



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

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20-22 August 1984

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Introduction

1. The first International NGO meeting on the Question of Palestine took place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 20 to 22 August 1984 in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 38/58B of 13 December 1983. The meeting was attended by 94 NGOs, 6 NGO observers, 26 experts as well as by members and observers of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and other governments.

2. The following topics were considered by five panels established to look into various aspects of the central theme of the gathering, "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People":

(a) The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People Under International Law: Activities of NGOs in Promoting the Awareness of Public Opinion of These Rights;

(b) Factors Determining Policy-Making in Europe: NGO Role in Influencing That Process with Regard to the Implementation of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;

(c) Role of Religious Institutions in the Search for the Peaceful Solution to the Question of Palestine;

(d) Strategies for NGO Collaboration and Networking: NGOs' Participation in Providing the Support to the Just Cause of the Palestinian People;

(e) Paths to a Comprehensive, Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East: Role of NGOs and Models for Action.

3. The opening session of the Meeting, on 20 August 1984, was addressed by His Excellency Ambassador Massamba Sarré who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Committee, expressing the hope that the meeting would contribute to a rapid, global, just and durable solution of the question of Palestine. He also spoke of the impact of the Meeting on the international public opinion.

Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations, gave a brief account of the present state of the Palestine problem stressing that the just solution of the question of Palestine was the sine qua non condition for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He went on to highlight the role of "grass-roots" in the shaping of attitudes toward the destiny of the Palestinian people.

4. In the ensuing wide-ranging discussions the participants strongly endorsed the proposal for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

5. The Meeting concluded its deliberations by adopting a "Resolution of Non-Governmental Organizations" which was followed by a closing statement by His Excellency Ambassador Mohammed Farid Zarif. He, in particular, stressed that the Meeting adopted a set of important recommendations included in the final Resolution. Ambassador Zarif expressed the hope of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that this series of meetings would become an annual feature attracting an ever-growing number of NGOs.

International Meeting of Non-governmental Organizations
on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 20-22 August 1984)

Resolution of non-governmental organizations

1. We wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for making this meeting possible and without whose invaluable assistance our success would have been impaired.
2. As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) we are particularly grateful to the United Nations for the creation of an NGO liaison staff function and for the provision of annual NGO meetings and symposia on the question of Palestine.
3. We consider that the meeting of so many non-governmental organizations as a consequence of United Nations resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983 is essential to the increase of international awareness of the question of Palestine.
4. We, the representatives of 98 NGOs represented at the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held from 20 to 22 August 1984 at the United Nations Office at Geneva, call upon all the peoples and all the Governments to take initiative steps to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.
5. We wish to voice our support for the United Nations, especially its work to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions.
6. We express our concern for the lack of protection of the Palestinian refugees through a United Nations agency, and urge the General Assembly to extend the mandate to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to include Palestinian refugees.
7. We reaffirm our support and our commitment to work for the implementation of the 1983 Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights.
8. We decide to establish an interim Co-ordinating Committee on Palestine for NGOs as a positive development to further liaison between NGOs and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People through the Division for Palestinian Rights. The names of the organizations on the interim Co-ordinating Committee are attached. a/ We request the Committee to ensure that at next year's conference a session shall be devoted to enabling the NGOs to decide on the future structures for their co-operation with the Committee and the Division.
9. Since the United Nations has set aside 29 November each year as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we call upon all NGOs to express on that day, by all means available to them, solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination and statehood.

10. We call on the Committee through the Division to disseminate the publicity material, posters and information to all NGOs well in advance of 29 November to ensure that the preparation of our activities can be concluded by September each year.

11. Non-governmental organizations have decided to launch a campaign to collect signatures from the peoples of the world in support of an international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine of August and September 1983 and as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C. It is essential that the conference be inclusive and be attended by the representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, those Arab States parties to the conflict, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Just as General Assembly resolutions recognize the right of both peoples to self-determination and statehood, so now should the States Members of the General Assembly reiterate these principles as the basis for a negotiated peace under the auspices of the United Nations.

12. Non-governmental organizations accept responsibility to promote within their own countries support for this international conference and agree to raise this with their own Governments.

13. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to assist the non-governmental organizations in this most important endeavour by providing administrative facilities and support in order to ensure the success of this petition, which will be launched on 29 November 1984 culminating on 29 November 1985 and then will be presented to all the parties involved.

14. We call upon the Committee through the Division to campaign actively in order to bring new organizations, especially from those areas of the world that were not represented at Geneva into the work of solidarity in support of the Palestinian people and into the family of NGOs.

15. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, further to strengthen the network of women working for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. We call for a wide exchange of information, including with the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (General Union of Palestinian Women), with special focus on the situation of Palestinian women in preparation for the NGO forum in Nairobi in 1985.

16. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination of NGOs on a regional basis. NGOs from the EEC region have envisaged during this conference an organization in the near future.

17. Non-governmental organizations regard as a priority the publication and early distribution of a comprehensive report including all the recommendations for action made by the panelists and the participants at the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 20 to 22 August 1984, and we call upon the Committee, through the Division, to accept this responsibility. Such a report should be made available no later than 30 October 1984.

18. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to provide the international NGO community with a clearinghouse for information on the question of Palestine.

9. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to provide a comprehensive resource guide and directory of all NGOs working on this issue, including those that have not participated in any United Nations activities.

10. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to expand the bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights to include a regular section on NGO activity and information.

11. We call upon the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey the resolution and report of the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 20 to 22 August 1984, to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session as part of the Committee's report.

Notes

a/ The following organizations are members of the interim Co-ordinating Committee: Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (Israel); Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Israel); Law in the Service of Man (West Bank); Palestine Human Rights Campaign (United States of America); National Council of Churches of Christ (United States of America); Trade Union Friends of Palestine (United Kingdom); French NGO Committee (France); Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee in Association with Soviet Committee of Friendship and Solidarity with Arab People of Palestine (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics); International Jewish Peace Union; Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation; Arab Lawyers Union; Middle East Council of Churches in Collaboration with the World Council of Churches; World YWCA; International Commission of Jurists; World Peace Council.

Ambassador Massamba Sarre

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to welcome you to the first international meeting of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine organized under the auspices of the United Nations.

Exactly one year ago we were meeting here, all leanings mingling together in the framework of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to ponder together in a responsible and objective manner on ways and means of finding a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine.

That Conference was a success largely because 104 non-governmental organizations attended and participated actively in it thus demonstrating that they can play a decisive role in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine.

The Committee can only express its satisfaction at today's meeting which is a supplement to the peace efforts of the United Nations. If we consider the impact that non-governmental organizations have on world public opinion it is not unreasonable to hope that a comprehensive, just and durable solution will very soon be found to this problem which concerns us to the highest degree.

I can even say that you add a third dimension to the peace efforts in the Middle East, the other two being the relevant United Nations resolutions on the matter and the seminars which the Committee organizes in different parts of the world - the ninth, which was held in Tunis and was attended by African and European members of Parliament and experts, has just ended - seminars accompanied by round tables with the media of the various continents. It is now you who occupy [centre stage] to make your objective contribution to the peace effort for, unless a just and durable solution is found to this question, it may threaten international peace and security.

By coming to Geneva you have sought to translate the noble ideals of your organizations into action, in other words to establish a new international order based on justice, peace, understanding and entente between men and nations irrespective of ideology or belief. In short, you mean to rehabilitate mankind which is today struggling with contradictions that jeopardize its very existence.

Mankind now has enough on the material and technological level to live a better life for centuries to come; on the spiritual and human rights level we have put together principles which enable the individual to develop himself freely in justice, happiness and with dignity.

Implementation of all these considerations has given rise to contradictions as is most aptly demonstrated by the current situation in the Middle East and in Palestine. There is no need to go back over the events that

led to this situation. You know the facts. What we need now is to create the conditions which will make it possible to implement the international and regional approaches which have emerged in recent years regarding the question of Palestine. The good thing about these approaches is that they take into account the aspirations of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We must also make sure that reason prevails over passion and prejudice.

One year ago, the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, meeting within these walls, was defining the modalities for a just and durable settlement of this question and proposing that an International Peace Conference on the Middle East should be held so that genuine negotiations could begin between the parties concerned or interested in that conflict. The General Assembly adopted the proposal by an overwhelming majority in resolution 38/58 C. On that basis the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to whom we pay tribute for his dedication to the settlement of the Middle East cause, approached all the parties in order to implement that resolution. On the whole, his appeal was favourably received by members of the Security Council.

The only obstacle encountered to date are, on the one hand, the negative response of the Israeli Government and, on the other hand, the reservations of certain States interested in the conflict. It is highly desirable, in the interest of the right to existence and security of all States in the region that these obstacles be removed and that real negotiations begin without further delay under the auspices of the United Nations. The immobilism we are witnessing today can only lead to an intensification of the cycles of violence. We are stressing the need for negotiations to take place under the auspices of the United Nations because we believe that the United Nations has a particular responsibility in the Middle East crisis and the question of Palestine. Indeed, the birth of the State of Israel and the legitimacy of the just claims of the Palestinian people regarding the creation of their own State, stem from General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. Moreover, the United Nations is the guarantor of international peace and security.

Political realities also compel us to appeal to the super-Powers to support the United Nations in its peace efforts. The settlement of the complex situation in the Middle East may be an important step towards East-West détente and the easing of other political, economic and social tensions in the world. This demonstrates the urgent necessity for putting an end to it. Recent objective studies have shown that a comprehensive, just and durable settlement to the question of the Middle East and of Palestine was the key to international détente.

I intentionally did not, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, dwell on other equally important aspects of the Palestinian question (such as the situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories and elsewhere and assistance to the refugees) because I am convinced that you will give them the necessary attention. I stressed the political aspect because I remain convinced that the settlement of other aspects of the question of Palestine and of the Middle East hinge upon it.

I should like to thank you all, experts and non-governmental organizations alike, for having been so good as to agree to participate in this constructive work dedicated to peace rather than sterile confrontation. I am sure that the ideas which will be expressed during these meetings will contribute in large measure to restoring the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They will also bring closer the dawn of an era of justice, peace, brotherhood and co-operation in the Middle East.

This meeting is not an end in itself but a response to the historic call for a meeting for peace in the Middle East and in Palestine which the international community made in Geneva a year ago.

I wish you success in your efforts.

Zehdi Labib Terzi

Last year at this same time and place, the representatives of the "grass-roots", the NGOs, participated in a most active way in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine. In recognition of your efforts and in response to your request we meet here again. It is with great satisfaction we welcome you. We welcome you and invite you to pursue the course you have started on collectively last year, a course that contributes to the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

The search for peace has been the focus for many years. But for peace there are prerequisites. Peace cannot be attained in a vacuum. Peace will be through a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Palestine question is at the heart of the conflict.

Thus in endeavouring to attain peace and guarantee its viability it is imperative that endeavours must be directed at achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine. As a matter of fact, an international consensus of opinion emerged stressing this specific point. Namely, that the just solution of the question of Palestine is the sine qua non for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian people, through its sole and legitimate representative, PLO, wishes to put on record its gratitude to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and will appreciate it if you, Mr. Chairman, will convey its esteem and appreciation to each single member of your Committee.

Last week a number of distinguished persons, members of parliaments and other institutions in their respective countries, met at Tunis in a Seminar organized by the Committee. Chairman Arafat and Mr. Kaddoumi met with the distinguished persons who contributed to the success of the Seminar. Some of those who have contributed at Tunis, have also accepted an invitation to contribute in this Meeting. I am sure they will convey to you the excellent and highly valued results of their Seminar.

Chairman Arafat and Mr. Kaddoumi convey to you their best wishes on behalf of our Palestinian people and on behalf of our sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization and its Executive Committee.

We wish to express our thanks and gratitude to the participants in this Meeting - to the distinguished members of the panel as well as to the distinguished representatives of the non-governmental organizations. The distinguished participants are knowledgeable about the plight of our Palestinian people and the endeavours of the United Nations in this matter of concern, particularly since 1975, when the United Nations Special Committee

was established. But I shall take the liberty to address the specific item, "Paths to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East". In 1964, when the Palestine Liberation Organization was proclaimed, the Palestinian people hoped that the international community would respond to its appeals and that it would redress the injustice and bring to an end the misery and dispersion of its people. In 1968, we decided that, since such appeals went unheeded, we would exercise our right to struggle by all means, including armed struggle. This did find some response. It is really lamentable that much blood must be shed to awaken the conscience and arouse curiosity, interest, understanding and recognition of facts, culminating in identification and solidarity.

In 1974, Chairman Yasser Arafat appeared before the General Assembly offering two options: the olive branch and the gun of the freedom fighters. Since then PLO adheres firmly to both options.

Since 1976, PLO has welcomed and encouraged all endeavours by the different organs of the United Nations to achieve a settlement conducive to peace and guaranteeing the restoration and exercise of our inalienable rights. PLO has rejected all partial agreements as such agreements have ignored and even attempted to annul our rights and have only contributed to exacerbating of the situation, to the consolidation of the Israeli occupation of our homes, to the persistence of Israel in its policies and practices against our people and to further Israeli military adventurism and expansionism.

PLO saw a gleam of hope in the joint declaration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America in October 1977, but the Government of the United States of America reneged. Since 1976 the Government of the United States has wilfully obstructed all endeavours for a settlement under the aegis of the United Nations and precisely the Security Council. The Government of the United States has responded adamantly and in a very negative and destructive way against the call by the General Assembly to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East. The General Assembly has adopted such a call almost unanimously with the exception of the United States, Canada, Israel and a fourth Member. It has been stated that: "In the case of the liberation of Namibia, the United States finds itself a party to the delaying process". In the case of peace in the Middle East, the United States is the part obstructing peace and undermining all international efforts for peace.

We note with great satisfaction the inclusion of the item "Role of religious institutions in the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine". We fully understand the real motives. Somehow, religion had been invoked and capitalized on. The Holy Scriptures are selectively quoted. Religion and beliefs and faiths have never been meant to serve one party, at the expense of another or others. We feel reassured that the panel will cover all the different viewpoints. A peaceful solution should be understood to mean a just solution.

In addressing the North American Symposium on the Question of Palestine, in June 1984, we expressed our confidence that the distinguished participants would use all their resources and endeavours to bring the United States in line with the rest of the world. Isolationism in the sense of imposing a "pax americana" will not help to bring peace in the Middle East or justice to the Palestinian people.

The prime concern of this Meeting and your continuing efforts should focus on the fate and destiny of almost 5 million Palestinians and how to redress the injustices and visitations that have afflicted the lives and well-being of the Palestinian people.

It is commonly known at the United Nations that, as early as 1948, the Government of the United States has called for the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes. We appeal to you, the "grass-roots", to increase the awareness of the international community of the social and economic burdens of the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its persistent policy denying this fundamental right of the Palestinian to return to his home. We believe that you will use all your resources to increase the awareness of the need to facilitate and ensure the return of the Palestinians to their homes in Palestine, where they can live in peace.

Self-determination of peoples is an inalienable right. With the exception of the United States and Israel, the entire world community advocates and upholds this right for the Palestinian people and is endeavouring to find the means to guarantee the free expression and exercise of the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people.

It is here that we feel that you can contribute to bring to the awareness of the American and Canadian peoples and their Governments in particular that the Palestinian people has the right to self-determination. You can participate in finding ways and means to make the exercise of this right one of the aims and policies of all Governments.

It is a common right of peoples to choose their representatives and the Palestinian people has already and unequivocally proclaimed that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is their sole and legitimate representative. We do understand that some Governments may have their own views on who should represent peoples, but regardless of these views, our people stand fast and united that the Palestine Liberation Organization is their representative. In 1974, the United Nations invited PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, to participate in its work.

We welcome you here today as you do subscribe to the above aims of this Meeting, namely, to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, in its homeland, in Palestine.

In Geneva in the summer of 1983, the United Nations Conference adopted a programme of action for the achievement of Palestinian rights and in some

detail what is suggested is that the non-governmental organizations intensify their efforts in every possible way. Such efforts are mentioned there in detail and we are certain that you will intensify your efforts, particularly in exchanges and other programmes of joint action with your Palestinian counterparts, be they in the occupied Palestinian territories or in the diaspora.

We further trust that your strategy for collaboration and networking will focus on your activities in your own countries.

It is through your direct involvement that you will definitely prove to be a factor among the factors determining policy-making in your respective countries. Some of you have come from countries members of regional intergovernmental institutions. The Governments of these countries meet and co-ordinate and determine policy-making. Will it be too much, if we ask you, the "grass-roots" representatives of non-governmental organizations, to get together, every once in a while, to discuss, co-ordinate and draw a co-ordinated strategy that will be reflected in the making of policies of your respective countries and the intergovernmental organizations they belong to.

We cannot but consider the economic aspects of United States-Israeli relations as well as the preferential treatment that Israel receives in the economic and commercial fields in EEC. I am sure you know that, by January 1985, the United States will import from Israel 2 billion dollars worth of Israeli products. That will be a direct result of the implementation of the free-trade-zone agreement. Some claim that this will not seriously endanger United States industry, or European trade. But let us think of another aspect. The racist white minority régime in South Africa has found in Israel an outlet through which to market its products in EEC and we also know that by providing this facility to Israel, the Israeli military industry will also profit and will increase marketing its products in some neighbouring countries in Central America and South America and other places. I leave it to your imagination to assess to what extent this will affect the economy of the United States and its work-force, its involvement in CIA and other operations, as well as the ensuing general impact on the rest of the world.

In the military field, the General Assembly last December had demanded particularly from the United States to refrain from taking any steps that would supplement Israel's war capability and consequently its aggressive acts whether in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or against countries in the region. In total disregard and contempt, the United States reviewed and developed its strategic agreement with Israel and as a matter of fact has initiated the implementation of such an agreement by conducting so-called medieval manoeuvres. In this context we are sure that you, the "grass-roots" will definitely have something to say to your own Governments about this involvement, after all, United States arsenals are all over Europe.

And finally, I must say that the time to act is now. We are confident that your final declaration will be a true reflection of your determination to contribute.

Let us not wait for the establishment of more Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian land. Let us not wait for the results of such policies - results that will be manifested in more repressive action by the Israeli Zionist forces of occupation - manifested in further stealing of irrigation waters, manifested in closing of schools, manifested in strangulation of Palestinian Arab towns and villages, manifested in the demolishing and desecration of religious shrines, and the consequences of such aggressions.

Let us not wait for another Sabra and Shatila, Ein El Helweh, not another Deir Yassin and Kafr Kassem - not another 1948, 1967 and 1982. Let us act now.

A. The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People under International Law: Activities
of NGOs in Promoting the Awareness of
of Public Opinion of these Rights

Rachid Driss

Mr. Chairman,

In paying tribute to you, I should like to say how much the International Studies Association of Tunisia appreciates my having been invited by the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights. One of the goals of the association is to participate in symposia or seminars both in Tunisia and abroad. Our magazine Etudes Internationales regularly publishes studies and commentaries on the question of Palestine, which is one of the most important - if not the most important - and interesting problems in the world.

I have taken an interest in it for many years, both before and after the war. As representative of Tunisia to the United Nations I consistently upheld the Palestinian cause whenever necessary, out of a sense of professional duty and out of conviction and, with the distinguished representative of PLO, Mr. Labib Terzi, I helped establish the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and had my country, a moderate Arab country, participate in it on behalf of the African Group, with the clear and precise aim of working to safeguard the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and achieving a balanced solution in the Middle East so as to ensure peace and stability for our countries.

The Committee has come a long way since its establishment on 10 November 1975 (General Assembly resolution 3276 (XXX)). Its action is positive. The programme of action it has drawn up, and the reports and studies it has had published have increased understanding of the Palestinian question. The fact that action has not yet resulted in the solution of the Palestinian problem does not diminish the effort made or the desire for justice and peace underlying that action.

Our meeting is one of a series of meetings that have been organized or that are planned in order to publicize the Palestinian problem, to disseminate the concept of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and to help sensitize international public opinion.

This meeting, which has been organized pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, underscores the effort made by the United Nations to increase awareness of the facts of a problem which continues to trouble the Organization and which to some extent threatens its stability in terms of the precarious and threatening situation in the Middle East. Indeed, following his recent journey to the Middle East, His Excellency Mr. Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, acknowledged the gravity of the situation and the unforeseeable repercussions it might have. What better illustration could there be than the resistance to the Zionist occupation in Lebanon, the Iraq-Iran war and the dangers encountered by international traffic in the Straits of Hormuz and, more recently, in the Gulf of Suez.

Sixty-four years have elapsed since the Balfour Declaration (2 November 1917), 34 years have elapsed since the resolution on partition (General Assembly resolution 181 (IV) of 29 November 1947) and 10 years have elapsed since Yasser Arafat visited the United Nations and the General Assembly adopted the resolution on inalienable rights (3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974). The region has been engulfed in a series of wars which have presented the world with a real threat: 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1980. Can we, at this meeting of non-governmental organizations, discuss the problem of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians under international law - the wording of the topic for our discussion - as jurists, if we follow the example of the wise men of Byzantium. Did they not endeavour, in their philosophical discussions, to determine which came first - the chicken of the egg?

To speak of inalienable rights and international law means to define whether inalienable rights derive from international law or whether international law, one of whose constituent elements is custom, is not the later justification of those rights. In order to grasp the problem more fully, it is necessary - since we must make a choice - to consider not only the egg; we must try to define and comment on the notion of "inalienable rights", to define the term "Palestinian people", which is supposed to benefit from these rights, and to consider the question of international law and international legality which stems from that law in order to take stock, subsequently, of the state of the Palestinian question and of the impasse it has reached and conclude on what I hope will be an optimistic note, despite all the past taboos and all the reasons for despair.

We believe that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were set forth clearly in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX). They are as follows:

1. The right to self-determination without external interference;
2. The right to national independence and sovereignty;
3. The right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted;
4. The right to participate in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East;
5. The right to regain its rights by all means in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

These in brief are the inalienable rights which the Palestinian people should have. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established the following year (on 10 November 1975) to implement those principles.

The Palestinian people who were to benefit from these rights were in the occupied territories, had taken refuge in neighbouring Arab countries or were scattered more or less all over the world. They were continuing a bitter difficult struggle which had already started in the days of the British mandate (1920 to 1948). Now it is more scattered than ever and suffers from Zionist colonization. It did not rest with the Arabs to decide that the Palestinian people was but one people without consideration as to race or religion.

Zionism decided that it should not be. Israel was born of the notion that the Jewish people was a separate people and should have a State to itself. PLO had dreamed of a democratic State in which all Palestinians would be equal, without distinction, but it had to bow to reality. When Yasser Arafat addressed the United Nations General Assembly on 13 November 1974 and used the dual symbol of an olive branch and a gun, he was defending the Arab people of Palestine. The inalienable rights are therefore those of the Arab people of Palestine.

After 29 November 1947, and particularly after 14 May 1948, the separation of the two peoples was consummated. That separation was painful and it continues to have disastrous consequences, at least for the Arabs. On 5 August 1983 the media reported that in the Arab village of Oum Fahm, not far from Tel Aviv, Arabs and Israelis had demonstrated together against Meyer Kahane, the Zionist extremist member of Parliament, who wants to rid Israel of the last remaining Arabs. It is an encouraging sign of human intentions but it must not cause us to forget the harsh reality of the problems. We are all familiar with that reality. It is so obvious that we sometimes doubt what we hear or read in the news. We sometimes think that beyond the daily actions it is possible that secret efforts are being made to reach an accommodation to safeguard the future; then the curtain falls and it is yet another disappointment.

In a statement published in the newspaper Le Monde Diplomatique in July 1984 (pages 12-13) General Peled, an Israeli member of Parliament and President the Israel Council for Israeli Palestinian Peace (ICIPP), established in 1975, talked about the efforts that Committee had made and the contacts its leaders had had with PLO, particularly the PLO representative Issam Sartaoui, in order to reach an agreement. He stated inter alia:

"But it soon became clear, during the contacts with the Government that the latter had resolved to pay no attention to that change and even to see it only as a tactical manoeuvre clearly designed to weaken Israel's position and to make it yield the territory it had won to an organization whose sole aim was the destruction of the State of Israel".

Israel, the product of the vision of Theodore Herzl (1860-1904), who wrote The Jewish State in 1895, and of the Hitlerian holocaust and the support of the United Nations in 1947, is occupying territory set aside for the Arab State of Palestine and is preventing the Palestinians from exercising their inalienable rights. Need we recall here that Golda Meir, at the height of her power in the 1970s, denied that the Palestinians even existed? Meir Kahane, on the other hand, recognizes that they exist but believes that they must be hounded out of their country.

The pro-Arab movements are weak as yet and the Knesset majority since the elections last 23 July is reinforcing the status quo. And yet, whether they are analyzed from the standpoint of the Palestinians' roots in Palestinian soil or held up against legal texts, the Palestinian rights are manifest rights and can be denied only by the insincere.

Let us leave aside the historical argument, which will take us back to the Philistines, the Canaanites, Abraham, our common ancestor, and even to Nebuchadnezzar where we will be lost in the Tower of Babylon.

The rights of the Palestinians are consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, which recognizes the right of peoples to self-determination (Chapter I, Article 1, para.2), and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees the right of return by stating in article 13, para.2: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country". Article 15, para.2, states that "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality..." and, on the subject of property, article 17, para.2 states that "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property".

These rights have been recognized and proclaimed not only by the General Assembly but also by various political organizations and groups. The list of these bodies includes the League of Arab States, the European Economic Community, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement and lesser groups. These rights are also recognized implicitly in the Camp David Accords of 17 September 1978 which provide for the participation, at a later stage, of representatives of the Palestinian people in negotiations on the future of the occupied territories and the settlement of the Palestinian question. In a speech made on 1 September 1982, President Reagan announced the beginning of a settlement of the problem on the basis of internal autonomy of the occupied Arab territories. He referred to the Camp David Accords which, he said, recognized the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and acknowledged that the problem of the Palestinians was not just a problem of refugees, as suggested in Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

The Soviet Union, for its part, has gone beyond the stage of recognizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and supports the idea of convening an international conference on the question with the participation of all parties concerned, including PLO and Israel, the United States and the Soviet Union.

This idea, which was solemnly proposed by Brezhnev on 16 September 1982, and which the Soviet Union raised again at the end of July 1984 has been discussed at length by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and was the subject of a resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session (resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983). It concerns the method to be adopted in order to enable the Palestinian people to enjoy the rights of which it is being deprived. It does not have to be an international forum. That is a subject that deserves careful consideration. Let us confine ourselves for the moment to the question of inalienable rights under international law and let us adduce in support of the argument in favour of recognizing these rights the text of a document which has some importance, given the development in Israeli-Arab relations in Palestine. The text was given by General Peled in the above-mentioned article in Le Monde Diplomatique. It is the manifesto of the ICIPP Committee and contains 12 points. It recognizes the existence of two peoples, the co-existence of two States and looks ahead to negotiations with PLO. It is a platform which moderate Palestinians can accept since it recognizes their existence and their right to a State. It is consistent with the seventh principle set forth in the Final Declaration of the Twelfth Arab Summit held at Fez (6-9 September 1982), concerning

"the establishment by the Security Council of guarantees of peace between all States of the region, including the independent Palestinian State".

It is also consistent with the Franco-Egyptian draft resolution of 29 July 1982, which, we are told, was endorsed by the PLO head and which inter alia calls for "the mutual and simultaneous recognition of the parties concerned". A basis of international legality, founded on international law, legal texts and political stands seems to be emerging in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Some of these texts lend themselves to differing interpretations regarding the area over which these rights should be exercised and by whom - according to the League of Nations Mandate over Palestine it is one area and cannot be divided (1920), - the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promised the Jewish people only a home not a State and it was stated that it must in no way prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. (General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and various resolutions.)

However the general trend - and the number of texts is increasing - is towards delimiting two zones, one of which could become - in accordance with international legality - the Palestinian State where the Palestinian people could at last exercise its inalienable rights.

This international legality is not new - it dates from General Assembly resolution 181 of 29 November 1947. At that time, relying on international law and on a legality which pre-dated that which the decision of the major Powers and force of arms was to impose, the Arabs, not without reason, refused to divide their country. Several decades have elapsed and the facts are now seen in a different light. Has the time come for an understanding between two peoples of Palestine, the Arabs and the Israelis who find themselves - the one driven by repression in the European countries, the other by self-defence - face to face? Those who, whether in Israel or elsewhere, continue to deny the Palestinians their rights and to defy fate bear a heavy responsibility to the future. To continue establishing settlements, occupying Palestinian land on the left bank of the Jordan and in Gaza, relying on sheer force, applying the law of the jungle instead of respecting international law and international legality is to promote fanaticism and chaos in the Middle East and to jeopardize international peace and security. It is true that there are extremists and diehards on both sides but one cannot enjoin a man who has lost everything and who is wandering throughout the world unwanted and spurned, to be gentle and moderate, to consider the law and legality in his search for a little dignity. However, is not a Government that prides itself on being democratic and humanitarian duty-bound to behave in a responsible fashion? And yet Israel chose to invade Lebanon in 1982, continues to occupy Lebanon and to refuse any preliminary solution to a problem, the Palestinian problem, which sooner or later it will have to deal with more urgently, more immediately, more reversibly. The Israeli leaders continue refusing to recognize PLO not just because it is, as they claim, a terrorist organization but because they appear to have no intention of respecting international law, of respecting international legality and acknowledging that the Palestinians have legitimate

and inalienable rights. They are setting up new settlements at their expense and extending Israel's power; Greater Israel is indeed a goal which the Zionists are working towards resolutely.

The United States is giving them its unstinted support even though their policy is not necessarily endorsed by the United States Government as was made manifest by the strategic agreement signed between Israel and the United States in Washington in November 1983. The United States policy towards the Middle East has developed, at any rate since 1967 and the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967. In his address to the Foreign Policy Conference for Educators on 19 June 1967, President Johnson outlined five principles:

that the right of every nation to live must be recognized and that there must be justice for the refugees, innocent maritime passage, limitation of the destructive and costly arms race and political independence and territorial integrity for all.

The goal of United States policy, in my view, was to achieve a compromise that would guarantee, first and foremost, recognition of the State of Israel. The situation has evolved since then. Israel no longer seems content with the recognition of the Palestinians and its Arab neighbours. It seems, quite simply to be managing without it and, despite the Lebanese adventure is persisting with its national policy, hence the complete deadlock of the Palestinian question and the pessimism that prevails in the Middle East. Should one therefore lose all hope of seeing right - the best guarantee of international peace - triumph?

Everything inclines us to be pessimistic, even the nuclear threat which overshadows our futures. Authoritative sources claim that Israel has the capacity to manufacture an atomic bomb and to use it if necessary. The notion of right and legality is a totally relative concept. Right may be the expression of a de facto situation, for instance, partition which is legal, although at the start it was a breach of legality and of right. A united Palestinian State whose citizens had the same rights irrespective of their race or religion, would be a step towards progress and human understanding.

The Palestinians, in the pursuit of their fundamental and inalienable rights have agreed to the co-existence of two States. They refer, in their quest for such a solution, to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 333 (1973) reduce them to the state of refugees and cannot be the basis for a solution to their problem. The convening of an international conference is not in sight. The Security Council can always meet to consider the problem - under threat of a veto. What poor prospects for this just cause. The alternative is to fight - that inalienable right remains - the alternative is to hope for a change of heart - and we must all work to bring this change of heart about. That is what gives us hope:

What reinforcement we may gain from hope
If not what resolution from despair.
(John Milton 1608-1674)

The Palestinians are trying to find a reason for living. Mid-way between despair and hope.

As for us, it is our duty to give them support, if not out of a spirit of justice and solidarity, at least in order to safeguard ourselves from increasingly dangerous repercussions, from the wretched vicissitudes of a problem which has persisted for many years and which it is time - high time - to resolve by making the only possible compromise, namely, mutual recognition and real reconciliation in a noble vision of a common future.

Anis El-Qasim

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I shall attempt to deal with some basic rights of the Palestinian people as affected by Israeli ideology, legislation and persistent practices from the angle of racial discrimination, in order to establish whether such ideology, legislation and consistent practices are racist in their nature and, if so, whether they constitute institutionalized racism.

My points of departure and reference will be the following:

(a) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations by resolution 2106 A (XX) of 21 December 1965 and entered into force on 4 January 1969 to which Israel became a party in 1981. I have intentionally avoided any reference to the two Covenants, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Israel has signed but failed to ratify. I have also avoided reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because the Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that it does not form a part of the law of Israel and I have also avoided reference to the Geneva Conventions because of the ruling of the Israeli Supreme Court that, although Israel became a party to them, yet they were not a part of the laws of Israel because of the failure of the Government of Israel to pass the necessary enabling legislation, which makes a mockery of acceding to international conventions. Thus I am limiting myself to the international convention to which Israel has voluntarily become a party and which it implements through the submission of annual reports to the international committee established under the Convention.

(b) The two basic resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations dealing with the future of Palestine and its people, namely resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948; the first was the resolution which partitioned Palestine and was concerned with the question of the division of the territory between an Arab and a Jewish State, the City of Jerusalem, the Holy Places and minority rights of Arabs in the Jewish State and of Jews in the Arab State. The second resolution concerned the repatriation of Palestinian refugees or payment of compensation to those who did not wish to return. Those two basic resolutions were solemnly accepted by Israel in official declarations and explanations submitted by Israel on the establishment of the State of Israel and on its admission as a Member of the United Nations. The same resolutions were accepted, indeed strenuously lobbied for by the United States Government, and are affirmed year after year by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Here again, I have abstained from any reference to other resolutions which were

not approved by both Israel and the United States and resolutions, such as Security Council resolution 242 (1967) which was not directly concerned with the Palestine problem, and which do not stand on the same level of importance with the two aforementioned resolutions. In this connection, it is important to recall that Israel's declarations and undertakings in pursuance of these resolutions were unconditional, i.e., they were not made conditional upon acceptance of the resolutions by the Palestinian Arabs. Indeed, they were made after the rejection of the partition plan was well known and well established. The first Israeli declaration to the United Nations, as required by the partition resolution, was made on 15 May 1948 after resistance to the partition plan had led to armed conflict in Palestine, and the second declaration was made on the occasion of the admission of Israel to membership of the United Nations on 11 May 1949, after the armed conflict had reached new dimensions and after the refugee problem had become a devastating reality. Thus, the nature and extent of the problems as well as the nature and requirements for their solution were well recognized and formally accepted through official and solemn undertakings by Israel to the international community;

(c) The ideology of Israel and its establishment had remained unchanged since the creation of Israel and has not been in any serious manner affected by who is in power. They call it zionism without any distinction between the various brands of zionism on the spiritual and political levels. Thus when I talk about zionism, I should be understood as talking about that ideology which has been the guiding force in the mainstream of the political life in Israel. The basic constituents of this ideology, as put into practice, have not changed since the creation of Israel and on them there is no difference between the Labour and the Likud parties. Therefore we have persistent policies and practices whose basic inspiring ideology is the same although the pace and tactics may differ.

I. The Convention

As my first reference point, I mentioned the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965 because it is very important to emphasize that the term "racial discrimination", when used responsibly, is used as a term of art with an internationally recognized definition. Both the definition and the criteria are not subjective, but set out in an international convention which has received the widest ratification and acceptance by the international community. Up to April 1984, the number of States which had ratified or acceded to the Convention is 122. No other human rights convention can boast of such a figure.

Paragraph (1) of article 1 of the Convention defines "racial discrimination", as used in the Convention, to mean:

"any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

Thus this definition was in existence and formed a part of international law ten years before General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 determining "that zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination" and it is to the definition in the International Convention as well as to the judgement of the International Military Tribunal of Nürnberg that one should appeal in order to establish whether the determination by the General Assembly was correct or not by testing against it the ideology, legislation, policies and activities of Israel as a zionist State.

In article 2 of the Convention, States parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races. To that end, States parties have undertaken definite commitments, some of which should be mentioned in detail because of their direct relevance to the subject under discussion:

- (a) Each State party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation;
- (b) Each State party undertakes not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by any person or organizations;
- (c) Each State party shall take effective measures to review governmental national and local policies and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists;
- (d) Each State party shall prohibit and bring to an end, by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, racial discrimination by any persons, group or organizations;
- (e) Each State party undertakes to encourage, where appropriate, integrationist multiracial organizations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between races and to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division.

Under article 4 of the Convention, States parties undertook to declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority as well as the provision of any assistance to racist activities, and to prohibit and declare illegal organizations which promote and incite racial discrimination. Article 5 selects certain civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for special attention, including the right to freedom of movement, the right to leave and to return to one's country, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of thought and opinion, the right to form and join trade unions and the right to education and training.

II. Israeli United Nations undertakings

These are some of the main substantive provisions of the Convention to which Israel is a party. Apart from the Convention and back in 1948 and 1949 on the creation of Israel and before its admission to the United Nations,

Israel made the declaration required under resolution 181(II) which is the basis of any legality for the existence of Israel. Section C of part I of that resolution made it obligatory on the provision Governments of the proposed Arab and Jewish States to make a declaration before independence containing certain clauses set out in that section. A general provision of the section declared:

"The stipulations contained in the declaration are recognized as fundamental laws of the State and no law, regulation or official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation or official action prevail over them."

In other words, the sovereignty of the proposed two States was restricted to the extent stated in the Declaration. On 15 May 1948 the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Israel addressed a cablegramme to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in which he stated, inter alia,:

"I beg to declare on behalf of the Provisional Government of the State of Israel its readiness to sign the Declaration and Undertaking provided for respectively in part one C and part one D of the resolution of the General Assembly."

The United Nations, in adopting the partition plan, were extremely anxious to guarantee the safety of the holy places and accessibility thereto and the rights of the minorities in each State and wanted to ensure that neither of the two States would rely on the defence of sovereignty in dealing with the matters governed by the stipulations provided for in the declaration. Consequently and before admission to the United Nations, Israel declared to the United Nations that it would not invoke article 2 (7) of the Charter, which relates to domestic jurisdiction.

III. The Israeli Nationality Law

It should be recalled that the matters covered by the declaration and undertaking were extremely vital because of the consequences of the partition plan and the possibility of discrimination against the minority in each State. The importance of these guarantees, which were made under the protection of the United Nations, can be gathered from the fact that, under the partition plan, the proposed Jewish State would have a population consisting of 509,780 Arabs and 499,020 Jews according to the statistics available to the United Nations at the time. As noted by an authority on the subject:

"the territory which was earmarked for the Jewish State by the resolution of 29 November 1947 was just as much allocated to the 509,780 Palestinian Arabs as it was allocated to the 499,020 Jews who were then the inhabitants of such territory. However, Israel has acted as if the United Nations has granted to the Jewish inhabitants alone the territory of the proposed Jewish State and reserved such territory for their exclusive use and occupation." 1/

Paragraph 2 of chapter 2 of section C of part I of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 provides:

"no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants on the ground of race, religion, language or sex."

