was worded as if this were the meeting between two heads of government. ^{36/} The joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit, pledged the Soviet Union's continued support for "the struggle of the Arab people of Palestine, for their legitimate rights, including their inalienable rights to self-determination and the creation of their own national home up to the formation of their statehood". ^{37/}

The Soviet Union has consistently cast positive votes on all draft resolutions affirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, before the General Assembly or the Security Council. It has been very critical of the United States negative votes in the General Assembly and Washington's use of veto on draft resolutions before the Security Council demanding the materialization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent sovereign state.

A question may be asked here whether the Soviet Union's stand on the issue of human rights for the Palestinian people is based on a genuine concern for the Palestinians or on political expediency with an eye on the future in respect of the Middle East region. Probably both considerations are there. Undoubtedly the Soviet Union's efforts to champion the cause of the Palestinians at various forums is noteworthy. However, the motives underlying this are not very clear; particularly when one looks into its own internal record on human rights. Thus, one may be forced to conclude that the Soviet position on the question is not entirely free from political overtones.

Our discussion of super-Powers' role in respect of the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people may be concluded with the note that nothing substantial can be expected out of the super-Powers' activities. This leads us to the logical question, that is, what should be done to redeem the situation? The next section of the article is devoted to answering this question by advancing a few suggestions.

IV. Suggestions for a Future Course of Action

Despite the General Assembly's repeated annual declarations that the Palestinian people have national rights, such as the right to self-determination leading to the establishment of a sovereign political entity, nothing has come about so far. The main factor has been the Security Council's inability to act. The General Assembly's formal resolutions could not be converted into a plan of action for the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people because of the unqualified support that comes from the United States for Israel. Consequently, the General Assembly call to the Security Council to apply sanctions against Israel has not found unanimously accepting ears in Security Council circles.

What can be done under these circumstances to materialize the human rights of the Palestinian people? The following suggestions may be worth pondering in this regard:

1. The PLO as a co-ordinating and integrating force for the various groups and opinions within the Palestinian people should act to galvanize all possible support that can accrue to it so as to strengthen itself to achieve the goal for which it has been established. A two-pronged action is likely to help achieve this goal. On the one hand, at the organizational level, it should pay greater attention to internal cohesion and unity. Common bonds of identity-background, ethnicity, socio-economic geographic, cultural etc - and destiny - the creation of sovereign independent Palestinian state-among the Palestinian people should be emphasized and propagated. Differences - organization and purposive - in the ranks of Palestinian people should be amicably settled because internal dissension and absence of unity in thought and organization are likely to hamper all plans of goal attainment. Unity and cohesion will help generate an indigenous force that will have to be reckoned with by all related to this problem. On the other hand, efforts should be directed to tap all sources of strength - political, diplomatic, economic and military - at the regional as well as international levels. Proper propagation will build image and enhance the prestige of the PLO as the sole representative body of the Palestinian people and augment its power to influence the decisions of international actors involved in the question of Palestine.
2. Greater attention should be paid and utilization be made of the alternative forums, for example, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. They constitute a majority in the global political structure; the former has 94 members and the latter's strength stands at 42 States.

Moreover, most of the members of these organizations have experienced in the past the problem of deprivation of human rights; therefore, full co-operation and solid support can be expected of them. They have already taken up the cause of the Palestinian people and pressure on the super-Powers from the above-mentioned countries will hopefully lead to new initiatives that may force Israel to submit to the legitimate desires of the world body. An equally useful weapon may be bringing economic pressure on Israel from the super-Powers.

3. The United States should be made to realize that its policy of partial settlement in the Middle East has reached a *cul de sac* and that it has not helped in achieving the goal of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Therefore, it must use its economic and military leverage with Israel to achieve a comprehensive settlement that takes into account all problems and all parties to the conflict.

4. The PLO should try to make fuller use of the American media to inform the American people how a persecuted people, the Jews, have become persecutors themselves and that the successive American administrations are largely responsible for this. It should be emphasized to them that the ideals of human dignity and honour that they preach and practice within America should be made available to the homeless Palestinian people.

It is expected that these steps will help arouse the moral sense of the American people to neutralize the pressure of the Jewish lobby on the policy-makers in Washington.

A situation in which the super-Powers begin to look at the question of Palestine without coloured glasses and adopt a policy posture on the basis of the merits of the case, both within and without the United Nations, will help materialize the human rights of the Palestinian people. Predictably an intense awareness about the magnitude of the problems and the potential dangers which permeate the region may produce pressure on administrations in the United States and the Soviet Union to seek a total settlement of the problem whereby a Palestinian people will be established.

Conclusion

The problem of Palestine has been festering for the last 33 years and the Palestinian people are languishing for their human rights.

Israel continues to follow a course wherein the Palestinian people suffer a deprivation of their human rights. American military and economic aid had encouraged Israel in the pursuit of this policy and has made her adamant to the extent of flouting world opinion.

The United Nations has failed as a world body to implement its resolutions that would lead to resolving the issue of Palestinian people. Its efforts at redeeming the Palestinian people's situation has hardly borne any fruits because of the American administration's attitude. Nor has the Soviet policy of coolness to active espousal of the Palestinian people's cause done any good to the Palestinian people.

Since much cannot be expected from the United Nations or from the super-Powers, it is advisable to make rigorous use of other forums of opinion, persuasion and pressure. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference platforms may prove to be very effective to bring home to Israel and the super-Powers the need to act immediately to restore the rights of the Palestinian people.

FOOTNOTES

1. For text of the British Mandate over Palestine, see J.C. Hurewitz (ed.), Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record 1914 - 1956 (New York, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 106-111.
2. For text of the Balfour Declaration, see ibid., pp. 25-26.
3. Harry B. Ellis, The Dilemma of Israel. (Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1973), p. 7.
4. For the text of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the partition of Palestine, see J.C. Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 281-295.
5. Nadav Safran, From War to War: The Arab-Israeli Confrontation 1948 - 1967 (New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1969), p. 33.
6. Harry B. Ellis, op.cit., p.7.
7. U.N. Chronicle, July, 1980, p.6.
8. U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1981), p.1002.
9. Insight Team of the Sunday Times, Israel and Torture (Washington, D.C., Free Palestine Press, 1977), pp. 19-20.
10. U.S. Department of State, op.cit., p.1005.
11. Insight Team of the Sunday Times, op.cit., p.18.
12. U.S. Department of State, op.cit., p.1005.
13. Ibid., p.1006.
14. General Assembly Official Records, Suppl. 31, p.4.
15. United Nations document A/31/35.
16. For text of the draft resolution, see United Nations document S/11940.
17. United Nations document S/12119 of 29 June 1976.
18. United Nations document S/Pv.2040 of 27 October 1977.
19. Commission on Human Rights Report on the 24th Session, 6 February - 10 March, 1978, pp. 104-105.
20. Ibid., p. 106.
21. U.N. Chronicle, February, 1979, p. 30.

22. U.N. Chronicle, February, 1979, p. 33.
23. U.N. Chronicle, June, 1980, p. 19.
24. U.N. Chronicle, January, 1981, p. 10.
25. United Nations document A/32/204 of 14 October 1977.
26. Previous General Assembly resolutions on the subject are: 31/196 of 21 December 1976; 3516 (XXX) of 15 December 1975; and 3336 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974.
27. For text of United States - Israel Pact of Geneva, see New York Times, 18 September 1975.
28. For text of Memoranda of Agreement see Washington Post, 16 September 1975.
29. For text of the draft resolution see United Nations document S/11940.
30. For text of the draft resolution, see United Nations document S/12119.
31. For text of the draft resolution, see United Nations document S/13911.
32. Table 1 gives details of official economic and military aid to Israel over the past three years.
33. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereinafter FBIS), 16 November 1973.
34. FBIS, 5 June 1974.
35. Quoted by Baruch Gurewitz, "The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Organizations" in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.) The Limits to Power: Soviet Policy in the Middle East (London, Biddles Ltd., 1979), p. 262.
36. FBIS, 29 November 1974.
37. FBIS, 9 December 1974.