Chapter 3 of the same section C was very careful to deal with the question of citizenship. Paragraph 1 provides as follows:

"Palestine citizens residing in Palestine outside the City of Jerusalem, as well as Arabs and Jews who, not holding Palestinian citizenship, reside in Palestine outside the City of Jerusalem shall, upon the recognition of independence, become citizens of the State in which they are resident and enjoy full civil and political rights."

It should be noted that, regarding this question of citizenship, an Arab or a Jew would, on recognition of independence, become automatically a citizen of the State in which he was a resident even though he might not have been a holder of Palestinian citizenship. Thus the Israeli Law of Return of 1950 and the Israeli Nationality Law of 1952 which gave only to Jews who were in the country before the establishment of the State the automatic right to nationality while denying the same right to the Arabs who were also resident in the country before the establishment of the State are clearly in contravention of the above provision and are both illegal and unconstitutional - illegal because of the racist nature in accordance with the principles laid down by the Nürenberg Tribunal and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination referred to above and unconstitutional because they contravene the general provision of section C of part I of resolution 181 (II) which made the stipulations of that section, including the provision regarding citizenship, a fundamental law for both the Jewish and the Arab States.

Under the Israeli Nationality Law all that is required of a Jew to become a citizen of the State is that he must have immigrated to the country before or after the establishment of the State. However, an Arab in his homeland is deemed to be stateless and is destined to remain stateless unless he meets four conditions, some of which are beyond his control. They are:

(a) He must prove that he is a Palestinian citizen. This is not required of a Jew who immigrated to Palestine during the United Kingdom Mandate. With the surrender of the Mandate on 15 May 1948 by the United Kingdom, the Government of Palestine disappeared and there was no authority which could give a certificate of citizenship. In almost every country in the world most nationals do not care to have a certificate of citizenship unless it is specifically wanted for a specific purpose. The Arab population of Palestine was no exception to this rule. Most people did not have such certificates. Only those who travelled abroad, and they were comparatively few, had passports indicative of their nationality. It is for this reason, in addition to the principle involved, that the citizenship provision of the protected section C, part I, of resolution 181 (II) of 1947 provided for automatic citizenship for Arabs and Jews residents in Palestine regardless of whether they had Palestinian citizenship or not;

(b) He must have registered on March 1952 as an inhabitant under the Registration of Inhabitants Ordinance, 1949. Commenting on this requirement, the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights said:

"Since many of the Arab inhabitants of Israel were not registered as inhabitants during the first years of the existence of the State, in particular owing to the intentional difficulties caused by the military administration, this fact alone already deprives them for ever of the fundamental right to citizenship." 2/

It is unthinkable that one's citizenship in his homeland should depend on a census registration. Moreover, all the refugees whose right to the citizenship of the Jewish State, envisaged by the partition plan, and which was solemnly accepted by Israel in its declaration and undertaking to the United Nations, are deprived of that right by this requirement of registration. They were denied by Israel the right to return and, because they were not registered inhabitants on the said date, they were deprived of their citizenship right. In Israeli legalistic terminology, these refugees are "absentees" whose property was expropriated, again because of their "absence";

(c) He was an inhabitant of Israel on the day of coming into force of the Nationality Law, which, was under article 19(a) of the Law, 14 July 1952;

(d) He was in Israel, or in an area which became Israeli territory after the establishment of the State, from the date of the establishment of the State to the day of the coming into force of the Law, or entered Israel legally during that period. Thus, as commented by the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, absence of one day could easily deprive a Palestinian Arab of his right to citizenship. 3/ In an article entitled 'Everyone has the right to a nationality', (see article 15/1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), Mordechai Avi-Shaul commented on the effect of Israeli Nationality Law as follows:

"Israel is ruling tens of thousands of Arab inhabitants who have not become Israeli nationals. Their number is unknown. No official figures are available. The Minister of Interior is all-powerful. If he so wills, he grants; if he so wills, he revokes; if he so wills, he sustains. As a Ha'aretz editorial noted in 1952, We have learned well the art of trimming minority rights and we should have no pride over the agile perception we have demonstrated in this domain!" 4/

The Israeli Nationality Law avoided the use of the word "Arab" in any of its provisions in order to give the appearance of general application and to avoid the charge of racial discrimination. However, racial discrimination is not a question of form only; it is a question of substance and effect. That is why the definition of racial discrimination, as set out in article 1(1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination specified that the racist act must have "the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal

footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms". The purpose and effect of the Israeli Nationality Law was to give a distinction and a preference (both of which are prohibited under the Convention) to Jews who were residents of the State on its establishment as against the Arab residents, both of whom were guaranteed equal recognition and enjoyment of their citizenship right.

Under article 2 of the Convention, each State party undertakes to "take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists". In compliance with its solemn international undertakings and commitments, Israel should rescind the Nationality Law and enact a law which is not tainted by racial discrimination and which would give full effect to the declaration it solemnly signed with the United Nations recognizing equal citizenship rights for all Arabs and Jews who were residents in the part of Palestine allocated to the Jewish State. In this way, a part of the refugee problem would be on the correct legal way to a final solution. Those refugees who were residents on 29 November 1947 in the area allocated to the Jewish State should be deemed and recognized by Israel as Israeli citizens and by the United Nations as well in pursuance of section C of resolution 181 (II) and Israel's undertakings thereunder. A person's absence from his country because of force majeure circumstances, such as the outbreak of hostilities, would not deprive him of his residence, and the Palestinian refugees have all the years effectively demonstrated their readiness and determination to return to their country. It is Israel which is not allowing them to do so. It is for the refugees themselves, if they so wish, to surrender the citizenship guaranteed to them and not for Israel to deprive them of it, deny it to them or force a permanent form of exile on them.

IV. Social benefits

Another example of Israeli attempts to camouflage the racist nature of Israel's political ideology, zionism and its racist policies can be found in the field of social legislation. The underlying philosophy, which is racist in its nature, of such legislation is to deny, as far as possible, families of Israeli Arab citizens the social benefits which should be provided by the State. An insight into this racist attitude can be found in a direct statement by Ben-Gurion, the real founder of Israel and its first Prime Minister. Ben-Gurion was, of course, the leader of the Labour Party, which, in view of its actual policies, is a committed national socialist party with no place in the Socialist International.

In order to cope with the problem of the gap between Jewish and Arab rates of natural increase, Ben-Gurion had this to say:

"...since the problem of the birth rate does not affect all the inhabitants but only the Jewish community, it cannot be solved by the Government. Israel provides (sic) equal rights for all its citizens without distinction of race and nationality. Consequently if the Government plans to increase birth rate by providing special assistance

to large families, the main beneficiaries will be Arab families, which are generally larger than Jewish families. Since it is only the Jews who need such incentives, the Government is unable to deal with the problem and the matter should be transferred to the Jewish Agency or some special Jewish organization." 5/

We shall deal later with the use of so-called "non-governmental" organizations by Israel in order to implement its racist ideology and policies and to avoid the charge of racism. In the field of social insurance, the idea of utilizing the Jewish Agency was discarded because of implementation difficulties. 6/ Therefore, an amendment was introduced in 1970 to the Discharged Soldiers (Reinstatement in Employment) Law. The law itself looks innocent enough, for who would not like to help discharged soldiers. However, an amendment to the law gave the Minister of Labour, after consultation with the Minister of Finance, the power to make regulations providing for the payment of grants to soldiers or to members of their families or to specific groups of them in such a way, under such conditions and in such amounts as he might decide in the light of their financial or family situation. The amendment also authorized the Minister of Labour to empower the National Insurance Organization or any other body approved by the Knesset Finance Committee to pay the aforesaid grant. As a result of the definition of the term "soldier", in practice 99 per cent of the Jewish population of Israel received the increased subsidies. However, the Arab population did not receive these subsidies in spite of the fact that Arabs pay taxes and insurance contributions exactly like Jews.

It should be remembered, in order to understand the racist nature of this legislation, that most Arabs do not serve in the Israeli armed forces; they are not conscripted, nor are they permitted to volunteer for service. Only Druze and Circassian communities (which constitute only 7 per cent of the total non-Jewish population in Israel) have been subject to conscription. Thus the whole purpose of the exercise is to give substantial preference to members of the Jewish community. There is nothing more telling on this point than the treatment of those Jews who are exempt from army service. Under the law, like the Arabs, they should be ineligible for the higher payment. However, the law was not allowed to take its course, and these Jews receive compensatory payments from a special fund under the control of the Ministry of Religion. The result of this glaring racial discrimination is that "although all children in large families are eligible for allowances from the National Insurance Institute, those whose parents, grandparents or brothers served in the Israeli Defence Forces receive 40 per cent more". 7/

The "soldier" mechanism has been used very widely in Israel as the instrument of racial discrimination against Israeli Arabs. "The possession of veteran status is a prerequisite to a wide variety of jobs and assistance programmes." 8/ Arab students are finding it more and more difficult to join Hebrew universities, the only universities effectively allowed in Israel, because of the prerequisite of previous army service, and the Israeli Council for Higher Education, with the approval of the Ministry of Education has, in

1981, refused permission to establish the Arab University of Galilee under the pretext that there was no need for more universities in the country. Ha'aretz of 5 July 1984 published a statement distributed by the Arab Students Association condemning the Law of Discharged Soldiers which was passed by the Knesset the previous week and which granted special privileges to soldiers discharged from the Israeli army. "The law", said the statement, "will constitute fertile soil for the development of institutionalized racism that will penetrate all fields of life: Jewish students will be preferred over Arab students for entrance to higher educational institutions and also will enjoy scholarships, grants and university services on a much broader scale than their Arab student colleagues. All through the excuse of military service".

As we have already noted, Israeli law prohibits Palestinians from the draft, and yet punishes them in their livelihood, their jobs, their education and opportunities for work because they were not in the armed forces. Here we have the same story once more in a different field. The refugees are denied the right of return, therefore they are treated as "absentees" in order to justify the expropriation of their property. The Israeli Arabs are prohibited from joining the armed forces, and their failure to be such members is used as the justification for racial discrimination on a very wide scale.

V. The question of land

So far, this paper has dealt, in brief, with two examples of Israeli institutionalized racism against the Palestinians, even those who are Israeli citizens, namely the Nationality Law and the various legislations affecting social benefits. Those two examples cover most of the spectrum of civil, political and social rights. I move now to refer to another form of institutionalized racism which is also of a very far-reaching effect, namely the question of land. 9/ 10/

Some basic figures will be helpful in this discussion. Before the United Kingdom decided to relinquish its mandate over Palestine, the United Kingdom and the United States Governments agreed on the setting up of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946. The mandatory Government, the United Kingdom, prepared for the Committee the "Survey of Palestine" which showed that the total Jewish land ownership represented only 6.03 per cent of the total land area of Palestine. According to the most optimistic figures given by the Jewish Agency, the figure was 6.59 per cent.

The partition plan adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in resolution 181(II) of 29 November 1947 allocated to the Jewish State 56 per cent of the land area of Palestine and Israel ended, before 1967, occupying 77 per cent of the land of Palestine. However, as noted above, this allocation was based on the declaration and undertaking signed by Israel with the United Nations regarding the protection of minority rights, including the right to property and the right to citizenship, all to be enjoyed without discrimination as to race, national or ethnic origin.

However, let us look at the record. According to Don Peretz,

"The first authoritative statement of policy on Arab property from the Provisional Government of Israel was the Abandoned Areas Ordinance published in the Official Gazette on June 30th 1948. It defined an 'abandoned' area as any place conquered by or surrendered to, the armed forces of Israel or deserted by all or part of the inhabitants. The Provisional Government was given authority to declare any place an 'abandoned' area." 11/

Again, according to Don Peretz,

"The relationship of Arabs to their property was somewhat clarified in December 1948, when the Provisional Government published its first Absentee Property Regulations...In effect they prevented the return of any Arabs, including those who were citizens of Israel, to property abandoned during, or immediately before, the war."

The "firsts" were the prelude to numerous legislative measures regarding the seizure of Arab property in Israel which ended by, so far, vesting 92 per cent of the land area of pre-1967 Israel in the State and the Jewish National Fund. In this paper we shall not attempt to follow all the legislative and administrative actions of Israel to dispossess the Palestinian Arabs of their property. However, it is relevant to remark, at this stage, that the first two actions of the Israeli Government reflect its ideology and its implementation. According to these legislative measures, the term "abandoned" property was not used to cover only property which has been actually abandoned in the normal use of the term. On the contrary, it included any place which has been conquered by, or surrendered to, the armed forces of Israel or deserted by all or part of its inhabitants. Thus, if one family, or indeed one person, has deserted his town or village, the whole town or village could be considered as abandoned. Indeed, there is no need to leave the property, the village or town. It is enough to treat them as abandoned if they have been conquered by or even surrendered to the armed forces of Israel. It is the grossest misrepresentation to describe such property as abandoned, particularly when the second action of the Israeli Government to "clarify" the relationship of the Palestinian Arab to his "abandoned" property was designed to prevent his return to his property. These are legislative acts which are in gross violation of established principle of domestic and international law. Even if all Palestinians are to be treated as enemy subject, the rule of international law is clear. Oppenheim states the rule as follows:

"Immovable private enemy property may under no circumstances or conditions be appropriated by an invading belligerent. Should he confiscate and sell private land or buildings, the buyer would acquire no right whatever to the property." 13/

Nazi German acts of plunder of private property in occupied territory during the Second World War were condemned as a war crime by the International

Military Tribunal at Nürnberg. When directed against a specific national or ethnic group, such acts become not only war crimes but also crimes against humanity for which the Nazi leaders were convicted. Thus the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs from their homeland is not a novel idea advocated by Rabbi Kahane but has its legislative expression as early as December 1942 under the Provisional Government.

It is important to remember that it was and still is through legislative acts, for which the Israeli Government is responsible, that the property of the Palestinian Arabs, whether they are "absentees" or "present absentees" (a term used to refer to those Israeli Arabs who were in Israel but were, nevertheless treated as absentees), was seized, and placed at the exclusive use and occupation of the Jewish community to the permanent exclusion of the Arab community.

It may be argued that a State may nationalize private property. However, if such nationalization is directed against a specific national or ethnic group, such nationalization would be racist. Moreover, the object of nationalization is to put the property for the benefit of the whole community. Expropriation of private property is known in all domestic jurisdictions. However, the purpose of such expropriation is to construct roads, hospitals, schools, public gardens, etc. for the benefit of the community at large and not to deny them even by law to a specified section of the community on a racist basis.

The property expropriated by Israel was put and is still put at the exclusive use of the Jewish community alone. I have mentioned that 92 per cent of the land in Israel is now vested in the State and the Jewish National Fund. I have already referred to Ben-Gurion's statement regarding the possible utilization of the Jewish Agency in connection with family benefits. The Jewish Agency as well as the Jewish National Fund, which are officially designated as non-governmental organizations, are used as instruments of institutionalized discrimination by the State itself. Commenting on the rule of such agencies, Lustick had the following to say:

"What should be emphasized is that the existence of separate, Jewish institutions such as JNF and the Jewish Agency, controlling as they do vast resources and not including Arabs in the purview of their activities, enables the (Israeli) Government to use the legal system to transfer resources from the public domain to the Jewish sector. It does this without discriminating in the law between Jews and Arabs but by assigning responsibility for the disposition of those resources (especially land and funds from abroad) to institutions which are historical creations of the Zionist movement with personnel imbued with the desire to consolidate and strengthen the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael." 14/

What Lustick missed in his otherwise correct remark is that the transfer itself through the legal system of public domain with the effect and intention that

it be used exclusively for the benefit of the Jewish community is an act of racial discrimination by the State. The use of the transfer instrumentality to that end is itself an act of racial discrimination, and when the law is used for such a purpose the legal system becomes an instrument of racism and racial discrimination.

In reality, the matter went further than mere transfer. The Custodian, who was the agent of the Israeli Government, for Israel has persistently refused the appointment of United Nations Custodian, transferred the property of the so-called absentees to the Development Authority, which is a government body, under the Development Authority Law of 1950. The Authority, under said law, was empowered to sell those properties, but only to:

(a) The State;

(b) The Jewish National Fund;

(c) Municipal authorities, providing the land had first been offered to the Jewish National Fund;

(d) An organization engaged in settling Arab refugees who had remained in Israel. Such an organization was never established and virtually all the land was "sold" by the Government Development Authority to the State and to the Jewish National Fund 15/ as if they were acting as independent parties.

The involvement of the State in institutionalized racial discrimination against the Palestinian Arabs, even its own Arab citizens, went even further again through legislative and administrative action. In November 1961 the JNF and the Israeli Government signed a Covenant based on legislation enacted in July 1960. The Covenant set up two bodies: an Israeli Lands Administration controlled by the Government and a Land Development Administration controlled by the JNF. The Government-controlled body was charged with the management of State and JNF property under the restrictive JNF land policies which are to apply not only to land "owned" by JNF but also to State lands as well. Thus, despite all the legalistic gimmicking the State itself, through a Government-controlled body, had become a direct manager of racial discrimination.

It should be remarked that, under its own constitution, JNF is to hold the land as the "inalienable property of the Jewish people". The Sixth Zionist Congress of 1903 discussed the objectives and modus operandi of JNF and decided, inter alia, that land acquired by JNF was to be "inalienable" and that it could be developed by JNF itself or leased "but only to Jews". 16/ Under the aforementioned Covenant all those restrictions were enforced by a Government body in respect of 92 per cent of the lands of Israel. The involvement of the Government, again through its legislative action, did not stop at the actual implementation of the racist policies of JNF, but went further to provide legal protection against violations. In 1966 there was an uproar in Israel because some Jewish lessees subleased property to Israeli Arabs or used Arab labour. The Government intervened through the Agricultural Settlement Law of 1967 under which any individual or settlement engaged in

those practices would have his land expropriated. The land would then revert to JNF or the Israeli Land Administration, as the case may be, whereupon these bodies would make arrangements for the use of the land in a more suitable fashion. 17/ The problem arose again in 1974 and the Ministry of Agriculture and the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency conducted a vigorous campaign to eliminate this "plague" which was described by the Minister of Agriculture as a "cancer" which should be severely dealt with. 18/

Under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States parties undertook 'not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by any persons or organizations'. By the legislative measures it has taken, by the incorporation of racist organizations into the fabric of the State and utilizing them to achieve its racist objectives, and by concluding covenants and agreements with them with the full knowledge of their racist objectives, Israel is flagrantly violating its undertaking under the Convention and institutionalizing racism.

VI. Conclusion

Law are not words only. They implement ideologies and manifest or attempt to conceal intentions, and cannot, and shall not, be looked at in a vacuum of formal abstraction apart from their societal function. This applies to Israel as well as to others. They also play a decisive role in formulating attitudes and norms of behaviour. Rabbi Kahane is not an aberration of the system. He is one of its genuine products. Israel's persistent violation, as regards the Palestinians, of the rule of law, cannot but bring to mind the words of Moshe Sharett, Israel's first Foreign Minister and second Prime Minister when he confided to his personal diary as follows:

"What shocks and worries me is the narrowmindedness and shortsightedness of our military leaders. They seem to presume that the State of Israel may - or even must - behave in the realm of international relations according to the laws of the jungle." 19/

What Sharett has said about the military seems to apply with equal force to the mentality of the entire Israeli establishment. The pretence of propriety and legality is no substitute for the substance. Ratification or accession to international conventions or signature of solemn undertakings to the United Nations is no substitute for their implementation in absolute good faith.

Notes

1/ Henry Cattán, Palestine, the Arabs & Israel, The Search for Justice, Longmans, 1969, p. 164.

2/ Cited in Documents from Israel 1967-1973, Readings for a Critique of Zionism, ed. Uri Davis & Norton Mezvinsky, Ithaca Press, London, 1975, p. 88.

3/ Op. cit., pp. 88-89.

4/ Op. cit., p. 97, emphasis in the original.

5/ Cited in Arabs in the Jewish State - Israel's Control of a National Minority, by Ian Lustick, University of Texas Press 1982, pp. 108-109.

6/ See on the whole subject, Sabri Jiris, Documents from Israel 1967-1973 Readings of a Critique of Zionism, ed. Uri Davis & Norton Mezvinsky, ibid., pp. 98-101.

7/ Lustick, op.cit., p. 292, note 29, for a general discussion of the legislation and Israeli policies regarding land.

8/ Ibid.

9/ Israel & Palestine Arabs by Don Peretz, The Middle East Institute, Washington, 1958, pp. 141-192.

10/ Zionism & the Lands of Palestine by Sami Hadawi & Walter Lehn, and Jewish National Fund: an Instrument of Discrimination by Walter Lehn, in Zionism & Racism, EAFORD publication, 1977, pp. 59-91.

11/ Op.cit., p. 149.

12/ Op.cit., p. 150.

13/ Cited in Cattán, op.cit., p. 166.

14/ Op.cit., p. 109. The word "Jewish" was emphasized in the original.

15/ Op.cit., Hadawi & Lehn, p. 71.

16/ Op.cit., Lehn, p. 82.

17/ Op.cit., Lustick, p. 108.

18/ Ha'aretz, 13 December 1974.

19/ Cited in Israel's Sacred Terrorism by Livia Rokach, AAAUG Inc., Belmont, Mass, 1980, p. 21.

Abdeen M. Jabara

Within the framework of the operations of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established pursuant to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, much discussion has arisen concerning the rights of the Palestinian people under international law. 1/ These rights have been variously delineated as

- (a) the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property in Palestine, from which they had been displaced and uprooted;
- (b) the right to self-determination without external interference;
- (c) the right to establish their own independent sovereign State.

These rights are embodied in the United Nations Charter, 2/ various United Nations resolutions and international declarations 3/ and covenants. 4/

The specially constituted Committee of the United Nations has carefully formulated recommendations and set forth the modalities for implementing the rights of the Palestinian people by indicating several stages for the return of Palestinians displaced before 1967, and then the fashion in which the rights of self-determination, independence and sovereignty might be realized. The Committee regards the evacuation of territories occupied by force as a condition precedent to the Palestinian exercise of the right to self-determination and establishing their own form of Government without external interference. The Committee's recommendations have been endorsed by the General Assembly and transmitted to the Security Council. The Security Council has not taken action on these General Assembly-approved recommendations and thus the international machinery under which the initial partition of Palestine took place remains unable to effectuate the portion of the partition resolution of 1947 providing for a Palestinian State and the right of all those displaced in the creation of the State of Israel to return to their homes and property.

The United Nations Security Council limited its involvement in effectuating Palestinian rights to the adoption on 1 March 1980 of the historic resolution on the question of the settlements established by Israel in the occupied Arab territories and determined "that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East". In another part of the resolution, the Security Council "calls upon all States not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with

settlements in the occupied territories." 5/ Because the United States Government, as the principal economic and military aid supplier to Israel, 6/ was unwilling to make its acquiescence in Security Council resolution 465 (1980) part of its foreign policy, the resolution had little practical effect, if any.

There can be little debate that the attention accorded Palestinian rights in international, regional and special-purpose organizations since 1969 was the result of the emergence, in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, of a unified organizational structure for the waging of Palestinian armed and political struggle. 7/ The increasing prominence of the Palestine Liberation Organization after the battle of Al-Karameh in 1968, Black September in 1970 and the creation of an extensive politico-military infrastructure among the Palestinian population resident in Lebanon from 1968 onward brought the cause of Palestinian rights to centre stage.

It is within the context of the increasing political gains made by the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization that the Camp David accords and the 1982 Israel invasion of Lebanon must be viewed. Indeed, recognizing the implicit harm represented by those trilateral accords, General Assembly resolution 34/65, dated 29 November 1979 notes with concern that the Camp David accords have been concluded outside the framework of the United Nations and without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people; rejects those provisions of the accords which ignore, infringe, violate or deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return, the right of self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and which envisage and condone continued Israeli occupation the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967; strongly condemns all partial agreements and separate treaties which constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, the principles of the Charter and the resolutions adopted in the various international forums on the Palestinian issue; and (4) declares that the Camp David accords and other agreements have no validity in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. 8/ Having been sponsored by the Government of the United States, the Camp David accords and the subsequent Egypt-Israel peace treaty was the political attack to be launched against Palestinian national rights enunciated and accepted by the overwhelming majority of the peoples and nations of the world. 9/

The military attack on Palestinian rights was conceived and implemented in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. Serious issues concerning the violation of Palestinian and Lebanese rights under the law of warfare and the several Geneva Conventions relative to treatment of the civilian population are raised in Israel's recourse to warfare in Lebanon, the conduct of the invasion by Israeli armed forces, and Israeli occupation policies in the aftermath of the invasion. The report and recommendations of an International Commission to inquire into reported violations of international law by Israel during its invasion of Lebanon was issued in January 1983. 10/ Headed by Sean McBride, the 280-page report details the factual predicates for grave breaches of the Geneva Convention and contravention of the terms of the Convention and the

prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. Several legal scholars agree that war crimes and genocidal massacres occurred during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, specifically in the massacres which occurred in Sabra/Shatila refugee camps between 15 and 18 September 1982. 11/

The Kahan Commission jurisdiction was of a limited character. 12/ Thus, it remains to identify and evaluate alternative procedural mechanisms for the establishment of a special international tribunal to prosecute and punish Israeli leaders for war crimes perpetrated in the invasion of Lebanon beginning 6 June 1982. Several assumptions have been made: first, that a tribunal capable of imposing legally binding, enforceable criminal sanctions is, in principle, preferable to a mere commission of inquiry with no penal power or jurisdiction; second, that the United Nations provide a framework within which to organize the tribunal; and third, as a matter of pragmatic politics, that the General Assembly is the most appropriate organ within the United Nations to undertake the formation of the tribunal.

I. Limited precedential value of post-Second World War tribunals

No direct precedent exists for the creation of a tribunal capable of trying and imposing criminal sanctions upon war criminals through the United Nations. The only genuinely "international" war crimes tribunals yet established have been the two international military tribunals created by the Allied Powers in the aftermath of the Second World War. The International Military Tribunal which convened in Nürnberg to try Nazi war criminals was established by the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the USSR through the London Agreement of 8 August 1945, following the ratification of the Charter of the United Nations on 26 June 1945, but prior to the first session of the General Assembly, which ran from 10 January to 24 February 1946. 13/ The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, which convened in Tokyo to try major Japanese war criminals, was constituted by a Special Proclamation issued on 19 January 1946, by General MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. 14/ Although rich sources of substantive law precedent, the charters of the tribunals and the manner of their constitution as such are of limited value in determining the feasibility of establishing a similar tribunal through the United Nations. 15/ This conclusion is not altered by the fact of the United Nations subsequent affirmation of the principles of the Nürnberg Trial and Judgement in December 1946. 16/

A United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes had been created on 20 October 1943, but despite its title, its establishment preceded the birth of the United Nations, and like the international military tribunals, it was also established by multilateral agreement. Moreover, the functions of the United Nations Commission were merely investigatory; its founders vested it with no authority to try and punish war criminals. 17/

II. The United Nations consideration of an international criminal court

The topic of international tribunals for the trial of war criminals has been a matter of concern within the United Nations. Extensive, if sporadic, discussion has occurred surrounding the subject, although principally in the form of considerations of the feasibility of the establishment of a permanent international criminal court which would have jurisdiction to try war criminals

as well as offenders against other kinds of international prescriptions. These discussions have paralleled, and frequently intertwined with, the better known efforts of the United Nations to codify principles of international law through such instruments as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 18/ and various drafts of the Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind. 19/

The first formal proposals for the creation of an international criminal court were submitted by the Secretariat to the General Assembly as appendices to its draft Convention on Genocide in August 1947. 20/ Interest in the formation of a permanent international criminal tribunal was next reiterated when the General Assembly, simultaneously with its approval of the Convention on Genocide in resolution 260 A(III) of 9 December 1948, invited the International Law Commission to study the question of the creation of a court with international criminal jurisdiction. 21/ ILC reported its findings, with a recommendation that an international criminal court be established, in 1950. Following consideration by the Legal Committee and General Assembly debate on the question, a resolution was passed on 12 December 1950 in which a special 17-member committee was appointed to study separately the question of an international criminal jurisdiction. 22/ This committee submitted its report and a draft statute of an international criminal court to the Legal Committee and the General Assembly in 1951. Following Legal Committee consideration and General Assembly debate, the conclusion was reached that further study of the matter was due, and a second 17-member committee was constituted to carry on that responsibility. 23/ This second committee submitted its report in 1953, only to have consideration of it postponed in 1954, and again in 1957, pending the report of the Committee to Define Aggression and the draft Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind. 24/

The 1953 report of the Committee on International Criminal Jurisdiction is particularly instructive as regards the feasibility of the establishment of a special ad hoc war crimes tribunal. 25/ In the report, the Committee discussed problems in alternative modes for constituting a permanent international criminal court, but the constitutional problems in establishing a special ad hoc tribunal are probably substantially the same (explicit consideration will be given to this question below). In any case, the 1953 report, issuing from a United Nations committee, and examining closely analogous problems, represents an important source of authority on the question of the feasibility of setting up a special ad hoc tribunal.

Procedural modes for the establishment of an international tribunal

The report considered four methods by which an international criminal court might be established: (a) by amendment of the Charter of the United Nations; (b) by a General Assembly resolution; (c) by a General Assembly resolution to be followed by conventions; and (d) by multilateral convention. Each of these methods will be described below and their relevance as models for the establishment of a special ad hoc committee will be discussed.

A. Establishment of the court by amendment of the Charter

Several possible applications of this method were discussed by ILC, including the establishment of the court as a new principal organ of the United

Nations, and the establishment of the court as a chamber of the International Court of Justice through an amendment to the latter's Statute. Although this method was sound as a constitutional matter and would have certain advantages in lending stability and effectiveness to the proposed court, it was eventually considered to be unrealistic in light of the necessity, according to the Charter, of gaining approval by two thirds of the Member States, including all of the permanent members of the Security Council, for amendments to the Charter.

Aside from the fact that amendment to the Charter would seem to be an inappropriate manner for the creation of an ad hoc tribunal, the above-mentioned procedural requirements virtually assure that any attempt to create a special ad hoc tribunal through the exercise of this option would fail.

B. Establishment of the court by a General Assembly resolution

In favour of the power of the General Assembly to constitute the court by a resolution, it was noted that, under Article 22 of the Charter, the Assembly could establish subsidiary organs to assist it in performing its functions with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. The existence of an international criminal jurisdiction would be a factor in the maintenance of peace, since it would strengthen the moral opinion of the world against international crimes. In addition, Article 13 gave the General Assembly the power to make studies and recommendations concerning the development of international law. Therefore, nothing in the Charter prevented the General Assembly from creating an international criminal court as a subsidiary organ.

Against this interpretation, it was argued that, under Article 22, the General Assembly might establish only such subsidiary organs as it deemed necessary for its functions, which did not include the trial of individuals. The latter could only be tangentially related to General Assembly's function of maintaining peace, and moreover, would exceed the General Assembly's powers under Articles 10, 11 and 13, which are primarily to discuss, make studies, and make recommendations, rather than to issue and enforce judgements against individuals.

The report did not indicate clearly which of these contrary views it considered valid, although the weight of the argument seemed to lie with the skeptics of the propriety of establishing the court through a General Assembly resolution.

Facially at least, all of the criticisms directed against the suggestion of creating a permanent international criminal court by General Assembly resolution would seem equally telling in respect of the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal. If the trial of individuals indeed exceeds the powers of the General Assembly, the defects of creating a tribunal which purported to do so would seem to be the same whether it were permanent or ad hoc. This might not be the case if it were demonstrated that special circumstances made the establishment of the special ad hoc tribunal urgently necessary to the maintenance of peace, 26/ although it is difficult to envision how such an argument could be convincingly made with respect to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, at least at the current stage. 27/

On the other hand, the arguments in support of the powers of the General Assembly to form a tribunal, whether permanent or ad hoc, are not so manifestly implausible that they may not be raised as a rhetorical gesture. To repeat: Article 22 of the Charter empowers the General Assembly to establish subsidiary organs to assist it in performing its functions; under Article 11, the Assembly was given functions with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, and under Article 13, it was charged with a role in promoting the progressive development of international law. The establishment of a special ad hoc tribunal may be argued as falling within the penumbra of functions outlined in these two Articles. Furthermore, world opinion has recognized the necessary relationship between the preservation of the international legal order and the imposition of individual crime responsibility for transgressions against it. In the words of Mr. Justice Jackson, Chief of the American Prosecution in the Nürnberg Trials:

"This principle of personal liability is as necessary as well as a logical one if international law is to render real help to the maintenance of peace... Only sanctions which reach individuals can peacefully and effectively be enforced... Of course the idea that a state, any more than a corporation, commits crime, is a fiction. Crimes always are committed only by persons." 28/

Ultimately these arguments may not withstand hard legal analysis, but none the less they bear a certain rhetorical appeal. 29/

C. Establishment of the court by a General Assembly resolution to be followed by conventions

Under this method, the General Assembly would adopt a resolution to which the statute of the international criminal court would be annexed. The resolution would provide, however, that the court would not come into existence until a specified number of States had conferred jurisdiction on it by convention, special agreement, or unilateral declaration. Some delegations to the Committee considered that this method would obviate the constitutional difficulties which they believed were inherent in the creation of the court merely by a resolution since the court would come into existence as a result of the action of the General Assembly. 30/ This view was not unanimous, however, and the method was abandoned as impractical before the question of its constitutional viability was resolved. It was contended that, since the existence of the court was dependent already upon the actions of individual States, nothing would be gained by embodying the statute in a resolution rather than by convention. In fact, it was felt that fewer States would adhere to a statute offered in final form to them by the General Assembly than on the drafting of which they had actively participated in.

In light of the possible constitutional infirmities of this method, and its dubious value viewed from a practical standpoint, it does not present a suitable model for the establishment of a special ad hoc tribunal.

D. Establishment of the court by multilateral convention

According to this method, the international criminal court would be brought into being in much the same manner as the International Military Tribunal at Nürnberg that is, by the agreement of States. The drafting of the multilateral convention could either be left entirely to the interested States, or it could be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. A majority of the members of the Committee considered this method to be the best and most feasible for the creation of an international criminal court.

The suitability of a multilateral agreement as a means of establishing a special ad hoc tribunal involves a balancing of interests. It perhaps would not be difficult for a group of sympathetic States to constitute a tribunal, perhaps modeled after one of the various draft statutes for an international criminal court. 31/ The Nürnberg and Tokyo tribunals provide important precedents for the right of States in international law to convene war crimes tribunals. 32/ Just as clearly, however, the prestige of a tribunal constituted in this manner would be far less than one constituted through the machinery of the United Nations. Avoiding the above-described constitutional difficulties of acting through the United Nations might be worthwhile, however, if a large number of States could be confidently predicted to adhere to the multilateral agreement establishing the special ad hoc tribunal.

IV. Other modes for the establishment of tribunals

As a matter of international law, States within which war crimes have been committed are entitled to try accused war criminals either in the State's national or military courts; thus Lebanon would be entitled to try any accused war criminals over which it had custody. 33/ This is only mentioned in passing, however, not only because such tribunals would lack the desired prestige of an international tribunal, but because for practical reasons, this option is unlikely to be exercised.

The Security Council has apparently never been considered as a vehicle for the creation of either a permanent or an ad hoc war crimes tribunal. Aside from the obvious political reasons, this also reflects the sense that the functions of the Security Council are more geared to maintenance and restoration of peace, to "crisis-management", rather than adjudication of rights in the aftermath of disputes. 34/

If the purpose of the establishment of a special tribunal were primarily to publicize Israeli war crimes instead of actually imposing punishments on war criminals, little would seem to be lost by the creation of a tribunal that would try and issue judgements against war criminals while lacking the capacity to enforce these judgements. Such a tribunal or commission of inquiry almost surely could be created by the General Assembly under Articles 22, 11 and 13 and would probably not be susceptible to the objection that it would exceed the General Assembly's powers, under Articles 10, 11 and 13 to discuss, make studies, and make recommendations with respect to matters relating to international peace and security. Such a commission or tribunal could be justified on several grounds: as being necessary to determine the impact on the

integrity of the international legal system of massive and repeated violation of its principles; as being critical to the determination of a just resolution to the crisis caused by Israel's invasion of Lebanon. "Judgements" could be passed on in the form of recommendations to the General Assembly, the Security Council, and to Member States calling, for example, for unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops, for the payment of reparations and for prosecution of war criminals by the Member States. 35/

CONCLUSION

Israel, as a member nation of the United Nations world community, has obligated itself to a standard of behaviour not inconsistent with the purposes and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations or international humanitarian conventions or additional covenants and protocols created under the auspices of the United Nations and acceded to by Israel.

These include the "grave breaches" provisions of the Geneva Convention and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Since the Government of Israel did not initiate criminal prosecution proceedings under Israeli domestic law against the principals in the genocidal massacres committed in the Sabra/Shatila camps on 16 to 18 September 1982, and since the principal aggrieved party, the Palestinians, have not yet achieved the wherewithall to establish a court of competent jurisdiction in which such defendants might be tried, it remains with the international community in the form of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to initiate the retributive measures for the international delicts arising out of the Lebanon invasion. Obviously, respect by nations for international legal precepts must be built on an ability of the international community to sit in judgment on flagrant and deadly contraventions of those precepts. When crossing the borders of Lebanon in 1982, Israel undertook an act of aggression contrary to its Charter obligations and its presence and behaviour in Lebanon are an appropriate subject of review in light of the duties it has expressly assumed under multilateral agreements.

The conscience of the world was shocked as the facts emerged from the rubble and body strewn corridors of Sabra and Shatila. Even if the General Assembly might constitute a tribunal without power to enforce judgements, perhaps the cause of Palestinian rights would be advanced and some measure of justice would be done.

Notes

1/ See published proceedings of the First United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 14-18 July 1980, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania; Second United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 25-29 August 1980, Vienna, Austria; Third United Nations Seminar on the

Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 10-14 August 1981, Colombo, Sri Lanka; Fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 31 August-4 September 1981, Havana, Cuba; Fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 15-19 March 1982, New York, United States; Sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 12-16 April 1982, Valleta, Malta; Seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 9-13 August 1982, Dakar, Senegal; Eighth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 9-13 May 1983, Jakarta, Indonesia.

2/ Charter of the United Nations, Articles 1 and 55.

3/ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 A (111) (document A/810).

4/ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, General Assembly Resolution 2200 (XXI) (document A/6316).

5/ United Nations Security Council Resolution 465 (1980).

6/ See U.S. Aid to Israel, Thomas R. Stauffer, Middle East Problem Paper 24, Middle East Institute. Also United States Assistance to the State of Israel, United States General Accounting Office (1983).

7/ Cheryl Rubenberg, The Palestine Liberation Organization: Its Institutional Infrastructure, Institute of Arab Studies, Belmont, Mass. (1983).

8/ A/34/65 (1979).

9/ Dr. Fayez A. Sayegh, Camp David Agreement and Palestine, League of Arab States (1980).

10/ Israel in Lebanon, Report of the International Commission to inquire into reported violations of International Law by Israel during its invasion of Lebanon, London, Ithaca Press (1983).

11/ Linda Ann Malone, The Kahan Report and the Sabra/Shatila Massacre in Lebanon, Unpublished legal study of Kahan Commission Report, University of Arkansas (1984).

12/ Commissions of Inquiry Law of 1968. For an English translation of this law see Israeli Law Review, 6 Is.L.R. 410 (1971).

13/ "Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis," 82 U.N.T.F. 279. The agreement came into force for the four original signatories upon signature; it was subsequently

adhered to, prior to the Nürenberg Trial, by 19 other States.

14/ Special Proclamation of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers establishing an International Military Tribunal for the Far East, Tokyo, 19 January 1946. Other accused war criminals were sent back to the scenes of their crimes to be tried before the national or military courts of countries occupied by the German army during the war. In addition, the Allied Powers, through Allied Control Council Law No. 10, authorized "each occupying authority, within its zone of occupation" to bring war criminals to trial "before an appropriate tribunal" (article III, Allied Control Council Law, No. 10, 20 December 1945; text reproduced in Ferencz, B., An International Criminal Court, vol. I, 1980, pp. 488-493). This was generally done by bringing the accused before military tribunals of the respective Allied Powers.

15/ The charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East is derived from, and is greatly similar to that of the charter of the International Military Tribunal established through the London Agreement. For a detailed comparison of the two charters see United Nations War Crimes Commission, History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948, pp. 204-206.

16/ Resolution 95 (I), 11 December 1946.

17/ Representatives of 17 Governments participated in the founding conference of the United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes. In introductory remarks to the Conference, Lord Simon, representative of the United Kingdom, described the two primary purposes of the Commission as: a) investigating and recording the evidence of war crimes, identifying where possible the individuals responsible; b) reporting to the Governments concerned cases in which it appeared that adequate evidence might be expected to be forthcoming. This preparatory investigatory work of the Commission was clearly distinguished from the procedure for the eventual trial of war criminals, which was to represent a later stage and a question for decision by the Governments concerned rather than by the Commission. History of the UNWCC, pp. 113-114.

18/ General Assembly resolution 260 (III) A, 9 December 1948, reproduced in Ferencz, B., An International Criminal Court, vol. II, pp. 173-176.

19/ The first draft of the Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind was presented by the International Law Commission to the General Assembly in 1950; a second draft was presented in 1951; and a third draft was presented in 1954. In 1954, and again in 1957, the General Assembly voted to postpone consideration of the draft Code pending a report of the Special Committee to Define Aggression. Consideration of the draft was next resumed in 1978, four years following the definition of aggression in General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX). At that point, the General Assembly voted to submit the draft to the Governments of Member States for comment; no further action with respect to the draft has been taken.

20/ The General Assembly, in resolution 96 (I) of 11 December 1946, had affirmed that genocide is an international crime and requested the ECOSOC to

draft a convention dealing with it; this task was in turn entrusted to the Secretariat, which reported back to the General Assembly on 25 August 1947. The first appendix was a draft statute establishing a permanent international criminal court, while the second appendix was a draft statute establishing an ad hoc international court to prosecute violators of the proposed Convention on Genocide. Documents in Ferencz, B., An International Criminal Court, pp. 127-140.

21/ General Assembly resolution 260 A and B (III), 9 December 1948; Ferencz, pp. 173-177. The International Law Commission had been established by General Assembly resolution 177 (II) of 21 November 1947, and was charged initially with responsibility for: a) formulating the principles of international law recognized in the Charter and judgement of the Nürenberg Tribunal; and b) preparing a draft Code of Offences against the Peace and Security of Mankind (see note 7, *supra*). Ferencz, pp. 178-179.

22/ General Assembly resolution 489 (V), 12 December 1950, reproduced in Ferencz, op.cit., p. 312.

23/ General Assembly resolution 687 (VII), 5 December 1952, reproduced in Ferencz, ibid., p. 153.

24/ General Assembly resolution 848 (IX), 14 December 1954; and General Assembly resolution 1187 (XII), 11 December 1957; reproduced in Ferencz, ibid., p. 485 and pp. 507-508 respectively. The sentiment was that discussion of an international criminal court could not proceed in the absence of an international code of offences which the court would apply. Since the completion of the code had been stalled by the inability to agree upon a definition of aggression (see note 7, *supra*), the entire movement for the creation of an international criminal court was arrested. Although some further progress has been made in the effort to complete the Code, the discussion of an international criminal court has not been formally resumed in the United Nations. Doubtless these fitful attempts reflect the underlying fact that interest in an international court has waned considerably since its peak in the immediate post-War years.

25/ Official Records of the General Assembly: Ninth Session; Supplement No. 12 (A/2645), 1954.

26/ The "Uniting for Peace" resolution provides precedent for the General Assembly to act in a manner arguably beyond its literal powers under exceptional circumstances.

27/ At the inception of the invasion or during the periods of active military activities, it might have been argued that threat of the imposition of individual criminal responsibility might have deterred Israeli leaders from taking further actions in violation of international law.

28/ Quoted from official records of the Nürenberg Trials, in Mueller and

Wise, International Crime Law, 1965, p. 268.

29 It is perhaps worthy of note that the United States representative to the Committee was among those of the opinion that there were no constitutional difficulties facing the General Assembly if it chose to establish a permanent international criminal court by resolution (doc. A/AC.65/SR. 4 and 10).

30/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Ninth Session, Supplement No. 12, (A/2645), 1954, paras. 43-44.

31/ See for example, the draft statute annexed to the 11953 report of the Committee on International Criminal Jurisdiction, Official Records of the General Assembly: Ninth Session, Supplement No. 12, (A/2645), or that prepared by the first International Criminal Law Conference, presented in The Establishment of an International Criminal Court, 1971 (pamphlet issued by the First International Law Conference).

32/ But the basis of the jurisdiction of the special ad hoc tribunal would not be incontestable, despite the Nürnberg-Tokyo precedents. Commentators differ on the legal basis for the jurisdiction of the Nürnberg and Tokyo tribunals. Robert Woetzel, for example, considered international approval by a "quasi-totality of civilized States" to have been a key element in the jurisdictional basis of the Nürnberg Tribunal. Irrespective of the precise meaning of that opaque phrase, this suggests at least that endorsement of a substantial number of States would be necessary to confer jurisdiction on a special ad hoc tribunal. See Woetzel, The Nürnberg Trials in International Law, 1962.

33/ Mainly because Lebanon does not have custody over Israeli war criminals. It is worthy of note, however, that should future circumstances be different, and Lebanon finds itself capable of gaining custody over Israeli war criminals, and inclined to prosecute them, it may well be able to do so. In 1968, the General Assembly adopted the "Convention on the Non-applicability of Statutes of Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity," General Assembly resolution 2391 (XXII), 9 December 1968. A Palestinian State, when it is established, will also have jurisdiction to try Israeli war criminals, as the Eichmann case illustrates. Eichmann, who was abducted in 1960 from Argentina and taken to Israel by agents of the Israeli Government, was tried in Israel for alleged "crimes against the Jewish people" which had been committed prior to the establishment of the State of Israel.

34/ This sense is promoted by the language of Article 36, which states that the Security Council should take into consideration that legal disputes should generally be referred to the International Court of Justice, and by Articles 39, 41 and 42 which speak of the Security Council's peace-keeping powers and responsibilities in the context of the imminence of hostilities. On the other hand, Article 51 refers to the Security Council's authority to take

action "at any time", to maintain or restore international peace and security. Article 41 empowers the Security Council to decide what measures not involving armed force may be employed to give effect to its decisions, and to call upon Member States to apply such measures. This would seem to give broad enough latitude to the Security Council to establish at least an ad hoc tribunal, providing that a sufficiently cogent argument could be marshalled to show its necessity to the maintenance of peace.

35/ The Nürenberg Trial established the precedent that "crimes against peace" and "crimes against humanity" had no particular geographical locale, and thus the principle of "universal jurisdiction" applied to them - meaning that any State has jurisdiction to prosecute perpetrators of these offences. See Quincy Wright, "The Law of the Nürenberg Trial", in Mueller and Wise, International Criminal Law, 1965. (But cf. Woetzel, "The Eichmann Case in International Law", also in Mueller and Wise, which challenges the extension of the universal jurisdiction principle to crimes of genocide.) The four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 provide that the signatory Powers are obligated to prosecute individuals for serious violations of the agreements, regardless of their nationality, or the place where they committed the acts. See Geneva Conventions in United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

Niall MacDermot

Much has been said and written in recent years on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Last year's International Conference on the Question of Palestine produced a Declaration identifying as the principal rights of the Palestinian people the right to self-determination, the right of those outside the territory to return to Palestine, and the right to national independence and sovereignty. Addressing the Conference, United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar reiterated these rights and underscored the right of all States in the Middle East to live within fixed and recognized borders. The Declaration of the Conference calls upon States and NGOs to take concrete steps to promote these rights and all the other basic human rights of the Palestinian people.

Perhaps the best contribution which NGOs can make to promoting Palestinian rights is to explain as widely and clearly as possible the measures being taken by the Israeli authorities to further their long-term intentions relating to the occupied territories. This had been done by a complex series of military orders, completely distorting the existing law applicable in the territories.

Under the international law a military occupier is prohibited from altering the existing legal system and institutions of the territory save in so far as it is necessary for the security of its forces or for the benefit of the population.

The Israelis have sought to justify their legislation by the contention that their changes in the law meet these criteria.

One of the difficulties in following the pattern of the changes made by the Israeli military Government is that the military orders by which they were effected were not public documents. There was nowhere you could go and buy them over the counter. If you applied to the military authorities for a copy, as often as not it was refused, or simply no reply was given to the request. It was not until two young Palestinian lawyers in the West Bank set about making a comprehensive analysis of these orders that a clear picture of the system emerged. These lawyers were Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttub of "Law in the Service of Man", our West Bank affiliate, and we were proud to publish in 1980 their work "The West Bank and the rule of law". It has since been translated and published in French and Arabic. We intend to publish soon a new text by Raja Shehadeh bringing the analysis up to date.

It is impossible in a short space of time to give a comprehensive picture of the Israeli legislation in the occupied territories. Perhaps it would be helpful to look briefly at one crucially important, but very complex subject, the land law. Ownership and control of the land is, of course, crucial to the Israeli intention to take over the West Bank, which they now term Judea and Samaria, and which they announce that they will "never surrender" and which, it seems clear, they intend eventually to annex.

A few simple figures will show how far the Israelis have already gone in realizing their goals. When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967 there were about a million Palestinians in the area, and virtually no Jews. Virtually all the land was in Arab hands. There are now between 30,000 and 35,000 Jewish residents in about 100 settlements. The Israelis therefore number under 4 per cent of the population, but according to an Israeli researcher, Meron Benvenisti, they now control at least 40 per cent of the land. How can this conceivably be justified as being necessary for the security of the Israeli occupation forces or as being in the interest of the population?

The Jewish settlements are themselves a violation of international law, and condemned as such by impartial observers. Even here, the military authorities claim that the settlements are necessary for their security, and this contention has been accepted by the Supreme Court of Israel with one exception. The exception was the Elon Moreh case, where the extremist settlers refused to be a party to this hypocrisy and declared openly that their purpose was to recover what they regarded as Jewish land. The appeal therefore succeeded, but the settlement was later built a few miles away, just the same.

How has it been possible for the Israelis to gain control of two thirds of the land of the West Bank?

At first there were two principal methods, by the power of money, and under the pretext of controlling enemy property. Before 1948 when land came on the market for sale, Jewish organizations were able to offer more for the land than Arab purchasers, and in this way, over the two years, they managed to acquire a small part of the land. More important was the "Control of Enemy Property" and the legal fiction of 'abandoned property'. At the time of the 1967 occupation many Palestinian owners of land fled the country, and others were for one reason or another already abroad. The Israelis refused and still refuse to allow these people to return to their country. This was itself a violation of the right to return, a right which Israel proclaims as the very basis of the Israeli State, but which they deny to the Palestinians.

A custodian of enemy property (called the Custodian of Abandoned Property) was established, in accordance with normal practice, to manage the property of these absentee owners, a task which he was supposed to fulfil in such a way as to safeguard the interests of the owners. The reality, however, was quite different. The Custodian, who should have administered the property as a trustee, has used it with a freedom equivalent to absolute ownership. The land has frequently been disposed of to Israeli bodies for use for settlements. If the landowner is later found not to be 'absent' and the Custodian has disposed of the property 'in good faith', the owner is unable to recover his property and receives no compensation.

A third, and in recent years far the greatest, weapon for acquiring land in the West Bank has been the acquisition of land by the military authorities, especially by declaring unregistered land to be State property.

Firstly, land has been expropriated on the grounds that it is needed by the armed forces for security reasons. Most of this land has then been made available to Jewish settlers under the pretext that the settlements are needed for the security of the Israeli armed forces. Under the Jordanian law the intention to expropriate land for public purposes had to be made public in a local newspaper, and owners of land had a right of appeal to the courts. The requirement to publish has now been abolished and the right of appeal to the courts replaced by an appeal to a so-called 'Objection Committee', composed of Israeli reserve officers with inadequate knowledge of the complexities of the relevant land law.

Secondly, and far more frequently, the military authorities declare land that has not been registered, either as individually owned or communally owned, as being public land. Under the Jordanian system only about one third of the privately or communally owned land had been registered. The burden of proving ownership of non-registered land falls on the owners. It has become extremely difficult for them to prove their title. The previous Jordanian system of referring disputes to special courts has been abolished. Now the landowner has to appeal to the Israeli Objections Committee which often finds inadequate the normal methods of proof, such as oral testimony, tax receipts and purchase agreements. If the owner fails to prove his ownership to their satisfaction it is held to be public land and the military authorities claim to have legitimately inherited it as successor to the Jordanian Government.

This last step is based on a complete misunderstanding or distortion of the law previously in force under Ottoman, British and Jordanian rule relating to 'public lands'. Under Ottoman rule, there were five classes of land, one of which was land designated for public purposes, such as roads and cemeteries, known as matruke land. This was the only form of public land. Under British and Jordanian rule, land acquired for public purposes was called State land. Under the Jordanian Government only 75,000 hectares had been registered as State land by 1967.

Under all these régimes there was a substantial area of land which had no owner (known under Ottoman law as mawat or dead land). None of this land was regarded as public or State land.

The Israeli military Government in 1967 issued an order (No. 59) defining as State land all property formerly pertaining to the enemy State (i.e. Jordan) or to a juridical body over which the enemy State possessed any right, direct or indirect. But it was also extended to include all land with 'no ownership claims'. The supposed purpose of the order was to manage Jordanian property until the end of the occupation. It has, however, been used extensively to declare land as State land and hand it over to settlers. Consequently all the mawat land, that is the land that had no owner, either private or public, is now treated as State land and claimed by the military authorities.

In addition to treating matruke land and mawat land as State land, another category of land (miri land) has also been treated as State land. This is land

which the Ottoman rulers had assigned to individuals who could use it for specific purposes, but who did not become owners of the land. However, under Jordanian law, the miri land-holder was given all the powers of an owner. He could sell, lease or rent it, build on it or cultivate it. This development has been ignored by the Israeli military authorities and unregistered miri land acquired by them has been taken over as State land.

The treatment of land acquired for Jewish settlers as public land is, of course, an abuse of language. The land is in no sense public land. It is land from which the general public is excluded and which is handed over to the illegal Jewish settlers.

The brief resumé of a very complex subject indicates the procedures by which the Israel authorities have assumed control over the majority of the land in the West Bank under an ingenious cover of legality and deprived a great many Palestinians of their property rights.

Raja Shehadeh

The occupation of the West Bank has now come to the seventeenth year. At this point it is possible, with some authority, to speak very clearly about what seems to be already in place and what are the plans for the future and what is the vision that Israel sees for the population of the Jewish minority of less than 4 per cent and the Palestinian majority in the West Bank.

You have already heard from the moderator some of the methods that are used to acquire land in the West Bank. With the use of these methods approximately 40 per cent of the land has already been acquired. You have also heard that only one third of all the West Bank land has been registered and the methods used to acquire the remaining two thirds have been outlined. The situation now is that the rest of the land - the remaining one third which is registered land - is also the subject of take-over. This is taking place by several methods. When it is not possible to acquire land using one or the other of the methods that have historically been used, land is simply expropriated for what is called security needs. A recent example of this: 3,000 dunums (1 dunum is 1,000 square metres) in the area of the industrial development of the town of Ramallah have been acquired ostensibly for security purposes. But, the settlement plans do not only include areas outside the towns and in the countryside, there are also plans for settlement inside the towns.

One settlement that has been going on for a while inside an Arab town is in Hebron. The method used there for facilitating settlement inside town is to replace the elected mayors by Israeli mayors. Contrary to what is normally said and often believed, I think the main reason for this has not been political but much more practical. The situation in Hebron for example is that the person who has replaced Mr. Natshe, the Mayor of Hebron, is the person who served for the last 17 years as custodian of what is called absentee property and State property. In that function he was able and became very knowledgeable about land ownership and the land situation as well as the social fabric of the town. This information is of course very valuable to him in facilitating settlement and acquiring more land for the settlement. Licences for Jewish settlers to build inside Hebron have been given and more action has been taken as, for example, the removal of the bus station from inside the town to elsewhere and use of the land where the station lay for enlarging the Jewish settlement inside the town.

Another thing that has taken place recently is to change the boundaries of the town to enable more land to be given to the settlement nearby Hebron Kiryat Arba to enlarge its jurisdiction. Similarly, a very important development that has occurred is the amendment to military order No. 59 which is the order on State property whereby land that has been expropriated is now considered to be State land and may be registered as such.

So a temporary measure which was taken ostensibly in the beginning for security reasons has now been made permanent by this amendment to an earlier order No. 59. When it was passed it was clearly not justifiable that such an

order should be passed by an occupying Power to enable it to take control over property that belonged to the State which it has taken control from. This and other developments have now led to the acquisition by the Israeli authorities of land which we have already heard is used exclusively by the minority of the population in the occupied territories.

As to the rest of the land, what is taking place presently is that the use of that land is being restricted. In 1970 by military order No. 418, the Planning Law was amended whereby the power lay exclusively in the hands of the Israeli officials. Now, restriction on the use of the remaining land has been taking place in the following manner: the first is through town planning. The plans within the towns are being made to enable the Israelis to fulfil their plans as for example in Hebron for the settlement within the town of Israelis. In other towns where plans exist for settlements on the boundaries, the municipal areas of the towns are being determined so that they do not conflict with the settlement plans. But more seriously than this method are the two very serious and damaging plans that have now been put into force which are the regional plan and the road plan for the West Bank. The first plan, which is called the "RJ5" (Region Jerusalem 5 Plan) was published already a year ago and if you look at the plan it is very easy to see what the purposes are that are intended by the plan. The plan provides for the largest area for development of the Jewish settlements.

Around the Jewish settlements are areas that are designated as special areas. In these special areas no building licences may be granted and the settlements may develop further than the already demarcated circle for the development, which is in most cases larger than the Arab towns and villages. The Arab towns and villages on the other hand are demarcated by a small circle within which they can expand, but outside which they have very little room to expand. Around most of the towns and villages the areas have been designated as agricultural areas and in these agricultural areas the licences for building which may be granted are extremely restricted. The other plan which is extremely serious is the road plan for the West Bank. This is referred to as "Road Plan 50". It has been published more recently than the regional plan RJ5 and it points out all the roads that are going to be built in the West Bank. Some of you may already be familiar with the West Bank, may have visited there, others may not. I would like to say that the West Bank does have roads, these roads are adequate for its purposes and it is not a case of an area which did not have roads suddenly being brought civilization and better road systems.

What is really intended behind this road plan is to tie the Jewish settlement to Israel and to do this by avoiding the Arab towns and villages. In some of these areas the existing plans will be enlarged and in others new roads will be built. The extent of the damage that is going to be caused to the West Bank by this road plan is very extensive. I have myself before coming here visited one of the areas where a road plan has been drawn up which is in the Nablus area. Road no. 57 extends from the Tulkarem to the area called El-Jiftliq and I saw for myself the damage that is going to be caused by that road.

I would like to give you some idea of that damage. The road is 80 kilometres long; it is going to destroy 3,500 dunums of vegetable-cultivated areas; it is going to destroy 1,200 dunums of olive groves, 350 dunums of citrus; it is going to destroy an irrigation scheme for the Faraa' irrigation system which irrigates 35,000 dunums of land; it is going to destroy 15 artesian wells, 15 irrigation ponds, 4 modern nurseries amongst them what is thought of as the biggest nursery in the whole area including Israel and 3 vegetable nurseries.

This is only the destruction that is going to be caused to one small area by one individual road. Further and similar destruction is going to be caused elsewhere in the West Bank by this road scheme. There is no question that roads of 120 metres width and this is the amount of the area in which building will not be allowed, are not necessary for the existing conditions in the West Bank. It is also the case that an occupying Power may not make such a scheme and may not do so for the purpose of benefiting less than 4 per cent of the population as this road scheme is clearly intended to do. Therefore this scheme is contrary to international law and the convention which governs the situation similar to that of the West Bank.

The road scheme is subject to internal opposition, but we have had experience with resorting to the objections committees which have been established for this purpose by the authorities in the West Bank. Apart from these objection committees there is resort to the Israeli High Court of Justice. In this case the Court has already ruled in favour of this road scheme. This came about in another case which was the case brought by the housing cooperative for teachers which had been denied licences to build the housing for the teachers and one of the reasons given for denying the licences is that the plan conflicts with the road scheme and therefore the Court had occasion to look into this road scheme and decide whether it is in conformity with international law or not. The Court decided that, whereas the occupation was one of long standing; i.e. it was a long occupation, therefore what would otherwise not be permitted is, in this case, permitted and therefore the road scheme is not contrary to the powers of an occupying Power. I think that this decision is extremely serious. To me, the decision indicates that we have come to a dead-end as far as the possibilities of resorting to legal action within the existing legal framework that the occupation has provided us with.

What this means is that we have to resort to another Court and we have, I think, an existing option. This option is the International Court of Justice and it is my suggestion to you that the members present here urge their Governments to take the necessary steps to make possible either an action or an advisory opinion from the International Court on this matter. There is another matter of grave consequence to us living in the West Bank and working there. This is the situation of the Courts in the West Bank: the court system that has been developed in the West Bank has ensured that the Israeli settlements are outside the jurisdiction of the local Arab courts. Therefore, any deterioration in the system of the Arab courts does not affect the Jewish settlers.

Already, through various methods (one of them has already been mentioned - the emergency regulations), Israeli law has in effect been applied to the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. What remains for the arbitration of disputes for Arabs is the court system which has been in operation since 1967 and it has been amended and changed by the authorities in the West Bank. The situation now in this system has deteriorated to an extent that in my opinion it has become totally non-functional. We have made all efforts possible to bring the situation of the court system to the attention of Israeli officials, the Israeli public, the people responsible for the West Bank, again and again, over several years. The result has been that there is absolutely no willingness to act and in fact, I think, an encouragement of the corruption and the bad state of affairs in this court system.

One of the answers that we have been given is that it is not any better in Jordan. This is not true, for with us are people who have been urging for a change who have been lawyers for approximately 50 years. They have witnessed the situation under the British Mandate, they have witnessed it under the Jordanian régime and presently under the occupation. In their opinion the situation that exists now is unprecedented. When we make objections we are told things which are also untrue such as that the police is an Arab police: this is not at all the case and the authorities should know better. The police is an important function of the courts and an important instrument of execution of the court's decisions and to assist the courts in bringing an accused to court. The situation that exists in the West Bank is that the police refuse to do its duty in law enforcement and law-keeping. The result of this is that in the West Bank now the occupying authority is failing to provide law and order. Under international law it is its duty to provide law and order in the proper sense and to safeguard the life and well-being of the people under occupation.

This is another course of action that I urge you to attempt with all the means available to you to bring an action to the International Court, or to seek an advisory opinion on the matter. I think that both the publicity about the restriction through these regional plans and the road plans that have already been put into place through all the means that you have would be of assistance to us because, as I have already said, we have come to a dead end as far as the possibility of action within the system that is already available. And to the extent that these schemes are contrary to the international law which applies in the situation it is possible through international pressure and action perhaps either to delay or to cancel altogether these road schemes.

B. Factors Determining Policy-Making in Europe: NGO Role
in Influencing that Process with Regard to the Implementation
of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Igor Beliaev

I would like to set forth some considerations on the factors which influence the working out in Europe of the stands on the Palestinian problem and, hence, on a Middle East settlement as a whole.

I want to specify that I mean Europe in its entirety as a continent. I do not deem it expedient and useful to exclude the Soviet Union and other Socialist States from it. I foresee the objections. Their view may boil down to the idea that in actual fact the approaches to settlement may be and are different and still I think it is useful to speak here about the approach of Europe as a whole.

I proceed from the idea that there exist and operate objective (geographical, historical, economic and political, as well as religious) factors which have a direct effect on the developments in the Middle East, first of all because this region is situated in direct proximity to Europe and is a bridge between three continents--Europe, Asia and Africa. It would be natural if the parties concerned, Europe included, could move without hindrance and, I want to add, safely on this bridge. I mean, first of all, human contacts and world trade. In this case the geographical factor already becomes transformed into a political, economic and social one because it directly concerns the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

The Middle East is a source of a major strategic raw material--oil - which plays a most important role in the world and, hence, European economy. Specifically, oil supplies from the Middle East, regulated by the respective agreements which have been concluded between the oil-producing States and the countries that consume it, and, I want to add, guaranteed supplies of Mid East oil - are really a vital necessity for the Western European countries.

This dependence, on the one hand, makes it necessary for the European countries to maintain normal relations with the petroleum-producing Arab States and, on the other, explains the interests of the Western European countries in the earliest settlement of the Middle East crisis which has been troubling the whole world for more than three and a half decades. It is a fair guess that the Western European countries are interested, at least theoretically, in a more balanced settlement in the Middle East, as distinct, for example, from the United States of America. Their approach to settlement in the region finds expression specifically in the fact that Western Europe has its own lop-sided approach to it, just as to the ways and methods of attaining the goal. Western Europe refused to support the one-sided policy in the Middle East crisis.

I am convinced that the Western European Powers, among them the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany, would like to have their own relations with the Arab oil-producing countries. And there are many examples of the existence of such relations, and Western Europe does not at all want to lose them. It does not want to cede to the United States of America not only Middle East oil but also the capitals of the oil-exporting countries.

Western Europe also has its own stance vis-à-vis the developments in the Middle East, also in shaping a Middle East settlement, proceeding specifically from the necessity of resolution of the Palestinian problem. As a result, there is every reason to speak about the counter-action by the Western European countries to the Camp David policy. True, their counter-action is passive or moderate at least. I want to recall here that virtually all Western European countries have recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization in one way or another. And this signifies in practice that there is a giant difference in the approach of Western Europe, on the one hand, and the United States of America and Israel, on the other, to a realistic settlement in the Middle East. The point is that if France, like some other Western European countries, recognizes the existence of the problem of satisfying the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, this means that the concept of Israel which considers the Palestinians to be "terrorists" but by no means a people is rejected, just as the position of the United States which supports the Israeli approach to the Palestinian problem by virtually all its deeds is also rejected.

I think that the recognition of PLO by all the countries of Western Europe --an important factor for a Middle East settlement--will, most likely, take place soon, and this will be an event of great importance, though in reality it will not have a decisive influence on the correlation of forces in the Middle East conflict. The point is that the Western European States will not be as important to the Arab countries and Israel as the Soviet Union and the United States of America now are in the military and economic spheres. It is this weakness, which is abundantly clear to the unbiased observers, that will determine the restrained character of Western European policy in the settlement of the conflict.

I would like to note here today that the debate on Western Europe's stance on the Palestinian problem and Middle East settlement has been going on for many years. I want also to point to its somewhat moderate character, and I do not think that tomorrow the Western European Ten or the European Parliament will take any unexpected step forward in upholding the interests of Western Europe in the Middle East, a step signifying confrontation with the United States of America. No, nothing of the kind will happen. But even in this context, i.e., in the context of Western Europe's independent stand, its independent, though self-interested, but largely constructive character is abundantly clear. I believe that existing documents--the Venice Declaration and the decisions of the European Parliament--already hamper the process of forcing on the Arabs the Camp David policy which is capitulatory in its essence and which does not serve to achieve settlement of the Middle East crisis.

In this complicated situation the non-governmental organizations of the Western European countries could do a lot to intensify and even clarify the stands of their Governments on the Palestinian problem and on the fate of the Palestinian people. It seems to me that the time has come when it is possible to step up the explanation of the aspirations of the Palestinians--they are "terrorists" but victims of Israel's terror. They should be given assistance

in deciding their destiny. This assistance should guarantee a just approach. And this means in practice that it is imperative for Western Europe to take sides. On whose side is it? Is it on the side of Israel which is trying to impose Camp David on the Arabs with fire and sword? Are not Sabra and Shatila enough to convince one who is the real victim and who is the aggressor and occupationist? Or is Western Europe for a just Middle East settlement?

It is necessary to do also another thing--to launch a new intensive campaign to ensure that the Western European countries take sides also in the main questions of the Middle East settlement--the Palestinian problem.

Now I want to say a few words about the position adopted by the other part of Europe--the Socialist countries, the Soviet Union included, with regard to the Palestinian problem. In my opinion, this position is clear, firm and consistent. I also want to add that in some elements it coincides with the stand taken by Western Europe, and this could form the basis for joint action for the sake of achieving a Middle East settlement.

If it is really so, let us establish a durable long-term peace in the Middle East, a peace based on a just solution of the most complicated and burning problems of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is exactly what the new Soviet proposals call for. The simplest thing is to accept them, and after that the Soviet Union will be no longer in a position to carry out its "subversive" activities in this important area.

While advancing its new proposals on the Middle East, the Soviet Union pursues the prime aim of peace in the region and, hence, resolution of the Palestinian problem. It is my conviction that peace there, just as the resolution of the Palestinian problem will serve the main thing--the strengthening of international security and creation of favourable conditions for communication among people in the present-day world. And this is one of the noble aims of the activity of the United Nations, as well as of the non-governmental organizations represented in it.

For my part, I would like to assure those present that the Soviet Union has no aggressive intentions whatsoever, either in the Middle East or all over the world. A graphic illustration of this are all the recent Soviet peace initiatives.

Claude Bourdet

I shall try and abide by your decision that we should be brief. However, I think I must try and be thorough in my dealing with this question which we are all considering today. For our foreign friends I would remind everyone that the Association France-Palestine that I represent today covers a large spectrum of French opinion because among the seven presidents and I am one among them, there is every colour of French politics from the Communist Party to the two right-wing parties and there are two eminent persons from the medical world in France. I can say that on the right, for the Socialists, tendencies do not embrace our cause, but none the less there is a symbolic agreement under all flags and on the question of Palestine there are no difficulties at all.

Among the French organizations co-operating with PLO are the Franco-Palestinian Medical Association, the France-Arab Co-operation Association and the France Al-Quds Association, to mention but a few. The France-Palestine Association is pleased to be here and we thank the United Nations for the opportunity and we believe in this opportunity to meet which can be done only under United Nations auspices.

The stress on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is right and proper. We have often heard it said that there are arguments which lose their strength by force of repetition, but I think that we must give thought to this proper reasoning. There is a need for repetition. The whole world community is based on the existence of ius gentium, the existence of the concept of independent States or the right of peoples to independence and self-determination. If these things are not in existence there could be no United Nations. There is a people of Palestine: their will to have a nation and Statehood have been well demonstrated. The representativeness of their Palestine Liberation Organization has borne this out, whether in the municipal organization of elections and so forth or by other evidence. All new States have had a period of resistance or almost all of them and any suggestion to the contrary for Palestine is not permissible.

When we have a people fighting for their claims we cannot have talk of terrorism. We have to obtain what we seek and what is needed is the willingness of the State of Israel and of the United States of America. The attitude of the United States to the PLO, the attempt to find a solution outside PLO, whether through the Camp David or the Jordan solution, remind us French of the attitude of the same country in 1942 and 1943 towards the National French Committee of General de Gaulle. The United States vainly sought to replace the solutions sought by the resistance, something that would have suited them, but those attempts really only lasted a few months. Their attitude to this can only be explained away because of the Zionists, because of the capital thrust of the lobby of the American NGOs and the Arab States closest to the United States. It is absolutely staggering that those European countries which like France suffered this refusal should not be more energetic in opposing United States policy. This is the problem, this subjection of Western Europe to United States policy. I think largely we need non-alignment.

A further argument of greater weight in European circles is that one should think of all the other countries that have been subjugated against their will. It is not a good reason. This is the clearest instance not just by the demonstration of public opinion in Palestine, of the Palestinian people, not simply because this is political oppression but because there is a refusal of national resistance and thus far we have few instances of this. It is not a matter of facing a super-Power which we cannot prevent from oppressing or refusing the existence of others: in this case one of the smallest nations of the world. If the United States so wished it could be done. The solution to the question of Palestine which Israel and the West alone propose should call for other solutions, indeed the West does this for other parts of the world in other cases. There have been changes in the situation in these countries and these things should not be forgotten because the reasoning for the liberation of Palestine is based on other things than the right of independence of the Palestinian people. Every violation of the rules and principles of recognized international law can be considered together with independence of Palestine: it has been refused, it can come about one day.

But the Palestinians should not be subjected to pillage and plunder and oppression. Let us mention the colonization or settlement policy, the massive theft of water from Palestine and Lebanon. These excursions, the exoduses, the expulsions, State terrorism, torture, terrible aggression against Lebanon, massacres and crimes either committed by themselves or through intermediaries both against the Palestinian people and against the Lebanese people, the nuclear threat, collaboration with the racist minority Government of South Africa and there are more. The immediate action of the international community is necessary. We are, as we say in French law, faced with a situation of in flagrante delicto, which is constant and on-going. But we are non-governmental organizations and our sole interest is that we are not bound by obligations of State. We can have action that brings pressure to bear on States. I should like to refer not to the French problem but, out of homage to the moderator, I should like to state the enormous change that has come about in the thinking in the Netherlands: we have seen this happen due in part to NGOs. We can of course always do more, it is quite proper that this conference has chosen this afternoon to discuss action in Europe.

Things cannot be done through military action although there may be a contribution from those circles. Of course, it is not true a nuclear world war is going to destroy East and West and the Middle East in particular. I think that solution is absolutely pointless. The real settlement calls for a change in the will of the United States and the American organizations represented here that are NGOs obviously seek to bring this about. And they are trying for this in the short and medium-term. There is an obligation for Washington to take into account other requirements and this is where Europe comes in. The United States with Canada, Western Europe, the European community, the States Members of the Atlantic Alliance, if they were to oppose the Middle East policy of the United States, that country would be obliged to take things into consideration. The clear, courageous stands of the EEC countries would force the doves in Israel into a stronger position and force the hawks to sit up and take notice.

We have to go on precisely because a growing part of United States policy is decided at the European level, or more often than not, because of the excuse of the European level, they do nothing.

The suggestion made this morning by the representative of the PLO, Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi, was very discreet and yet absolutely unequivocal. The co-ordination of the pro-Palestine organizations in the European Community countries was a key idea which we should immediately take up and act upon. It seems particularly important to me, not just because of the exchange of experience but because it is the only way to prevent our Governments from using other European governments as an alibi. How many times have we heard in France, but of course in other countries as well, people say through one official minister, we do everything we can to bring about a settlement of the question of Palestine but you know very well it is the other Europeans that do not want it: they are the ones who are knee-jerkers to the Americans and so forth.

Alone we cannot do anything: it is not easy and it is simply a fallacious argument. We can only out-maneuvre these machinations if we take action. There is an organization which seeks to fulfil this function which is extremely useful: EURABIA. It is an autonomous, independent organization and we would like to see it represented here. It is a confederation of all the organizations directly or indirectly involved in the problem of Palestine in all EEC countries.

Another specific activity at the governmental level is that such a confederation, with all the names of prestige that it can command in a committee of patrons, could greatly multiply the possibilities of action in German, Italian, Portuguese, English and Scandinavian languages and of course in French. This information is needed by our peoples. There would be an urgent pressing need for such activity which, of course would have a ripple effect. We have to have the truth of the 1948 exodus; of the manoeuvres, the terrorism to throw the Palestinians out, the demolition of the myths of Arab encouragement, which we have heard earlier by Erskine Childers but which nobody has heard of today; and this ongoing policy of the perennial right of Israel and the real truth of the possible solutions since Arafat's 1974 statement, the whole official statement by the Palestinian officials on this, the racist trends and the forces of peace in that country, and then we could have the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was mentioned this morning. How many people in our parliaments are familiar with those declarations? There has to be a body which can prepare for action vis-à-vis our own Governments so that we can carry through with those activities that I have just touched upon. We need statesmen, somebody has to take the initiative constructively. Sometimes it does happen. What strength if we were able to say to that person willing to take the initiative: "Don't worry, our friends in such and such a country are willing to help you in this way or that". I am sure that that would encourage that person so that that official could go to their ministers or secretaries of state.

Such co-ordination could be of crucial importance in this struggle against Zionist propaganda. I do not have to tell you about that, just how effective and powerful it is. It is weakness is that it is based on lies and deceit. If we had the material means to disseminate responses to these lies and distortions then even among our Israeli friends there would be some whose eyes would be opened. We see every month, every fortnight, remarkable texts being published in Haolam Hazeh and Ha'aretz texts. It is the honour of Israel that at least the press is still free. What do we do about this? Absolutely nothing: we have got as I say Davar and Ha'aretz but what else? There is very little reproduction done by some people but it needs to be given very wide dissemination in our countries, sent to our high officials, sent to our people in parliament. We need money and if we get together this would make it easier.