TABLE I
UNITED STATES LOANS AND GRANTS TO ISRAEL
(in millions of dollars per fiscal year)

		1978	1979	1980
I.	Econ. Assist. - Total	791.8	790.1	786.0
	Loans	266.8	265.1	261.0
	Grants	525.0	525.0	525.0
A.	Aid	785.0	785.0	785.0
	Loans	260.0	260.0	260.0
	Grants	525.0	525.0	525.0
	(Sec.Supp.Assist.)	785.0	785.0	785.0
B.	Food for Peace	6.8	5.1	1.0
	Loans	6.8	5.1	1.0
	Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0
Title I-Total		6.8	5.1	1.0
	Repay. in S-Loans	6.8	5.1	1.0
	Pay. in for. Curr.	0.0	0.0	0.0
Title II-Total		0.0	0.0	0.0
	E.Relief.Ec.Dev.&Wfp.	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Vol.Relief Agency	0.0	0.0	0.0
C.	Other Econ.Assist	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Loans	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Contr. to IFI	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Peace Corps	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Others	0.0	0.0	0.0
II.	Ml. Assist. - Total	1000.0	4000.0	1000.0
	Loans	500.0	2700.0	500.0
	Grants	500.0	1300.0	500.0
	A. Map Grants	0.0	0.0	0.0
	B. Credit Sales-FMS	500.0	2700.0	500.0
	C. Intl. Ml. Ec.. Trng	0.0	0.0	0.0
	D. Tran-Excess Stock	0.0	0.0	0.0
	E. Other Grants	500.0	1300.0	500.0
III.	Total Econ. & Ml.	1791.8	4790.1	1786.0
	Loans	766.8	2965.1	761.0
	Grants	1025.0	1825.0	1025.0
Other US Loans		5.4	68.7	301.4
	Ex-IM Bank Loans	5.4	68.7	301.4
	All Other	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights, 1980.

The table does not include huge sums that are collected in the United States through tax-free 'charity' and other contributions to funds for Israel and the proceeds from the sale of Israeli bonds in America.

THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND ASIAN PUBLIC OPINION

Dr. Abdul Malik Ali AhmadAuda

The paper discusses the most prominent features of growth and change in reciprocal relations between the Palestinian cause and all its stated issues and position on the one hand, and the States of the Asian continent and all their stated value and policies, on the other, and the manifestations of the results of this dynamic interaction in the modalities of growth and change in Asian public opinion.

The paper, in this abbreviated form, gives the researcher's opinion in the form of comments on a series of known facts, events and trends emerging from this dynamic interaction, which takes into account the general framework of international interaction and reciprocal international relations at the world level during the period extending from 1947-1948 to the beginning of the current decade.

I. The General Framework of Interaction

The content and form of the Palestinian cause has not remained static from 1947 and 1948 to the present day but has been a moving growing reality. Changes have taken place with regard to the intellectual scope of its meaning and structure and with regard to the scope of the movement of the conflict and the parties to this struggle, primary and secondary.

Changes have also taken place with regard to the types and levels of leaderships, ideas and concepts of leadership and national endeavour, the participation of national organizations, either popular or underground movements and the interplay of reciprocal relations between all these parties, particularly in the field of the management of the conflict.

The balances of political, military and information forces have also changed in successive stages during this period, in particular between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, as the fundamental poles in the management of the conflict on the Palestinian issue.

There has been a deep and complex transformation in the structure and policies of the Asian States and Asian public opinion. The number of independent states has increased; their role and their interaction on the world stage has increased; the problems have increased; and the issues have become more complex inside the independent states and in their mutual relations, as a result of comprehensive development experiences, general social change, the effects of international pressures and the struggle between regional forces and major Powers in the contemporary world.

A profound change has occurred in the network of reciprocal international relations at the universal level, within which dynamic interaction takes place between Palestinian cause and the world public opinion in general and the Asian public opinion in particular. Change and movement has taken place and is still taking place at the regional and the world levels. The balances of power have changed as a result of ties between Asian States themselves or between certain Asian States and foreign Powers and forces outside Asia.

The United Nations and its organizations have been the forum for part of this interaction, and interaction has also taken place outside them. There has been an interplay of effects between internal and external factors, since there are currently no fixed and lasting rules governing the political game in its diverse forms among the parties and within each party.

II. Main Features of Asian Public Opinion

Asian public opinion is a part of world opinion, but it has certain special characteristics that occupy a special place in the public opinion of the States and peoples of the Third World. This particularity arises from the following.

The continent and peoples of Asia are unique in the diversity of their religions, their civilization and their culture and have varied degrees of involvement in the long history of mankind.

The continent of Asia is a part of the old world, but it constantly gives evidence of diversity in the value systems of the Asian peoples and communities and in the relations of the peoples with each other and with the peoples of the old and the new worlds.

This means, in my estimation, that the cultural and value structure of public opinion in Asia is of great significance when this public opinion, or the greater part of it, agrees to support the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The continent of Asia, with the States, communities and public opinion there, is the historic home of the call for non-alignment, the building of the first movement of non-aligned States and the call for the elimination of all forms of colonialism and the national liberation and independence.

This means, in my estimation, that historical antecedents and historical human consciousness have meanings and significations and that historic leaderships, political parties and governmental and non-governmental organizations have a heritage in this field. It is from this that their support and backing for the Palestinian people and for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people derive their weight and value. This is clear from the documents of the Non-Aligned Group and the documents of the United Nations, which show the extent and continuity of this support and backing.

Although the majority of Asian States are among the poor nations and belong to the Third World, and although these have their role in the call for replacement of the world economic order and the world information order by new and just world systems, the continent of Asia contains the territories of two of the States which have permanent seats in the Security Council and one of the major industrial States. These are the Soviet Union, China and Japan.

This means, in my estimation, that the three States have a role and an influence at various levels and in various directions in international relations and in the world struggle. They also have, individually or as members of regional groups, interests, policies and ideologies which require interaction with the

Asian States and Asian public opinion, which supports the causes of national liberation, decolonization and opposition to apartheid. The Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people form part of the principles and causes in which Asian public opinion believes and the struggle for whose victory it supports. This is what has happened in the past, and future prospects for increased support and backing lie open.

The history of the issue since 1947 and 1948 emphasizes the Arab role and the Arab participation at all levels, and we find that Arab-Asian interaction has increased and that its positive results have emerged either in the form of bilateral or multilateral relations between States at all levels.

On the continent of Asia live many Islamic peoples, States and communities, and, through their adherence to Islam and organized Islamic groupings, they represent a weight and a reality which has its value and meaning when we speak of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. These Islamic States on the continent of Asia (and on the continent of Africa) have positions and policies on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This means, in my estimation, that interaction between the Islamic States and the other States of Asia has increased and the role of reciprocal relations has grown, which has served to attract wider support for the Palestinian cause. The documents of the Organization of the Islamic Conference confirm this.

The Afro-Asian solidarity movement began in Asia and spread to Africa, and from it derived solidarity between the three continents, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The solidarity movement has historically adopted the call for independence, national liberation, the combat of apartheid and support of the rights of peoples to self-determination and the establishment of their national governments on national soil.

The solidarity movement still has an active role in such areas as the combating of aggression, military invasion, the colonial threat and apartheid. It therefore supports and backs the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people, and, as everyone is aware, the field of action of the Organization of Afro-Asian Solidarity lies in the sphere of peoples and public opinion.

The foregoing explains the meaning and special value of Asian public opinion, and the factors which we have indicated provide its inputs and distribute its outputs. This is what makes Asian public opinion a valuable pillar of support for the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

III. Growth of the Dimensions of the Palestinian Question

Historically, the roots of the Palestinian question and the conflict around it on the world, national and regional levels go back to the beginning of the current century. However, because this Seminar is being convened under the auspices of the United Nations, the paper discusses the period since 1947-1948.

The Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, as discussed in the documents of the United Nations and as proclaimed and fought for by the members and leaderships of the Palestinian people, is the essence of the conflict in the Middle East.

A just and lasting peace in the region cannot be attained and achieved without a just solution of the Palestinian question and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to independence, sovereignty and the establishment of an independent state on their territory, in accordance with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.

A review of the events and documents on the question within the framework of the United Nations and on the soil of Palestine shows decisively that the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict have developed into a situation which threatens peace and security in the region and throughout the world.

There is no room in this brief paper for a comprehensive enumeration of the developments in the complex and involved situation of the Palestinian cause at the present time. It will only give a few examples which explain the meaning of the statement that the Palestinian question has developed in dimensions and content, both as set forth today in the United Nations and as it exists as a living reality in the Middle East region. These explanatory examples are as follows.