We have to organize trips for information in the West, those who are here from Israel and others. We have simply to bring our efforts together but this in itself will not be enough. We have to call upon the United Nations to make an effort so that there will be a strong regional confederation which could see that the problem does make progress. We have to call upon the Arab countries but they spend money right and left to make a considerable effort of their own. Khalid Khalibi in his institute, the Institute of Palestine Studies, publishes outstanding books with very little money. If they had been disseminated, were given ten times the circulation, then that would have made more headway than ten Arab divisions, but of course there was no money. The rich States, of course, do not like to spread their largesse around but they should therefore focus their charity: we need their aid. There are millions of dollars taken from taxpayers money to fertilize and feed Israeli propaganda throughout the world. I think it would be a good payment from those rich countries to offset that.

Without interfering in the internal affairs of any countries I have to say that it is essential to do the following: we have to have PLO united and brought together. It will be more effective even if it is only a moderate programme rather than have different groups with wild dreams. It is not a matter of the false alternative of military against political solutions: both methods have their place. The dilemma, however, is that there is a refusal of a solution to accept the fact that Israel exists without which neither politics nor military action can go through. Another recent authorized statement leaves us in no doubt that we must not stop explaining to make clear. The trump card of zionism at home or abroad is that the argument is that the PLO will destroy Israel. The recognition of Israel is the last card, the final trump.

If one calls for a very moderate programme, these things have to be made specific. The military means must be weighed up, there must be no military victory for the Arab or Palestinian countries as long as Israel is supported by the United States. We have to bring pressure to bear among world public opinion particularly upon Israeli opinion at home. We have to strengthen the doves in Israel. When there is an Israeli civilian victim then that is a strengthening of the arguments against zionism throughout the world.

Politics may not be fair but we have to play the game. Let us not forget the two issues which are linked and must remain linked in the minds of all our organizations: the problem of Lebanon, particularly after the statement by the Lybian Arab Jamahiriya two days ago and then the struggle of Lebanese resistance, requires no illustration from me. We have to deal with Lebanon and Israel and the matter of the Gulf is again made more difficult by the United States which has prompted Iraq into this war which serves the cause of Israel. Some countries can take action, those who continue to help the Islamic Republic of Iran, for example the United Kingdom has far too much influence in the Islamic Republic of Iran even now. And there are still economic links with other countries. The confederate regional body that I have suggested should make a first priority peace between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq without which we can make no headway. It is politics reduced to a game of chess and is therefore rather an indirect game.

Ernie Ross

Can I say first of all that the reason you are the Moderator of this assembly is that I am not a moderator. In fact, I take this opportunity to apologize to those colleagues who attended the NGO meeting in Geneva last year and suffered somewhat from my chairmanship. Although I apologize I do not apologize for the manner in which I chaired the meeting because NGOs are perhaps the most important factor as far as the Palestinian question is concerned and, if we spend too much of our time having long debates with prepared analyses of 10 or 14 pages, all we will simply do is to make yet one more conference and what we do not need is another conference.

What we need is to involve the non-governmental organizations in a non-governmental fashion which is dialogue and, from that dialogue, positive action around an agreed set of principles and proposals that we can all take back to our own countries and we can all do something with. I think we have got to make some fairly strategic decisions as NGOs during this conference. I think we have got to move away from the governmental structure that, unfortunately, appears to be imposed upon us. I would accept that Don Betz is not attempting to turn us into a governmental organization but I think that the nature of this first conference is such that it may well be that you, the most important people at this conference, will unfortunately have to listen to a great deal of prepared, set speeches which really will not tell you very much new and which could just as easily be handled if they were reproduced and handed to you or sent to you through the post, first-class mail, and you could read them at your leisure when you return to your homes.

The opportunity to come together as we did last year, the 105 organizations in support of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will occur only once a year. We may just convince some people to bring us to the United States when the United Nations considers the report of the various seminars that will be held on the question of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. So we must ourselves determine our agenda and we must ensure as NGOs that we use this time to its best advantage.

I would certainly think that we need no more set statements than obviously an opening address from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as we had this morning; a statement by the distinguished representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization and then the rest of our meeting should be dialogue. It should be dialogue around proposals that we have as NGOs: the people that do the work on the ground amongst the peoples of Europe, Africa, Asia and America; the people who are doing the very necessary work to win more people to the understanding of the question that we are discussing here today.

It is very important that the people who elect the representatives to our parliaments, to our municipalities, do have the opportunity to have that dialogue because this is where our power lies. As an elected representative I could assure you that the majority of my colleagues' first aim in life is to stay elected and the way they stay elected is hopefully by responding to the aspirations and the dictates and the wishes of their electorate and we are the electorate. Unless we can convince our elected representatives that their attitude on the question of Palestine has to change then all the seminars in the world will be of little use whatsoever. So I think that what we have to do is to move away from the prepared statements and try and see where we can bring people together.

Last year paragraph 9 of the Declaration of Venice gave us the perfect opportunity and it gave us the format when it said that parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America should join with their counterparts in other parts of the world to extend their support. An initiative will not come from politicians. Initiatives come from the people in this room, who spend many days, many hours convincing others to join in this particular struggle. I think what we have to do during the next two or three days is to try and set ourselves some objectives to see whether or not we can achieve something on behalf of the Palestinian people.

Klaas de Vries and I were very fortunate to be panelists at the Ninth Seminar on the Question of Palestine which recently concluded its discussions in Tunis and produced a report. This report will disappear into the administrative structure of the United Nations and it will stay there for months and months and months unless we start demanding a copy of this report. This is a copy of the final draft report. I am not sure what the ethics or the administrative realities are but this report is here and this is the final draft report and I think that everyone in this room requires a copy of this before they leave Geneva this week.

There is also a very short statement which I think you have in your folders from the Executive Committee of the Euro-Arab Association reminding the Western Europeans particularly of our responsibilities to try to produce an independent initiative from the European parliaments. In 1983 the Venice Declaration said some hopeful things about the Palestinian question but the most important thing that it said was that necessary contacts should be made with all the parties involved and yet, in 1984, despite the fact that the Israeli leadership and the Israeli opposition have addressed the European Common Market, not one single solitary representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization has been invited to address the European Economic Community. That is something that we can do something about in Western Europe. We can ask our elected European assembly members why is it that they do not invite Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, to come and address the European Economic Community so that the Western European public opinion formers and the Western European public opinion can hear from his own mouth the unambiguous statement that he accepts each and every single one of the United Nations resolutions from the General Assembly and the Security Council which are pertinent to the question of Palestine. That is something that we can do ourselves.

It is also very relevant on the tenth anniversary of Arafat's speech to the United Nations when he spoke about the gun and the olive branch, to remind our own people that since 1976 when the Palestine Liberation Organization was granted Observer status at the United Nations, since that day there has not been one single effort or attempt by the Israelis to promote any dialogue or suggest any proposals for peace in the United Nations. All the promotions for peace have come from either the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People or from the Palestine Liberation Organization itself or from the Arab countries. We have to take this opportunity, coming up to the tenth anniversary of Arafat's speech where he called on all those who wished to live in Palestine in peace, to remind people of that speech. We also have the opportunity as we are gathered here for three or four days to agree on common action that we as non-governmental organizations can take on 29 November which is the United Nations day specifically set aside for the question of Palestine.

I do not want to say any more because I think it would be arrogant to try and tell the people, the activists on the question of Palestine, how they should be proceeding. But I do think we ourselves have to clarify exactly why we are here as non-governmental organizations and once we understand why we are here we have got to agree on simple objectives that we can all take back to our own countries and now that we have these necessary contacts made we have got to use them to promote the same objectives at the same time as to bringing concerted pressure to ensure that the Palestinian people can begin to enjoy some rights.

C. Role of Religious Institutions in the Search
for a Peaceful Solution to the Question of Palestine

Riah Abu El-Assal

The invitation of the United Nations to religious groups is both an affirmation and a challenge: an affirmation that the religious groups and institutions, be they Jewish, Christian or Muslim, have a role, or are expected to have some role; a challenge in the sense that we who claim to have such a role are being requested to examine the role assigned to us, how far have we accomplished it, the areas we have neglected, the failures we have experienced, and the experiences we may share with others.

Why should religious institutions be involved in such a search? Is the Middle East conflict a religious one? How related is the question of Palestine to religion, religious aspirations, etc.?

In order that we may answer these questions, we need to remind ourselves continually of the following:

That the Middle East conflict involves all of us, be we religious or non-religious, and therefore it must concern all of us.

That part of the Israeli argument for the justification of a Jewish State in Palestine depends on a religious understanding that the Almighty God has promised the land to His chosen people.

That peace, justice, reconciliation and the like, which are greatly desired by all, comply with the greatest of values that religion ought to preach and practice among people.

That human sacrifice should come to an end! The Palestinian people have been continuously sacrificed on an altar named by the majority of the Western countries "Mercy for the Jews". All human sacrifices should cease, and therefore the search for peace need not all mean a change in the sacrifice.

That there is a great deal of the spirit of Samson in the minds of the leadership, not least in the minds of some of the key figures in the Israeli leadership.

Finally, because we believe that peace, just and lasting, is possible: the principles are there, namely truth and justice for all, the means are or could become available. What is lacking is the will. And religious institutions and bodies are equipped to strengthen the will among the conflicting parties to meet with the understanding: live and let live.

What peaceful solutions are we searching for? No peaceful solution will last in the Middle East unless the Palestinians have the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on

Palestinian soil side by side with Israel. The only peace that can be guaranteed is that where the peace of the one part depends on the peace and security of the other. To achieve this, United Nations resolutions must be implemented; Israel must withdraw from all the occupied territories of 1967 including East Jerusalem; mutual recognition must be encouraged, and this may not be of necessity a pre-condition to direct negotiations, but an outcome of direct negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, and in a forum already proposed by the United Nations namely the International Peace Conference, as envisaged by the United Nations and supported by the majority of the nations of the world.

How may we, the religious institutions, involve ourselves in the search? Inasmuch as the term peace has been loosely used, i.e. misused and often abused, so the terms religion, religious institutions, etc. have been greatly misused. (The Israelis gave their invasion of Lebanon in 1982, which was described by many as an organized act of terrorism against both the Palestinians and the Lebanese people, the title "Peace for Galilee" operation, believing that peace may be achieved through some military victory, and ignoring the fact that the best of secured borders are found in reconciled neighbours.) The same may be said about religion! There has been much harm done in the world, to the human society whom God has loved, in the name of religion, and often carried out by the institutionalized communities of the so-called "faithful"! The examples are numerous. Enough to remind ourselves of the way both Jewish and Christian circles in the world, not least in Israel, defended and justified inhuman actions carried out by Israel, from occupation to expansion on the remains of others, as being in the mind of God, foretold by the prophets of old in the Old Testament. Certainly one does not want to be identified with that kind of religion. It makes people sick of religion! There is another religion where the emphasis lies in the following: to teach our people to beat their swords into mattocks and their spears into pruning knives; that nation should not lift a sword against nation, nor help pay for nations to acquire more arms, and challenge our men and women to refrain from training or going into war. We need to train our people to translate the words of the man from Nazareth, Jesus Christ, to stop being peace-talkers, and refrain from even saying "shalom" or "alsalam alaikum" until we mean to translate that into action by making peace. Our people, the religious groups, need to understand that they cannot claim to be children of God until they practice peace-making. Jesus said: Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God, and vice versa the children of God are expected to make peace. I must admit that most religious institutions and circles have fallen short of this. And we have often been silent if not completely indifferent to the cause of peace in the Middle East. If this is true of the leadership in say the Christian institutions in Israel (the Moslems have not been able to even organize themselves in an institutionalized form), whose smashing majority is expatriate and therefore foreign to the land and could hardly identify with the smashing majority of their constituent communities, it is not true of the communities themselves. More, though one may accuse the leadership of being relatively silent, recognition must be made of the important task carried out either at their initiative or through their support in different fields, in particular in the field of education and medicine. The Church institutions are giving a greatly appreciative service

to the thousands and tens of thousands of Arab Palestinians who benefit from the church-sponsored schools and hospitals. And it must be recognized that the Church institutions, in doing so, believe to be sharing in equipping the generations to meet the challenges of the present and to work for a better future on the land to which they belong and which belongs to them. Mention needs to be made also of the housing projects the different Church denominations have helped in bringing about to fasten the feet of their congregations on the land.

However, I regret to say that as far as we are concerned in Israel, there has been no planned strategy, nor could I remember that there was an attempt to bring about a planned strategy, a united one of different organizations and institutions, to carry out the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. Some consider the issue too hot to touch, too delicate to approach, and too complicated to attempt! And yet there were and continue to be attempts and endeavours carried out by individuals who believe that part of their mission to the world is to share in making peace. Perhaps I could share with you the following: we discovered that much of the indifference we have witnessed among the grass-root folk resulted from ignorance and lack of information about what we consider to be a just cause for our people. And ignorance does breed indifference. And when others were quite active in conveying their mind and aspirations to the public opinion of the world, we have failed to do the same by presenting the other side. Many have become biased! We are to blame! As individuals we initiated what might be described as "meet the Nazarene" or "meet the living sites of the country", with the object of sharing what concerns us, our fears and hopes and aspirations. It proved to be greatly appreciated, often described by the different "fact-finding missions" as the highlight of their journey. Many have converted as a result of such meetings, though we never aimed that they shift from being pro-Israelis to becoming pro-Palestinian, but we did aim at making them realize that to be honest with themselves they ought to be pro that which is right, pro that which is true, pro that which is just, pro that which leads to a just peace, and pro that which leads to not only co-existence but co-living.

Missions, fact-finding missions, tourists, pilgrims and all who come to visit the Holy Land must be told and encouraged to meet with the Arab Palestinians in Israel as well as the progressive groups in the various countries

(a) By offering one's services and time in helping our students to pursue higher education, encourage different publications that aim at deepening the consciousness of the Palestinians in Israel in their palestinianism, by taking part in different committees to do with defending our right on our land, the honouring of those who gave their lives to the cause, and attempting to realize a great dream for our people in the form of an Arab university in Galilee, and the like.

(b) By attending different conference and sharing with participants first-hand information, while endeavouring to help others better to understand our cause and find better means to help propagate it.

(c) By participating in political rallies, even running for municipal and parliamentary elections with the aim of finding a new platform to convey the message, while strengthening the ties with the Jewish progressive movements in which we see hope for the future. Humble as they may be, the different attempts proved to be fruitful and quite encouraging.

Possible actions which the religious institutions may initiate or copy.

The Pope added credibility to the Church by welcoming Chairman Y. Arafat. One wonders why the National Council of Churches, WCC or Canterbury would not do the same. After all they all relate to the Holy Land in one way or another, and the Palestinians are much as others part and parcel of it.

Different church organizations and institutions should be urged to celebrate the International Day for Palestine, and to focus on how best they can serve the cause of peace in the Holy Land.

The attention of the faithful should be brought to the tragic happenings that befell the Palestinians with the intention of arousing public opinion to the need to implement and translate the principles of peace, and bring about the day when the Palestinians will get their right to self-determination and their right to an independent State on Palestinian soil side by side with Israel. Emphasis must be laid on the fact that once this is accomplished, all will enjoy security, and the Holy Land become really holy.

Ismail Al-Faruqi

THE PALESTINE PROBLEM: THE VIEW OF ISLAM

The problem of Palestine is that of zionism's attempt to empty Palestine of its native people and to replace them with the Jews of the world. The purpose of this operation is to build on the ruins of Palestinians a nation-State for the Jews in which Jewish religion and culture would prosper.

Four factors combined to produce and nourish the movement to achieve this goal: First, Europe's persecution of its Jewish subjects; second, the emancipation's dilution of Jewish identity and responsibility for the "hyphenated-Jew" monstrosity; third, the Jews' acculturation into European ethnocentrism and their all-out imitation of Europe's romanticism and nationalism; and fourth, coincidental agreement between zionism and the colonialist strategies, first of Europe and then of America.

Islam's view of the problem and its possible solution are precise and clear. From the 1920s the voice of Islam has been teaching the same lesson regarding it, without change. Islam countenances no ambiguity, and needs no diplomacy. What it teaches on this as on any other matter is rational, critical, universal, open to contention but not to compromise of principles. Its advocates do not believe in it out of "faith", but out of conviction. And they will continue to teach it to their fellows and descendants, enlightening with it the world-Ummah and mobilizing it to bring about its implementation.

The view of Islam consists of five pillars:

I. The tragedy of Jewish persecution and their need for refuge

Europe's persecution of the Jews, whether ancient, medieval or modern, and especially in the last 150 years, is a human tragedy. Islam condemns the perpetrators and requires restitution and compensation, as well as restoration of the persecuted communities in their European homelands. Unfortunately, in the last century and a half, the Muslim world was unable to help because it too was the object of a colonialist onslaught. When Hitler marched over Germany and Europe, hardly a spot of the Muslim world was free of colonialist aggression and occupation. Even so, and to the extent that its adherents have learnt of the problem, Islam pointed its accusing finger at Christian dogma, Machiavellian rulers and feudal lords of the past, and at ethnocentrism, nationalism and consumer capitalism in modern times, as responsible for the disastrous relationships between Europeans and Jews. But, rather than blame God as Elie Wiesel did, or compensate the Jews with somebody else's land and property like the colonialists, or despair of Europe like the Zionists, those committed to Islam insist on the perpetrators' shouldering the responsibility for their crimes, and on the Jews' restoration of their original communities and properties in Europe. If, restoration notwithstanding, the Jews still wish to emigrate from Europe, or anywhere else, Islam believes they are entitled by birth to their freedom of movement; and it opens wide the gates of the whole Muslim world to them. In its 14 centuries of history, the Muslim world has been a refuge for the Jews emigrating from Europe; and this, in

fidelity to its own doctrine and law.

Islam thus gives the Jews far more than zionism. However, in welcoming and rehabilitating the Jews, Islam does not permit them to rob, to cheat, or to coerce another people. They will have to work for and earn their living under the law. If because of their religious attachment, the Jews prefer to live in Palestine and adjacent lands, rather than in tropical Africa or South-east Asia, Islam respects and honours their wish, provided it does not alter the Islamic character of the land.

II. Islam's attitude to Judaism

The attitude of Islam towards Judaism has been laid out in the Koran. Because it is critical, it has a positive and a negative aspect, each of which includes four cardinal points.

(a) Islam acknowledges the Jews as humans equal to all other humans and endowed by God at birth to discern Him and His law, to obey Him and achieve felicity in this world and the next;

(b) Islam acknowledges the Jews as recipients of divine revelation sent to show them the straight path to truth, piety and virtue. It identifies itself with their faith, affirming that the essence of all the revelations of God to the prophets, including the ancient Mesopotamian legacy, the Hebrew prophets and Muhammad, is absolutely one and the same;

(c) Islam acknowledges Banu Isra'il as people who believe in God as absolutely one and transcendent, and who were elected by God to ambassadorize for Him; i.e., to call all humans to God through sound preaching and good works. It reassures them that their sound faith and virtuous action will surely win for them divine pleasure on the Day of Judgment;

(d) Islam is full of admiration for the Jews for having held tenaciously to the unity and transcendence of God throughout centuries of incarnational and Trinitarian proseletization.

On the negative side, Islam criticized Judaism on four counts:

(a) Hebrew scripture has not preserved its textual integrity as divine revelation, but has been subject to alteration and tampering until the present text was canonized at Jamnia in the first or second century A.C. Hence, it is unreliable as a record of the revelations which came to the Prophets from Abraham to Jesus;

(b) Judaism has called God in the plural "Elohim" and described "them" as marrying the daughters of men, thus compromising divine unity and transcendence;

(c) Judaism ascribes to the prophets of God deeds which are unworthy of them, including idolatry, theft and adultery;

(d) Judaism claims for its adherents elect status above all humankind. It defines election as conscripting God to favour the Chosen People forever, and assuring them of His favoritism even if they went a-whoring after other gods or violated every law of morality.

The positive attitude of Islam toward Judaism renders its critique domestic; i.e., a critique raised by a fellow-adherent, not a stranger. In fact, the Koran affirms, "Your God and our God is One; and so is His revelation to you and to us (Koran 29:46). Both of us stand equally obliged to obey Him. This Islamic critique has nothing new which has not been voiced by one Jew or another in history. It did not prevent Jews and Muslims from living together in peace and friendship, from building together and participating in Islamic civilization. Hasdai ben Shapirut and Musa ibn Maymun represent the best of accord and harmony between Islam and Judaism.

III. Islam's attitude to zionism

Islam condemns zionism on two main counts: for what it has perpetrated against Judaism and the Jews; and for what it has wrought against Palestine, its people and neighbours.

A. Against Judaism and the Jews

In Hebrew scripture, two religious traditions are in evidence, intertwined with each other. These are the monotheistic, moral, universalist and spiritual strand and the monolatrous, arbitrary, racist and materialist strand. At every stage of Jewish history, one strand or the other was predominant, while its opposite was weak. Under the influence of European romanticism and ethnocentrism, zionism has interpreted Judaism according to the particularist strand. First, it compromised divine transcendence by promoting the view that God has a relation to the Jews other than His relation to all Human creatures, namely, necessary favoritism to the Jews and condemnation for the goyim. Second, it has compromised both divine justice and human morality by transforming the two-way covenant in which man works righteousness and God rewards with mercy and happiness, into a straight-jacketed "promise" to grant favour regardless of merit. Third, it has destroyed God's absoluteness and universalism by "enlandizing" Him; i.e., tying Him inseparably to the land of Palestine, the real estate. Just as the Prophet Nathan advised Naaman, the Syrian, that God may not be worshipped except in Jerusalem (and that he should take a mule's load of Palestinian soil to stand upon in his native city when he worshipped), zionism defines Jewishness in terms of Aliya and settlement in Palestine. Fourth, it has emphasized a materialist interpretation of the "city of God" and the "divine kingdom", of Messianism and eschatology, and repudiated the spiritualizing dimension developed painstakingly in Jewish history over the centuries. Finally, zionism perpetrated against the Jews and the Palestinians, in pursuit of its objective, some of the most hideous crimes history has known.

Against the Jews, zionism has uprooted the Sephardic communities from their homes and lands in order to fill Palestine with them, and subjected them to the strongest deprogramming, aimed at changing their identity. Moreover, it has rendered the Ashkenazi Jews everywhere suspect in their own countries in an age of hysteric nationalism, by burdening them with loyalty to the Zionist State. Against both, zionism has imposed the nihilistic, skeptic, materialist culture of the modern West, in the name of progress and modernization, even as it promised the resurrection and cultivation of Jewish culture. Instead of providing security for the Jewish victims of European persecution, zionism armed them to the teeth, made their security dependent upon the machinations of colonialist Powers, and threw them in a fortress of barbed wire surrounded by an infinite sea of resentment and hatred. Zionism has thus failed religiously, culturally and politically.

B. Against Palestine, the Palestinians and their neighbours

Firstly, zionism has perpetrated large-scale armed robbery. This robbery was first committed with British arms against a captive population of the British mandate, which was designed to protect the Palestinians and prepare them for self-rule. Later the armed robbery was repeated in 1948 on a much more massive scale. The same year witnessed another armed robbery perpetrated with Czechoslovak arms. In 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982 to the present in Lebanon, the same armed robbery has taken place. In all these instances innocent blood was shed by Zionist hands, and innocent lives destroyed by the tens of thousands. The personal properties of Palestinians, their homes, shops, factories and lands, were seized, confiscated and given to others. In 1967, 1973 and 1982, the same crimes were perpetrated against Syrians and Lebanese, with French, United Kingdom and United States arms.

Secondly, zionism destroyed the corporate life of Palestine and its people, their culture and institutions. It erased hundreds of villages from the map; and consistently denied the Palestinians in the occupied lands of their human right to reorganize their society. If the loss of material property can be estimated in money, that of community, social institution and corporate hope is inestimable in any terms.

Thirdly, zionism has made its State a hatchetman for European and United States colonialism, to do the "dirty work" of colonialist policies throughout the Muslim and third worlds. American money, political and military power have since 1967 stood on the ready to defend, protect and bail out the client state.

For all these reasons, Islam condemns zionism; and teaches its adherents to resist it with all their power. Islam is the religion of universalism and justice. Zionist racism is an affront to humanity, much as Zionist aggression against and robbery of the Palestinians and their neighbours is a violation of justice. Islam teaches that both affront and injustice must be stopped and removed. This condemnation of zionism by Islam is a matter of principle. It is not obviated if zionism were to set up its State on the other side of Mars. Moreover, zionism has debased the ethical, monotheistic universal religion of Abraham, Moses and the prophets and made itself unworthy of their tradition. While it justifies its birth by claiming to arrest assimilation of the Jews by Europe, zionism has itself become the very instrument of Westernization of its own people, of their alienation from their own Jewish, "Semitic" identity and culture.

IV. The Islamic solution

Islam provides the only rational solution to the problem. It consists of seven measures:

First, the continuing criminal action of zionism must be arrested and stopped.

Second, zionism must restore to every one of its victims the property it has seized from them. Furthermore, it must compensate such victims for their wounds, for their lost ones, as well as for their privations since it perpetrated its crimes.

Third, the frontiers of the Zionist State must be removed and its military forces disbanded.

Fourth, the Jews now living in any part of Palestine must be declared legitimate citizens entitled to continue to reside wherever they wish. Equally, the Jews of the world ought to be permitted to migrate and live wherever they choose.

Fifth, none of the Muslim States can justify its existence as an entity separate from mother Muslim States. The nation-State is not the Islamic way of organizing society; and nationalism is abhorrent to the Shariah. All frontiers of Muslim States were drawn by colonialists to serve their interests and perpetuate Muslim division and weakness. Hence these frontiers must be abolished; and the Muslim States, including Palestine, i.e., the territory of Israel as well as the territories occupied by it, must be united into a larger whole under sovereignty of the Shariah.

Sixth, the Jews of the world are entitled to set up their residences wherever they desire. The whole Muslim world should not only permit them to immigrate, but also to welcome and help them settle down in freedom and dignity as Jews, and to work for a living like any other Muslim citizen. Islamic law is the only law in the world which is pluralistic; i.e., it enables the non-Muslim citizens to order their lives by their own laws, culture and traditions and do so legitimately, constitutionally, under the protection of the Shariah and the guarantee of God Himself and His Prophet.

Seventh, the Jews who wish to live within the Muslim world ought to repudiate zionism, its plans and goals, to de-zionize themselves. They ought to learn anew the ancient Semitic wisdom that God is absolutely one and transcendent; that before Him, all human creatures are equal; that they all stand under obligation to fill the world with life, happiness and beauty, but in equity, justice and righteousness; that blest or unblest, every human should and would get exactly what his intentions and works have earned for him.

This solution is that in which Islam believes and to which Islam as world-Ummah and world movement is committed. It is the only solution designed to save the Jews as Jews, to grant them their freedom and dignity under the Torah, as well as to restore to the Palestinians their inalienable rights.

Elmer Berger

REDEEMING ZION WITH JUSTICE

I. Religion and Politics

You will forgive me, I hope, for a brief autobiographical word. I was raised in a home where a consistent, parental admonition was, "Never argue about either religion or politics". That was more years ago than I like to remember and in a world more simple than ours. In the succeeding years, I am afraid I have honored the admonition more in the breach than in practice.

In any event, I was somewhat relieved that the Under-Secretary-General's telegramme inviting me to be a member of this panel on "The role of religion and the question of Palestine" included the phrase, "or an aspect of the subject". For I am still reluctant to make public judgments about religions other than my own, or about their communicants; and certainly most arguments about partisan politics are stressful exercises in ultimate futility.

Despite these reticences, having been involved as an anti-Zionist for more than 40 years in the Arab/Israeli/Palestinian/Zionist controversy, I have found it impossible to avoid religious issues or the political aspects relevant to the human and political rights of the Palestinians. I do not shrink from the unavoidable political arguments. But I regret profoundly that, because of the inherent character of zionism, the religious factor often obscures the political issues. The controversy over territory and political rights is not, and should not be, a religious controversy about the authentic traditions of Christianity, Islam or Judaism. There may be, and have been, legitimate differences over stewardship for the generally recognized religious shrines, particularly those in Jerusalem. These are disagreements over guarantees of tolerance, freedom of worship and other matters where the descriptive language belongs properly to the lexicon of religion. But not since the times of the Crusaders - until the advent of zionism - have formidable armies marched and destroyed, in an effort to claim the superiority of one faith's vision of God superior to all others in the role of guardianship of the holy shrines.

II. Zionism's facade of religion

Yet such pre-emption of the divine prerogatives is, and is meant by Zionist protagonists to be, unassailable as a religious sanctum validating zionism's claim to Jerusalem and, indeed to the totality of historic Palestine. The paradox is that there is a minority of near-fanatical Zionists who embrace this medieval belief to justify a kind of religious imperialism. But the vast majority of Israelis are a religious, if not anti-religious. Their motivation, or at least that of their self-righteous and often sanctimonious governmental leaders, is purely temporal, an appetite for more territory and the fabrication of a synthetic, political/national entity which

authoritative Zionist literature and Israeli legislation calls "the Jewish people". No less an Israeli authority than Golda Meir let the cat out of the bag in a speech to the Knesset in 1970. Speaking of the majority of Zionists in Israel she said, that to establish this synthetic so-called "Jewish people" as an authentic nation, Zionists faced an inner conflict

"to uphold their atheist convictions thereby dividing the nation...
or to sacrifice their conscience, and atheist conviction, for the
sake of national unity."

It was the second choice these Zionists ultimately made, including Mrs. Meir who, in the same Knesset speech admitted

"They accepted that their identity depended on a religion in which
they no longer believed." 1/

The genuine religionists should know that the progeny of the shot-gun wedding cynically embraced for political expediency has nothing in common with the faith which admonished,

"Not by power and not by might
But by my spirit, saith the Lord."

So to attempt to give legitimacy to an undemocratic Zionist State with mundane national interests, zionism claimed a counterfeit religious relationship with a fabricated political entity, it calls "the Jewish people". In the process zionism has liquidated the moral, the divine element in the so-called "promise", leaving only that part which, in its amputated formulation appears to consecrate with divine approval their appetite for territory and for maximum population increase to people its pirated territory.

I have, on other occasions, expanded on the theological misrepresentations of Zionist philandering with the authentic traditions of Judaism. 2/ Those interested in pursuing the subject further may do so by reading these other writings some of which are footnoted in the text of this statement and available here. My focus here is rather to present this assembly of NGOs with the logic to release you from inhibitions hobbling energetic, knowledgeable and sustained participation in the political debate of the political/territorial/human rights issues of the problem of Palestine and its displaced or disadvantaged people. For this pragmatic purpose it will, I think, suffice to state general conclusions which make clear the distinction between Judaism and zionism.

III. Judaism

Judaism is a covenant religion. The people were promised the land only if divinely specified moral obligations were strictly fulfilled. The Biblical texts referring to the return to Zion, promise no "free lunch". Some Jews, and some Christians and most devout Moslems, regard the biblical Zion as a religious sacrament. With some theological differences, they believe a universal, Messianic era of human redemption will include the restoration to Zion of what the Bible calls "the children of Israel". From that Zion there

was to go forth "the word of the Lord". The unique export from the truly Messianic Zion was to be the moral law, not mundane Knesset legislation and certainly not an abundance of sophisticated weaponry, which today makes the Zionist State the world's seventh largest merchandizer of armaments. 3/

The first corruption of the Biblical concept of Zion is to call the covenant "the promise". They are two different terms. A promise may be unilateral, performed or offered without qualifications or corresponding commitments from the beneficiary. A covenant however, clearly implies reciprocal commitment by at least two parties. A covenant may include a conditional promise, but a promise need not include a covenant for fulfilment.

Any critical reading of the frequently quoted scriptural texts referring to the return of the biblical "Children of Israel" to Zion, leaves no doubt that what is involved is a "covenant". A more precise contemporary word would be a "contract". God would fulfil His promise only if "the people" meticulously observed the divinely inspired conditions stipulated in every version of the contract. Since Judaism was a living, evolving religion the divine demands changed from age to age. The first covenant in the Book of Genesis reflects a primitive, tribalistic faith. Abram, or Abraham was the human partner. The divine requirement was only that the "seed" of Abraham have only one God and circumcise every male child. 4/ For Moses, a divinity still bordering on the tribal spoke of collective guilt and punishment, but displayed also mercy and forgiving of sin, but still threatened to "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children...unto the third and fourth generation". 5/ Some three or four centuries later the prophet Jeremiah announced a new contract with a much more selective God who, according to the Prophet, said

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

The new vision raised moral conduct to the level of individual responsibility. According to the Prophet, God declared

"In those days they shall say no more 'the fathers have
eaten sour grapes
And the children's teeth are set on edge'
But everyone shall die for his own iniquity." 6/

But whether at the tribal level or the vision that found God judging individual conduct the quid pro quo was meticulous obedience to a demanding code of human conduct. A story in later rabbinic literature noted the reluctance with which the people agreed to the hard bargain of the covenant. The interpretive narrative recounts that, as Moses was prepared to deliver the version of the covenant for his day, the people, assembled at the foot of Mt. Sinai, did not rush to accept. The rabbinic legend describes God as lifting up the mountain, holding it over the people like a barrel, and saying to them: "If you accept the Torah, fine. If not, this will be your grave." 7/

None of the Zionist counterfeiters of what they call "the promise" ever

finds it supportive of their cause to refer to the obligatory part of the covenant-contract. Those who glibly pontificate that the present State of Israel is a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies rarely, if ever, quote the complete prophetic texts. If a people morally acceptable to God would be rewarded by "the return", a morally deficient people would cause the devastation of Zion. In the following, typical example from the prophet Micah the divine wrath is provoked by lack of justice and equity and shedding blood.

"Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the
house of Jacob,
And rulers of the house of Israel,
That abhor justice, and pervert all
equity:
That build up Zion with blood and
Jerusalem with iniquity...
Therefore shall Zion for your sake be
plowed as a field,
And Jerusalem shall become heaps,
And the mountain of the house as the
high places of a forest. 8/

Zion is holy only if the law of God does go forth from it, which is not at all the same as saying that any law emanating from Jerusalem is holy. Certainly the laws of the Zionist State which disadvantage its own citizens who cannot qualify as Jews by Zionist legislation cannot be considered just. Nor can the regulations savaging the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories qualify as equitable. Regardless of all the amenities of contemporary, man-made international law, measured by the criteria of the prophets, the Zionist State, far from fulfilling the exalting prophetic visions, profanes and corrupts the land regarded by devotees of three great faiths as holy.

IV. Christian Zionists

Advocates of zionism's "Jewish people" nationalism are not alone in interpreting the Old Testament prophecies as political prognostications and the State of Israel as their fulfilment. Regina Sharif is a historian on the faculty of Kuwait University. She is the author of a brilliantly researched book, appropriately and explicitly titled, Non-Jewish Zionism. 9/ She establishes, beyond argument, that the electronic media type of the Christian literalist or fundamentalist school of bible interpretation bears an important responsibility for the bias against Palestinian rights in the Western world. The great Powers used zionism as a tool of colonialism and as a stick to beat down liberation movements in the Arab world. Zionists were only too eager to accommodate as long as these colonial designs, camouflaged with religion, advanced zionism's objective of an exclusivist Zionist State.

In the United States, Jerry Falwell and the so-called Moral Majority are perhaps best known of these Zionist evangelicals. One Christian scholar is reported to have said, of Falwell,

"Falwell is to religion as number-
painting is to art."

The quip certainly fits anyone claiming to be an exponent of any religion and who could say, as Falwell said to Begin after the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi reactor,

"Mr. Prime Minister, I want to congratulate you for a mission that made us very proud that we manufacture those F-16s. 10/

The problem is essentially one for evangelicals themselves to resolve. Its political implications for the Middle East and for peace are not to be dismissed as trivial. In large areas of the United States this interpretation of Christianity affects political opinions. Many years ago, one of the very best Palestinian scholars, on a visit to Princeton University, told me he regarded this brand of evangelism to be as great an obstacle to Middle East peace as the Zionist lobby. Too few Americans, of any faith, see the absurdity in the alliance between a Falwell or a Billy Graham and Menachem Begin, or zionism in general. For the scenario for these Christian evangelical Zionists contemplates a final act described by one dissenting evangelical as

"the establishment of Christ's millennial kingdom, where Christ will reign from Jerusalem, with all the nation Israel converted to Christ and participating in the administration of Christ's millennial kingdom--a literal kingdom on earth with its headquarters in Jerusalem and Israel." 11/

The imagery of the quintessential Jewish nationalist, head of the exclusivist Zionist State, pinning an award of merit on the most aggressive dispensationalist advocate of the abandonment by Jews of their faith must cause the caring, humanity-loving God a small, ironic smile of disbelief, if not derision.

A friend who is an evangelical minister and writer for The Christian Church of North America and who, on principle, opposes Falwell and others who politicize the evangelical message, quotes a typical Falwell statement:

"We are so pro-Zionist, pro-Jewish, we are the only thing - the one driving force in America that will not allow Washington to lift her hand of support from Israel."

(Old Time Gospel Hour; 30 January 1980)

My friend summarizes

"The attempt to influence a pro-Zionist American foreign policy in the Middle East by uncritical Evangelical Zionists encourages a continuing destabilization in that region; it aids the perpetuation of injustice against Palestinians; sustains the escalation of an arms race and wars in that region of the world; assures the day by day increased possibility of super-Power confrontation. All this and perhaps more is being encouraged through the misinterpretation and mis-

understanding of the words 'bless' and 'curse' in Genesis 12:2a, 3a, and their misuse in the politicization of that Scripture and other prophecies." 12/

I repeat my instinctive reluctance to take public issue with another's professed religious faith. But to all those who share a similar reluctance, I suggest the burden of guilt is upon those Zionists--whether Jew or Christian--who blasphemously claim the seal of God for their human and fallible political opinions. We will not be deterred from our moral duty to choose between good and evil, between justice and injustice, between service to God, however each may conceive of Him, and servitude to some caricature of God. For we are told that in the true redemption of Zion,

"Justice will flow as water
and righteousness as a mighty stream." 13/

Leaving aside theological imponderables, the Messianists and millenialists --both Christian and Jewish--operate with their own expertise in the field of religion. Their debate and dialogue are legitimate in the context of theology. They both address the imponderables of life, usually regarded as the prerogatives of religion: questions of God's will, of man's spiritual aspirations and the criteria for ultimate truth. These questions cannot be resolved by boundary adjustments, superior armaments or the election of one kind of human sovereignty over another. Religious men and women of integrity may invoke God's guidance to find the closest, human approximation to justice or truth to resolve such mundane matters. The earnest, agonizing efforts of men of real integrity to find the best, possible human formula for such problems may be enobling examples of human striving to do God's will. But neither the mortal players nor the results should be cavalierly equated with Divine Plan. For any mortal to attempt to proscribe the struggle by asserting he or she has the authority to seal any one, human design with the insignia of God is arrogance in the superlative degree and a prostitution of any of mankind's great religions. Any who attempt to foreclose debate of such political questions by claiming divine sanction for their particular answers "take the name of the Lord in vain".