1. The question began as a conflict inside Palestine under British imperialism, and with the passing of time, the conflict expanded and extended to the territories of other Arab States. Israel embarked on aggression, invasion and usurpation of these territories by armed force.
2. At the beginning, as now, the first and principal party was the Palestinian people, and, with the passing of time, the dimensions of the conflict expanded and it was joined by other parties supporting the Palestinian people, such as the Arab States, the Islamic States and important increasing numbers of other states and world public opinion. Each still has its role and its level in the conflict.
3. At the beginning of the conflict, the foreign parties' involvement in the issue was represented by British imperialism, which colonized the Arab region with French imperialism at that time. Between 1947 and the present, the positions of the foreign parties involved in the issue in support of or in opposition to the Palestinian party changed, and other foreign parties, such as the Soviet Union, the United States of America and the European Community, entered the arena of the conflict.
4. At the beginning of the conflict, the Palestinian people were in their homeland and on their territory, but now a great part of them live outside the Palestinian homeland. This is not just a reference to the situation of the refugees but to the direct and indirect political and military problems in Lebanon at the present time.
5. There has been a profoundly felt development in the levels of thought, organization and leadership in the social structure of the Palestinian people. We may cite by way of example the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its civilian and military organizational structure and its current leadership. The value and significance of the development are clear if we compare the current situation of the Palestine Liberation Organization with its past history since the establishment of the all-Palestine Government through the stage of the leadership of Ahmad Shuquairy up to the present leadership of Abu Ammar Yasser Arafat.
6. Such development has occurred at various levels in the dimensions and ideological contents of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict. An example may be found in a review of the documents, basic statutes and causes believed in and proclaimed by Palestinian organizations and groups. While there is a consensus on such issues as liberation and self-determination and the building of an independent state, there are wide and diverse differences and individual views in such areas as fields of action, the strategic conception of the struggle and allies, the building of state institutions and the map of social forces in Palestine and in the States of the Arab world.
7. There has been a wide change in the positions of the Arab States at the level of the general view and at the level of details. This is sometimes seen

as rational and sometimes as irrational. There is much that may be said in this area. An indication without expatiation suffices.

To sum up, the essence of the conflict is the Palestinian question and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, but the events of history and the developments in the conflict at the national, regional and world levels have brought changes and new dimensions and elements which have become a part of the basic issue.

The value of this discussion, in my estimation, is that Asian public opinion is aware of and interacts with these developments and the circumstances in which the issue emerges today in that it has a full awareness and appreciation of the meaning of the essence and the origin of the conflict and of international efforts in the United Nations and elsewhere to arrive at a just and lasting solution in accordance with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations.

IV. Indicators of Interaction for Study

The support which the Palestinian cause has received in Asian public opinion is a result of many variables which have occurred from 1947-1948 up to the present time. The accumulated facts and interaction have led to the climate of clear support which prevails in Asia today.

I believe that a detailed analytical study of these indicators will not be possible in this brief paper, and the researcher will confine himself, as has been done so far, to a brief presentation of a small number of explanatory examples and invites new generations of researchers and students to study them in depth and add to them.

The explanatory indicators are as follows.

A change has occurred in the official positions and stated policies of the Asian States generally, and they have gone from a position of neutrality or remoteness or from a position of lack of understanding and lack of support to various levels of positions of support for the Palestinian viewpoint.

We shall point out one example to show the extent of the change in the political positions and the general mentality in a number of Asian States. We may recall what happened in the late 1940s and during the 1950s, when the Zionist movement, the Government of Israel, the Histadrut and other institutions working in the field of Israeli-Asian relations were active. The first Asian Socialist Conference was held in Rangoon in 1953 and the second Asian Socialist Conference in Bombay in 1956, and they were attended by party representatives from Israel. However, with the passing of time, orientations began to change and to take into account other circumstances and policies. Measurements of Asian public opinion at that time compared to measurements of Asian public opinion today show the extent of the great change which has taken place and the deep understanding of the changes and events in this paper.

This is an indication, in my estimation, of the general social change which has affected the communities, peoples and Governments of the Asian States. The quarter of a century which has elapsed since the beginning of the independence and national liberation movement has witnessed intellectual, political and ideological changes and the succession of generations.

This intellectual change in support of the Palestinian viewpoint is confirmed by a study and measurement of the voting indicators in the United Nations and its organizations on the Palestinian question and related issues and events.

It is clearly exemplified by the resolutions of the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session and the resolutions and recommendations adopted by it on the Palestinian question, which have led to the convening of this Seminar in the Asian State of Sri Lanka.

There has been an important change and positive growth in relations between the Arab States and the other Asian States, singly and collectively, particularly since the Arab States also work through the League of Arab States and the organizations and unions related to it.

All the Arab States have achieved independence and participated actively in the international arena in, for example, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Group, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Group of 77 and OPEC, and the strengthening of mutual friendly relations has led to an increase in understanding of and support for the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Examples of this are many and varied and are found in such areas as bilateral relations, visits by officials, summit meetings, conferences and agreements.

The question of Palestine and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people has been presented within the framework of Afro-Asian solidarity, within the framework of tricontinental solidarity and within the framework of Islamic and popular conferences, which has led to an increased knowledge of the Palestinian viewpoint on the part of political, trade-union and non-governmental professional organizations. The resolutions and manifestos of these gatherings and meetings bear witness to this.

There has been gradual, healthy and striking growth in bilateral relations between the Palestinian people, represented in the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Governments of the Asian States. This growth in bilateral relations is linked to changes on the Palestinian side and on the side of the Asian Governments, and these we have mentioned earlier.

Then there is the effectiveness and role of Palestinian information in particular and Arab information generally. Its approaches have changed, its bases have diversified, and it has adopted scientific mass communication methods.

This is apparent in the number and variety of publications and published data, whether printed, auditory or visual. This is indeed a positive step which raises the struggle to the appropriate level, and its effects are exemplified in the response and support which we see emanating from all sectors and shades of Asian public opinion for the Palestinian cause and for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Despite Sri Lanka's exceptionally long colonial history, its deep rooted economic dependence and its continuous exposure to the harsh caprices of the international market, the average Sri Lankan's interest in external events and issues has been characterised by such a parochial indifference that conventional wisdom attributes it to a natural insularity. The sole exception was Vietnam; a notable exception, too, because a manifest popular interest found active expression in a manner which not only reflected concern but an emotional involvement and commitment. The reason was plain enough. There was immediate identification between the Buddhist public here, its ecclesiastical and lay leadership, and the dramatic protest movement launched by Vietnamese monks against a Saigon regime run by the Catholic Diem family.

As a general rule, however, Professor Howard Wriggins' pointed resumé of the national opinion scene in his authoritative work: "Ceylon: The Dilemmas of a New Nation" was a fair account. He wrote "apart from a few individuals in the democratic parties, articulate Marxists, and a handful of journalists, few seriously debated foreign policy alternatives. There appeared to be a notable unconcern with foreign affairs for a people as much affected by developments abroad."

But this was written in 1960. The introduction of 'free' state education in the 1940s, the spread of the school system into the hinter-land in the 1950s, the achievement of one of the highest literacy rates in Asia, and the growth of mass media, although typically Third Worldist in its reliance on the transnational agencies for international news, witnessed the advent of a new generation far more alive to the world outside.

Today, the most easily identifiable social group which takes a lively, even passionate, interest in international questions is an increasingly radicalized youth, almost exclusively educated in the national languages. An amazing proliferation of news sheets and little journals, along with other forums such as study groups and seminars, exhibitions and film shows furnish impressive evidence of a heightened awareness of the Palestinian issue among the young radical intelligentsia. Palestinian poetry, I should note in passing, has been translated into Sinhala, and the work of many Palestinian writers, I am told, into Tamil. (Incidentally, this new interest among youth extends also to Latin America.)

The dramatic opinion shift on Palestine should therefore be related to both this sociological change as well as to the forceful and inescapable impact of external realities, economic and political, on Sri Lanka's decision-makers.

But a generation ago the situation was altogether different. In the first post-independence period, Ceylon's foreign policy - if that timorous and self-effacing exercise deserves such a grand title - was a handiwork of a small coterie of few key individuals in the ruling party and their advisors in the civil service establishment and outside.

This advisory and policy-making group, though miniscule, was a representative fragment of a well-knit, homogeneous westernized elite, educated in English, mostly in Christian schools in Colombo. Their values, aspirations and general outlook had been shaped on metropolitan models. So were their professional attitudes; in our case, the British public school, university and Whitehall. Foreign policy was not a matter for public discussion. It was - and needed to be - the preserve of the new caste of the cognoscenti.