V. A note on Islam

One final idea is indispensable to complete my contribution here as a Jew. Regrettably, some Zionists and others, perhaps with other motivations, have attempted to convert the political confrontation between zionism and Palestinian nationalism into a religious war between Judaism, or Jews and Islam. The ploy is preposterous. I have already indicated the major differences between Judaism and zionism. There are Jews who are not Zionists and there are Zionists who are not Jews. Among the Palestinians there are Christians, Muslims and, in an age which, whether for good or bad, is increasingly secular, there are the non-religious. On the historical level, what is often called "the golden age of Jews" occurred under Muslim authority. It must also be remembered that, when European colonialism dominated the Arab world, it was a frequent political gambit to encourage religious confrontation among the devotees of the three religions. The fact that puppet Islamic rulers succumbed and sometimes used their derivative authority for reprehensible treatment of both Christians and Jewish minorities is less a reflection upon Islam than upon the so-called Christian Governments of the colonialists.

Theologically and philosophically, Islam is not only a sister religion of Judaism. Its scholars not only acknowledged the relationship. They speak of it with pride. So, hear Dr. Isma'il R. Faruqi, one of the foremost Islamic authorities in the United States:

"As adherents of their historical faith, the Jews are perceived by Islam as enjoying equality with Muslims. Islam regards Judaism as containing most of the important moments of one and the same religious tradition to which it itself belongs. It regards Judaism and Islam as composing one integral tradition of prophecy or divine revelation and human achievement with which it identifies itself. The Koran affirms the Torah to be revelation from God; that the Prophets of Judaism are prophets of God. No Muslim may deny any of these prophets, or the divine source of the revelations which they conveyed, and remain a Muslim. By denying any of them, such a Muslim commits blasphemy and makes himself guilty of apostasy.

"All this notwithstanding, Islam does indeed call the Jews to itself. But by doing so, it does not seek to convert them out of their faith, for it holds their faith to be from God and hence true..." 14/

Incidentally, the vicious propaganda that the Palestine conflict is one between Islam and Judaism, or those who are misled by the propaganda to believe this, seem comfortably to ignore the small, but earnest support by the so-called "Jewish State" to Khomeini's so-called Islamic Revolution. Like the unholy marriage of Falwell and Begin, the Israeli/Iranian relationship is an example of how the most degrading conduct can be rationalized by combining politics with religion.

VI. "We the peoples...."

I conclude this paper with a sense of great inadequacy for the subject assigned. My conscience is somewhat eased by reminding you that my objective was not to instruct this diverse audience in the often elusive concepts of theology. I hoped simply to emancipate political activists from the irrelevant, fabricated, fallacious presumption of an organic relationship between religion, particularly Judaism, and the political/territorial/human rights issues comprising the Palestine problem. To free the articulation of the rational judgements of this group of non-governmental organizations from such contrived efforts to inhibit free, responsible debate is more than ever important. Let me remind you that the opening words of the United Nations Charter reads, "We the peoples of the United Nations..."

It was a wise placement of authority. "The peoples" are very often far more visionary and morally responsible than their Governments. Indulging in secret diplomacies, in devious strategies, in manipulative politics and other instruments, the fallibilities and lack of integrity of our Governments are too familiar in a fearful, restive, even a revolutionary world. In the 70-year history of the Palestine problem, we who have attempted specialized knowledge are usually dismayed at the duplicity of most of the Governments involved. There has been, and still is, an amount of what an aide of Ronald Reagan, in another context, recently smirked was an example of the President of the United States practising "deliberate confusion". Without a presently

unforeseeable conversion of most of the world's political leaders to common decency, to some respect for the humanity of people, to some loyalty to the clear, unambiguous imperatives of the three great religions with spiritual interests in the land all of them call "holy", the NGOs have a staggering responsibility to make their voices heard. And I can only hope my contribution here today will have made it somewhat easier to let their vision of freedom and self-determination for all people, including the Palestinians, be heard. At times of discouragement, our voice may seem feeble and disregarded. But it was a "still, small voice" which the ancient prophet heard. It became eventually the summons heard by humanity everywhere to strike the chains that bind them and to engage in the never finished struggle to be free, to be "but little lower than the angels", striving to realize the full potential of the spirit which a transcendent vision of God breathed into the body of humankind.

I may perhaps be forgiven in my veteran years if I say that beyond microscopic examination of the deliberate ambiguities of diplomacies, beyond the still frustrating shrouds of ignorance woven of either Zionist willfulness or neglect by those who could supply information, I sense something of a soaring human spirit which will not be denied, of the resurrection of the Old Testament Prophets and their Judaism and the Christianity of Jesus and the universalism of Islam. And I continue to believe that if we who have known for so long so much of the truth about these problems continue to hold the standard high we will see the day when, with the execution of justice and respect for the human dignity of all men, we may look upon Palestine and in the exalting words of the ancient prophet say, that God could look down and declare,

"My house shall be a house of
prayer for all peoples. 15/

"And no one shall hurt or
destroy on my holy mountain. 16/

Notes

1/ The UnJewish State, Akiva Orr, Ithaca Press, London, 1983, p. 172.

2/ "Prophecy, Zionism and The State of Israel"; "Zionist Ideology-- Obstacle to Peace"; "An Examination of the Claim of Zionism to Divine Authorization for Establishing Settlements". Arab Perspectives, May, 1980. (Reprint) These are all available at the office of American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism, 133 East 73rd. Street, 404, New York, N.Y. 10021.

3/ For details, see The Iron Wall, Lenni Brenner, Zed Books, London, p. 169ff. Also, The New York Times, 6 January 1983; op.ed. page article by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi; also, ibid: 21 July 1983, p. 1.

4/ Genesis XVII: 10ff.

5/ Exodus XXXIV: 7.

6/ Jeremiah XXXI: 29ff.

7/ Ever Since Sinai, Jakob J. Petuchowski, Scribe Publications, Inc., N.Y. 1961, p. 62.

8/ Micah III: 9-10; 12.

9/ Non-Jewish Zionism, Regina Sharif, Zed Press, London, 1983.

10/ Quoted from The Washington Star, 6 July 1981, in "The evangelical right and Israel: what place for the Arabs? Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1611 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009, p. 3.

11/ Ibid., Michaelson, p. 3.

12/ "The Promise. Evangelicals, Zionism and Israel", The Reverend Mr. Louis A. DeCaro, appendix 1, in Report No. 46, available upon request at American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism, 133 East 73rd Street, 404, New York, N.Y. 10021, pp.2-4.

13/ Amos V: 24.

14/ "Judaism, Zionism and Islam", Isma'il R. Faruqi. Paper delivered at a symposium on Judaism and Zionism, Washington, D.C. 6-7 May 1983, p. 7. Copies available on request at AJAZ office.

15/ Isaiah LVI: 7.

16/ Isaiah VXX: 25.

Leopoldo J. Niilus

Issues at hand

What are the issues at hand here?

Why do religious institutions have any special role in the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine? The Palestinian question certainly is not a religious one.

Reality at hand

The unsolved Palestinian question lies at the base, has generated and continued to generate death, destruction and wars in a very special area, the Middle East.

No specific conflict is fraught with more potential explosiveness and more religious, social and political ramifications than the present set of conflicts in the Middle East. The Middle East not only gave birth to three monotheistic religions. It not only nurtured both "Eastern" and "Western" civilizations. It also has always been considered by many to be the heartland, the crossroads of the world with the political implication that whoever controls the Middle East controls the world. Today the Middle East has the highest per capita expenditure for armaments.

Today the Middle East already has become a nuclear-weapons zone. Today the Middle East is perceived as a region of strategic importance in the East-West tension, where a chain of events well might be set in motion that could lead to World War III.

The acute danger that the unhampered negative events in that area imply for the world at large, and in particular for Europe and the United States of America, should be patent. But is it?

Noam Chomski in a very recent book (The Fateful Triangle) rightly expresses his frustration about and amazement over the still virtual impossibility of getting across to the otherwise meritorious and growing main-line peace and disarmament movements the point of the greatest likelihood of local conflicts or outside interventions coming to engage the super-Powers, leading to global nuclear conflict. And very much so in the Middle East.

That puzzlement was put, in an understandable mixture of anguish and anger, by a voice of a Lebanese woman of Palestinian origin, in the summer of 1982, in the aftermath of the massive bombings and shellings of Beirut, as follows:

"You saw it happening. Let me give you good advice. Don't tell us what we should do. Rather prepare yourselves, because the next time it

may be your turn. You saw it happening on your TV screens when there was nothing more important to occupy them. One wonders what you people thought in your countries when you, with your very eyes saw the effect of the vacuum bomb - or is it, per chance, forbidden for you to think? Did it ever occur to you that one day you might find yourselves on the receiving end? Or do you believe that things happening to Arabs are none of your concern? That you are above every reproach? May God have mercy with those who ever turn to you for aid." (Lina Mikadi)

It is sad that human beings are pushed into situations where they no longer even dare or care to ask for compassion and aid but only are able to articulate: "Are not you afraid?"

The existing recklessness may well stem from the following delusion. The world today is witnessing an unprecedented accumulation of destructive power which far too many of those in political leadership tend to take for an increase in political power, which it is not. Basing themselves on a capability of literally total destruction, big Powers in particular are tempted to become engaged in the search of total security and, even worse, of an illusory military superiority. In the nuclear age, super-Powers and great Powers must be capable of conflict management, and the simple truth is that they are not! Events in the Middle East render glaring illustrations of that blatant incapability.

A general role of religious institutions

In such a situation, religious institutions would have, by definition, an additional role, duty and calling besides and beyond collaborating with all persons of good will in awareness-building, networking, sharing of resources and all the other things that have been recommended here. That specific role would be to counter the prevailing logic of power based solely on destruction or threats of destruction, by vindicating and upholding the ethical heritage and standards of religion and religious faith.

I am aware that many persons, in particular those professionally engaged in politics might well view a discourse of ethical standards as against logic of power as a well meant but basically sentimental nonsense. "How many divisions do religious institutions have?" they could ask. But they might do so at their own peril and that of humankind at large.

Religious bodies may not wield military or physical power but their potential for peace and justice could turn out to be of unique and central importance even for secular politics and politicians. Religious institutions are uniquely equipped for such a task in both creative and effective manners. People of religion in different parts of the world - South, North, East and West - are not only people of religion, but also members of their particular communities, citizens of their particular nations, part and parcel of their respective regions. Jointly and separately they do have means to mobilize the will of the people, national will and political will of the nations, to foster positive trends and to counter negative ones. Using the immense wealth of

first-hand knowledge, experience and information about countless particular situations and willingness to testify, i.e. to take a personal stand, they have the potential and capability for identifying each other's perceptions. Such a consistent and continuing process would also generate a re-evaluation of our own particular situations, enabling ourselves and others to come to grips with particular situations.

Special duty

This in general terms. However, as Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi rightly pointed out yesterday to us, in regard to the question of Palestine, religion has become involved or rather, in many ways and under many circumstances, has been introduced in illegitimate manners.

This is true as over the years much of the Israeli propaganda machinery has been engaged in a deliberate obfuscation, and I quote here Mr. Elmer Berger from his presentation to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva, from 29 August to 7 September 1983:

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

However, as a Christian I am not able nor willing to judge the extent to which religious Judaism has become perverted. This can and should be done by the Jews themselves. A concern that, however, I as a Christian legitimately have is that deliberate obfuscation undertaken by the Israeli propaganda apparatus, whatever else it may have done, it has also introduced some amount of confusion - to use an extremely polite term - into some, mainly Western Christian quarters. Thence the phenomena of certain groups and sects which have been induced into approving, aiding and abetting all and any of the policies promoted and undertaken by the Israeli establishment. Not out of purely political or ideological considerations, but in the name of what they claim to be Christian faith. Some of them have become pushed even further to make barely veiled apologies for possible cataclysmic events (which today well could mean a man-made nuclear destruction) to come about and as willed by God before some final, eternal and blissful state of things. The really frightening thing here is that seemingly some such a line of "thought" has even reached persons and quarters who have or might have access to the doomsday nuclear buttons.

This is being countered. More needs to be done, because two basic things are at stake here. Firstly, the Christian faith and credibility are at large. Secondly, as also pointed out by Mr. Berger, that kind of diversions wraps all Israeli actions in a protective blanket of "romanticism, mysticism, dubious theology and sanctimonious protestations of morality. These obstacles to peace will not be removed until this protective blanket is torn away and the Israeli State is made to stand in the witness box of world opinion for a probing cross-examination of the fundamental ideology which conceived the State and still provides the dynamics for both its domestic and international policies" (Ibid.).

In regard to the deliberate Israeli obfuscation of politics and religion it may not be too far-fetched either to ask how far it has not produced reverberations in Islam, in the form of catalyzing or exacerbating certain trends of extremism. But again, this is **something** to be judged by Muslims alone.

Next steps

More collaboration between religious bodies has been recommended by meetings previous to this one. This not only needs to be taken seriously but followed up by mutual constructive dialogues on various levels, bilaterally and jointly, among Muslims, Christians and Jews, in order to learn, question, facilitate and build toward reconciliation.

As I indicated in the beginning of this presentation, I am convinced that a tremendous and yet untapped potential is there.

In all the three great religious faiths which emanated from the troubled area of the Middle East, there are formulas for atonement and rectification of injustice.

But it is also true that it is already very late... We can no longer afford, as religious institutions, disencouragement.

Joseph L. Ryan, S.J.

I am very happy personally and on behalf of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association to participate in this Meeting and to share with you some reflections on the topic of the religious institutions and their role in the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

As some of you may know, I, personally, have been actively involved in discussions and activities on this topic in the United States since the early 1970s because I was convinced of its importance and urgency. In some ways, especially because of the rapid development of settlements on the West Bank, that urgency has been widely perceived as now being greatly heightened.

I have long been convinced of the special contribution which non-governmental institutions have to make in a solution of the question of Palestine and have spoken often about it. Hence I am very pleased to participate in this remarkable coming together of non-governmental agencies these days in Geneva.

As I reflected on what contribution I personally could make to this panel by prepared remarks, it occurred to me that I might perhaps most effectively contribute if I were to talk from the point of view of my own church, not restricting my consideration to it, but providing my view on it, on the question of Palestine, as a point of departure that might be stimulating to discussion on your part about the role of religious institutions more generally and their possible interaction with other non-governmental and with governmental institutions for common purposes.

In general in discussing the Roman Catholic Church, I will focus primarily on the Church in Rome and then on the Church in the United States, taking any consideration of other Catholic churches in the light of these two. This approach is important in view of my limited knowledge of other Catholic churches - their policies and activities - regarding the question of Palestine. This approach also helps for clarity and effectiveness.

I. The Roman Catholic Church of Rome and the question of Palestine

I have written occasional articles on this matter in the last decade, focusing particularly on the Popes since 1948, namely from Pope Pius XII to the present. At the North American Seminar in 1982 at the United Nations in New York, sponsored by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I gave a paper on the present Pope, John Paul II. In it I treated not only his statements which expressly took up the question of Palestine but also, and in a sense more interestingly, his life as a Pole and the various influences on his development; and I pointed out a number of striking "resonances" in the life of John Paul II with the Palestinian experience.

Any one who read that paper and attended carefully to those resonances would not have been at all surprised at the meeting, which took place shortly after my paper was written, between the Pope and Mr. Yasser Arafat at the Vatican. Some of the adverse reaction to that meeting, but only some of it, is due to the lack of awareness of the general direction in which the Holy See has been moving on the Palestine question and of the way in which the present Pope's character and background are likely to make him speak and act.

The Pope's reception of Yasser Arafat was one very significant event since my 1982 paper. Another was the issuance of the Pope's letter, on Good Friday of last year, on Jerusalem, a letter which underscored, in case any one thought there had been a significant change, the continued and detailed concern of the Holy See on the matter of Jerusalem, a matter, as all the world was aware, which had suddenly become highly partisan in the United States.

I have no intention of repeating here what I have written in detail elsewhere. What I would like to do, however, is to point out that increasingly the activities and the views of the Holy See, especially on the Palestine problem (since that is our interest here), have come into greater prominence, at least in the United States. The United States decision to take up diplomatic relations with the Holy See is one example, a decision which reflects far more, I believe, than one President's possible estimation of how to prepare for the next election. The question of Palestine is surely not the only issue that is significantly heightened by an exchange of ambassadors, but unquestionably it is an important one.

Another pertinent point is the increasing academic interest in the Holy See's relationship with the question of Palestine. For example, a Ph.D. thesis has just been completed in international relations at the Graduate School of the University of Southern California by George Irani. Entitled "The Papacy in the Middle East: the role of the Holy See in the Arab-Israeli conflict 1962-1982", this dissertation focuses on the Holy See and three topics: the Palestine question, Jerusalem and Lebanon, and examines the role of the Holy See as a transnational actor in these three areas.

The main assumption of the dissertation is that the Holy See is motivated by two fundamental interests: protection of the welfare of Catholics, and the fostering of co-existence between Christians, Muslims and Jews. There are five major conclusions from the analysis in the thesis: a) that pontifical diplomacy is unique; the Holy See intervenes in world affairs as a religious institution relying the Pope's moral prestige to foster the Church's values of justice and peace; b) that the Holy See avoids giving concrete solutions to the problems affecting Arabs and Israelis; c) that papal diplomacy is distinguished by consistency and pragmatism; d) that Lebanon and the preservation of its Christian communities constitutes a significant lead regarding trends in the Holy See's involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict; and e) that with some qualification papal diplomacy is effective only in religious issue-areas.

Dr. Irani has begun preparing his thesis for publication.

A second instance of academic interest in the analysis of the Holy See's relationship with the question of Palestine is a mini-thesis at the McGill University by Andre Kreutz on "The Vatican and the third world: the case of the Palestinians", in manuscript form.

A third instance is a manuscript written by Livia Rokach on the Holy See and the question of Palestine; whether it was published before her death, I do not know.

A fourth example is the Conference on the Holy See, Islam and the Middle East which the Center for Islamic Studies at Villanova University in Pennsylvania is planning to hold there in October 1985.

So far I have mentioned the Holy See in its policies and attitudes and, implicitly, its diplomacy which expresses and implements these.

Special mention, even if brief, should be made of the humanitarian assistance given by the Holy See, especially in its institutional form in the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. The Pontifical Mission for Palestine was established by Pope Pius XII in 1949 to give immediate relief to refugees. Its first president, Msgr. McMahon, not only directed operations to assist the homeless; he also spoke out publicly on the right of the displaced Palestinians to return to their homes, urging that right before the United Nations representatives and members of the United States Congress. Since its establishment the Pontifical Mission for Palestine has distributed more than \$100 million in money, supplies and services through its offices in Jerusalem, Beirut, Amman, its liaison office in Rome and its headquarters in New York City. It assists all, regardless of creed. It is non-political. Funds are directed primarily to educational projects for the young, to the care of the sick, aged and physically handicapped and to self-help programmes. On its twenty-fifth anniversary Pope Paul VI, in a letter to Msgr. Nolan, confirmed its important role. Steadily over the years Msgr. Nolan has helped religious leaders, editors and journalists to come to the Middle East to learn first-hand about Palestinian conditions.

II. The United States bishops and the question of Palestine

I personally have spoken extensively, especially in the years 1971-1977, and written occasionally on Palestinian questions and in those activities I have had occasion to explain the views of the American bishops, in particular, and the American Catholic Church more generally.

In a paper originally prepared for the annual convention of the Arab-American University Graduates in Washington in 1979, I analyzed the documents on the Middle East issued by the bishops collectively or by their chief spokesmen. Entitled "Religion and United States foreign policy towards the Middle East: A Catholic perspective", it was published in American Church Politics and the Middle East by Basheer K. Nijm, editor (Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., Belmont, Mass., 1982). The central elements of the 1978 statement will give a basic idea of the views of the bishops (except on Lebanon). The bishops make the following five points: (a) the rights of Israel to existence as a sovereign State within secure and recognized boundaries; (b) the rights of the Palestinian Arabs to participate in negotiations affecting their destiny, and to a homeland of their own;

(c) just compensation should be provided for all parties, of whatever national origin, deprived of home and property by the three decades of conflict; (d) recognition of the unique religious significance of Jerusalem which should be preserved through an international guarantee of access to the holy places., and through preservation of a religiously pluralist citizenry; and (e) United Nations Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and its continuing utility as a basis for a just settlement in the region.

In treating of the Holy See, I have spoken of its relief organization, the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. Similarly, but with a difference, in connection with the American Roman Catholic bishops, I should also mention the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, whose national director is Msgr. John G. Nolan, and whose president is Archbishop John J. O'Connor, archbishop of New York. Whereas the Pontifical Mission for Palestine is papal, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association belongs to the United States bishops. The Pontifical Mission is for Palestine, although, as the years have seen changes in the conditions of Palestinians, the Pontifical Mission assists Palestinians but not merely them; rather others also in the same areas in similar conditions of need. The Catholic Near East Welfare Association was set up to assist the Catholic churches, especially in the Middle East, but, in fact, it helps not only them but other persons too.

These two Catholic institutions are noteworthy not only because of the material assistance they have provided. Steadily and quietly over the years, they have also made a major contribution to understanding on the part of American Catholics of the whole Middle East and particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict. Religious leaders and editors and writers have been helped to come to the Middle East and to meet and talk to people in many different countries.

What kind of influence do churches generally and, in particular, the Catholic Church (in Rome and in the United States) have on government policy (in this case, United States policy) regarding the Middle East?

I think we can distinguish three kinds of possible influence: (a) direct lobbying; (b) direct (non-lobbying) influence (e.g. by meetings of church leaders with officials, etc.); and (c) influence on "policy debate" through the education of church members and the formation of their views.

I cannot off-hand think of any examples of official Catholic lobbying.

As for the other two forms of influence, it is difficult to assess their occurrence and impact. I presume that it is safe to suppose that in both cases it is less rather than more and, probably, in the matter of United States Administration and congressional decisions touching the Palestine question, very slight on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.

Yet, in recent years, the activity among Roman Catholics in the United States in the matter of foreign policy, especially regarding Viet Nam and Central America, has developed in an extraordinary way. This is all the more remarkable because, in my opinion, Roman Catholics in the United States generally have been inhibited because of their immigrant background from appearing to be "un-American" by criticizing United States foreign policy (or domestic policy also) except in those specifically "Catholic" areas such as

Catholic schools, birth control, etc. This matter is complicated and, over time, complex; here it is impossible (and unnecessary) to go into it further.

Whatever the causes and whatever the past history, today Catholics in the United States have begun to be active in the policy debate. 1/

An outstanding example, of course, is the United States Catholic bishops' letter on nuclear weapons. Its preparation involved Catholic leadership at the highest level who invited participation from various quarters and who issued drafts which provoked further input and heightened interest. Once the letter was issued in its final form, preparations were made for its discussion in a serious educational programme.

This episcopal letter is significant for several reasons:

- (a) It was prompted by strictly religious and humane considerations;
- (b) It wished to tackle a very high priority question;
- (c) In the process it spoke directly to its own members but also to other Americans sharing a concern for the issue.

In the process of preparing and issuing the letter, the United States Catholic bishops went through an experience of great maturity and development for themselves and their people. That experience has encouraged them to take on an even more complicated issue, namely the United States economy.

Is it possible or likely that these same bishops might undertake a similar letter on the Middle East and specifically on the question of Palestine? This is a tantalizing question.

In any case, the experience has shown certain strengths of all the churches in making a contribution to the policy debate:

- (a) They are permanent, respected institutions with full-time offices and commissions, drawing on resources of personnel and funds which enable them to address and study and make recommendations on complex and provocative issues;
- (b) Precisely because of their prophetic or moral character, they are able (or should be) to undertake an examination of a very delicate and threatening question and to view it essentially in moral and human terms;
- (c) The churches have extraordinary media possibilities, not only as "the electronic church" but in more prosaic terms, as the impact of the letter of nuclear weapons illustrates.

In speaking of the contribution of religious institutions in making a contribution to the public policy debate, it would be invidious not to at least mention two groups whose activities regarding the question of Palestine have been remarkable in their courageousness and consistency. I refer to the American Friends Service Committee and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, under its Metropolitan Philip Saliba and Dr.

Frank Maria, head of its Refugee Committee. The Quakers in their famous 1970 report were surely ahead of their time, not only in the boldness of their initiatives but in the extraordinarily sensitive way in which they tried to represent differing positions with fairness. ^{2/} While their conclusions angered some Arabs and Jews, the thrust of their recommendations were persuasive and helped many Americans, hitherto under the deep influence of propaganda, to think seriously about reality. Until the issuance of the United States Catholic bishops' letter on nuclear weapons, I used to say that I wished the United States Catholic Church, with numbers and resources far in excess of the Quakers, would take peace as seriously as the Quakers and devote themselves effectively to its search.

The Antiochian Church, despite its size and other limitations, has worked doggedly, especially in collaboration with other groups, religious, ethnic and other, to focus attention on the problem of Palestine. As a member of the National Council of Churches in the United States, the Antiochian Church has been persistent in acting as a kind of conscience of various committees and committee members on this issue.

A recent, pertinent example of the Antiochian Church's efforts was the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast which took place on Capitol Hill, in Washington on 25 July 1984, which the Church's Department of Mid-East and Refugee Affairs sponsored to express opposition to legislation which would move the United States embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Leaders of eight main-line religious groups expressed their churches' opposition to the move. Some 40 Congressional offices were represented, including eight Congressmen. During the day some of the religious representatives visited individual senators and congressmen, contacting 31 offices.

From Saudi Arabia came a telegramme to President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz, signed jointly by Metropolitan Philip, then visiting Saudi Arabia, and Dr. Omar Abdullah Nasseef of the Rabita (Muslim World League). This telegramme is the first joint communiqué issued from Saudi Arabia by a Muslim and an American Christian leaders. (Cf. "United States won't shift embassy: Shultz", by William Willoughby, Washington Times, 27 April 1984; and letter of Irene Hansen to the author, 3 August 1984 from The Attiyeh Foundation.)

III. Networking

What I have been discussing up till now has been mainly an analysis of attitudes and activities of the Holy See and the United States bishops on the question of Palestine, an analysis of the past, even if recent past.

Now I would like to pass to discuss the present and future and present three suggestions regarding the future: networking, aid to the West Bank and some special issues in the United States. These suggestions are hardly new, but they are worth renewed consideration.

On the question of Palestine, United States Roman Catholic churches are enriched (and have been in the past) by contacts with churches having ties with the Middle East, Catholic and Orthodox and Protestant, because of the special

experience these churches have with the problem of Palestine. But there are complications, too, as the case of Lebanon has vividly illustrated.

On speaking tours, when non-Catholics would complain to me about something they did not like about the Catholic church in their area and the Palestine question, I would urge such people to contact the bishop. Given the new ecumenical openness among Catholics, bishops might well pay more attention to approaches from non-Catholic neighbours than from me.

This is particularly true, I believe, regarding Muslims in the United States. Contacts between them and American Roman Catholics on all levels ought to be encouraged. Further, it would seem long overdue that the American Catholic bishops have an officer or person officially designated to bring Muslim matters to their attention, something comparable to the office for relations with Jews.

Recently in the United States Catholics seem a little more ready to speak frankly about differences with Jews. This tendency is to be heartily encouraged. Archbishop Jadot, when he was Apostolic Delegate, and Archbishop O'Connor, in his first major meeting with Jewish representatives after becoming Archbishop of New York, spoke publicly about differences. Another but different example is the special article on Palestinians in the National Catholic Reporter by Steve Askin, a Jew who is head of the newspaper's Washington desk.

IV. Development aid to Palestinians on the West Bank

Conditions on the West Bank have deteriorated recently, especially due to the increase in unemployment. When economic and political repression made life difficult, many Palestinians wished to leave the West Bank for life and work elsewhere, especially in Jordan. To try to stem this hemorrhaging, the Jordanian Government put restrictions on Palestinians entering Jordan. As a result, worsening conditions in the West Bank left many people with no work and no place to go. Further, attempts by voluntary agencies to assist the situation by the development of self-help projects ran into obstruction on the part of the Israeli Government. This condition has been documented by Benvenisti in his famous analysis.

Voluntary agencies can assist in two ways, one by aiding, in whatever ways are possible, in the overcoming of this critical unemployment; the other is by trying to get the United States Government to effect changes in the Israeli Government's policies and practices.

V. Some special issues in the United States

Here I suggest some particular problems in the United States today in which voluntary agencies, by their common participation, may be able together to make significant progress.

(a) Anti-semitism. As the Farrakhan affair showed, anti-semitism in its root and in its expression needs constant attention. When it is neglected, not only is harm done, but good things are rendered fruitless. Connected with this problem is the misuse of the charge of anti-semitism for political aims. Collaboration by churches and other voluntary agencies would seem to be very much in order;

(b) Fundamentalism. This is a problem whose root is not political but religious. And, as Catholics well know, fundamentalism is difficult to change. Yet, considering the harm which is effected when fundamentalism is simplistically applied to the question of Palestine, is not this worthy of special attention and collaborative effort?

(c) Terrorism. Some careful and comprehensive review of terrorism and its instant identification with Palestinians seems in order. This is all the more true in view of the way in which churches in Latin America have spoken of the special harmfulness of "institutionalized violence" by Governments. An application of this term to the reality of the occupied territories might be particularly helpful.

In conclusion I would like to raise the question: How effective can religious institutions be? One may also ask: How effective have they been in the past?

Steven L. Spiegel took up the latter question in an article in the Fall/Winter 1982/83 issue of the Journal of International Affairs (an issue devoted to religion and politics). His article was entitled "Religious components of United States Middle East Policy" (pp. 235-245). He says: "The influence of religiously identified groups in the policy process, however, has been far more limited than is generally assumed". Even Jewish influence is not quite what it seems. Consider this paragraph, a masterpiece of poormouthing:

"Despite the varied range of activities engaged in by Jewish groups and individuals, they are all in the final analysis dependent on decisions made within the Executive Branch and by Congress. Thus, when Jews individually and in organizations come to advocate certain policies, they do so as supplicants and generally as outsiders. This position necessarily implies an ultimate posture of weakness; Jewish groups can threaten a president, legislator, or official who opposes their policies with punishment either at the polls or in the press. They cannot prevent a determined political figure from acting in opposition because, they as groups, do not control any policy apparatus, and therefore cannot make policy." (p. 244).

Life is tough! The grass is not greener in the other guy's lawn.

How effective can we be? How effective have we been? I do not mean to do more than to suggest the following: (a) we need to assess honestly what we have done; (b) we must realistically judge what we can do, under ideal and under lesser circumstances; (c) in accordance with what we judge to be our best possibilities, we need to use well all our resources, including the special strength of a wide collaboration by disparate groups.

Notes

1/ On 9 August 1984, Bishop James W. Malone, president of the National Conference of (United States) Bishops issued a statement on the bishops, public policy statements and political candidates. He said: "We seek, however, not only to address Catholics and others who share our moral convictions, but to make a religiously informed contribution to the public policy debate in our pluralistic society." The statement was published during (but was prepared before) a series of public statements by Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York and Governor Cuomo of New York State over moral issues and politics. (New York Times, 10 August 1984)

2/ See the 1982 Quaker Report: A Compassionate Peace, A Future for the Middle East, American Friends Service Committee (N.Y. Hill and Wang, 266 pp. 1982).

- D. Strategies for NGO Collaboration and Networking:
NGO's Participation in Providing the Support to
the Just Cause of the Palestinian People

Edith Ballantyne

I would like to give you some idea of how our panel sees its task for this afternoon. Our subject is strategies and networking for NGO collaboration. We would like to make this session, in fact, a networking session. We see ourselves as trying perhaps to pull together some ideas that came forward yesterday and today and will certainly be made this afternoon. We would like to see this tidied up a little bit and tied up so that by the end of this afternoon's session we have some idea of what we want to do: what concrete actions we want to undertake. So we would like to concentrate a little bit on what exactly we want to do, what are the one or two or three ideas that all of us can work on. We will make very short introductions - no long presentations. We would like to have the participation of everyone so that we can come up with very concrete proposals.

We think it would be very useful to have a small drafting group that could in fact prepare or put together some of these ideas and prepare some kind of final document that we would all be happy with and discuss and adopt tomorrow. We will do some consulting and perhaps later on this afternoon we can make some proposals to you on who should be on a drafting group.

I would like to give you some idea of how we want to work this afternoon, what the agenda would be for this afternoon. We are thinking in terms of perhaps three main items that we should see. One would be strategies: what do we mean by strategies, what do we see as strategies and what does networking mean, how do we see it? Mr. Kotthaus and Mrs. Sovik will make some very brief presentations. We then would like to give some examples of the kind of networking that some of us have experienced or the kind of work we are doing: the needs we have. We have taken the liberty of co-opting a few organizations from the floor. Some of them do not know that we will call on them but we would like to get some idea from them of the experience they have. We would like everyone to be extremely brief, just to give us an idea of what is needed and what we should do. Then we hope we will have time for a wider exchange and discussion of all the subjects that have been raised in this early part.

We suggest then a very short break to give us time to have short consultations and for you also to think a little bit of what you want to do in the second part of the afternoon. So those of you who are not here will miss the most exciting part of the afternoon's programme which will begin perhaps with proposal for ideas as to who can be on this drafting group. Then, the other two main items we would like to bring up are very concrete proposals for joint action that everyone can do. Of course, other ideas will come forward, but we would like to concentrate primarily on what can we do together. There were some proposals made in the past two days: we should look at them and see if these are things we can do together.

Then the last item would be how can we organize ourselves in the most unstructured way, in order to carry out some of the things that we agree here to do. You will remember that many of us met here last year, we agreed on many things, but unfortunately we did not really have time or want to go into

some form of organizing ourselves to carry on and consequently some of these common actions never took place. Well, we would not want to leave here this time without having some form of organization that we know we can carry on. One will be this wide networking and perhaps we need some other things and that will be our final point.

We also have an idea that we would like perhaps to end up this conference with two types of documents, one would be a very brief final declaration or programme of action, whatever it may turn out to be, that we can all adopt. The other one would be a report of this meeting. A comprehensive report of this meeting that we would hope that the United Nations would produce rapidly, not as rapidly as possible, but rapidly, and disseminate. We had some excellent presentations here; a lot of information; a lot of good ideas for action: we do not want that to get lost and obviously we are not in a position now to produce such a report. I think we must ask the United Nations to do this and perhaps there will be many other things that we would like the United Nations to do to help us carry on the kind of support work we want to do and that the United Nations needs desperately.

Hans Peter Kotthaus

I think we have heard over the last two days from participants from all over the world and from all those countries specifically concerned with our subject. We have had enough analysis, I would say, on what are the most important obstacles to a peaceful solution, to a concrete step like the United Nations Peace Conference and we can filter out of what we heard through the first two days two major points of reference for strategies. (Strategies sounds a bit military to me - if say we, replace it by perspectives, I would be much happier.) Let us say some working perspectives out of the very brilliant analyses we have heard recently.

I think the first point of reference is the Palestinian people under occupation: the very urgent plight of these Palestinian people under occupation in the occupied territories and Israel, because there are several crucial issues and crucial things at stake. I think on the one side the cultural identity of the Palestinians is at stake, especially in Israel but also in the occupied territories. The very material existence in the occupied territories - the subsistence of the Palestinian people - in that area is at stake so help to support solidarity on that front is one major point of reference.

The other point of reference I would make concerns the major obstacles to a peaceful solution, that is, Israel, the United States and Europe. And I think we have to make major efforts towards the public and through public opinion in these countries to shift policies of those countries. Someone quite rightly said the other day that Israel does not care very much about Europe. I am convinced that the Israeli Government does not care very much about Europe. But I am convinced that the Israeli Government cares very much about the United States and the attitude of the United States Government. But then we have a triangle, the United States Government, and every United States Government cares and has to care for its European NATO allies.

I believe and am convinced that we have to tackle these Governments concerned on points that are in their own interests. Governments are not concerned with idealism and with ideals. It is a game of power and power-politics. One example, a bit out of the way, from my own country which is the Federal Republic of Germany. Some ten years ago if a politician was approached by somebody who asked him about or had some critiques about the environment or protection of the environment he would not get an answer. Now things have changed to grass-roots politics, and public opinion, people concerned about very actual problems caused a change in public opinion. Today, if you go to any party, left, right, centre in the Federal Republic of Germany, any party has a special commission concerning the protection of the environment.

There is hope and there is need for punctual action towards government and I think the weakest link in this unholy triangle, Israel, United States and Europe, is Europe. We have already had some breakthroughs in Europe. There is already a public opinion and shifts in public opinion and therefore I think we should start to concentrate on Europe and to push the Americans and

the Israelis through Europe. It is an old game - if you want to change something you start at the point where you can already put your finger into the pie.

That is why I am convinced that we have to start there and, as I said yesterday, it is very important that the various Israeli peace organizations ready to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestinians on the other side co-operate with us in this area as much as possible because if we can present in Europe as well as in the United States, if we can deploy efforts where we bring together and present together to the public actions with the parties concerned - Israelis and Palestinians - the public will be very sensible to all these kinds of actions. It is up to the various organizations to think about it. We should bear in mind some of these points and I will stop here because I think there should be a lot of feedback. I wanted just to draw a framework within which we should act to pinpoint our main targets of work: Palestine, the plight of the Palestinian people on the one side and the Israeli, the United States of America, Canada and Europe on the other side as targets of our activities.

Audrey Shabbas

The consensus that developed at last year's International Conference on the Question of Palestine was that the major work to be done in educating the populous toward change in government policies had to be carried out within the United States and Israel. Sean McBride, who had then recently headed the McBride Commission of Inquiry into the Sabra and Shatila Massacres, set the tone of the Conference and noted with grave concern in his closing remarks that we are "becoming a world paralyzed by one or two nations, and that in regard to the question of Palestine, the world is paralyzed by Israel and the United States". "The people of these two nations," he went on, "have to come to realize what is being done in their name. I am quite certain the people of these two nations do not know, or do not understand, what atrocities are being committed in their names."

Since so much of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians receives, at minimum, a nod of approval and a blank cheque from the United States, it is in the United States that the real NGO work needs to be done. It is the United States that is the key to progress, or lack of progress, towards Palestinian rights.

What was clearly heard from all quarters of the globe at last year's Conference, was that it is the policies of the United States that must be changed in order to effect any realization of Palestinian rights and self-determination. What North American NGOs heard repeatedly was that they bear the responsibility for public awareness campaigns in this direction!

Representing an NGO that operates exclusively within the United States and without affiliation to an international NGO network, I can attest to the fact that in the United States there is no distinction between "political work" and "cultural awareness", when it comes to any aspect of the Arab world.

In my work as an educational consultant on the Arab world, I have learned that a dance is political. In assisting teachers in the inclusion of Arab folk-dances in the curriculum for six-year-olds in the Berkeley schools, I was confronted with the demand that I teach "the other side of the dance!"

More recently, in developing an outreach programme for a local art museum in conjunction with their hosting of a Smithsonian exhibit of bedouin folk-art, I learned that blankets and baskets are dangerously political.

In our early stages of work with museum personnel we heard "avoid controversy", but admonitions towards the end of our relationship had become "talk about the objects, not about the people or culture that produced them". This, in progressive California, in the area encompassing the famed computer world of "Silicon Valley".

We were later to learn, after we filed a law suit, and during the underoath depositions of museum board members, that manoeuvres to hinder the programme we had contracted to produce, were being directed by a leading Zionist on the University of California, Berkeley faculty who characterized folk-tales and anthropological discussion of Arab women as producers of handicraft not only as dangerous but as having no bearing on a collection of Bedouin folk-art, most of which was produced by women.

And so, all work becomes "political". American organizations that deal with the region, but claim not to be political, are fooling themselves. Indeed, to be an Arab-American is to make a political statement.

And there are many organizations like Najda - small, locally active groups (whose size is no measure of their effectiveness) which continue to work without an international stature of many groups represented here. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the International YWCA already have an international network without going outside their own organizations. I would offer that most people working on the Palestine issue are doing so within a small parameter, and hence the need for building some kind of network - within their communities, within their nation, worldwide - is a very desperate one.

Many such small independent groups were brought together in June at the North American NGO meeting. Many do not have the funds to have attended this meeting. Yet the work they do is of significant value at the grass-roots level, and there is much that can be done to facilitate their work and increase their effectiveness. These points were discussed at the North American meetings: (a) a clearing-house for information on the question of Palestine and for the sharing of NGO strategies; (b) a broadened and more widely accessible calendar of events; (c) a resource guide for NGO networking that focuses on who we are and what each has to offer, that can facilitate the work each of us does, with concrete suggestions and assistance so that each is not re-inventing the wheel and that can serve as a handy reference for materials, films, resources developed by others. A fourth idea that many of us have discussed, but that did not become part of the North American Declaration, is the need for resource centres, particularly film libraries, in each region.

Our adversaries in the United States boast the enormous umbrella of some 28 regional offices of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Free to every teacher, civic leader, librarian and budding programme chairperson is a handsome guide to films, video and slide programmes, lauding the Israeli State and boasting such titles as "The Arabs of Israel: in their opinion" and "The healing of Jerusalem", and of course everything you wanted to know about "The Palestinians and the PLO". But the real clincher is that every single title is available through any one of the 28 offices.

Our resource guide, while it will direct people to where they can find, for example, a good film on the settlements issue or a study package introducing the Palestine question for a particular type of audience, will have to be coded to the more than 100 different locations, each of which may be the source for only one of the resources listed. Bringing all such resources together under one roof and then duplicating such a library in other locations, would be an invaluable aid to all of us.

I want also here to raise what kind of networking takes place in the Berkeley/San Francisco region. Here there is no dearth of organizations, within and without the Arab-American community of approximately 30,000. Some 15 to 20 organizations carry out Middle East-related work, perhaps 5 of which are purely social. While there does exist some of the petty rivalry of each trying to tap the same pool of activists, this is really quite minor, and for the most part each works semi-independently given its own character and calling. But several times each year, there is a coalition-building around central events or activities, particularly quickly initiated responses to catastrophic events in the Middle East.

A recent coalition-building that took place is worth noting for its unprecedented purpose and for the very fine model it presents for emulating elsewhere.

A coalition of organizations and individuals was put together last year at this time, for the purpose of putting an initiative on the Berkeley ballot which would allow Berkeley voters to express their opinions on Israel's settlements on the occupied West Bank. Measure E, on the ballot for the city for the 5 June 1984 primary election, had it been successful, would have directed the Mayor of the city to write a letter to the President requesting that aid to Israel be reduced by the amount that Israel spent on settlements in the occupied territories.

Measure E had Arab and Jewish organizational support right from its inception, with the local chapters of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Committee for Academic Freedom in the Occupied Territories, the International Jewish Peace Union and individuals from the New Jewish Agenda playing major roles. Members of Najda assisted throughout the campaign, collecting signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot, doing all the countless mundane tasks of getting the measure before the electorate, and finally being involved in the precinct and on election day, helping to "get out the vote".

The campaign was highly publicized and very costly. Supporters of measure E collected in excess of \$25,000 and opponents collected in excess of \$150,000. (Stated another way, opponents spent \$5 for every "no" vote they received.) Measure E lost by a 63 per cent to 36 per cent margin, on a June presidential ballot that also included Jesse Jackson's candidacy for president on the Democratic ticket.

The prestigious campaign firm hired (with a treasury in excess of \$150,000) to conduct the "No on E" campaign (the "Yes on E" campaign was entirely grass-roots organized and lead), polled registered voters back in February and discovered that the vast majority of the voters opposed the settlements, with women showing overwhelming opposition. Further, all voters saw peace issues as their most important political issue, again with women being the overwhelming supporters of peace issues. Through a careful manipulation of the issue, the "No on E" people won the election. Their target population, persuadable voters, was heavily weighted to swing women voters and black voters away from a "yes" vote and into the "no" column. The technique was noteworthy: the "No on E" campaign did not speak to the

settlements issue at all. There was no support for Israel's settlement policy, no attack on the idea of a Palestinian homeland. Instead, the opponents of E stressed "peace", "negotiations" and "the bargaining table" in order to swing the women and black voters into their "no" column.

The "Yes on E" committee, not having conducted a poll of the electorate, was unaware that we had already won the argument on settlements. The professional campaign firm running the "No on E" campaign had determined that not only did all voters oppose settlements, but women voters opposed them even more than the rest of the voters. The "Yes on E" people continued to talk about settlements (an issue we had already won) while the opposition sent a message to all voters that peace was in danger if the measure passed.

Yet, for those who worked on it, measure E was not a loss. Few cared whether the Mayor wrote a letter to President Reagan, and this is all that 50.0001 per cent of the vote would have accomplished. The goal was to open discussion on the issue of Israeli policies, and this was done. The coalition of people it brought together made it one of the most stimulating and rewarding projects many of us had ever worked on. There was consensus that the strategy of a ballot measure is a viable and valuable model to emulate elsewhere.

Another lesson learned by the measure E coalition was that coalition-building needs to take place between established organizations, for coalition-building creates authority, and in every such situation, there must be the counterbalance of accountability. The "buck" has to "stop" somewhere, and in a loose coalition, there is the danger that this is not clearly spelled out to all parties.

Another type of networking is the coalition of individuals around the model of a single issue for long-term work. In the San Francisco area, individuals from Najda and from Jewish Women for a Secular Middle East came together to form a new organization "Tadamun" (Arabic for "solidarity"), which will work on the single issue of women political prisoners under Israeli rule, including those in Lebanon.

By publicizing individual cases of women in prison, under town arrest, expelled, confined by curfews, etc., Tadamun hopes to be able to help people in the United States to overcome stereotypes and see Arab people as human beings. Individuals from both Najda and from Jewish Women for a Secular Middle East, which grew out of the larger Jewish feminist movement in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, felt this broader group was necessary to carry on the work more successfully. The obvious advantage is the strength we draw from unity - unity that is perhaps possible at this point only on a single humanitarian issue.

And lastly, I would like to address the concerns that Najda members have made the object of our work and central commitment, and this is concern and commitment to the very fine indigenous Palestinian institutions on the West Bank.

For those of you who heard me at the New York meeting, this will be repetition, but regard it also as emphasis of crucially important work that must take place simultaneously with task of changing public opinion.

I am here as a representative of Najda: Women concerned about the Middle East. Our name, Najda, is the Arabic for "help in time of need". When we formed in 1960, the "help" was in the form of medicine and clothing to Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco during the Algerian war of independence. And we worked in the United States at educating the American public towards a change in a United States foreign policy that sided with the French against the Algerians.

Today the burning question is Palestine, and the "need" we feel is most urgent is that of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. And so it was, that in the midst of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, our Board, swayed most persuasively by a Lebanese member, made a commitment to redouble our efforts at assistance to the people in the occupied West Bank. It was they, we believed, who would ultimately pay the price for the Lebanon invasion, and we were determined that their needs ought not be overlooked as our hearts and attention were riveted on Lebanon.

Our commitment to the indigenous Palestinian institutions comes also from the consensus of our membership that, as non-Palestinians, there is little we can, or ought, or need, to do to help to direct their struggle. But we can, we feel, do networking in North America and around the globe, in solidarity with their struggle, providing them assistance and support, and the safety provided by international attention.

The four institutions or organizations which I will briefly describe are but tender shoots that must be allowed to grow. Not all four of them are exclusively women's organizations.

Of the West Bank's legal profession, 25 per cent are women. Law in the Service of Man, a not-for-profit corporation, is the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, headquartered here in Geneva. Founded in 1980, Law in the Service of Man, with its office and library located in Ramallah, is under the direction of two full-time practicing attorneys, Jonathan Kuttab and Raja Shehadeh. Full-time administrators, field workers and a steering committee of volunteers carry out the organization's objectives (as embodied in its logo al-Haq - Arabic for justice, law, right, fairness) through its library, publications and current projects. Work of the organization is distributed through the Quaker Law Center, through universities, and through a weekly column in Al-Fajr entitled "Know your rights".

The second organization I want to highlight is a theatrical troupe, a theatre and an arts centre. El-Hakawati began as a troupe organized in 1977. Their name, El-Hakawati, is the Arabic word for the traditional "storyteller", although there is nothing "traditional" about the manner in which El-Hakawati turns a tale.

Not folk-loric, El-Hakawati attempts, through its choice of themes, situations and characters, to illustrate, lucidly and without complacency, the Palestinian reality at present under the Israeli occupation. Through use of mime, superbly exaggerated flourishes and brilliant cameo caricatures,, they have brought this important contribution to theatre to nearly every Western European country, to Poland and to Tunisia.

Their production, "Ali the Galilean" tells of Ali-Eli who is treated for his split personality by a professor of Arab Israelology, who tries to cure Ali/Eli by forcing him to choose either Palestinian or Israeli symbols in his "treatment". Their original creation "1001 Nights of a Stone Thrower", their current offering, is a take-off on the Scherezade theme, in Haroun Al-Rashid period costumes, but with a poignantly modern twist. The Stone Thrower is obviously the West Bank Palestinian, for whom in reality the maximum penalty for such stone-throwing has just been raised to 20 years in prison.

El-Hakawati, after seven years of existence, is no longer just a theatrical troupe. It is now a theatre and arts centre as well. The first Palestinian theatre in the occupied territories, it held its gala opening just this past May.

The following day, its director was taken into custody and "held" for three days for "questioning". Their overseas mail, being taken out at Ben-Gurion airport, was seized and photocopied. What else is in store can only be guessed. Just this month seven of its members were arrested, interrogated and later released. El-Hakawati needs international support, and above all, international attention and visibility. A boost in this direction has just been announced, in the form of a \$100,000 Ford Foundation grant, and the plans are being made to bring the troupe on a United States tour in 1985.

More well-known perhaps is In'ash El-USra, (Society for the Preservation the Family), the third organization I want to bring to your attention.

In'ash El-USra grew from one woman, Sameeha Khalil, one rented room, six sewing machines and eight girls in 1965 to the major charitable and self-help project in the area. Today, through its headquarters in Al-Bireh, it boasts a Montessori-trained day care centre, a kindergarten, adult education and literacy centres (more than 100 serving nearly 6,000, of whom 85 per cent are women), summer school for youngsters needing extra help, a folk-lore and research centre, a library, vocational training centres, production centres and aid programmes of all types, providing assistance to students, scholarships, family aid, medical and dental assistance and children's sponsorship similar to our Foster Parents Plan. In'ash El-USra's newest achievement is the beautifully constructed and equipped orphans' home and the exemplary programme run there.

Sameeha Khalil, as well as some of the other prime movers within In'ash El-USra, have been under town arrest for some time. This has greatly inhibited their ability to carry on this village work. But the ingenious young women of the villages soon developed a scheme of their own. They come into the city headquarters with finished embroidered pieces hidden in their shopping baskets, and smuggle back to the village women, the cloth and embroidery floss for further production. Such items are dangerous things to an Israel bent on destruction of Palestinian national identity.

The Women's Work Committee, established in Ramallah in 1978, reflects a qualitative change in the nature of the women's movement in the occupied territories. The Women's Work Committee (WWC) had a stated reason for its unwillingness to be absorbed into the framework of existing women's charitable

societies: the activities and programmes WWC envisioned necessitated the creation of a new type of women's movement that went beyond the gaps in the structure and style of work of previously existing women's groups. But other reasons included the fact that the framework that was newly created and is still being used by WWC today did not require a permit from the Israeli Military Government by opting out of the "charitable society" framework. They also, of course, had a perspective of their work that was not charitable in nature, but was more directed towards the building of an organized women's movement.

So what we have on the one hand is a superbly run operation like In'ash El-Usra, which provides wonderful services to its immediate area and is essentially the one-woman show of sturdy and unflappable Sameeha Khalil, and the Women's Work Committee on the other, which aims at something systemic - bringing more fundamental changes in the roles of women in society at every level, but whose programmes are largely on paper, the realization of which is a slower process.

That the work of indigenous Palestinian organizations need assistance and support is a given fact. Perhaps the easiest form of assistance we on the outside can lend is that of international exposure. Publicity and show of concern for the welfare of such institutions is fundamental to their survival under and Israeli military authority that finds it increasingly more difficult to act with a heavy hand while it knows it is being watched.

To underscore the importance of such networking, I would like to draw your attention to the case of an important institution that was, to all intents and purposes, harassed out of existence.

Musa Alami's Arab Development Society began soon after the 1948 disaster on a 2,000-acre concession from the Jordanian Government. Here on 2,000 acres of worthless, salt-encrusted land near Jericho, despite prophecies of failure, Musa Alami found sweet water, washed the soil of its salt and created a home for 600 Palestinian boys on what was soon 2,000 acres of productive farmlands, with a prosperous dairy and poultry farm.

After 17 years of occupation, the Arab Development Society looks once again like the "before" photograph - "the land as it was" - in the Society's 1960 brochure. To walk here now is to walk past empty corrals, through buildings filled with ghosts and now maintained by a skeleton staff.

This was no fly-by-night operation. Musa Alami had received a Ford Foundation grant in the 1950s to build the main building. Arnold Toynbee headed the British Friends of the Society. Here was an organization with world-wide backing and credibility that has been put behind the 8-ball - decimated.

In trying to return to what they had before the 1967 war, they were blocked every step of the way. They are now territorially one-fourth of the original size. Where there were once 600 boys and 450 employees, there are now only 100 boys and 25 employees. Their 30,000 chickens were destroyed in 1967, so were their 400 dairy cows.

Musa Alami, shortly before his death this past June, had signed an agreement to turn over the operation to the Swedish Save the Children Society. Literally, outsiders have had to take it over, in order to rebuild it, for the simple reason that occupation authorities cannot act arbitrarily and with such callous disregard with an international organization.

If this can happen to an internationally renowned and bonafide group, what can happen to these very new organizations I have just described? Law in the Service of Man, El-Hakawati, In'ash El-Usra and the Women's Work Committee are the tender shoots. Look what happened to this sturdy tree!

Ruth Sovik

"Networking". What is it? One of those words that is suddenly everywhere, not easy to define, and, somehow, embarrassing to use. But perhaps we should take a look at it since it defines the assignment of this panel.

"Networking" is an alternative system of communication. Networking is the system of communication for those who have little or no power and the direction of that communication is horizontal. In the world of the powerful, communications systems, essential in maintaining power, work from the top down, or from the centre to the periphery.

It is not surprising, therefore, that women today are discovering this system and using it. It is not new to them, of course. Groups in every society who have no access to power have always used it - the poor, those under occupation, those struggling for self-determination, those fighting for survival.

What are the characteristics and advantages of networking?

Perhaps we can try to describe them. Networking is highly personal. Messages, calls for support, for simultaneous or co-ordinated effort on an issue are passed from person to person, from group to group. It is limitless in its possible scope; it has no natural boundaries. Word is passed from individual to individual and through an individual in one group to yet others. And so the network expands.

Networking creates bonds and builds community, often over very great distances. It is the communication of solidarity and is, to use a cliché, the communication of the "global village".

Networking is also communication between equals. No one, no group, is too small, too far away to join in the response to a call for a common effort.

Networking is flexible and responsive, and costs little or nothing. It does cost time and commitment. And then, of course, what is of primary importance to us, networking, when focused on particular actions, brings tremendous power and influence to bear on issues.

A note of caution should be sounded: Networking prospers without much organizational machinery to support it and it is often severely weakened by over-organizing it.

The Young Women's Christian Association is an organization of women, led by women and open to women of all faiths. These women, some three million of them, belong to national associations in about 80 countries spread throughout the world - from Fiji to Norway, from Zimbabwe to India, from Korea to Peru.

With this diversity YWCA embraces the diversity of the world's opinions on the Middle East. Here, a brief picture of that diversity:

- (a) We have two Palestinian associations, one in Jordan and one in the West Bank, both of them part of the former YWCA of Palestine, established in 1893. We have at the same time in the United States, Canada and Europe associations which have Jewish members at all levels of the association;
- (b) In Europe and North America, our associations share the general sense of shame and guilt felt by the Christian world toward the Jews since the event of the Second World War, and as a result a kind of spontaneous defense of the State of Israel in all international questions;
- (c) In Islamic countries where Muslims are in the majority and support for the Palestinian cause is part of the national consensus, YWCA, which is principally related to the Christian minority in those countries, is part of that consensus;
- (d) In Africa and Asia, there is both the tendency to identify the biblical Israel with the modern State bearing the same name and, at the same time, the recognition that the struggle for justice of the Palestinian people is a liberation struggle similar to movements familiar to them out of their own recent past.

The world movement has not ignored the situation in the Middle East and the suffering of the Palestinian people and has taken positions in world meetings on these problems. It has also supported since 1947 the work of our associations in the Middle East with Palestinian refugees. But, finally, this was not enough. And it was a Palestinian member who forced us to face the question: what more must we do?

The decision was made to launch within the entire world movement an effort to educate our members, and their communities, on the questions of peace and justice in the Middle East and then see what came out of that process. The plan was simple. Citing the resolutions of the years past, associations were invited to set up study groups to study the Middle East situation. A visit to associations in the region was planned which we called Middle East Encounter In Search of Peace and Justice.

The study groups, using local resources and materials sent out by the world office, struggled to understand four main questions:

- (a) Who are our sister associations in the region, and what are the needs and problems of the communities in which they live and serve?
- (b) Who are the Palestinians (their history, culture, struggle, PLO) and who are the Israelis (the Diaspora, the demographic composition of the State of Israel)?
- (c) The history of the conflict in the Middle East;
- (d) The religious complexity of the region and, especially, the question of the relationship of the biblical Israel to the present political situation.

Study groups sprang up in many parts of the world and eventually the visit took place. A group of 19 from 14 different countries, reflecting both the complexity of the world movement and the realities of international power politics in the Middle East, included women from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America, among them two Jewish members of YWCA, another who had had the experience of living through a liberation struggle and several who remembered what military occupation meant. The group visited YWCAs of Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank and their communities. But the visit was more than a visit to friends. It was a trip into human tragedy, into deep self-questioning, and finally into understanding.

A brief, simple document, written by the group at the close of the visit, reflecting the basic consensus of the participants, focused on the similarities and differences between the three peoples (Palestinians, Israelis and Lebanese), the problems specific to each of these peoples, the factors outside the region which influence the chances for peace and finally a set of suggested steps toward peace. They affirmed in a phrase that has helped us weather many attacks and misunderstandings that "no solution can be found for one people at the expense of another". With this consensus document in hand, participants returned home to their communities to do what they could for peace with justice in the Middle East.

What have been the results? For the participants themselves, a sense of obligation to attempt to implement the consensus of the group. Participants spoke to many groups - 30 some in Great Britain alone. These groups varied widely - academic, community, religious, political; some hostile, some not.

Concrete actions were taken and are still being taken to make representations to government through personal contacts with people in parliament, and in foreign ministries, etc. Programmes are under way to inform the flood of Christians who go on pilgrimage to the Middle East on the situation of the people of the area. A group of young members of European YWCAs will join with young people from the West Bank in a summer camp in 1985 which will offer an opportunity to work together and to learn to understand each other. These European young people - students and young professionals - will return to multiply the number who have seen, heard and now understand and who will go and tell.

For the world movement, the results were felt when the 19 visitors educated the rest of the movement on the Middle East at the recent world assembly held at the end of 1983. The result of this effort is visible in a world policy statement which embodies the substance of the consensus document. A world policy statement passed by the world assembly carries with it the obligation of implementation. Under this obligation, YWCA of the United States, with its membership of approximately one million members, is attempting to put before its national convention early in 1985 a policy position on the Middle East in harmony with the world statement. Such policy statements are the basis for action at all levels in YWCA of the United States, from lobbying government on legislation to community-level information campaigns and solidarity actions.

What have we learned? We have learned that the process is long, and that it requires both patience and commitment. We have learned that it carries risks - to those who return to educate their communities and to the unity of the world movement as a whole. We have learned through the networking with others during the study process and afterward that we can be enormously strengthened in this task both by the knowledge and sophistication of others and by the human support they offer. We have learned that our specific role both as a world movement of women and as a NGO is the promotion of human dialogue between those of profoundly differing opinions and that this is both possible and essential. The experience of the study group within YWCA of the United States is living testimony to that fact. Only through dialogue could that Association have moved into this highly polarizing question. We have learned that, though this very human effort may seem inconsequential given the magnitude of the problem, it is a very positive factor in the establishment of the atmosphere necessary first for local national action and eventually for political negotiation.

Groups and individuals contacted through networking the local community during the preparatory process have sustained the associations' efforts to understand the Middle East issues. Networks have been created in the community through the contacts between those who, upon their return home, have felt a commitment to tell and those who have heard them. The world-wide network of the 19 visitors and the study groups from which they came has been enlarged by others who have shown vital interest in the problems of the Middle East during the world assembly. This world-wide network sustains our efforts towards peace and justice. What began as a question from a Palestinian sister has become a network of hundreds, perhaps of several thousands, of concerned individuals. We look forward, now, to the opportunity offered next year by the NGO forum which will be held parallel to the United Nations meeting on the Women's Decade in Nairobi. Perhaps there, there will be another chance to increase the number of women concerned about peace and justice in the Middle East.

E. Paths to a Comprehensive, Just and Lasting
Peace in the Middle East

Joseph Algazy

The Israeli-Arab conflict, or, if you wish, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has cost till today a very high price of blood and resources, has left behind widows and orphans and brought pain and torment to a lot of people. As thinking human beings, it is but natural that we shall look for the reasons and causes of this calamity. However, at this moment, I am convinced that it is much more important for us to find the way how to stop, once and forever, the killing; how to prevent it in the present situation that contains the seeds of the coming war.

The temptation is great to draw a historical balance-sheet of decades, of hundreds of events and occurrences, in order to find out the guilty and the extent of their guilt, and to seek absolute justice; however, this way only leads us to a blind alley that does not relieve us - Israelis and Palestinians - from the vicious circle of war, from further complications following it that lead to another war, and so on.

No, our generation is incapable of drawing a balance-sheet. Maybe the coming generations, after many years of peace, will be capable of doing so. In the present, every bookkeeping of mistakes and injustice leads only to a kindling of hostility and of the fire of war.

I do not hold this view for the sake of convenience or of opportunism, as complices use to do, who purify their sin by expressions of pious repent and wash their hands in clean water. What I want is something else. I want to contribute my share to the opening of a new chapter in the relations between Israel and Palestine; for this purpose we have to put aside - for the sake of our joint future - the hard feelings of the past that nourish the continuation of a permanent war. At this moment, we, as humanists, have one duty: to bring a solution that prevents further wars and brings possible and real justice and a lasting peace. I said possible justice, because I mean justice in this world, with its limitations, and not an absolute justice in the world of heaven after mutual destruction. The next war, and we do not know how it will develop, might expand beyond the borders of the region. Not guilty, guilty and innocent alike will pay an identical price: death. The conflict we are discussing today might, in some constellation, be the spark that kindles the next world war. We do not think enough about this danger. We live in an era of formidable technologies, in an era of a nuclear balance of horror, in an era of computers and all kinds of "Dr. Strangeloves"; we might lose control of them, and then... My words may sound today as if they were taken from a book of prophecies of doom; nevertheless, who can assure us that the situation will not deteriorate that far? The previous generations, too, had not thought of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, even in their worst dreams. So let us be vigilant.

The model of peace I shall present to you may look naïve, a Utopia, a dream, in view of the hard reality facing us. But if we do not believe that peace is still possible, what have we gathered here for?

The State of Israel has been founded on the basis of the General Assembly resolution of November 1947, regarding the realization of the right to self-determination of both peoples, Israelis and Palestinians. The first has realized this right and established its independent State, the State of Israel. The fate of the second people, whose greater part became homeless refugees, was suffering, misery and alienation; it became also a tool for various manipulations; till today, the Palestinian people has not realized its right to self-determination. This is the focus of the problem.

Since the war of June 1967, the areas in which the majority of the Palestinian people lives, are occupied by Israel. The Israeli occupation deprives the Palestinian people by force of its national rights, denies its right to live as a people as other peoples, deprives it of elementary human rights and of basic democratic liberties. The Israeli occupation Administration seizes the land and the water, establishes settlements in order to found a "Greater Israel" and to create conditions that will make the establishment of the Palestinian State impossible. This is the principal seed of calamities.

Inside Israel, the continuous occupation and its side-effects have developed cancerous tumours that gnaw at the Israeli society. We witness cases of extremist nationalism and unbridled, shameless racism. Fascist groups operate openly. Their representatives sit in the Knesset, preach their racist message undisturbed in the mass media, introduce their racist ideas into schools and army camps, poison the young generation. Israeli society is divided into a peace camp, still weak and not united, and a nationalistic, aggressive camp of war. The gaps and antagonism between well fed and hungry people, hungry for education, for a decent living and human dignity; between those who make profits from the war and the occupation, and those whose bread is cut by the war and the occupation and who pay with their blood for wars; between Ashkenasi and Sephardi Jews - these gaps and contradictions get deeper and deeper. The big Arab minority, who lives inside the State of Israel within the "green line", is a victim of a policy of discrimination; it has a hard, long struggle to conduct facing the racists who dream to drive it out of its homeland. To all these has been added the Lebanese swamp into which the Government of Israel has plunged us; the war in Lebanon, like previous wars, has blunted vehemently all contradictions and antagonisms inside Israeli society, and given them a distorted form.

But we must not close our eyes to the fact that the Governments of Israel were capable of doing so - and they are responsible for their misdeeds - thanks to conditions that made it possible, that helped them.

The Israeli Governments could not have done all this for such a long time without the encouragement and massive support of the United States; without the disagreement between the two super-Powers; without the indifference of Western Europe; without the reality of a split Arab world, without the complicity of reactionary, corrupt régimes; without the fact that the Palestinian camp that represents a basically just aspiration is

not united; it still talks in several voices, sometimes contradictory and antagonistic; there are still some who adhere to sterile slogans and to maximalistic formulas; and some who persist in terrorist activities, which - it must be said openly and clearly - serve the occupation, the oppression and are primarily harmful to the Palestinian people, whom they are supposed to serve.

The model of peace, whose main points I shall present today, is based on principles of justice. I emphasize: a possible justice, justice that must be achieved by democratic means; in other words: a model of peace based on principles of universal humanism. To show the way toward such a peace I am capable of playing, without much difficulty, simultaneously, the role of the Israeli, of the Palestinian and even of the mediator between them.

First, the representatives of Israel, that is to say the Israeli Government, and the representatives of the Palestinian people, that is to say PLO, have to sit together, face to face, at the negotiating table and to negotiate the conditions for reaching peace. If they are unable to sit alone - let the representatives of the international community join them. If they refuse to sit down - let the representatives of the international community force them to do so. The United Nations and the Security Council can certainly fulfil this task. It is not up to Israel or to the Palestinians to decide who the representatives of the opposite party shall be. Israel has an elected Government, good or bad - this is a matter for the Israelis. The Palestinian people has a representative body, recognized by it and by most nations, which is PLO; the balance-sheet of its activities will be drawn by the Palestinian people alone.

In the negotiations, the parties, Israel and the Palestinians, will discuss the way to implement the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish its independent State. Where shall the Palestinian State be established? In the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, according to the lines of 4 June 1967. It is obvious that Israel has to evacuate all its forces from these areas.

Are the lines of 4 June 1967 sacred? Do they incarnate absolute justice? No. I do not pretend to suggest a model of a peace plan of absolute justice. I doubt if anybody can draft borders and lines for absolute justice. The lines of 4 June 1967 are lines of a possible justice, of realistic justice, these are the lines supported by the broadest international consensus. These are lines of concessions and compromise, of understanding and of realpolitik. Is realpolitik the privilege of the perpetrators of injustice? Do not the peoples, whose claim is just, need the services of practical wisdom? Are they, because their cause is just, free not to look for ways toward the implementation, the adoption of painful and necessary solutions?

In the next stage, the international community has to take all steps needed in the opinion of both parties and in its opinion, to guarantee

that the two States, Israel and Palestine, after having signed a peace agreement, shall live side by side in peace, not attacking each other, not serving as bases for an attack against their neighbours.

Of course, a practical solution, acceptable to both States, is necessary, as to how to link the West Bank with the Gaza Strip. Such a corridor between the two parts of the Palestinian State can definitely provide a source of mutual advantage for both States.

It is also necessary to define a solution that guarantees free access to both parts of Jerusalem, the one that serves as capital of Israel and the one that shall serve as the capital of Palestine. Such an arrangement is possible, safeguarding the sovereignty of the two States, finding a solution for both parties. Other peoples who love Jerusalem or regard it as the cradle of their religion, will benefit from it.

The disgraceful existence of the Palestinian refugee camps must be wiped out. Israel must recognize the principle of the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland. We have to be aware that since 1948 a new reality has arisen in Israel, in the places where the Palestinian refugees had lived, and therefore alternative solutions must be found: to settle the Palestinian refugees in other places, including inside Israel, no in the place of other people who live there now; to pay appropriate compensation to those who will renounce their right to return to their homeland.

Somebody will say: the solution suggested by me is based on much goodwill on both sides. True. It is also based on the conviction that it is much better to pay the price of peace than the price of war. The solution is based on the conviction that, if the two parties to the unhappy conflict will take the road of negotiations between equals, the road of mutual respect - concessions and compromises for the sake of life, a lot of mutual goodwill may be expected. There is a single alternative to peace: war. I have chosen peace. Not the peace of an oppressed and his master. After the Camp David accord, that gave the Israeli Government and the United States Administration neither a free hand in Lebanon and in the West Bank, nor a "pax americana". I go for peace between equals, based on reciprocity, with the whole international community involved, and not one super-Power alone.

My demands from the Government of Israel were clear. I would lie to myself if I would not point out what is required from the Palestinian leadership. This leadership must get rid of unrealistic slogans that still exist in the Palestine Charter including those texts that deal with the establishment of a "secular, democratic State" in Palestine. A solution in this spirit is not just and not democratic. Under the guise of a plurality of three religions, it ignores the existence of two peoples and it also denies one side of the right to self-determination. Peoples are not divided into religions. Let us remember: the Israeli annexationists, too, want to found one "greater State". And then, I regret, the demands of those who advocate "one great Israel" and implement

it meanwhile - and the demands of those who dream of "one United Palestine" - meet. The idea of the "secular, democratic State" nourishes false illusions, makes the establishment of the Palestinian State more remote and provides the occupants, who deny the national rights of the Palestinian people, with an excuse, with an alibi, to continue their policy.

It is a rose with a thorn. The model of the peace plan I have suggested has one defect: at present, Israel, as well as the Palestinians and the Arabs, are incapable of taking the road to the solution I propose. Israel does not want to give up the advantages provided by its superior military power, its technological superiority, the enormous American support, the split in the Arab world and the lack of political maturity in the Palestinian camp. The Government of Israel wants to perpetuate its advantageous position. However, a growing number of Israelis reach the conclusion that the Israeli advantage is not eternal; woe to Israel once the tides turn because then Israel might become an episode of the past. I do not want Israel to suffer this fate. Many in Israel believe that Israel must keep its superiority at every cost, be it mutual destruction, or a new version of "may my soul die with the Philistines". These circles also wish to lay their hands on nuclear weapons to threaten with them the region and the whole world. The danger of a third world war leaves them indifferent.

In the Arab world there are reactionary régimes who fear that the solution of the Palestinian problem might lead to their collapse. Therefore they contribute to the perpetuation of the problem and of the conflict. The Palestinian leadership which oscillates and hesitates between various solutions, does not dispel the confusion in which the Palestinian people lives, a confusion that has grown during the battles in Tripoli, which does not help the peace camp in Israel to prevail over the camp of war.

I said: the Arabs and Israel are presently unable to reach a solution alone. What should be done? The international community has to enforce a solution. Yes. We have a precedent for a forced solution, although in smaller dimensions: in October 1973, when the danger of a world war threatened us because of the war in the Middle East, the Soviet Union and the United States reached mutual understanding and forced the parties to accept a cease-fire. The international community must unite now and impose a peaceful solution on Israel and the Arabs. Enforcing such a solution is vital, desirable and beneficial. It will save the two peoples, the peoples of the Middle East and the whole world immeasurable suffering. The enforcement of a solution is necessary today before it becomes too late. I am saying this as an Israeli, I would have said it also as a Palestinian, and I appeal to you, who represent other peoples. Evidently, the issue has ceased to be a Palestinian problem only, it is also an Israeli problem and it has also become an international problem. The peoples will accept a solution, even a forced one, to which their rulers cannot lead them.

Till all parties are convinced that there is no choice but peace I shall continue, together with my colleagues in Israel, to fight for human rights, collective and individual, to fight against the camp of war and hatred, to consolidate the camp of peace inside Israel. Our struggle is inside Israel and against official Israel. Hence follows also the moral right to tell the Arabs and the Palestinians what is harmful and what is useful for the joint cause of peace and justice. Having taken part for many years, together with others in Israel, in the struggle for the rights of the people whose rights have been denied - a struggle whose price in Israel is sometimes ostracism - I deserve this right.

The peace between Israel and Palestine is not a dream. We can make it a reality. It can be done, if we understand that co-existence is preferable. Living one at the expense of the other has turned our life into hell, has made fathers bury their sons before they had known love, has made mothers bear children as cannon-fodder.

Although we are dealing with a political question, it will not do any harm if an atmosphere of reproaches and of what may be considered a Utopia spoils the routine. We are entitled to believe in peace. That is why I am here.

Shafiq Al-Hout

I was very happy sitting for the last three days, silent, in that corner listening to you, until I found all of a sudden that I have to be used like a spare part or sort of replacement for a dear friend of mine, Mr. Khalid Al-Hassan. I have to apologize on his behalf for his failure to show up this afternoon for reasons that he could not control. Nevertheless he sent me a very interesting and huge study paper which I assure I am not going to read to you. First of all, it is in Arabic and I am not a very good interpreter, otherwise I would be joining these nice ladies and gentlemen upstairs instead of representing the Palestine Liberation Organization, most probably. Secondly, because a great deal of his paper, as I read it off-hand, I found that there is a lot of reiteration of what we have really heard in the last three days in this room. A third reason, I think, we in the PLO, especially members of the Palestine National Council, have come a long time ago to a consciousness and either one of us can really speak on behalf of PNC and represent a great deal of the consciousness of the members of that body.

Before I come to the point of discussion, I would like to seize the opportunity to thank you all. It was a very interesting and happy experience for me - this is my first experience to participate in an NGO meeting. It is really relieving compared to governmental congresses and on behalf of PLO and our people I would like to thank you all, one by one, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the great efforts you have been offering to express your solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause.

One more point: I would like to attract your attention to a point I felt that we have not stressed enough in this conference: that is the Israeli representation here. Those courageous people from Israel who are campaigning for peace, who are representing to me the pioneering generation in Israeli society and trying to tell their people that there is another option for survival in the Middle East and there is a political option for the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. These people need your support as much as the PLO need your support because we know what kind of harrassment and threats may be planned for these courageous pioneers of the Israeli people. I, as a Palestinian, appreciate their struggle. We evaluate it highly and we are fully aware of the obstacles and the difficulties they are facing. It is very unfortunate that we are living in an era in the century that those who wage a war are the courageous and heroic people while the struggle for peace which is much more tough and difficult is not taken care of as it should be.

Now we come to the issue under discussion. I do not think that in such a conference I need really to assure any one of the participants about the sincere intentions of our people and our organization for maintaining peace. If there is any people in this world who miss the word "peace" it is the Palestinian people. I can hardly remember in my life-time, as well as that of

my colleagues the Palestinians present in this conference, a year of peace in their lives. Ever since this problem was created, ever since this conflict came into existence, all the people in the area, Palestinians and Jews and others around of our Arab brothers have been suffering from a continuous series of wars. And I do not think I need to explain to you the justice in our cause. All these complications of the question of Palestine are really unnecessary. It is the question of a people who know of no other homeland except Palestine and have been chased out of their country. These people like others all around the world are determined to go back to their home country and enjoy what is a divine right for all people in this world, that is sovereignty over their own territories. If I have to elaborate about that then I would really be misbehaving in such a conference with such kind of representation.

In spite of this there is a need for some elaboration because we have been facing a hell of a campaign by the Zionist circles, by the imperialistic media which have insisted in portraying the Palestinians as terrorists, and I would not even touch on that double-standard definition of the word "terrorist". I am very proud to be a PLO terrorist as long as I am fighting for my freedom, for the restoration of my usurped territories and my legitimate and national rights.

In the media in the West we have always been referred to as one of two things: either terrorists or refugees. As an example, in the concentration camp, Al-Ansar, in the south of Lebanon, when the Israeli authorities were counting the names and nationalities of each one of the prisoners, they used to write names and nationality (if the prisoner was Syrian they would write "Syrian", if the prisoner was Egyptian they would write "Egyptian" and so forth) but when they come to a Palestinian before the word 'nationality' they would put "terrorist" - so that is a nationality. So, by the media we are looked upon either as terrorists or as refugees. But as you have all noticed through the years of your co-operation and solidarity with our cause that we are very ordinary people. We have all kind of people. We have terrorists, we have artists as well, and we have painters, all kinds of people. So, the point that I would like to stress is, as a matter of fact, just drawing your attention to something that you know, that in my opinion (and it should be in world opinion) that the moment the PLO joined the United Nations, accepted to be a member Observer in October 1974, abiding by the Charter and resolutions, implicitly and explicitly it is obvious that the Palestinian leadership had accepted a political option.