If in practice policy-making was perfectly attuned to policy precept this was because of the single settled conviction of the native leaders who inherited power at the moment of political independence that Britain was and must remain Ceylon's necessary and trusted friend. After all, had not Britain transferred power freely and peacefully, without any need for mass agitation or struggle? Indeed, the transfer of power had been conducted with the orderly decencies and decorum proper to a governor's garden party.

The dominion of Ceylon had its first parliamentary election in 1947 and attained full independence in 1948, the very years in which the question of Palestine had come on the agenda, and the partition plan was being discussed in the United Nations, and the State of Israel was to come into existence. Since Ceylon was not a member of the United Nations until seven years later, there was no occasion of a policy response. Otherwise, it would have been interesting for us now to see whether Ceylon would have joined other non-Arab Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran in voting against the partition or joined the Philippines in voting for it or China in abstaining.

The Indian situation, in many ways, presents a striking contrast to the Ceylonese case, but some interesting parallels can be drawn too. In a chapter entitled "The Congress develops a foreign policy", Mr. Nehru in his "Discovery of India" notes that "most (political) parties were preoccupied with internal politics except small groups of socialists and communists". As a general proposition, this would be applicable to our own experience, with an important difference. Not only did the left parties dominate the discussion on international affairs but they were by no means a small force at that point of time in our political history. On the contrary, at the first general election in 1947, there was just the possibility of a left-dominated coalition assuming office.

In the same essay, Mr. Nehru also observes that "Moslem Organizations (in India) were interested in Palestine and occasionally passed resolutions of sympathy for the Moslem Arabs there ..."

The Moslem League certainly did so. As early as 1940, Mr. Jinnah made this statement in his Presidential address to the Lahore Conference: "We want the British Government, in fact and actually, to meet the demands of the Arabs in Palestine".

Although Ceylon's contacts with the Moslem and Arab worlds go back several centuries (one of the island's older names, Serendib, is Arabic) the Muslim community in this island was not merely a small minority but perhaps the least emancipated, in terms of education and political consciousness. Totally immersed in trade, especially the gem business which was a Muslim monopoly, the large majority of Muslims depended for their livelihood on a close-knit paternalistic family system. Politically, they were equally dependent on the guidance of a few recognized Muslim notabilities who had been co-opted by the British through such customary devices as the conferment of imperial honours, the social cachet without which wealth alone is meaningless. After independence they became the natural collaborators of the Sinhalese establishment that took over the reins of power.

It is only after the multi-party parliamentary system developed its innate competitiveness that the Muslim community, long regarded as a block vote with a predictable pattern of behaviour, began to be wooed by the main contenders for power.

This attempt to cultivate the Muslim voter rather than negotiate with the power-brokers of the community was a significant departure in our electoral politics.

In the late sixties, the main opposition parties, that is the parties of the left and the Centre (I use the conventional categories commonly employed to identify political formations in our broad ideological spectrum) argued that it was a mistake to presume that the Muslims, however deep-rooted their conservatism in politics, would always vote right, en masse. It was the search for slogans which would produce a sympathetic resonance in the Muslim mind that led these parties to the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian questions.

Whether this paid the anticipated dividends is doubtful. While the entry much later of phrases like 'Arab power' and 'Islamic renaissance' into the vocabulary of Sri Lankan politics and press was to represent the advent of new forces on the global scene, a study of the Sri Lankan situation prompts questions of much broader bearing.

Here, the assumption was that the response to the Israeli or Palestinian issue (specifically, an election pledge in 1970 to suspend relations with Israel) would be both positive and automatic. I simplify, of course, but the implicit line of argument ran like this Muslim voter, therefore Islam, therefore pro-Arab, therefore pro-Palestine.

However, the Sri Lankan case itself suggests that the assumption of automatic congruence may be too facile. Evidence of that can be found in the electoral behaviour of the Muslim voter here; that is, in the fact that there exists points of friction between these categories of commitment - the different and sometimes competitive claims of religion, politics and ideology. May I explain?

Before the 1970 general election, the opposition United Front, a Centre-Left alliance comprising Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the socialist, quondam Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the pro-Soviet C.P., activated an organization called the Islamic Socialist Front (ISF). The ISF and the UF believed that although the large mass of Muslims voters remained conservative and pro-United National Party (UNP), (the governing party then), there were signs of a slow radicalization among a newly educated layer of Muslims. Was it not possible to wean away a section of this vote from its old conservative fold? In seeking solutions, the United Front went beyond the conventional forms of debate, the familiar battle-lines. Who (i.e. which party) had granted more benefits to the Muslims? That is how the debate had gone in the past. Now the United Front played the Arab and Palestine card, and introduced this issue directly into the domestic debate. The United Front promised, as I said, to suspend relations with Israel, which had a legion in Colombo.

Equally instructive was the manner of the UNP's counter-attack. Protesting against Mrs. Bandaranaike's allegation that the Government was pro-Israeli, the leading Muslim campaigners of the UNP argued that the "Government had at all times championed the Arab cause and would continue to do so". Dr. Bandiudin Mahmud's pro-Opposition Islamic Socialist Front, said Labour Minister M.H. Mohammed, was "a political device to entrap the Muslims in the communist net" (Ceylon Daily News -19.5.1970).

In his book "Electoral Politics in an Emergent State" (Cambridge Univ. Press 1975), Professor A. Jeyaratnam Wilson sums up the pre-election polemical exchange in a way which makes his comments quite pertinent to this discussion. He wrote: "While problems of education and economic survival beset the Muslim community (Labour Minister) Mohammed followed the UNP lead of decrying 'materialism' and 'ungodly communism'. Dr. Mahmud denied that his ISF stood for communism, but protested that Islam is a socialist doctrine; 'therefore while we will tread the path of socialism, we are not communists', he insisted."

In a similar exchange, another prominent Muslim campaigner of the ruling United National Party pointed out to Muslim constituents that "many belonging to the Muslim faith in the Soviet Union had suffered indignities at the hands of the Soviet authorities and three million of them had fled to Iran, Pakistan and other Arab countries since 1917. He asked whether it was not a fact that all the Islamic states such as the U.A.R., Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia had not outlawed the communists" (Wilson).

While I shall take up this point later, it should be noted here that this ideological counter-offensive had a seriously divisive and damaging effect on local political opinion at a time when only those organizations and groups which identify themselves as leftist or progressive were the sole champions of the Palestinian cause.

No appreciable swing of the Muslim votes contributed to the United Front's convincing victory in 1970. Its election pledge, however, was duly honoured and diplomatic relations with Israel suspended.

Afterwards, the local tea trade was to complain of an insidious campaign against Ceylon Tea by Jewish financial and commercial interests entrenched in the world tea market. And Prime Minister Bandaranaike herself was plainly piqued two years later when Sri Lanka's argument that it was Asia's turn to hold the non-aligned summit failed to win Arab-African backing and Colombo's offer to be the venue of the Fourth Summit was dismissed in favour of Algiers at the Georgetown Foreign Ministers Meeting. A disappointed Prime Minister told Parliament "some countries with whom we had been closely associated since the earliest days of non-alignment had shown a disregard for principle in this case".

Such displeasure had, however, little adverse effect on policy. On the contrary, these were the years - the years up to the Fifth Summit in Colombo in September 1976 - when the island's foreign policy was to acquire a high profile, and its non-alignment a radical activism. Soon, support for the Arab cause, in general and the Palestinian in particular, was to become an almost axiomatic factor in foreign policy.

So when the Bandaranaike Government was trounced at the July 1977 polls, with the United National Party returning to office with a massive 5/6ths parliamentary majority, there was no change of policy whatsoever on the Palestine issue. This was clear at the Havana Summit. The continuity of policy, and consistency in public posture on this question is all the more noteworthy because there are some significant elements of discontinuity and change in some critically important areas, e.g. Sri Lanka's position vis-à-vis the superpower relationship, its attitude to specific areas of superpower conflict to which Sri Lanka is necessarily sensitive, such as the India Ocean Peace Zone, and to other current problems like Kampuchea. The positions taken by Sri Lanka at the Delhi Foreign Ministers' meeting in February make this clear.

No such change, in substance or tone, can be detected on the Palestine issue. The commitment is unequivocal, and its declaration explicit. On Palestine Day last November, President Jayawardene said: "The Palestinian people continued to be denied their inalienable national rights. The question of Palestine lies at the core of what is called the West Asian problem". The President then reiterated Sri Lanka's recognition of the right of self-determination and the right to return home, and Sri Lanka's support for the Palestinian struggle under the leadership of the P.L.O.

So, the suspension of relations with Israel, commitment to the Palestinian cause and support for the P.L.O. has now acquired the authority of bi-partisan agreement. Yet it would be singularly ingenuous to regard this "certain certainty" of Sri Lankan foreign policy as the triumphant achievement and climatic expression of public opinion.

For all the undefined sentiment and rhetorical rectitude which now characterises Sri Lankan policy on Palestine, it is best to recognize that this policy is far less grounded in an appreciation of the true nature of the issue and a commitment to the cause than in a realistic adjustment to other factors and developments; chiefly, a realistic recognition of OPEC power, of the Arab world as new sources of aid and investment, and as a new overseas labour market for skilled and semi-skilled workers of a country where unemployment is 15 per cent of the total work force or about a million. Listed among the "most seriously affected countries", Sri Lanka's fuel imports last year accounted for nearly 40 per cent of its export income.

The importance of this distinction becomes clearer in the light of what I said earlier about dominant political opinion trends and new foreign policy tendencies. Sri Lanka's pending application to ASEAN and the gradual "aseanisation" of its non-alignment suggests that combating communism, or the

'Soviet threat' could give a sharper ideological edge to a foreign policy more open to external pressures and tensions in a region which is already a major arena of big power confrontation.

Already, the Sri Lankan position on Afghanistan is in full accord with that of the Islamic Conference, Sri Lanka's relations with the Gulf States are being rapidly expanded and strengthened as the opening of new missions in that area indicates. What if there is a shift in the attitude of the major Arab States of this region to the Palestine issue? I am thinking of a shift in the balance of considerations between how they perceive and how much importance they attach to an external threat, say the Soviet threat, and the internal challenge, the threat of radical social-political transformation, especially if such transformation receives an impetus from the radicalising influence of the Palestinian struggle?

In this connexion, the following comment from a report published in the Guardian some time before the Conference of Gulf States has an obvious interest:

"The Gulf Governments utterly reject any reordering of Middle Eastern priorities which sets a Soviet threat - real or imagined - above the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, their view is quite otherwise, since they believe that only a settlement of the Palestinian question can lead to a diminution of Russian influence. The Saudis, in particular, according to one student of their affairs, believe that the Russian position in the Middle East is "almost entirely related to Russia's support of the Palestinians".

The shapers of Ceylon's foreign policy in its formative years had no coherent world outlook, no historical understanding of Palestine, and no conceptual grasp of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Again, Nehru's percipience brings out this fact in bold relief. As early as 1933, in various letters which came to be published as "Glimpses of World History" Nehru noted the "new prominence" which the Middle East had assumed in international affairs; the importance of oil and what he called 'oil imperialism'; the Middle East and its strategic location, especially on the road to India; the triangular conflict, as he termed it of British imperialism, 'Arab Nationalism'; and Jewish nationalism, with numbers on the side of the Arabs, and great financial resources and world-wide organization on the side of the Jews.

Explaining why he dwells at such length on happenings elsewhere, Mr. Nehru writes: "I go on writing to you, at great length, of happenings in different countries, and they seem to be the same tale repeated again and again. I do so to make you realize that we have not to deal so much with national peculiarities, as all of us are apt to imagine in our respective countries as with world forces, with an awakening nationalism all over the East and with the same technique of imperialism to combat it. As nationalism grows and advances, the tactics of imperialism change slightly; there is an outward attempt to appease and give insofar as forms are concerned. Meanwhile, as this national struggle, the class conflict between different classes in each country, also grows more obvious, the feudal, and to some extent the possessing, classes side more and more with the imperialist power".

The Ceylonese leadership and opinion makers, with the exception of the left parties, saw no such identity of interests in the historical processes at work in the pre-independence era. At the first important Asian Conference held here after independence, the Colombo Conference of 1954 which paved the way for the historic Bandung, the Ceylonese delegation willfully reduced itself to "observer status" on the Palestine issue. When Pakistan's Mr. Mohammed Ali introduced a strongly worded condemnation of Israel to find U Nu of Burma insisting that it be modified, Mr. Nehru had to play a moderating role. The Ceylonese delegation had nothing to say.

The mention of Burma opens another interesting line of inquiry. The previous year, 1953, Burma hosted the first Asian Socialist Conference. There were delegations from the Socialist International, from the British Labour Party led by Clement Attlee, the Yugoslav Communists led by Milovan Djilas, and from the Israel Labour Party led by Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett. As a protest against the invitation to Israel, Syria and Iraq boycotted the Conference while Egypt and Lebanon walked out of the meeting on the very first day.

The Jewish hold on the imagination of the Asian intellectual, especially the left minded, and Israel's multi-level contacts and influence in Asia are matters which need closer investigation than I can pursue here. Nehru himself is a case in point. He wrote: "Today they hold leading positions as scientists, statesmen, literary men, financiers, businessmen, and even the greatest socialists and communists have been Jews".

Israel's special relationship with Burma is as relevant to the discussion as Israeli penetration of the Asian Socialist Conference. I use the word penetration advisedly. Within a few years the Asian Socialist Conference which had constituent members - and very distinguished members at that - from India, Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Nepal and Vietnam, was to collapse for lack of funds. But not before the Israeli delegation at the Bombay Conference in 1956 had offered to give the Secretariat a large grant. G.H. Jansen noted ("Afro-Asia and Non-alignment") that Israel "had tried to buy her way into Afro-Asia through this Socialist grouping".

That Bombay meeting in November 1956 was of special importance to Ceylon. In April of that year the Peoples' United Front (MEP) led by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's SLFP had formed a new government. It marked a formal adoption of non-alignment and the first serious break, at least in foreign policy, with British legacies. The British for instance had to withdraw from their bases in Trincomalee and Colombo. As a party, the SLFP, a self-declared middle-of-the-road party, chose promptly to seek membership in the Asian Socialist Conference. And the Bombay Conference was going on when Prime Minister Bandaranaike was in Delhi for talks with Mr. Nehru, on the way to the United Nations which he addressed as a sort of unofficial spokesman of the Asian group on the Suez and Hungarian crises.

Although the demonstrable fact of Anglo-French-Israeli collusion should have appealed to an Asian spokesman as an ideal opportunity to speak on the problem of Palestine, Mr. Bandaranaike did not do so. Nor did he speak on this question as Prime Minister of Ceylon though he was the first Ceylonese leader to address the United Nations. All he did say was: "With regard to the general settlement of the rather complicated and complex affairs of Western Asia, that is another matter. I sincerely hope that some time those troubles also can be settled, particularly those between Israel and its Arab neighbours".

The emphasis of this paper has been on policy and policy-making rather than on public opinion per se. At the very outset, I stated the reason for this approach - public unconcern with foreign affairs. Yet another fact, this time a fact of institutional life here, imposes such a perspective too; that is, the steady expansion of state-control over mass media. Only frequently did public discussion lead to policy debates, and not often did such debate determine the formulation of policy. On the contrary, public discussion and informed exchange of views, especially in the mainstream media, came after and centred on policy pronouncements by the Government.

This was not true of the first post-independence phase when the left parties were a major electoral factor and something of a shaping force of political opinion. Indeed, international affairs was almost an exclusive preserve of the left intelligentsia, and debates on international issues were wholly dominated by Marxist spokesmen.

Ceylon's left movement was characterised by an historical aberration. The parent Marxist party, also the oldest political party in the island, was Trotskyist.

The split-away faction which formed the Communist Party faithfully followed the general line of Soviet policy including its zig-zags, during and immediately after the war.

It was the much bigger and more influential Trotskyist LSSP which took a consistent position on British imperialism. Its Third Conference in 1939 adopted the following resolution: "The LSSP warmly greets the valiant Arab fighters for freedom in Palestine, and hails their partial victory in the abandonment of the imperialist partition of Palestine, and condemns the savage lawlessness of British imperialism and calls upon the oppressed colonial people of India, Africa, West Indies and Ceylon to take heart from the brave Arabs who are now the first line fighters against British imperialism".