This I should refer to Mr. Nusseibeh as he is much more of an expert than myself and a few months older, this in the history of the Palestinian people's struggle is a great concession. A position that only the PLO leadership was able to adopt - to give up the whole of Palestine which was once upon a time a Arab-Palestinian territory and to accept a compromise was a heroic step, a great decision and a turning point in the struggle of the Palestinian people. Thank God that my father died in 1970 - had he been alive in 1974 he would not have received me back in Beirut after my joining the delegation to the United

Nations. He would not have understood how come his son give up Jaffa which was his father's, his and my place of birth. But, the Palestinian leadership, not giving up historical rights, but being aware of the realities of this historical era: of the balance of power of global strategies, of the new facts that one cannot really ignore created in Israel. I was surprised to hear today that our friend Amnon Zichroni was born in Tel Aviv. I was born maybe two blocks away from where he was born, in Jaffa.

Accepting membership in the United Nations is quite indicative as a step that the Palestinians are seriously looking for a political solution based on justice. And not absolute justice, because our friend from Israel today, and he was decent and nice to say that he would like to see peace and justice but not absolute justice. So we have already fulfilled that because the justice we have accepted in the United Nations is really not an absolute justice by any means. But it was the form of justice which the international community has agreed to consider as the rights of the Palestinian people and whenever we recall these rights it is really the axiomatic rights of any human being: self-determination, the right to return and to have a State of our own.

In 1968 al-Fatah, the biggest organization in the PLO, adopted the idea of a democratic secular State which was rejected and which we have understood the reasons behind the rejection. But I still insist as Shafiq Al-Hout, the Palestinian man, not a part of the PLO, that it is vision that I would like to see in Palestine. I mean, I do not like to be disappointed by the dreams and the practices that I have seen in other societies like the United States, like Canada, like other countries that are secular States and democratic States and I have seen that people are living beautifully and happily. But, it is up to our next-door neighbours, they have their entitled right to self-determination, if they want a pure Jewish State, maybe it is up to them, and I hope that the new generation in Israel will be more democratic and they will think in much broader terms than theological terms and discriminative terms.

In 1977, we were alone: even the Arabs did not support us at that moment, when the Soviet/United States communiqué was issued in October in the United Nations between Cyrus Vance and Andrei Gromyko which is composed of two lines, one referring to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the other refers to Israel's right to exist in safe boundaries. So I think this is another signal from the Palestine Liberation Organization which indicates its sincere interest for finding a solution based on justice and that could be solved through political negotiations.

In 1976, the PLO, with the help of a group from the non-aligned countries drafted a resolution to the Security Council, the political substance of which was a very balanced draft resolution with reference to the Palestinian peoples' rights as described and defined by the United Nations and again the right of Israel to exist safely and happily. But this has been vetoed by the very, very dear friend of Israel, the United States of America, which in my opinion is the greatest enemy of the Israeli people and this has to be

observed in the future. Because if the US were a real friend it should have acted with Israel in such a way to make Israel's leadership to think of other options but not supreme Power.

In 1982 we had accepted, with the rest of the Arab Group, the Arab peace initiative at the Arab Conference which took place in Fez. Later on, in 1983, Chairman Arafat in his address to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in Geneva, called upon the participants to call for an International Conference for the Question of Palestine based on UN resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine. And two or three weeks ago there was a very elaborated initiative from the Soviet Union and I assume that everybody here has read that initiative and which, at least, there is lots of answers to the questions raised sometimes before the PLO people about the future of Israel and its right to exist and this initiative again has been supported by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Now, if this is not enough to prove that the PLO and the Palestinians behind them are sincere or not about this, I do not know what proofs we can offer you. But I would like to ask one question: in opposition to what all I have stated, as positions, as communiqué, as initiatives that we have supported, what has the other side offered us? What have the Israelis offered the Palestinians as a solution? What has that responsible super-Power, the United States of America offered? Somebody might remind me of Reagan's plan but I do not think that even Reagan himself was serious about it. I am sure he knew that it was going to be rejected because he did not dare to file in it the right for self-determination: something that Mr. Reagan feels that as President of a super-Power he has an entitled right to deny people the right to self-determination.

Nevertheless we are not intimidated despite of the frustrations, in spite of the wars that have been waged in conspiracy against our people, the thousands of casualties, the dispersion of our people, travelling overseas here and there. I am sure that our people are going to continue their struggle including the armed struggle and all kind of struggle possible and legitimate so that we achieve a final everlasting settlement based on peace and justice. I think through this struggle-march, we are not only trying to save our people, believe it or not through this march if we ever succeed, we would be as well saving the future of the children and newly born Israelis, saving them from something inevitable. It sounds to me an inevitable thing to be raised to go to a slaughterhouse of the serial war of the Arabs and the Israelis. We want to live in peace, with decency, with dignity, with sovereignty.

Maxim Ghilan

A man can only guide others along paths he has already walked. So, when reflecting aloud on possible paths to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Near East, I can only speak according to my own experience and offer modest advice from my specific viewpoint.

I am a national Jew and an Israeli; that is, I belong to the Jewish people (not the Jewish faith) as well as to the nation which has evolved in the last three generations in historical Palestine - evolved precisely at the same time (and for similar reasons) as the Palestinian nation, in all its specificity.

My work has centered, for the last 26 years, on the search for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and for the creation of a State of Palestine beside the State of Israel in its pre-1967 borders. Moreover, I have not just fought for peace between our two peoples, but for a just peace; never ever have we - in the International Jewish Peace Union and in Israel and Palestine Monthly - glossed over the sufferings and oppression of Palestinians, in order to make Jewish and Israeli peace activists more palatable, or acceptable, to the other side. And, in all fairness, never have our speaking partners of the moderate PLO camp seen the Israeli and Jewish progressive and democratic forces as co-responsible for the outrages committed against their nation by the Israeli Establishment, with the silent agreement of part of the Western World.

We gave them our love, brotherhood and friendship, in atonement for the sins of our fathers and brethren, or those of our youth; they responded with ethnic kindredness, brotherhood and solidarity; thus, over a period of almost ten years, were laid the first cobblestones on the path leading towards Israeli-Palestinian coexistence; cobbles cemented with the blood of many martyrs, Arab and Jewish, the foremost of them being the Palestinian leader, Isam el Sartawi, assassinated last year in Portugal, and the Jewish-Egyptian progressive leader Henri Curiel, assassinated in Paris in 1978.

For, of course, we were but one group of several to walk this lonely path on the Jewish side; in this valley of shadows also walk the leaders and members of the Israeli Council for Israeli Peace, whose work has just culminated in the election to the Knesset of two members of the first Arab-Jewish slate, the Progressive List, which has brought to the Israeli Parliament Advocate Muhammed Miari, an exponent of the national rights of the Arab-Palestinian minority inside Israel, and his comrade, General Dr. Matitiyahu Peled, a former member of the IDF General Staff and a leading Jewish exponent of true democracy in Israel.

Before them - and us - walked the groups of the Israeli extreme Left: Matzpen and Maavak, Isracat and the Jerusalem-Matzpen group, who pioneered

the political contacts with the other side, and opened, first, discussions with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and later with Fatah member, and then PLO representative in London, Said Hamami, who was likewise martyred and assassinated in the London office of PLO, in 1978, after he widened his contacts to mainstream Israelis.

In the same valley of shadows, but on a separate path, walked and still walk our friends of the Israeli Communist Party Rekakh and of their Front for Democracy and Equality in Israel who established, separately, contacts with the mainstream PLO and with that organization's left wing. long ago.

So much for our path in the past. Let me now address myself, in this brief presentation, to the far longer path we still shall have to walk, in the future.

The parameters of our search were set, long ago; were, indeed, predestined from the beginning, thousands of years ago, from the day the first Jew explored the Land of Canaan and the first Arab wandered there - both coming, at different times, from the great desert.

We are looking for a way in which the two peoples can co-exist, can live together in The Land, in freedom, in equality, in independence, and in prosperity.

If we really want freedom for all, equality for all, independence for each of the two peoples, and true prosperity for all those dwelling in The Land, there exists only one way in which this can be initiated: by the creation of two separate, but co-operating States, side by side; which then will be free to evolve towards their separate or common destinies.

Therefore, the first and foremost struggle just now is that leading to the creation of a Palestinian national State in the West Bank and in Gaza. And it is up to us, democratic and progressive Jews and Israelis, to mobilize our efforts in this direction.

For, my friends, whoever controls the destiny of another people cannot remain free. He pays the price; as the Israeli nation is now paying the price of 1967 conquests and the 1982 war in Lebanon with the disintegration of internal Israeli morality. Worse, the Jewish people as a whole is beginning to pay for the sins of Israelis, as a significant minority of fanatic religious-Jewish extremists attempt to replace the humanist Judaic ethic by the worst and most obnoxious brand of Jewish fundamentalism, wrongfully debasing veneration of the Deity by adding to it the idolatrous adoration of blood and soil - "Blut und Erde" in German - those two main elements of all primitive, neo-primitive and totalitarian beliefs.

It is, then, not only as part of the Jewish people that I walk this path; it is primarily for its sake that I do so. I struggle in solidarity with the Palestinian people who fight for their freedom and self-determination beside Israel; but I cannot pretend to be more Palestinian than the

Palestinians and to fight in their name. At best, ALSO, for their cause, as well as for the sake of our own interests.

Let us now see, what our strategic needs would be, in order to reach the goal of the two coexisting states:

First, it is obvious that there must be national and popular awareness of the other people's rights and needs. As Israel is now sitting on top of the Palestinian people, this should start - is starting - among Israelis. But the Palestinians, too, must sooner or later accept not only the fact of the physical and national existence of Israelis but their right to live there in freedom and independence - although not at the cost of the Palestinians. Therefore, our main struggle is, at this stage, to convince Israelis and Jews of the need for a national and independent State of Palestine, beyond Israel's pre-1967 borders.

Up to now, this struggle was led, among Jews, by the very few. In the long run, however, we trust it shall, led by the Jewish masses, and mainly by two camps: the more politically aware elements among Oriental Jews inside Israel; and, in the Jewish Diaspora, those Western Jews who have not sold away their liberal and democratic birthright for "upward social mobility" at home and dearly paid Zionist "honours" in Israel.

Second, we must understand that we do not live in a vacuum - nor shall we live in one once peace between the "Siamese twins" of Palestine/Eretz Israel is achieved: the area has other nations and peoples, the majority of which are Arab. Therefore, our struggle passes through educating the Israelis to the fact that they must become part of the Mashreq, of the Levant; and educating the Arabs that Israel must not be rejected, once Palestine is born again, but rather integrated so as not to serve anymore as an agent of interests which are foreign to the area.

Third, we must acknowledge that nothing can be changed in this area without the agreement of both world super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union. All efforts made in the past to obtain a settlement for the conflict in the shadow of one of these super-Powers came to nought, as its opposite number simply vetoed such efforts in one way or the other. Our joint aim, the aim of all those who want an independent national Palestine to exist beside an independent and defensible State of Israel, must be to convince both super-Powers that it is better for both of them to have a peaceful Near East, than to use the area as a second-hand battlefield.

How can this happen? Only through Israeli-Palestinian, and later on Jewish-Arab, solidarity, which will eliminate the ability of outside forces to use the Arab peoples and the Israelis as their pawns, in dangerously negative world games.

If we should someday arrive at a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we will have opened the door to intra-Mashreq solidarity; and when this is achieved we will be able to finally convince the super-Powers through our joint forces - that a neutralized Near East, a Mashreq which the Soviet Union and the United States will accept as a non-belligerent buffer-area between their respective zones of influence - is a better deal for both of them than an area where never ending wars threaten the borders of the Soviet Union and of Western Europe.

Thus, my friends, from the relatively small acorn of Israeli-Palestinian peace may grow the many-leaved oak of Near Eastern neutrality, an essential part of a peaceful, future world order, in which there will be neither vanquished nor victors.

All those now working for justice and peace in the Near East should understand this. Then, they would redirect wisely their efforts in this direction: helping us to change Israeli society for the better; helping create the Palestinian national State; and finally, co-opting both into the heart of the Arab Levant, for the future of all of the Mashreq.

Lucille Mair

It is really a very special pleasure for me to be presiding as Moderator over this important panel and, as Don Betz has stated, that pleasure derives to a great extent from our awareness of the fact that the important work which we have seen done here over the past couple of days is a continuation of that momentum which we saw generated at the Geneva Conference last year and it is particularly gratifying to know that that dynamism continues and what we have here is the continuing commitment of that outreach constituency over and beyond governmental commitment to the issue before us.

I think we are all acutely aware of how precious time is today. I think that none of us, however, would have missed the opportunity to hear that inspiring address we received this morning from His Excellency Archbishop Capucci and in fact I think that we could very rightly claim that this was a very relevant opening statement, very directly aimed at our panel today: namely paths to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Just a brief word about our format. It could be that we are undertaking a near impossible task this morning in that we are hoping to hear the statements of the very distinguished group of speakers who all have comments to make on this important topic. We are hoping in fact that we might hear possibly six or seven speakers this morning and in the afternoon we would like to throw the subject open for your participation. I am hoping that we can rely on the fullest co-operation and understanding of our panelists to keep within the time limit (approximately 15 minutes, absolute maximum of 20). I am going to claim the privilege of the chair to start off primarily to give some example of the desired brevity which we would wish to be the characteristic of this morning's session.

But more seriously to place today's topic within the context in very general terms of the international responsibility which clearly resides within the United Nations for that search for peace and for the achievement of that peace which is the prime objective of our considerations, the fact is that such a peace is inconceivable outside of the United Nations framework.

I think there are many of us here who are well aware of how easy it is to be cynical about the United Nations and this brings to mind a quotation of one of William Shakespeare's plays where the particular character, looking at a rather underprivileged person, who I seem to remember was also female, remarks that this was a "poor creature, an ill favoured creature, but my own". And I think in a way there is some relevance here to the United Nations. It may well be a poor creature, although one might have to consider who has made it, who created it in the first instance and who has made it poor. If it is ill favoured, who indeed has made it ill favoured. But it is our own, our very own. It is in fact the only creature which we have within our international system for promoting and ensuring global peace and global justice. And particularly in relation to this complex, this critical, this tragic issue which is our concern, namely the question of Palestine, this issue which is of major global implications, the only forum which accommodates all the leading

protagonists from the Government of Israel, on the one hand, to the legitimate representation of the Palestinians on the other - the Palestine Liberation Organization - this is the only forum which all parties can sit and I think we should also recall that it is under international law that that forum, the United Nations, accorded the proper role to the representative of the Palestinian people.

Our Conference in Geneva last year recalled the authority of the United Nations and I think it could be correctly stated that this was indeed one of the most important achievements of that Conference. It was so easy to forget that the issue started with the partition resolution within the United Nations and that this still important unfinished business. ICQP last year, consolidated an overwhelming international consensus, an international consensus in which the non-governmental participation was a fundamental element, consolidated that consensus on the significance and indeed the duty and responsibility of the United Nations to find that solution. Out of that consensus emerged the strong recommendation that now we have to get down to business around the negotiating table, namely the recommendation for that Middle East Peace Conference. You will recall that that recommendation of Geneva was subsequently endorsed by an equally overwhelming consensus in the General Assembly at its last session and we know that this too is the core of your consideration and the action proposals that we would like to carry forth from this meeting here.

As far as the United Nations goes, that resolution of the General Assembly is within the United Nations pipeline. Both the Secretary-General personally as well as active members of the Security Council, leading members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other regional groups are actively pursuing ways and means of making that conference a reality. Your own further thrust from this Conference will greatly facilitate that United Nations process.

However, we know well the stalemate that that process has reached at this point. We know exactly who and what is blocking that process. But this stalemate that we are observing whereby the majority of the Members States that have been consulted about their willingness to participate in that Conference have unequivocally agreed. In one or two instances there have been some reservations as to the terms in which they would participate, but nevertheless there is an overwhelming agreement to participate. But the stalemate which emanates from governments of which we are well aware is, in my mind, an indicator of something which is widespread and profound and deeply disturbing and indicative of a rather bleak climate of international relations which effects the capacity of peoples and of institutions to handle the grave issues of our times.

It is a reflection of a steady erosion of the United Nations among other multilateral systems and we see there the authority being flouted, undermined, as a consequence of this unfortunate decline of multilateralism. This is a steady, mounting trend which should alert us to the dangers of our current situation. It is a trend towards global unilateralism, which is threatening to engulf us in what the Secretary-General of the United Nations has himself recently described as international anarchy.

It is evident in many sectors, in many fora, in many processes throughout the multilateral system. It is critically evident in the area of economic

relations for example where the North-South global dialogue has gone exactly nowhere and all the signs are that this is a deepening trend. We have seen it in relation to what is happening to that eminent agency of the United Nations, namely UNESCO. We are seeing it in the humanitarian sectors, we are seeing it, of course, in specific political and regional issues.

So it is within this context of the reality which we should face, which is that as we see here, to find a global solution to the most critical political issue on the international agenda. At the same time we are virtually working against the tide whereby multilateralism is just not the fashion of the day.

I would like to feel that this presents a tremendous challenge to a meeting such as this: the challenge to exercise the political will and effort of our constituencies here represented to channel the search for Middle East peace into proper institutional processes. To clearly, explicitly, courageously confront those powerful forces which would turn the tide back to international collective action. This and only this in my view can permit a negotiated settlement for restoring Palestinian rights and ensuring that the United Nations with its historic responsibility and original responsibility can be revalidated for its unfinished task. May I humbly suggest that this should be part of the context and the backdrop against which we can hear the specific important contributions of particular panelists on the subject to Paths to a Comprehensive, Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East.

Anwar Nusseibeh

Path-finding is a thankless task at the best of times. It becomes even less rewarding in a situation such as this: a situation which is charged with historical memories, religious sensitivities, emotional pressures, conflicting interests and exaggerated hopes and fears otherwise sometimes described as human folly that create a maze in which the line that distinguishes right and wrong is blurred or even lost altogether in the search for the practical and the possible.

Why then make the attempt in the first place? Partly because the alternative to debate is violence and violence on the evidence only compounds the evil. Look at Lebanon. But also because partly I take heart from the nature of the present forum. Thus as a former politician I found it was always easier to be articulate in the opposition than in office and while I know that a non-governmental organization need not, Irish-fashion, be anti-governmental as well, nevertheless its debating forum can perhaps be regarded as less inhibiting because its expectations, one hopes, are more modest. Therefore, in this rather tentative and far from authoritative vein I would venture the following thoughts.

It is perhaps a truism to say that the Arab-Israeli conflict poses a dilemma. What is a little surprising, however, is the judging of the recent Israeli elections. This dilemma appears to be as confounding to Israelis as it is to outsiders. No matter who will lead the next Israeli Government or what shape that government will take, its options for political manoeuvre will be greatly limited. Therefore, the present impasse will regrettably continue to govern Arab-Israeli relations for some time to come. The cost in human terms will be considerable although the American safety-net will presumably underwrite all the other costs.

Now, this, despite the assumption, is a gloomy perspective and the question that is always asked is whether there is a special jinx that spoils our equation. In my opinion there is no such jinx. Beyond the nature of the conflict itself, there is the reputed perversity, not always deserved, of its immediate protagonists and the reluctance of third parties to be seriously involved. Instead the third parties voice sympathy, offer advice, or, on occasion, material assistance, but generally they tend to look the other way. Therefore viewed from the Palestinian perspective, and without in any way wishing to sound churlish or ungrateful, the armistice agreements of 1949 and the great humanitarian endeavour undertaken on behalf of Palestinian refugees, first by the Red Cross and later by the United Nations, did not basically deviate from this pattern. They were stop-gap measures that attempted to alleviate the crisis in human terms but that did not even begin to solve it and again the question is asked "why"? There is, of course, no simple answer.

However, it is a fact that, apart from the Jordanian exception, all the political processes that involved Israel in the meantime were processes from which the Palestinians themselves have been excluded. Nor had exclusion been altogether fortuitous. It was in fact an exclusion that was impelled by Palestinian choice. Thus, for reasons not far to seek, the Palestinians have never taken kindly to Zionist thought and had liked even less Zionist

practices. As the Palestinians saw them, both posed a threat to Palestinian existence in all its forms and all its dimensions. A threat that was as dynamic as it was uncompromising.

Therefore, the Palestinians have attempted to resist that threat in commensurate terms. That is, in terms that were as total as the threat itself. In that context, they refused to accord the source of that threat legal recognition and the recommendations of the field commission were consequently rejected as were the later recommendations of United Nations General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 calling for the partition of Palestine. Instead, the Palestinians offered what the Zionists would not accept, namely a united Palestine of Arabs and Jews, living together in peace but outside the framework of zionism.

There were arguments on both sides. Arguments genuinely advanced and fervently held, sometimes erupting in violence, in support of this position or that. But the arguments themselves stemmed, in each case, from different historical perspectives and deep-seated fears and reflected, in turn, different visions for the future. This left little room for compromise and the British, exhausted by the war and frustrated by a political conundrum which they themselves had conceived, decided to withdraw a little precipitously, thus leaving a vacuum that could only be filled by the exercise of force.

The Jewish community in Palestine, strongly supported by the Jews outside the country, galvanized by the prospect of achieving a long-awaited dream and drawing heavily on world sympathy in the wake especially of the holocaust, were evidently well prepared and most eager to apply that force and to fill that vacuum. The Palestinians on the other hand, whose political leadership was in exile at the time, appeared to be less prepared and thus succeeded only in providing the occasion and the pretext for the onslaught that followed and which prompted the mass exodus of Palestinian refugees from the country. An exodus that was deliberately induced on Mr. Begin's own testimony for reasons of State. For the same reasons United Nations resolution 184 (III) of 1948 was consistently aborted despite the glowing sentiments in Israel's declaration of independence and although Israel's admission as a member of the United Nations had been predicated on its prior acceptance of, and respect for, all United Nations resolutions affecting Palestine.

However, this is not the point that I had really set out to make. I had thought instead to examine the reasons for the failure of the peace process and had tried to suggest that perhaps the exclusion by choice of the Palestinians from that process was largely to blame. Regrettably, the psychological divide which had impelled Palestinian conduct on this matter in the past was not greatly ameliorated by the scar inflicted on them in the 1948-1949 fighting, and peace-making on this account became even more difficult.

Now this scar was also felt, although perhaps not to the same extent, by the Arab countries that rallied to the support of the Palestinians in response to the latter's call for help, although in coming to the assistance of the Palestinians the motivation of those countries must be differently assessed. Thus, while ostensibly adopting the Palestinian position on the street level, they were giving credibility to the image of a beleaguered Israel fighting for survival. Their objective at the official level was simply to restore order: a task that the Security Council might well have undertaken itself.

Israel was understandably sceptical, but I am of the opinion nevertheless that in the end the objective was genuine and that there developed a duality of standard within the Arab camp: a demonstrative support for the Palestinian position on the one hand, with room left for possible compromise on the other. The armistice agreements which Dr. Bunche worked out in 1949 were only possible in my opinion because of this duality. In my opinion also, those agreements gave Israel what in the event might develop into de facto recognition, subject always to the reservations stated in the agreements themselves. There were similar reservations if you remember prior to the admission of Israel to the United Nations as there were similar reservations in the Act of Union adopted between the East and West Bank of Jordan.

However, since those reservations affected Palestinian rights and since even de facto recognition does not by itself ensure peace and reconciliation, it became evident that, if there is going to be a genuine peace process, then the Palestinians themselves must be involved in this process. And this to my mind is the true significance of the resolutions and of the assumption by the Palestine Liberation Organization of this historic role.

In this connection it is a little ironic perhaps that Israel, which presumably needs peace as much as the Palestinians do, which understands that without the Palestinian component peace will continue to elude both peoples, should decline this challenge. I know that the Palestinian covenant is couched in ultimate terms. But so was Dr. Herzl's book, 'The Jewish State' and yet this did not preclude the late Mr. Ben Gurion from accepting partition that is something less than Dr. Herzl's vision. Moreover, I have yet to know a single liberation movement whose leaders have not at one time or the other been labelled as terrorists and who have not later become credible partners for peace. In fact, I am old enough and native enough to remember that some present Israeli leaders were at one time also called names.

I do not pretend to speak for the PLO or know what political accommodation the PLO is ready to consider but I do know that we owe it to ourselves on both sides and to the world generally whose security is held to ransom as a result of our crisis to give peace a chance: peace and justice, peace in compatibility, peace in honour, because nothing that falls short of this will endure. Peace that will eliminate the nightmare of occupation and the indignity of refugee camps, homelessness and statelessness - this is a trust that the world community may also discharge.

Ahmed Osman

It is a pleasure and a privilege, as a member of the United Nations Association of Egypt, to address such an international gathering of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine.

Let me at the outset congratulate wholeheartedly those who organized such a meeting to foster the cause of peace and justice in a deeply troubled world.

Having been a professional diplomat for 35 years accustomed to deal with international affairs almost exclusively at the official governmental level, I must confess that I was at first intrigued about the basis and value of such a meeting of non-official organizations dealing with one of the most acute and complex international issues.

The more I reflected about the matter, the more I discovered that the novelty of formally involving world public opinion in international explosive issues is a wise, constructive and much needed step. If it is easy to trace the formal basis of our work here to para. 3(b) of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B and to section III of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights, nevertheless the profound reality beyond these texts is the fact that what we are dealing with is no less than the survival of humanity.

Indeed, with the advent of sophisticated weapons of mass destruction, which, with one single stroke can provoke the massacre of whole innocent civilian population, and may entail also the annihilation of our planet, man could not remain a passive spectator in front of such unprecedented dangers, which Governments and international organizations are still unable to cope with successfully and decisively. This tragic situation triggered in man the instinct of self-preservation and provoked him to express loud and clear his deep dissatisfaction for the present state of world affairs. This is more so, since some historians, after diligent research in the origins and causes of world wars one and two, came to us with the fantastic claim that these two world wars could have been avoided if greater and more conscious efforts were directed to that effect in due time.

So we as people, as we are rightly reminded by the preamble of the United Nations Charter, have a responsibility to carry the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our generation has brought untold sorrow to mankind.

Forty years after the signing of the Charter, the time has come for the peoples of the United Nations to carry out this determination. This is more urgent, in the very explosive question of Palestine.

Let me read to you in this context something pertinent which Professor Edward Said said before the International Conference on the Question of

Palestine held last year in Geneva and I quote: "With the United States and many other nations, Israel has determined to reduce the Palestinians to a people without a narratable history, without a national institutional identity, without effective political presence," and Professor Said added: "The Palestinian people today are faced with nothing less than ethnocide, and perhaps for the first time in the history of nations the rest of the world is able quite literally to watch the process in all its horrible detail. Ignorance is no longer an excuse."

This is very true.

Today, we do not have to write hundreds of books or articles, or make movies, or unearth and publish memoirs about the massacre, torture and the sufferings of the Palestinians, as the Israelis did and still are doing to remind the world of the persecution at the hands of the Nazis some 50 years ago. All we have to do is to watch news broadcasts on television to see the tragedy of the Palestinian unfolding alive before our own eyes.

So, if we are assembled here today, it is because the peoples of the world decided to refuse to be a silent partner to the hideous crimes committed against the Palestinian people. This is fact No. 1 regarding the basis of our work here, which I would like to impress on all non-governmental organizations present here.

With regard to the practical value of our work, naturally there are cynics, who may describe our efforts here as an exercise in futility, that world public opinion will not stop a killing, liberate an oppressed or restore a right.

This may be true in the short run, world public opinion alone will not be able to check a mad and senseless use of brutal and naked force by a State determined to do so, as you may have seen it, when Israel invaded poor Lebanon in 1982. But, in the longer run, no leader or Government, however, powerful or despotic he may be, can continue to ignore and defy world public opinion without at least trying to conceal his evil policy in the cloak of a good cause. What we can do here as a first step is to strip him of this cloak, and show to his public opinion at home, and to the world at large where the good cause is.

So we have a right to be here and discuss critical international issues of war and peace like the Palestine question which may provoke a third world war and to try to influence events and policy makers in the sense we deem right, before it is too late. This is fact No. 2 which emphasizes the practical aim of our work.

The topic of my statement will centre on a very specific aspect of the Palestine question, which is the role of the United Nations in the settlement of the question. Since this is still a very broad subject, which, for shortage of time, cannot be dealt with in its totality here, we will have to concentrate on one or two major areas of the subject where it would be useful for non-governmental organizations to focus upon them and try to mobilize world public opinion around them.

I have in mind two important questions which need explanation and elaboration.

The first one is, why the role of the United Nations in resolving the Palestine question is paramount and indispensable.

The second is why an international peace conference on the Middle East, as requested by the United Nations, is a wise and sound move if not a necessity in the question of Palestine, despite the sole opposition of one concerned party alone.

Let us tackle the first question, why the role of the United Nations in general and in solving the Palestine question in particular needs strong encouragement, vigorous help and powerful support from non-governmental organizations and world public opinion.

There are many valuable and worthy reasons for that, and it is only fitting in this meeting to bring them into light.

First of all, the United Nations has been lately the object of a systematic, malicious and unfair campaign launched in many biased news media in the West. This campaign is orchestrated by Israel which is animated by outright hostility to the United Nations and does not conceal its attempts to undermine all United Nations efforts to undertake serious work on the Palestine question.

This is totally wrong and dangerous in the long run even for the Israeli themselves. Non-governmental organizations should oppose these Israeli attempts and insist on the continuation of the role of the United Nations in order to protect and assist a party strangled by the military occupation of his enemy, which is the Palestinian people.

In the second place, let us not forget on the other hand that the failure of the United Nations to settle this question may adversely affect the role and future of the United Nations itself. This link between the settlement of the Palestinian question and the role and future of the United Nations was recognized in October 1983, in the 29th Plenary Assembly of the World Federation of United Nations Associations when it included the question of peace in the Middle East as one of four sub-items to be discussed in a symposium specifically consecrated to the study of the role and future of the United Nations.

The failure of the United Nations is something that non-governmental organizations should not allow to happen for a number of good reasons. The peoples of the world have a high stake in the existence of the United Nations and the success of its operation. Because the United Nations, despite all its shortcomings, is still our best hope for the survival of humanity continuously threatened by a nuclear holocaust which can happen by accident or design.

The world in which we live today is plagued by hot local wars, tension, violence, a world where forces are lurking to resuscitate the outmoded concept of spheres of influence and domination of the weak by the strong, a world where economic dislocation and social upheaval and technological revolution is tearing apart the fabric of modern society, and if this is not enough, this chaotic world is threatened by the revival of the cold war. Where would we go to tackle these enormous problems? We should be grateful to have still the United Nations where the nations have a ready forum, where they can deliberate in the shelter of previously agreed noble principles and accept civilized norms of conduct and in appropriate organs already constituted for that purpose.

In the United Nations, Member States learn to co-operate together for a decent and viable minimum order.

It is in the interest of all peoples from South and North, from West and East, to make the United Nations a real instrument for peace, prosperity and world order. This is another reason why non-governmental organizations should find it possible to support strongly the ascertainment by the United Nations of its responsibility and the exercise of its authority over the explosive question of Palestine.

In the third place, the United Nations in trying to settle the Palestine problem, does not do so as a meddling intruder or as an ambitious despotic ruler, or to serve some selfish personal aims; the United Nations does so, because it is the trustee of the common interest of mankind, acting in the performance of its functions to resolve disputes by peaceful means and maintain international peace and security. The United Nations is not only institutionally habilitated to deal with the problem of Palestine but it has a historic, political and moral responsibility to do so and therefore it cannot just throw away its responsibility on the account that one or two States do not like the United Nations role simply because it runs counter to their aims.

Non-governmental organizations should be aware that the United Nations responsibility towards the Palestine question rests on solid grounds and should not be taken by false pretexts or artificial arguments.

In the fourth place, I would like to draw your attention to a very important fact. In dealing with the Palestine question, the United Nations does not substitute itself for any of the parties, or resolves to exclude any of them; on the contrary, it protects the right of all concerned parties to be present at the settlement on equal footing. This is fair play. Israel demands that the Palestinian should be eliminated from the concert of interested parties, hoping to settle the question behind the back of the Palestinians. This will be purely and simply a diktat, not a settlement, a capitulation not a peaceful settlement. The world did not pay the price of two world wars to condone once again diktat. And the United Nations was created precisely to prevent any more diktat especially when the relations between two parties is characterized by flagrant imbalance, which is the case between Israel and the Palestinians. You know now the secret why Israel wants to settle the question

outside the United Nations, where the conqueror can deal freely with the vanquished and extort territorial concessions or otherwise, without being reminded by other members of the United Nations of its obligations under the Charter, solemnly subscribed to, when Israel was admitted to the United Nations in 1949.

In the fifth place, a major breakthrough was attained by the United Nations in the handling of the Palestine question. Because of a deliberate and concerted blackout by world news media, this new attitude by the United Nations was concealed from public opinion and is still far from being understood or appreciated. This is a good opportunity to throw some light on the new role assumed by the United Nations in the Palestine question.

After a period of indifference and neglect of the question of Palestine, the United Nations finally decided to take a courageous and far reaching initiative to settle the question of Palestine in all its aspects. This was achieved recently in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, under the auspices of the United Nations. The era of concentrating only on relief measures for the refugees, or coping with the side effects of the question, or proposing partial or provisional measures to deal with the question was gone.

The door for discussing and arguing on a coherent comprehensive plan to deal with the Palestine question in all its aspects was finally open.

The plan was thoroughly discussed and adopted by consensus in this Conference and was embodied in two historic documents:

- (a) The Geneva Declaration;
- (b) A Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights.

It is pertinent and worthy here to note that the Geneva Declaration, when tackling the essential ingredients for a successful settlement, listed among them the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement and that the United Nations is the place to achieve such a settlement.

One of the merits of the plan conceived by the Conference, whether in the Geneva Declaration or the Programme of Action, is that it steered away from bland generalities and deliberate ambiguities which made Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, very famous. Sixteen years after the adoption of this resolution, years full of wars, tension, destruction and chaos in the Middle East, there was no more room left in the Middle East for mere generalities or ambiguities.

The Geneva Declaration and the Programme of Action gave frank, specific and constructive answers to all the essential points to be included in the settlement. But it still remains a crucial problem, which is how to put this settlement into effect, what is the most appropriate procedure able to render

the terms of the settlement operative. The answer to this question was given in the Geneva Declaration when it stipulated the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

Much has been said about the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Doubts have been cast on it, one or two concerned parties expressed vehement opposition to it. It is possible to imagine many other procedures to achieve peace in the Middle East. But, this peace will be partial, fragile, unjust. If we really want a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, which does not reflect the weight of conquest, it has to be in this Conference. And there are a number of reasons for that.

First of all, the Conference does not exclude any concerned party from participating on an equal footing. This is an important condition to have a viable settlement. This is why Israel and the United States have no legal or moral right to exclude any party concerned. Certainly, they have no right to exclude the victim of aggression.

The Peace Conference, in implementing the settlement, will take as a starting point the way the Geneva Declaration approached the question of Palestine, that it is of a people subjugated by military occupation, its land gradually usurped and annexed, and its elementary rights denied. The Declaration did not look upon settlement of the question of Palestine as a pawn in the dangerous game of the super-Powers or as part of the strategic arrangements of super-Power A or B, or to ensure a unilateral gain or a privilege or a special status in the area for that Power or the other. In the Peace Conference, the two big Powers are present together, with other permanent Members of the Security Council, working for a precise aim to restore the rights to all concerned.

In implementing the settlement, the Peace Conference will be bound by the accepted fact, that the core of the Middle East problem is the Palestine question.

In the Peace Conference, members will therefore categorically reject the Israeli allegation that to achieve peace in the Middle East is quite enough to sign peace treaties with its neighbours. The Peace Conference will insist that peace and stability in the area depend on a just solution to the question of Palestine, and therefore Israel will not be able to sweep again the Palestine question under the carpet.

In the Peace Conference in the Middle East, the political and legal umbrella for the solution, as specified by the Geneva Declaration, is the respect for, and application of, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the question of Palestine and the observance of the principles of international law.

The meaning of this element is very significant. The implementation of the settlement will be controlled by an international legal order whose content is accepted by the overwhelming majority of the international community.

This means also, that what is right or wrong, legal or illegal, feasible or not feasible is not decided by realpolitik or the weight of superior military might of one of the parties or its ally, but by what the United Nations Charter, the United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law say about this.

For all these reasons, it is quite natural that the people of Palestine insists on a solution under the auspices of the United Nations, and for the opposite reasons, Israel would like to settle the question outside an International Peace Conference held under the auspices of the United Nations.

World public opinion should support those who are on the side of the rule of law, not on the side of the rule of the jungle, those who are on the side of emancipation of people, not on the side of colonizing people, those who believe on equal right for all peoples, not those who believe in denying some people their fundamental human rights.

I do hope that I was able to clarify to you the advantages and merits of the involvement of the United Nations in the settlement of the Palestine question and the merits and advantages of convening an International Peace Conference for the Middle East to put this settlement into effect.

I also hope that the non-governmental organizations present here will be able to launch an intensive campaign in world public opinion to acquaint it with the necessity and appropriateness of the United Nations role, if we want to achieve a genuine peace, justice and stability in the Middle East.

Emile Touma

Allow me to pause at the beginning of the regional conditions of the Arab-Israeli conflict areas before I deal with the basic question of paths to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The region is still living in the aftermath of the Israeli atrocious aggression in Lebanon of June 1982. The Israeli occupation of South Lebanon continues. The armed struggle there becomes a war of attrition costing Israeli \$1 million daily. It is of great significance to stress that the four aims behind this Israeli aggression were not achieved. The first aim was to destroy the PLO, to crush it in Lebanon. The second aim was to liquidate the national Lebanese movement and transform Lebanon into a protectorate, an Israeli-American protectorate. The third was to deal a crushing blow to the Syrian army and in this way pave the way for a coup d'etat which will change the regime in the Syrian Arab Republic. The fourth aim was to sever the Soviet-Arab friendship which has become an obstacle to imposing a pax americana on the region.

You can see that these four aims have not been achieved. But elaborating on the first aim, the crushing of the PLO in Lebanon, one has to remember that the Israeli ruling circles hoped that achieving this objective would pave the way to suppress the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip and eliminate the inalienable rights of the Palestine Arab people. In fact, this vicious war against Lebanon was waged under the illusion that Israel can and must solve the Palestine problem militarily. Before the war the then Chief-of-Staff, Rafael Eytan stated: "The war between the Jewish people and the Palestinian people has been going on for a hundred years," (he said a hundred years because the first colonial settlement was in 1882), "and will only end when one of them is destroyed and it is not the Jewish-Israeli people who will be destroyed."