Yet even the Trotskyists freely admit today that many a left-wing intellectual saw the birth of Israel through a romantic haze. This attitude sprang, says a prominent party theoretician, from a sympathetic recognition of the Jews as an oppressed and persecuted people, an admiration for the Jewish contribution to mankind's intellectual heritage, their resistance to the British in Palestine and the collectivist forms of property which they chose in the early years of the new state. He cited this passage from "The Prophet Unnamed" by Isaac Deutscher, the author of the definitive three-volume biography of Trotsky. The passage reads: "As a rule the progressive or revolutionary Jew, brought up on the border lines of various religious and national cultures, whether Spinoza or Marx, Heine or Freud, Rosa Luxemburg or Trotsky, was particularly apt to transcend in his mind religious and national limitations and to identify himself with a universal view of mankind. He was therefore also particularly vulnerable whenever either religious fanaticisms or nationalist emotions ran high. Spinoza and Marx, Heine and Freud, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky, all suffered excommunication, exile and moral or physical assassination; and the writings of all were burned at the stake".

Time, and Israel's own aggressiveness and insatiable expansionism were to help remove many naively romantic notions from the minds of our English-educated literati nurtured on such books as Arthur Koestler's "Thieves in the Night". But the popular mind clung to other images of Israel, seen as David battling the Arab Goliath, Israel as an island in an Arab sea, two million brave people warding off the threat of extermination, and other warm ennobling stereo-types. Their sentiments were shaped by such highly popular films as Leon Uris' "Exodus", and, of course, the ideas steadily projected over the years by the daily press. If the Third World's agitational campaign for a new information order has brought no substantial tangible rewards, it has nonetheless made at least some Third World mass communicators conscious of the structure of the global information system and our common dependence on the metropolitan supply centres. Such consciousness has made many practitioners - editors, broadcasters, commentators and columnists - less ready to accept the information which is served to us as unbiased or neutral. Many are aware now of a fact that has been known to most Western, including reputed Jewish, journalists (I.F. Stone, for instance) of the pro-Israeli bias in the networks and even in some of those prestigious newspapers from which the Sri Lanka press so freely and innocently republished news and features.

In Lipton's tea garden a wide section of the native intelligentsia tamely acknowledged the totem and taboo of the English way of life. The London Times and Reuters were as much the sacred repositories of our unquestioning trust as the Bank of England. The newspapers of the 1940s are full of studies on 'terrorist' attacks on the British in Palestine and editorials railing against terrorist organizations called the Haganah and the Irgun. I mention this not because the present Israeli Prime Minister is a throw-back to those times, but because the history of that single epithet in our newspaper columns tells its own educative tale.

The 'terrorist', as a much-used term, becomes a media drop-out in the 1950s and 1960s in the local press, and re-emerges strongly in the late 1960s and 1970s. By this time, the supply sources of the local mass media have also witnessed an interesting change. With the British withdrawal, there is a steady decline in direct British influence. The advent of American paramouncy on the global scale begins to affect our own lives, not only in politics and economics but in the allied fields of ideology and culture. The major newspapers begin to buy AP and UPI, and syndicated material from the New York Times and the Washington Post. The English reading public received their wisdom from Mr. Henry Luce, and his encapsulated weekly dose of enlightenment: TIME Magazine. Enjoying a near-monopoly of power and privilege, the urban elite has its hands on the levers of the mass communications system, and so these ideas and attitudes infiltrate the minds of the people.

Re-emerging as a popular media term, the word 'terrorist' is now exclusively attached to another person: the Palestinian. In vulgar, simplistic terms, the bad guys have become the good guys.

Mercifully, this foundation of anti-Palestine prejudice on which layer upon layer of misunderstanding and distortion was built through the familiar technique of the insidious manipulation of minds, was shattered by two events.

Firstly, our minds were opened to the nature of American power through the barbarous, terroristic application of that power in a country with whose people we identified ourselves, Vietnam.

Secondly, in 1971, the smug Sri Lankan middle class suffered the traumatic shock of a bloody youth insurrection led by a party called the Peoples' Liberation Front. Wherever each thinking Sri Lankan may stand on that issue today, there can be no doubt that it forced them to face up to the complex phenomenon of violence. One man's terrorism, as Ambassador Yost said recently, is another man's war of independence. Or, one might add, another man's revolution. The United Nations debate on terrorism was therefore closely followed by those Sri Lankans who are willy-nilly, participants in the ongoing debate among radicals here on the roots of social and political violence, its ends and means. In contributing to that local discussion, and clarifying some issues, the discussion in the United Nations also contributed to the Sri Lankan understanding of the Palestine issue.

In the meantime, anyway, a parallel process, both positive in their end result, can be discerned. On the one hand, the idealised images of Israel, with her self-anointed mark of manifest and mystical destiny, have collapsed, one by one. On the other, long-entrenched misconceptions about the Palestine issue have been gradually dispelled.

What was presented to us and what we in turn presented to our respective audiences, is essentially a 'refugee problem', inviting our humane consideration, has been replaced by a recognition of the problem as the fundamental political question of national rights, statehood and sovereignty. What we in the media were long accustomed to regard as an annual resolution-passing ritual in the United Nations, has become a profound international issue whose tenacious hold on world attention has not been prised loose by all the diplomatic efforts, however motivated. We have watched the great expectations held out by the parties to the Camp David accords and the high hopes whipped up by the western media, slowly vanish.

This is the basic change in our perceptions and attitudes. Naturally, this transformation was neither sudden nor an outcome which could be attributed to a single cause. The debris of deep-laid prejudices and hostile images had to be cleared from our minds before fresh understanding could grow, and in our case, both dramatic events as well as fortuitous happenings were welcome aids to such discernment.

The battle of Karameh and the Egyptian crossing of the canal were tokens of Arab courage and military prowess - two counts on which pro-Israeli propaganda had fostered self-serving myths. The Sri Lanka Ambassador was made Chairman of the United Nations Committee to investigate human rights violations in the occupied territories, and our media took exceptional interest in its work and conclusions which did much to undermine the notion of a liberal Israeli society. The persecution and torture of Palestinians accompanies discrimination between Israeli and Israeli, between Oriental and European Jew. Controversial litigation over marriage laws and ever-expanding links with South Africa expose the racist ideology and the racist outlook.

But most of all, Israeli intransigence, arrogance and wanton aggressiveness does violence first to the prettified picture of a small, meek nation struggling for survival, and then prompts the obvious question as to what encourages such arrogant impunity if not the patronage of the world's richest and mightiest nation. The realities of global power politics, Israeli's strategic role in the oil-rich Arab world, mock the propagandist pieties of 'mystical' destiny. It was only the other day that one of the best known practitioners of my profession, Mr. James Cameron, a great admirer of Israel, wrote:

"I would not have thought that the destruction of Lebanese babies was part of Israel's destiny".

The cunning of history has completed a vicious circle and has had its revenge on Israel by making its rulers the most efficient destroyers of the very myths upon which Israel has sought to sustain itself.

THE PLO: THE CHALLENGE AND THE RESPONSES

Aff Safieh

A. Strategically located at the cross-roads of three continents, Palestine was throughout the ages coveted by external powers. Only during the twentieth century, British colonialism was only a transition between Ottoman (Turkish) domination and Zionist penetration.

Yet Zionism has its specificity. Unlike previous military occupations, it has imposed on Palestine a double human migration: the massive expulsion of the Palestinians to the periphery of their homeland was coupled with the massive arrival of settlers to replace them.

It is an irony of history that all settler colonies were demographically composed of persecuted individuals and groups who migrated in search of more hospitable shores. They were catholics from predominantly protestant societies or protestants fleeing an intolerant catholic environment. They were republicans from the European monarchies or royalists from newly-born republics. To take Algeria as an example: the "pieds-noirs" were mainly the descendants of migrants from the regions of Alsace and Lorraine annexed by Prussia (i.e. nationally oppressed), or descendants of the defeated revolutionary communards from Paris (i.e. economically exploited). (I am putting aside in this paper, the elements of greed, the search of adventure and the role of the metropolis).

In each case, a reversal of roles was operated: the needs of the newcomers gradually trespassing on the rights of the indigenous population until they totally negated their very existence.

Israel is no exception. Zionism has transformed the oppressed of one continent into oppressors of another continent. The State of Israel to which it gave birth had, from its very first day, an elastic conception of its frontiers resulting from an insatiable territorial appetite. Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, explaining the absence of a constitution and any delimitation of frontiers stated that the borders of Israel will go as far as "the Israeli defence army" will reach.

Today, the Palestinians are the heirs of the Jewish sufferings, the sufferings of Treblinka, Dachau and Auschwitz. The Jews were the direct victims of Nazism. The world recently discovered that the Palestinians were the Nazis' indirect victims while Zionism took advantage of the Nazi atrocities and from a minority tendency within the Jewish communities, it emerged as a hegemonic organization systematically exerting moral and intellectual terrorism on reluctant Jews.

But each hegemonic movement secretes its own dissidents. I should say fortunately, because Jewish, and later on Israeli dissidents, helped our people to reject all the theories abusively assimilating Zionism with Judaism. The role of those dissidents, in spite of their numerical weakness, is potentially great. By denouncing the long-term strategy of the State of Israel as well as its daily practices, they prove that there is no Jewish collective guilt vis-à-vis the ordeal of the Palestinians and thus they save the future possibilities of pacific cohabitation.

Pacific and harmonious cohabitation in Palestine is the objective of the Palestinian revolution since its inception. Rebellious against the prevailing intolerable situation in which the Palestinians had become "the Jews of the Zionists", the Palestinian freedom-fighters pledged that the Jewish community would not, when the balance of power will inevitably change, be transformed into "the Palestinians of the Palestinians".

This is how the project of a democratic, secular, pluri-confessional and multi-ethnic State in Palestine should have been perceived. By recognizing the demographic accomplished fact, the PLO demonstrated that it was not seeking any historical revenge but, on the contrary, to be sincerely yearning to break the dialectics of oppression.

B. Arnold Toynbee has explained human history in its unity and in its diversity through the individual and collective responses to the challenges of the environment, the natural and the human environment.

A homeland occupied, a people diasporized, a capital, Jerusalem, mutilated, a civilization at the same time denied and plundered, an Arab nation Balkanized into multiple states that imperialism tries, often successfully, constantly to antagonize: these are the challenges that the PLO has to cope with.

From 1948 - 1965, the Palestinian people resorted to what can be called the arms of criticism. But their complaints, expressed through petitions or street demonstrations, gave birth only to compassion and charity. It is only when the Palestinians opted for armed struggle, the criticism by arms, that their national identity and aspirations were recognized and the claim for their necessary satisfaction endorsed by the international community.

The battle of Karameh in March 1968 was a turning point. Only months after the humiliating defeat of 1967 and the Arab armies' discredit because of their poor performance, the Palestinian resistance movement proved its military credibility by facing heroically a massive Israeli attack intended to erase it out of existence.

In February 1969, even the classical political elite admitted the radical changes that had occurred in the Palestinian scene and Yasser Arafat, leader of the major guerilla movement, Fateh, was elected Chairman of the PLO. The Palestinians had recuperated the historical initiative; and no more a mere object of history whose destinies were decided upon in foreign capitals, they had become the subject of their own history.

Today, the PLO is a pre-governmental organization assuming already the responsibilities of a state. Each executive committee member is in charge of a specific department: the political department, economical department, information department, health department, cultural department, department for the occupied territories, etc. The organigram shows the internal administrative structure of the PLO:



- it is a multi-party system,
- with freedom of expression to all its components.

- and eventual internal opposition is not only tolerated but legal.

It is to be noted that decisions are rarely adopted by a unanimous vote.

The supreme decision-making organ in the PLO is the Palestinian National Council: the parliament-in-exile. Its last session, the fifteenth, was held from 11-20 April 1981 in Damascus.

Its actual composition is as follows:

The composition of the Palestinian National Council

315 members including 32 women

Guerilla movements: 94

Fateh:	33
Saika:	12
Popular Front:	12
Democratic Front:	12
Arab Liberation Front:	9
Popular Front: General Command:	8
Front of Palestinian struggle:	4
Palestinian Liberation Front:	<u>4</u>

94

Mass movements and Trade Unions: 51

General Union of Palestinian Workers:	12
" " " " Women:	8
" " " " Teachers:	7
" " " " Students:	7
" " " " Writers and	
Journalists:	3
" " " " Lawyers:	3
" " " " Engineers:	3
" " " " Medical	5
	professions:
" " " " Youth:	2
" " " " Artists:	<u>.1</u>

51
145

Representatives of the Palestinian communities in the diaspora: 62

Jordan17

Lebanon	9
Syria	7
Kuwait	9
Saudi Arabia	8
The United Arab Emirates	2
Qatar	2
Iraq	1
The American Continent	<u>7</u>
	62

62

Personalities expelled by the Israeli occupying authorities:	20
Scientists and intellectuals of international reputation:	13
Independents:	<u>75</u>
	<u>315</u>

The representatives of the guerrilla movements, of the trade unions and of the Palestinian communities in the diaspora (i.e. 207 members) are directly elected by their respective constituencies. The others (108) are co-opted by the initial elected members of the PNC.

There are 122 additional members from the occupied territories. The Israeli military governor having threatened each of them with expulsion if ever they took part in any session of the PNC, the Palestinian leadership advised them not to attend. However, they regularly send their evaluation of the prevailing situation to the leadership and petitions are addressed to the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations reaffirming that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Such an unfaltering national unity has foiled all the attempts aimed at promoting an "alternative leadership" for the Palestinian people.

C. If, and maybe I should say because, Zionism, as a colonial movement, had its specificity, the Palestinian national liberation struggle is unique.

In the game of nations, up till recently monopolized by States and only States, the PLO ("a non-territorial State"? Hicham Sharabi) emerged as a dynamic actor. Contrary to the claim of the Zionists, the PLO was not propelled on the international arena by the energetic crisis but because it had proved, on the terrain, that it was an irreversible political and military factor.

It is today an active and effective full member in the League of Arab States, in the conference of the Islamic States and in the movement of the non-aligned countries. All the socialist countries have officially recognized the PLO and successive presidents of the European Council of Ministers (Minister Gaston Thorn then Minister Christopher Van Der Clauw), in preparation of an eventual European initiative met with the Chairman of the PLO as a major party concerned in any endeavour for the solution of the Middle-Eastern crisis. Last but not least, the PLO enjoys an observer status in the United Nations Organization and in its specialized agencies having all the privileges of a full member except the right of voting and of directly submitting project-resolutions or amendments.

In the last four sessions of the Palestinian National Council (1974-1977-1979-1981) resolutions were adopted calling for the implementation of international legality. Looking at the international body as capable of reconciling ethics with politics, the PLO considers that the United Nations is the most adequate forum for the solution of the conflict.

Today, it seems to me, that an acceptable mechanism could be the following three-phased formula:

1. The speedy withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied in 1967.
2. In Palestinian territories evacuated, and in co-ordination with the PLO the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the United Nations assume responsibility for an interim period in between Israeli occupation and Palestinian sovereignty.
3. An international conference is convened under the auspices of the United Nations to which are invited all the parties concerned including the State of Palestine to agree upon all the remaining pending issues.

But the desirable is still impossible. And the possible (Camp David) totally unacceptable.

One might wonder, how come, the PLO, which has already achieved national consensus then international consensus, has not yet succeeded in materializing its political objectives on the geographical map?

Alas, the impotence of the United Nations on one side, the complicity, then the complaisance and now-a-days the abdication of Western Europe on the other hand are part of the answer. So is the insufficient mobilization of Arab potentials. But the unlimited and so far unconditional support, military and financial (from flour to phantoms) abundantly delivered to Israel by the United States remains the determining factor.

Israel is in crisis. The promised land has not kept its promises. But the economic and social vulnerability of Israel is for the moment largely compensated for by an overwhelming military superiority.

Yet, the Palestinian guerilla forces have confronted just weeks ago, successfully in a direct Palestinian-Israeli war (10-24 July) this huge war-machine equipped to defeat all the Arab armies together.

One might expect that the American administration will draw now some evident conclusions and that this dialogue by arms will inaugurate another phase in the confrontation, that of the arms of dialogue.

All Middle-East specialists and observers have underlined the realistic approach of the PLO. The Israeli leadership knows by now that it is totally erroneous to confound realism and resignation.

My personal hope, Mr. Chairman, is that the international community, friends and foes alike, will act in a manner to contradict Hegel's pessimistic vision, pessimistic but yet so often justified:

"From history we learn that we have not learnt from history".