It is clear today that this objective has not been achieved. The PLO is overcoming its difficulties. The Palestinian people in the occupied territories persist in their struggle despite the occupationist terror and the rights of the Palestinian Arab people have gained in stature as the United Nations Conference on Palestine last year in Geneva and the meeting of NGOs today emphasize.

The failure of the Israeli onslaught on Lebanon deepened the political and economic crisis in Israel. The political crisis leading to the establishment of early parliamentary elections and the results of these elections held on 23 July 1984 only proved the extent of that crisis. It produced a stalemate between the two big blocks - the Likud and the Marakh. And to illustrate this crisis one has to compare the elections of 1981 and the elections of 1984. In 1981, 32 "political lists" contested the elections and only 9 lists won seats in the Knesset. In 1984 26 lists contested the elections and 15 lists won seats in the Knesset. This fragmentation shows that the Israeli people were disappointed with the Likud Government which lost 7 seats and had less confidence in the Marakh which lost 3 seats.

However, the more important aspect of the election results is that they deepened the trend to the right and to extreme chauvinist nationalism. Not only did the ultra-racist Kahane win a seat but other rightists, no less chauvinist but maybe not so blunt, grew in strength like the Tehiya list and Morashah and others. This increased the dangers of creeping fascism which breeds in racialism. At the same time the balance of forces makes it difficult to form a stable government which is why we believe that there is a crisis of the régime now. At present there are attempts to form a government of national unity. But such a government, if established poses dangers for the people of Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries. It blocks the paths for an alternative policy of peace, democracy and equality. It promises to persist in the aggressive policies of the ruling circles who still toy with the plan of a war against the Syrian Arab Republic to achieve the same aims that they failed to achieve in the war of Lebanon.

It should always be remembered that the Zionist parties converged on what is known as the national consensus. This covers three levels. On the international level, it is based on the strategic alliance with United States imperialism which is directed against the national movements in the region and the Soviet Union. It serves the reactionary régimes and fascist régimes in South America, Africa and Asia. On the regional level, it is based on the five 'no's': no return to the borders of June 1967; no withdrawal from Arab Jerusalem; no independent Palestinian State; no negotiations with the PLO; and no withdrawal from South Lebanon.

On the local level it is based on the service of monopoly, foreign and local capital, onslaught on the working people, national oppression and racial discrimination against the Arab national minority in Israel which is 600,000 strong today. With this in view, we do not see, whatever Government emerges, any possibility of easing the economic crisis, as long as the present policy of militarization of the economy continues and the war budget consumes around 70 per cent of the State budget.

The sources of this economic crisis are clear. One, occupation of the Palestinian territories and the intensification of colonial settlements. Since 1977, Israel spends \$3.5 billion on these settlements designed to change the physical and demographic character of these territories and dissipate the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

Second, the war in Lebanon, which costs \$4.5 billion and the war of attrition, is costing \$1 million a day. Third, the war budget which consumes 70 per cent of the State budget.

The manifestations of this crisis are clear: a 400 per cent inflation; growing unemployment; growth of Israel's foreign debt reaching \$30 billion; and balance-of-payments deficit. I thought that this was needed in order to come to our problem.

So, despite this negative picture, Israel is not a hermetically closed citadel of reaction. There are active forces: the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and the struggle against this policy which endangers the people of Israel no less than the peoples of the region. The attitude of these forces is a direct opposite of the adventurous expansionist policy of the Israeli ruling circles. The former call for the immediate withdrawal of

Israel from Lebanon and their plan for a solution for the Palestine problem which is the crux of the Middle East crisis calls for the complete withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied in the war of June 1967.

The recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including their right to self-determination, and the establishment, alongside Israel, of their independent sovereign State in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with Arab Jerusalem as its capital; the call for a resolution of the Palestine refugee problem in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of December 1948; the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestine people and the only partner for an Israeli-Palestinian peace. There can be no peace even if Israel signs peace treaties not only with Egypt but also with the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan and Lebanon. Peace can be achieved only through the resolution of the Palestine problem.

These forces reject categorically the United States manipulation and monopolization of the Middle East crisis and in this context they oppose the Camp David agreement and reject it. The so-called 'Reagan peace plan' both negate the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their independent State and ignores the PLO.

It is clear that the proposed peace plan of the Israeli peace forces corresponds with world public opinion as crystallized in United Nations resolutions and the Geneva Palestine Conference of August-September 1983. It converges with the policy of the PLO as formulated by the Palestine National Council resolution in the Algiers session of February 1983. And in order to achieve this programme the peace forces in Israel call for the convocation of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all the parties of the conflict, specifically, Israel, the PLO, the neighbouring Arab countries and the participation of the Soviet Union, the United States and others.

The peace forces in Israel welcome the resolution of the United Palestine Conference of Geneva on this score. They welcomed the recent mission of the United Nations Secretary-General to the countries of the Middle East to achieve this purpose and welcomed the Soviet initiative for such a United Nations-sponsored international conference taken early this month.

It is clear that all the concerned Arab States and the PLO endorse the idea of an international conference; only Israel, with the support of the United States, rejected it. The meeting has correctly made the convocation of the international conference a major objective. Allow me at this stage to make one observation and two suggestions. The observation concerns the potential of the peace forces in Israel. The war in Lebanon generated a mess and anti-war sentiment expressed, as you may remember, in huge demonstrations. The tens of thousands who demonstrated believe that the Palestine question cannot be solved militarily. Our task today is to transform this understanding into clear political-conscious action around the plan for peace. The suggestions are two: one, to adopt the United Nations plan for a solution of the Palestine question. I think it is necessary whenever we speak about an international conference to specify a plan for the solution of the Palestine problem in order to propagate the basic idea that this solution can be based on the establishment of a Palestine independent

State alongside Israel, in order to propagate the idea that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative.

The second suggestion is to call upon the peace forces, the friends of the Palestinian people, the fighters for a Middle East peace and both the United Kingdom and France to pressure their Governments to support the plan for an international conference, added to the support of the Soviet Union and China for an international conference considering that they are permanent members of the Security Council. Such a stand will help to isolate the United States and pressure it to agree to such a conference as it did in 1977. This does not belittle the actions of all NGOs suggested and approved in this meeting. It only creates a special task in these two countries within the general struggle in Western Europe.

We naturally endorse the various proposals and view them with hope because their implementation helps us in our struggle in Israel.

Amnon Zichroni

My name is Amnon Zichroni. I am an Israeli lawyer, active in civil issues and for a just Israeli-Palestinian peace.

I am a member of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. The Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace was founded in 1976 by a group of prominent Israeli Zionists as a vehicle for responding to signs of moderation that were perceived from within the Palestinian national movement.

The issue before us today is defined as "paths to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

I would like to start with a few words on the term "comprehensive, just and lasting peace" and then come to the ways of attaining it.

How should we analyze the term "just peace" when speaking on such a difficult, complicated conflict like this one in the Middle East? In my opinion, starting here from an absolute, "historic", justice will lead us nowhere. The only correct way, as many philosophers (Emanuel Kant, to mention only one of them) have said, is from analysing the existing reality, the permanent and the changing factors in it, the existing dangers and possibilities.

The most important permanent factor that should be taken into consideration is the fact that Palestine, which was an Arab country a hundred years ago, has become, after a long and complicated historical process, the homeland of two peoples - the Palestinian Arab people and the people of Israel. The heart of the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs is the historical confrontation between the two peoples of this land, which is dear to both. No solution will be practical (and therefore just) unless the genuine causes of the war are removed. As developments in the region have shown more than once, going round the genuine problems or ignoring them can only damage. Israel must recognize that it belongs to the region, must take a positive attitude towards the national aspirations of the Arab world and must recognize the legitimate interests of the Palestinians. The Arab world must recognize that Israel exists and has become a legal and permanent part of the region.

Everyone should respect the national and human rights of both peoples. The only way of ending the tragedy of the Palestinian people is the establishment of an independent Arab Palestinian State in the territories occupied by Israel in June 1967. Any solution should include a persuasive political perspective for the Israelis too. That is why Israeli peace forces support the principle of an Israeli-Palestinian peace, based on mutual recognition and co-existence between two sovereign States, each with its own distinct national identity. The cardinal rule for this is the establishment of a State for the Palestinian Arab people, which will exercise its right to self-determination in the political framework of its choice, alongside the State of Israel. The border between these two states should correspond to that existing prior to the war of 4 June 1967.

On the basis of meetings and negotiations with high-ranking PLO officials, including PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat, we Israeli peace forces came to the conclusion that PLO is willing to assent to a just peace on that basis. PLO has made crystal-clear in various resolutions since 1976 its willingness to accept and recognize the State of Israel on the basis of mutual recognition of each nation's legitimate right of self-determination.

That is why we say that the present responsibility for the continuation of the conflict, the war and the tragedy rests on the Israeli Government which maintains a policy of occupation and annexation. The aim of this policy is to make the occupied territories, step by step, an integral part of Israel. The attitude towards the Arab-Palestine residents of these territories is one side of this coin; the Jewish settlements there are the other.

The war in Lebanon, launched by the Israeli Government, is directly connected with the overall policy of the Israeli Government, and its policy towards the Palestinian people, mainly in relation to the territories occupied in June 1967.

This is a concept of the endless war with Palestinians, of breaking their organizations - mainly PLO - and of annexing the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sharon, the former Defence Minister, thought the war in Lebanon was another step in the direction of breaking the Palestinians - and perhaps later - forcing them into making Jordan their Palestinian State. That was the "big plan" behind the war in Lebanon.

The aim of the war included the destruction of PLO - thus eliminating the Palestinian problem - and installing in Lebanon a puppet Government manipulated by Israel and consisting of a Phalangist dictatorship. All this is no secret. Sharon said a year before the invasion of Lebanon that he would do exactly what, in fact, has been done and spoke openly about the goals of the war too.

It is necessary to say a little more about the Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. At present, more than half of the 6 million dunams and 1,500,000 acres in the West Bank are in Israeli hands. In the West Bank there are more than 110 Israeli settlements and many more are planned for the near future. But it is not so much the number and the type of settlement that is the most significant factor. During the period of the Labour Government the concept of settlement dictated the building of rural settlements. Under the Likud Government and their settlement vanguard, Gush-Emunim, the emphasis was on urban settlements, dormitories for Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. For this form of settlement any sort of land is suitable. At the current rate of building, 3,000 apartments a year are becoming available. That means an annual increase of the Jewish population in the West Bank of between 12,000 to 15,000. Seeing that 25,000 Jews already live in the West Bank, one can predict that at the present rate of development there will be a Jewish population of 100,000 there by 1986, which will be a major obstacle to any political settlement.

I would like to stress one more point. Till now I have employed the term "Israeli Government" when I speak of some entity to be blamed for a political policy, and so on. It is very important for us, peace-fighters in Israel, that there should not be any confusion of identity between the government and the people. Public opinion in Israel is a force that should not be overlooked. We try to persuade the Israelis that their government not only

does wrong to others, but also is harming the true interests of Israel and the Israelis. Till now the war in Lebanon caused, for example, more than 580 fatalities and several thousand wounded among Israeli soldiers. The economic cost of the war was very high and postponed the chances of really solving Israel's sharp internal social and economic problems.

Israeli peace forces try, I may say, to mobilize the Israeli people against their Government and its policy. In this, any confusion of identity between the Israelis and their Government or the Government of the State of Israel can only do harm.

The most important political development in Israel in recent years is the intensifying polarization between the supporters of the confrontation policy of Israeli Governments and its opponents. On one hand, the struggle of Israeli peace forces has reached a new peak with the massive demonstrations against the war in Lebanon. On the other hand, the development of chauvinistic and national-religious fanatic political elements and attitudes was hastened. On the political map appeared extreme racist and fascist powers. The Jewish settlers in the occupied territories created anti-Arab terror organizations.

At this point I find it necessary to explain why such a large proportion, probably even the majority of Israelis, support the policy of confrontation with the Arabs. The most important factor, in my view, is the success of official propaganda in persuading most Israelis that there is a danger to their national existence in the Middle East, that there is "no choice" but the road of endless war with the Palestinians, and that there is no way of achieving a just peace that will ensure Israel's existence and its national rights. Extremist voices that have been heard in the past from the Arab and Palestinian side have strengthened this conviction. The development of the more realistic approach among the Palestinian leadership weakens it and, in this way, helps Israeli peace forces in their struggle.

Class division is another element. I am sorry to say that the majority of the supporters of the confrontation policy are the poorer people and definitely the majority of "Sephardim", Jews of oriental origin, while the opponents come mostly from the middle and upper classes: mostly (but not all) "Ashkenazim", Jews from Europe and America. Most of Israel's intellectuals oppose the war in Lebanon, but - to our sorrow - the majority of its working class support it.

Time is getting short for the beginning of real progress on the path to peace in the Middle East.

In our efforts to persuade Israeli people that such peace is attainable we need the help of a realistic attitude of the Arab and Palestinian side.

Real progress to peace will become possible only on the basis of real co-operation involving the two super-Powers, Israel, the Arab States and PLO. Regarding this point the United Nations can, of course, play a positive role.

For us the struggle for peace is also the fight on the essence of the State of Israel. Going on the confrontation line can continue to degenerate it into a fearful place. Starting the march on the peace road can take it back to the country we all wanted to live in.

Archbishop Capucci

I do not intend to deliver a speech to you this morning. I would rather let you know certain thoughts and give you material for meditation concerning the place that God takes within our consciences as inspired by our human hearts.

One of the greatest problems of our times is that modern man does not walk, modern man runs. Modern man is always running as if there were a tremendous race between the clock, time and man. This tremendous speed is catastrophic because man does not have time for reflection; man does not have time for meditation. We are living in a very agitated time and a very chaotic one in which the world is worse every day. The problems are greater every day. We see then in our times, when we speak of the time of light, it is not really so light, it is more a time of darkness. Here we see a contradiction because, technologically speaking, man has gone very high, high into space. But in the very same proportion, man has fallen, very, very low on a spiritual plane.

Modern man then is trying to go higher and above morality; above principles, he is going to be guided merely by his instincts, by his strengths, by trying to achieve monetary gain, going forward driven by his needs, his wants and his egotism. Therefore, the world presents a very dark picture because of this. Here we see war, here we see injustice, here we see violence, here we see hate, here we see divisions between peoples. And justice, peace, friendship, altruism, have become very rare in our society. That is the reason why men are now people acting as if they were ravishing the earth and not loving it. This is a very catastrophic situation in which we are living and man who has been created in the image of God and God being a god of love, how can the human race see and not do anything when we see this condition, how we cannot aim to create a new man, a better man, how we cannot try to create a better world, a just world, a pacific world.

Therefore thinking in terms of this ideal to which, since Monday, in a very calm manner, far away from your daily concerns and preoccupations, leaving aside your personal problems and interests and activities, you have opened your doors, I have seen that you have been trying to look upon human misery, misery suffered by your brothers, by humanity, all men, making no distinction, no discrimination at any time, human beings throughout the world, whatever their colour, religion or sex may be. We have seen that we are studying that each human being is our brother, our sister. Nevertheless there is one difference - the difference is that some of our brothers are suffering.

Therefore, these people must be in the forefront. These are the people who must have the very first position in our hearts; these people who have been humiliated, who have been despoiled of their rights; these people who suffer. I do realize that during these last two days you have already gone with great care into the studies and problems mostly facing the Near East and the population of that area of our globe.

As an Arab, as an Archbishop of Jerusalem, I am happy to be with you to work along these very same lines, for the same purpose. The Middle East has always been an area which is a strategic area which everyone has wished to control. Today it is the oil in its ground. The present catastrophic situation of the Middle East makes this to be an area which could explode at any moment as if it were a barrel of explosives that could go off at any moment, not only because of the problems in the region but because there could be an armed conflict between the two super-Powers because of the Middle East. Therefore world peace is threatened and we must find a solution very soon, (I do not want to say immediate but it should be an immediate situation) because otherwise we will face war in the Middle East.

First, let us look at the Iraq-Iran war. This is the conflict which has sometimes been forgotten, put to one side. It is a war that has gone on now for four years and we see that it has cost a lot of human lives, many thousands of people have been killed and many people are now handicapped, there have been many wounded people. Many dollars have been wasted - there is an economic loss as well. Destruction has been caused. This has been a catastrophe I must ask you, why has this occurred. Why and who brought it about? Who continues it, what can we do to stop it? How can we re-establish the peace between these two countries, these two brother countries? They are neighbouring countries.

Early last June the capitalist industrialized countries carried out an economic summit meeting in London. In their final communiqué, the participants of this summit alluded to the Iraq-Iran war. They did not allude to it deploring the loss of human lives in order to propose a plan for peace, in order to end this terrible tragedy. No, what they referred to was requesting the freedom of passage through the Persian Gulf and the Straits.

They wanted to use the oil of the exporting countries. They wanted to take the oil from them in order to carry in to their own depots. They themselves were the ones who had sold the arms to the two sides in this war. That is an important point. They wanted to get the oil, that is what they were interested in, because Kissinger had planned this in 1975. As the important aspect here, human suffering on the one part helps to make others happy because it forwards their interests. If these egotists are not held back, are not stopped and if the rights of certain people are denied, well, military intervention most possibly and probably might arise. It is certainly not excluded. We cannot sit quietly and watch this happen. No, because the possible confrontation and possible menace for world peace is there if this war should continue.

Let us now speak of the war in Lebanon. The war in Lebanon is another tragedy. This started in 1975 and it continues. Earlier, all Christian Lebanese, Moslems and Jews lived in total harmony. They lived in friendship and mutual comprehension. This was based on respect and mutual confidence. Lebanon at those times was not only a symbol of pacific life but was perhaps the most scientifically, socially and economically developed country. It was a little gem, an oasis in the area. Also, Lebanon attracted not only Arabs but also tourists from the entire world flocked there.

Today, unfortunately, Lebanon has become entirely upside-down, it is ruined, it is ravaged, it is devastated, it is reduced to ashes. It has been martyred and there have been more than 150,000 killed; more handicapped people have also emerged - people that are homeless, expatriates, millions of refugees expatriates world-wide that have fled Lebanon. And this was the country which was, as I said, a gem and which is now reduced to ashes. Here we see that smiles have disappeared and now we see tears. We see suffering where before we saw harmony. The powerful peoples in this world, have they really been able to help Lebanon once again to become independent and free and once again become a sovereign nation? Have the Lebanese people found hope and found peace?

A multinational force which supposedly came to achieve peace is part of those who caused and helped the war. It participated in the downfall of this country. The continuation of the Lebanese tragedy could bring out a war between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic which could also degenerate into a confrontation between the Americans and the Russians. And, also from Lebanon we see then a threat to world peace.

Let us then work towards peace in Lebanon. Let us work towards the union of Lebanon and the Lebanese, the unity and the union in the diversified society, that is what creates the strength of Lebanon, this beautiful mosaic of peoples made of 17 different religious communities which make up this country. That would be a tremendous and beautiful task, the beauty and charm of Lebanon that it would once again be sovereign and unique. It would be the Lebanon as it should be, otherwise it will be destroyed. It would be completely ruined and the Lebanese will actually commit suicide, so to speak.

Let us then go to the absolute crux of the Middle East problem. It is really true and basic problem. That is the Israel/Arab war. That indeed, is the tragedy of the Palestinian people. A people of 4,500,000 who twice, in 1948 and then in 1967, have been chased from their country, have been removed from their country by arms, by force. They have been obliged to abandon with no compensation whatsoever the property and their worldly goods. The Palestinians since 1948 onwards have been divided in two main groups: one part live under military occupation. Therefore, they are living as foreigners in their own homeland, as slaves without any dignity, without any freedom in their own country. The other group live in the diaspora. They are errants, they are refugees throughout the entire world.

Therefore, when they left home they took with them merely a suitcase: only one suitcase, stuffed full, full of suffering: spiritual, physical, moral suffering that they carried. That was their baggage, that is the baggage that they carry with them wherever they go throughout the world. It is the only bags they carry: a suitcase full of suffering. That is all they have to call their own. Their companions along this road are suffering and their daily bread.

What do the Palestinians want, what do they ask for? They want to end their suffering. They want it to come to an end. They do not want any more terrible massacres as we have seen. They, as people, require and insist on

having their inalienable rights of self-determination - the right to a homeland and a country of their own - they ask for justice, they wish to find peace. The Palestinians in point of fact are not refugees really. They are a people. They have all the characteristic elements which constitute peoples - they have history, they have traditions, they have customs, they have their dialects, they have their law, they have right as everyone else to a country, to a homeland so that they have land. They are an exception in the world, they do have now a homeland to call their own.

Two days ago I was in San Marino. San Marino is a very small town, 20,000 inhabitants. This is in Italian territory. And it is, nevertheless, an independent republic. There is an ambassador in Rome from this republic. The inhabitants of San Marino, they are not Italians, they are very happy and proud to be San Marino citizens. They have their own passports, they have their own flag, a San Marino passport, a San Marino flag. And their automobiles have a license plate that says "Republic of San Marino". And the question then that I raise here and wish to put before you for you to meditate on is that why a people 4,500,000-strong cannot have the very same privilege. Why can they not have the right to a homeland, to a Palestinian country, to a Palestinian passport, to a Palestinian flag, and to a license plate on their cars that says "Republic of Palestine"? Why not? Why can the inhabitants, these 20,000 of San Marino, have this and we not? Such a large people, why can we not?

If the horse has a stable, if the bird has its nest, if the rabbit has its hutch, all the animals have their own place to live, why can not we, the Palestinians? Why must we continue to be errant? Why we must we continue to be vagabonds on this earth? In the month of August must people go on pilgrimages? But when these pilgrimages and vacations are finished, when they come back home, when they knock on the door they are happy after these trips, after these vacations, after these different voyages, they say how happy we are to come home again. Why can we not, as Palestinians, have keys to our own homes, have our own homes that are really our homes, that are really our castles. Why cannot we say, with the rest of men, how happy I am to come home. How happy I am in my own home. Why can we not say that too?

Europe, in November 1947, decided with other nations to divide Palestine in two, to give half to the Jews and half to the Arabs. And, Europe, at that time, incarnated this division. Europe did everything possible to give the errant Jewish people a homeland, a country. Now there are no more errant Jews throughout the world. Jews have their country now. Now why do not the Europeans now do the same thing? Why do they not use the same means so that we in our time become the owners of Palestine, the legitimate owners of Palestine. It is we the Palestinians who have been deprived of our homeland of our land; why can we not at least have half of this country which used to be entirely ours? We have no homeland now.

What has Europe done to now? Their decision in Venice - what did they do, they spoke, they spoke, words, words, nothing more than words, empty words and if I want to be even more frank in my speech, I would ask why do we see such indifference because unfortunately it is indifference because the

European world in general up to today has still the holocaust complex. The holocaust of the Jewish people is a terrible regretful, terrible thing which we all regret, but that is not today's problem, because today there are suffering Jews, there are no errant Jews.

Now there is another type of holocaust. It is the holocaust of the Arab, of the Lebanese cause, the holocaust of the Palestinians and it is not working today, thinking of a holocaust which no longer exists. We should think of the holocaust which does exist today and see what we can do about it. Because then we see the matter that again is why us, why myself, why do we not have the right to have a home and a homeland, our country?

What is the official reaction, official answer to our call on the part of Israel? My question is not addressed to the thousands and millions of Israelis who live in Tel Aviv and who have made different manifestations against the massacres of Sabra and Shatila. But I speak to the many others who deserted the Israeli army after the invasion of Lebanon, who deserted because they listened to the voices of their consciences that prohibited them from killing innocent people. To all these brothers, we open our hearts and we sincerely put out our hands to shake hands with them, to hold hands with them so that we can build peace together.

I speak now only to the Israeli powers, to the Government and the answer to this question, the one that I hear, is the difference between the position of Israel before the war of 1967 and its attitude after that war. Before 1967, the dream of Israel, or at least the apparent dream of Israel, was limited to a Jewish State within the territory taken away by force from the Arabs in 1948. This Jewish dream was a nightmare for the Arabs from the time that they decided to liberate all of the occupied territory in 1948 and to automatically liquidate the Israeli State.

In 1965 President Bourguiba of Tunisia, on an official visit to Lebanon, had proposed as a solution to the Israel/Arab problem the application of the United Nations resolution of November 1946 which divided the land into Jewish Palestine and Arab Palestine and which gave to the Arab people more than the frontier of 1967 which they claim today. The crowd threw tomatoes at him, they interrupted his speech and he had to leave Beirut before the end of his official visit and, the next day in the press throughout the entire world, we saw this under the headlines.

This reaction, then, appeared world-wide. What happened then? In the Arab world before 1967, the Palestinian problem meant the return to the original boundaries of 1948 and therefore the recuperation of all Palestine.

As to the war of 1967, today the roles are totally opposite, totally changed, upside down. The Israelis who, before wished for half of Palestine which was their dream at that time, now require Palestine as a whole and the Arabs, who before 1967 revendicated all of Palestine would be happy today with half.

Convinced as they are that the Arab-Israeli conflict is a constant menace to world peace and wishing to establish peace not only in the region but in the entire world, that is their position today. The Palestinians, from the very same principles, tired and exhausted from suffering, massacres, misery and oppression and in agreement with the Arab world, totally changed their position in the Arab Summit in Baghdad in 1970, in the Fez Summit in 1982 and at the last Palestinian Council which took place in Algeria, that was their position. For all of them, the solution of the Palestinian problem would be taken care of in two resolutions: the first would be establishment of a Palestinian homeland with Jerusalem as its capital within all the frontiers established in 1967, the Gaza Strip and the banks of the Jordan.

What does it mean to accept and adopt this solution? What would this bring as a political prize? They would be pleased to have a homeland. A homeland occupying half of Palestine only - Gaza, the Left Bank - and they would automatically and implicitly be recognized by Israel. Aside from that, in the plan as shown by the Fez Summit, article 7, the Arab world has recommended the assurance of the security of all the countries within the region of the Middle East; although Israel was not mentioned by name it was included. Based on this reality, the Palestinians continue to claim the recognition of Israel as a pre-condition of the recognition of PLO and to speak officially with PLO. We think it is a sign of bad faith not to do this. I am not a politician. I say things the way I see them and the way I feel they are.

Looking then at these differences of opinion and despite them the Arabs have proven their sincerity and the sincerity of their pacific intentions. They have gone half way along the road towards peace. The matter which we see now as the main question is whether Israel on its side has made one step forward towards this goal to meet the Arabs on this road? In order to applaud you need two hands. The Arabs are offering their hands but has Israel put its hand forward to build the bridge, to make the link, to applaud the victory over hate, the victory over dissention, the victory over struggle, to applaud the triumph of friendship, the triumph of peace?

Two years ago, Mr. Navon, when he was President of Israel and when he was on an official visit to the United States of America, in a television interview, declared that in Israel there had been a general consensus covering all of the parties according to which the option of setting up a Palestinian homeland in Palestine was categorically denied. It was refused and refuted. If the Palestinians wanted to have a homeland, he said, well, let them have Jordan. This opinion was recently confirmed by Mr. Shamir and the opposition party in the electoral campaigns have also declared that they want to have a third country established between Israel and Jordan. I also a while ago listened to Mr. Shamir over the radio and he said that when the Palestinians recognized Israel and its border, when they did that then Israel's attitude and its politics nevertheless would not change, even if the Palestinians recognize it. The Israelis would not recognize them. Where will this lead us? According to the incorrect logic of this Israeli politician, Palestine no longer exists. It is Israel.

The West Bank has also disappeared. It is Judea and Samaria. There are no more occupied territories. All these territories are liberated. That is why we say "Yurashalen" and not "Jerusalem", which is now the capital of Israel. The Left Bank - was not that in part confiscated and transformed into a colony? Is not this the first step towards pure annexation of the Left Bank?

This type of fait accompli politics, this type of fait accompli action is the way the Israelis are working and the conciliatory attitude of the Arab world today, the tolerance of the Arabs have not received a show of good faith on the part of the Israelis. We see the weaknesses here, the exploitation, but we will not capitulate. We have made this decision. We will struggle to the very end to obtain our rights, to defend our human dignity. Dignity is life itself, dignity is the human being. It is better to die in a dignified manner than not to try to live in our own country. It is better that than to die as slaves without freedom, without dignity. Yes indeed, it is better to suffer as victims, as willing victims than to deny our country because that would be denying God as well.

In this life, everything has its price. Nothing comes free of charge. Our country, the emblem of human dignity, is something we must purchase. Suffering is the coin which we pay. If the grain of wheat does not die, it does not open and bring about a blade of wheat; this death brings about a fertility. It is part of it. Nevertheless too much suffering brings about a feeling of revolution, of revolt. Too much suffering brings about feelings of exasperation. And this exasperation breeds violence.

The Palestinians have suffered too much already, let us not provoke them further. Let us not tempt them further because the cup can run over. It is better, then, to be wise. It is better to know ahead of time. It is better to be wise than sorry. I am sending out this SOS. I detest violence. I hate war. Because whoever says "war" is saying that there are problems which must be solved, but when has war ever solved a problem. Even those who win are losers. Therefore, in order to obtain one's rights and to obtain our rights, I merely want to struggle, I want to struggle under the eyes of God, under the eye of my own conscience, of my own heart. I want to struggle peacefully. I want to struggle through the ways of international law, the Geneva Convention, different resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and most of all, I want to use as my sword dialogue.

Human beings in general, Jews and Arabs mostly, we are human beings. And we do not know one another. Men are enemies of what they do not know, what they ignore. We must know one another so that we can recognize ourselves in one another, so that we can recognize our reciprocal rights so that we can live together in peace.

All men of good will, all people who wish to obtain peace and justice, all who suffer, whoever they may be, whatever they are, wherever they are from, whatever their suffering, they all have their rights and I wish to thank each and every one of them and each and every one of you here present. I wish to thank you for these three days which you are dedicating to these different

problems of the world, these different sufferings. The pacifists are happy, happy because they, the pacifists will see the peace of God. Blessed be those who are good and are kind. It is much better to give than to receive. It is much better to give, to give oneself. That is the greatest pleasure in this life.

Therefore, and even more so when peace is what we offer, peace is what we give. Peace is capital, peace is a treasure, peace is a jewel. Through peace everything is possible, everything is available. But to communicate peace we have to have peace. We cannot give what we do not have. We must possess peace ourselves. We must have peace within our hearts, within our souls, within our consciences, within us so that we can set it out and give it out to others. We must then have around us in the world this peace. We must make a transfer of comprehension, a transfer of solidarity, of true happiness in life. Because true happiness in life is not caused by domination, by strength, by expansionism, by different positions, by money or belongings. It is in friendship, in fraternity and in peace.

In closing then I would say to my dear Jewish brothers a special remark that I wish to address to you. Let us work together my brothers. Let us work as brothers. Jews and Arabs. Let us work to build peace. God is our father. He is our common father to all Palestinians, whether we be Jews, Christians or Moslems. God our Father is love. It is his image which we must incarnate through our behaviour. Let us forget the past. Let us end the war. Let us end hate. Let us live in friendship. Let us live in fraternity, in brotherhood. Therefore this way we will live happily and we will make Palestine a happy and saintly land because today with this war it is more a land of the devil. We want it to be a land of God. We then will produce peace and we will produce peace together.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ambassador Mohammed Farid Zarif

We have now concluded our interesting and very important work. The adoption by the Meeting of the set of recommendations contained in the resolution is an appropriate combination of our efforts on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

I can assure you that we shall take note of those recommendations and proceed with whatever steps necessary on our part to facilitate that implementation. We welcome the establishment of an NGO Co-ordinating Committee on Palestine which I am sure will facilitate contacts between both the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

As you are aware, it is our intention that these meetings should become an annual feature and it is the Committee's hope that now that these series have been launched, the widespread interest shown will grow even greater and that an evergrowing number of NGOs will participate in subsequent meetings.

I have noted your concern that not all of the regions of the world were present here. This is a lacuna we certainly hope to fill by the time we next meet. As the Chairman of the Committee stated at the opening session, we attach the greatest importance to the contribution of the NGOs towards the search for a just solution of the question of Palestine.

I take this opportunity to reiterate our desire to develop our relationship and co-operation with a view to maintaining the momentum that this meeting has generated. The delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People feels, and I am sure you all agree with it, that the meeting we have just concluded was not only an interesting one, interesting in the exercise but also a successful, productive and action-orientated one. A large measure of the credit for that success goes to the distinguished and eminent panelists, who with their brilliant presentations laid the groundwork for our deliberations. A special word of thanks is due to those panelists who willingly shouldered the additional responsibility of acting as moderators and guided the discussions of the five panelists.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the Chief and the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights who worked so actively and enthusiastically to organize this meeting, as well as the Conference Officers, secretaries, interpreters and translators who have helped to make this meeting a success. Once more I thank you all and hope that we shall meet again at next year's meeting, if not earlier.

I declare the Meeting closed.

VII.

List of participants and observers

Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO)
American Arab Community Center
American Baptist Convention, International Ministries
American Friends Service Committee
America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism
Arab Lawyers Union
Arab Palestine Association of Canada
Arab Women's Council
Association Belgo-Palestinienne
Association des Etudes Internationales
Association des Juristes Democrates
Association de Solidarite Franco-Arabe
Association France-Palestine
Association Medicale Franco Palestinienne
Association Suisse des Amis de L'Universitie de Bir Zeit
Association Suisse Palestine
Canadian Arab Federation
Catholic Near East Welfare Association
Centre de Cooperation Avec L'Universitie de Bir Zeit
Centre de L'Enseignement du Quebec
Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development
Centre International d'Information sur les Prisonniers Deportes et
Disparus Palestiniens et Libanais
Churches Commission on International Affairs
Church of Christ
Church of Humanism
Christian Peace Conference
Christian Peace Movement
CIMADE
Comite France Jerusalem Al Qods
Comite Palestine et Israel Vivront
Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding
Democratic Front for Peace and Equality - Israel
Democratic Women's Organization of Israel
European Coordinating Committee of Friendship Societies with
the Arab World
Evangelical Episcopal Community
Friends World Committee of Consultation
General Union of Arab Students in Israel
International Commission of Jurists
International Council of Voluntary Agencies
International Fellowship of Reconciliation
International Institute of Humanitarian Law
International Jewish Peace Union

International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples
International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples
International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of
Racial Discrimination
International Progress Organization
International Union of Family Organizations
International Union of Students
International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations
Islamic Council of Europe
Islamic Women's Association
Institute of Development Studies
Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
Labour Middle East Council
Law in the Service of Man
Liberation
Le Regroupement Pour UN Dialogue Israel-Palestine
Ligue Israelienne Pour les Droits de L'Homme et du Citoyen
London Friends of Palestine
Middle East Council of Churches.
Middle East Fellowship
Mouvement Pan-Africain de la Jeunesse
NAJDA: Women Concerned About the Middle East
National Council of Churches, USA
New Direction
November 29th Committee for Palestine
Palestine Front of Norway
Palestine Committee of Norway
Palestine Human Rights Campaign
Palestine Studies Programme
Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation
Peace, Friendship and Solidarity Organization of the Democratic
Republic of Afghanistan
Presbyterian Church USA
Prisoners Friends Association
Procedural Aspects of International Law Institute
Radda Barnen
SANAD (Community Service in Palestine)
Search for Justice and Equality in Palestine/Israel
Solidarity Committee of the GDR
Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee
Trade Union Friends of Palestine
Union of Arab Jurists
Union Inter-Parlementaire Arabe
United Nations Association of Egypt
Women's International Democratic Federation
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Assembly of Muslim Youth
World Confederation of Labour
World Federation of Teacher's Union
World Muslim Congress
World Peace Council
World YWCA

NGO Observers

An-Najah National University
Dutch Palestine Committee
Joint Organization for Palestine
Institute of Oriental Studies
International Human Rights Law Group
Medical Committee Holland

List of observers governments

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

H.E. M. Massamba Sarré, Chairman (Senegal)
H.E. M. F. Zarif, Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic
of Afghanistan to the United Nations, New York
Mr. Andre Tahindro, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Madagascar
to the United Nations, New York
Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation
Organization to the United Nations, New York

Other governments

Dr. M. Akbar Kherad, Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (Mission to
the United Nations Offices, Geneva)
Dr. Monika Rose, German Democratic Republic (Mission to the United
Nations Offices, Geneva)
Mr. Amer Jomard, Iraq
Dr. Ghazi Rababha/Mr. Hisman Mumaisen, Jordan (Mission to the United
Nations Offices, Geneva)
Mr. Luis Aguirre, Panama (Mission to the United Nations Offices, Geneva)
Mr. Ibrahim Sy, Senegal (Mission to the United Nations Offices, Geneva)

Inter-governmental organizations

Mr. Osman El-Hajjé, League of Arab States

Palestine Liberation Organization

Mr. Shafik Al-Hout, Member of Central Committee, PLO, Tunis
Mr. Marat Abdelrahman, Director, PLO, Tunis
Mr. Raissir Al-Adjouri

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

United Nations Offices
Geneva
20-22 August 1984

Corrigendum

Page 5, paragraph 4, Line 11

International Commission of Jurists should be deleted.

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Substitute pages 162 to 164 for the following:

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Mr. Andre Tahindro, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Madagascar
to the United Nations, New York
Mr. Zehdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation
Organization to the United Nations, New York

Panelists

Joseph Algazy (Israel)
Riah Abu Al-Assal (Israel)
Ismail Al-Faruqi (USA)
Shafiq al-Hout (Palestinian)
Edith Ballantyne (Switzerland)
Igor Beliaev (USSR)
Elmer Berger (USA)
Claude Bourdet (France)
Rachid Driss (Tunisia)
Anis El-Qasim (United Kingdom)

Maxim Ghilan (France)
Abdeen Jabara (USA)
Hans-Peter Kotthaus (France and Belgium)
Niall MacDermot (Switzerland)
Lucille Mair (Jamaica)
Leopoldo Niilus (Switzerland)
Anwar Nusseibeh (Israel)
Ahmed Osman (Egypt)
Ernie Ross (United Kingdom)
Joseph L. Ryan (Jordan)
Audrey Shabbas (USA)
Raja Shehadeh (West Bank)
Ruth Sovik (Switzerland)
Emile Touma (Israel)
Klaas de Vries (Netherlands)
Amnon Zichroni (Israel)

Representatives of States members of the United Nations

Dr. M. Akbar Kherad, Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (Mission to the United Nations Offices, Geneva)
Dr. Monika Rose, German Democratic Republic (Mission to the United Nations Offices, Geneva)
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