5. Message of Mr. Yasser Arafat to the Third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

I have the pleasure to address this distinguished seminar on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. This seminar, which is held in friendly Sri Lanka, convened by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, has taken upon itself the task of defending the fundamental rights of the Palestinians. We are sure that the participants in this seminar will make valuable contributions to this important subject. I assure you that our Palestinian people places as great an importance on seminars dealing with learned objective subjects as on direct political activity. It is a distinctive fact that the Palestinian cause has been subjected, more than any other cause, to

organized campaigns of falsehoods all through its history. Zionism has used a great number of international information media and so-called academic research for the dissemination of cheap propaganda. It is therefore important to take the approach of true academic research to expose the falsehood of Zionist claims, for we are certain that the objective approach is to the advantage of our cause, because, in a real contest of objective research and discussion, the Zionist allegations cannot stand up to the test.

When the file of the Palestinian people is open, the Zionists cannot face up to the truth. Their record of atrocities, especially the acts of expulsion, expropriation of land, the building of illegal settlements to consecrate their occupation and to obstruct a just solution to the Palestinian problem is quite clear.

It has recently become more apparent to the international community, including the United States, which has continuously supported Israel's aggression, that Israel is bent on a genocidal policy against the Palestinian people. The recent aerial attacks on Beirut, the Palestinian refugee camps and the Lebanese villages, as well as the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, are manifestations of this inhuman policy.

Our people have suffered immensely, and are still suffering, and have paid dearly for their determination to defend and protect their inalienable rights. This people have proven to the world their mettle, their courage, and their patience, insisting on continuing the struggle no matter what the cost may be.

Again we witness another victory for the Palestinian people in withstanding the recent Israeli attacks. This is due to the perseverance of the Palestinians and to the increasing support from friendly nations.

Your presence here in this seminar is another manifestation of this support of our people. We are, therefore, certain of the final victory of our people in achieving self-determination, the return to their homes, and the establishment of their independent state in Palestine.

The world will realize then that the Palestinians have always been champions of human values, supporting understanding and brotherhood among peoples of different cultures, faiths, languages and history. This will become even more apparent when the Palestinians reach their goal of establishing their independent, secular, democratic state. This is why the Palestine Liberation Organization has always been ready to co-operate actively with the United Nations in alleviating all forms of injustice and deprivation all over the world, and in the efforts to eradicate all forms of colonialism, racism, Apartheid and Zionism, and in the promotion of understanding and co-operation among nations.

Inasmuch as you support the just cause of the Palestinian people, we would urge you to give the same support to all other just causes in the world. We wish you to defend the human rights of all who suffer from racism and colonialism with the same zeal as your defense of the Palestinian human rights usurped by the Zionist authorities.

This is my hope and my request to you, brothers and friends. I wish you success in your endeavours.

Revolution till victory.

6. Closing Statement by the Honourable Mr.H. Mohamed, Minister of Transport on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka

I am very happy to be here today at the concluding session of the Third United Nations Seminar to be held on "the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", and for this opportunity to speak a few words.

I address you as a Sri Lankan whose nation under the guidance of its distinguished President, His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene, its Prime Minister, Hon. R. Premadasa and its Cabinet of Ministers in which I have the honour to serve, fully recognizes the basic rights of all peoples of the world to lead a free, just, equitable and democratic way of life.

I also stand before you as the President of the Sri Lanka Branch of the World Muslim Congress which was founded by the late Ameen-al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Palestine who was very dear to me and whom I held in high esteem as an elder. Mufti Hussein was himself a front-line Campaigner for the Palestinian cause, and during his lifetime devoted much energies towards a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem. He worked relentlessly to secure for his people the right to live, unfettered in their own ancestral land.

I have no doubt that he would be very happy at the interest that is now being generated on this matter.

The Sri Lanka Government recognizes the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle for the realisation of these rights under the leadership and guidance of the Palestine Liberation Organization. And Sri Lanka will extend its fullest support to this end.

During the course of this Seminar we have been privileged to listen to several scholarly presentations on various aspects of the problems that confront the Palestinian people, and the obstacles they face in achieving their inalienable rights. These presentations and the discussions that ensued thereafter helped to clarify several areas both past and current, both legal and political, of the Palestinian situation. I might make special mention of an area which sometimes tends to be forgotten, which was presented to us in a well researched manner, and struck us with great force, namely the problems faced by the Palestinian child. This, I think, is an area that merits special consideration by all of us in our future efforts on this subject.

The Palestinian problem continues to shame the conscience of all right-thinking men to whatever nation they belong. Ever since the appointment of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine at the First Session of the United Nations in 1948, formulae have been developed and put forth to bring about a settlement. There has been continuous deliberation, and different nations at different times have expressed their sympathy and solidarity so that the majority of us today recognize the Palestinian people as those possessing the right to an independent state.

Palestine has been the home of the Palestinians from antiquity. The contribution of the Palestinians to civilization has been noteworthy. Some of the outstanding personalities of the Islamic world of the past are from Palestine. For example,

Imam Shafie, the founder of one of the sects of Islam, was born in Palestine.

Musa Bin Nusair, the Muslim leader who introduced Islam to Spain was from Al-Khalil.

The State Minister of Salahudin, who was an eminent scholar was an Askalanitor from Palestine.

Al-Tabari, whose commentary on the Holy Quran is justly famous, was from Tabaria.

Sughre was the birth place of the great Muslim historical Khalil.

The famous writer Abdul-Hamid Al-Katib was from Qaisariah.

The first scholar to translate Greek sciences into Arabic was a Palestinian called Khalid bin Yazid Al-Umawi.

Subsequently, however, it has been occupied by the Romans, Persians, Greeks, the Crusaders and several other powers including Israel today. If, as the Zionists claim, the land belongs to them by virtue of capture, then one must go against all international tradition and laws which exist in this day and age. It would be tantamount to stating that India and Sri Lanka should still be British colonies.

The Palestinian question has been debated and discussed in forums all over the world. The United Nations itself has held several seminars, had discussions and adopted many resolutions on this issue, but the problem still remains. In the diplomatic field two various suggestions made to Israel have been brushed aside. The Chairman of the P.L.O., Yasser Arafat, has offered to establish in Palestine a democratic state where Jews, Christians and Muslims could live on an equal basis. This has been totally rejected. In July this year the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, who is also the current Chairman of the European Communities Council of Ministers, has also emphasized the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and pinpointed the need to associate with the PLO in a quest for a peaceful settlement. Let alone attempting a peaceful solution, the Israelis are now attacking the countries which are seeking to assist the Palestinians. It is seen therefore that resolutions, diplomatic approaches, voicing of sentiments is not furthering the cause of the Palestinians to any great extent. The world powers must now take decisive steps to bring this problem to an end.

It is of little use proclaiming righteous slogans only to withdraw or hesitate when action is called for. The big powers must realize that the multitude of smaller nations are looking up to them to preserve, defend and uphold the rights of the weaker nations. If the action is confined to condemnations and resolutions only, then the trust reposed in these powers would gradually be eroded.

I would urge therefore, that the United Nations draw away from the area of resolutions, speeches and talks on this matter. One recalls the unhappy fate of its predecessor, the League of Nations set up amidst much fanfare with an over-abundance of good intentions. It was the very ineffectiveness of this institution in taking positive action when its words went unheeded, that brought it to disrepute and ultimate disbandment.

If the powerful do not assist the less powerful in the face of naked and brutal aggression then the time has come for the less powerful to consider to weld themselves together for their own protection, for whatever the combinations are and whatever dangers or hardships have to be faced, it is the duty of every nation to ensure that others are able to hold their lands against aggressors however powerful they may be.

The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have now to be enforced and it is time that the rest of the world led by the major powers, saw to it that the land of the Palestinians is returned to them to live their lives in peace and without fear.

Finally I hope that the delegates and others enjoyed their stay in Sri Lanka and will carry away with them pleasant memories of their stay.

7. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

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China
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Afro-Asian Students Association of Sri Lanka
Afro-Asian Solidarity Association of Sri Lanka
Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization
Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization
Sri Lanka National Union of Students
Sri Lanka Samasaja Youth League
World Muslim Congress
World Muslim Congress
World Muslim Congress
World Muslim Congress
World Muslim Congress
World Muslim Congress
World Muslim
PLO Solidarity Committee, Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka Committee for Solidarity with Palestine
Sri Lanka Committee for Solidarity with Palestine
Sri Lanka Communist Party
Sri Lanka Communist Party
Sri Lanka Communist Party
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Representative of PLO, Colombo
PLO
Sri Lanka
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