

Al Aqsa

Published By

Friends of Al-Aqsa
PO Box 5127
Leicester LE2 0WU
England
Tel: ++ 44 (0)116 2125441
Mobile: 07711823524
Fax: ++ 44 (0)116 253 7575
e-mail: info@aqsa.org.uk
Website: www.aqsa.org.uk

ISSN 1463-3930

EDITOR

Ismail Adam Patel

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Hajira Kassim
Alli Bahadur
Hasanji Patel

PRINTERS

Impress Printers,
Batley.

© 2002 Friend of Al-Aqsa

WE WELCOME

Papers, Articles on any aspect of Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque and those worshipping therein. With particular references to the History, Politics, Architecture, Religion, International Law, Human Rights violation. Letters on any related topics are also welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters for the purpose of clarity. Points of Views are also welcome but must not exceed 2000 words. Reviews of books related to the Palestinian issue of not more than 1000 words will be considered. Papers, Articles, letters and book reviews must be typed and if possible on a computer disk (Word format). It must include the authors full name, address and a brief curriculum vitae. All should be sent to the Editor, on the above address.

Contents

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 1 AUTUMN 2002
SHABAN 1423

Editorial	3
Opening Address - 'Justice in Palestine Conference' RT HON MR AZIZ PAHAD	
South African Experience in Resolving the Middle East Crisis RT HON MR ABDULLAH OMAR	9
Inequity in the Distribution of Resources in Palestine RT HON MR RONNIE KASRILS	13
The Muslim Attitude Toward the Jews in the West DR AZZAM TAMIMI	19
New Zion and Old Zion Under the Flag of Convenience Muhammad Siddique Seddon	23
Planning for Jenin YVONNE RIDLEY	25
Justice in Palestine – Conference Report KHALID DHORAT	29
BOOK REVIEW	37
The New Rulers of the World by John Pilger REVIEWED BY ABU HUZAYFA	
Beyond September 11th Edited by Phil Scraton REVIEWED BY ABU HUZAYFA	
Refugees in our own Land: Chronicles from a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Bethlehem by Muna Hamzeh REVIEWED BY KHADIJA RAVAT	

RESOLUTION

The conference thanks the Republic of South Africa for their support of the Palestinians and further call for their commitment to an unwavering political and economic strategy for a free and just resolution in Palestine.

We call upon the International Community to exercise all means possible to ensure that Israel complies with universally accepted International Laws, UN Resolutions and Geneva Conventions. For the failure to comply must result in the exercise of an immediate boycott of Israel and political isolation of the racist state. In addition, we call upon the International Community to initiate and support a boycott of Israeli goods, organizations and companies that support Zionist Apartheid Israel.

We believe that the Republic of South Africa can take a leading role in bringing justice in Palestine and begin a unilateral campaign against Israel by withdrawing its ambassador from Tel Aviv.

We believe that the Republic of South Africa could use its influence on the international stage in making efforts to indict Ariel Sharon for War crimes that he has committed and continues to commit.

We believe that the US has no monopoly over peace broking in the search for a just solution in the Holy Land.

We are all unanimous in equating Zionism as a racist ideology, which needs to be immediately dismantled, as was the racist ideology of Apartheid in South Africa.

Further we endorse our support for the undeniable and legitimate right of the Palestinians to resist occupation by all means possible to them and for a just and fair solution to the right of return of the Palestinian Refugees.

Conference on Justice In Palestine – Hosted by Friends of Al-Aqsa in conjunction with Jamiatul ‘Ulama Transvaal and KwaZulu Natal (Council of Muslim Theologians), Al-Aqsa Foundation (South Africa) and the Muslim Judicial Council. Indaba Hotel – Johannesburg, South Africa, 20th July 2002.



Praise be to Allah, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, who has said, 'Those of the believers who remain passive, other than the disabled, are not equal to those who strive hard in Allah's cause...'. May Allah's blessing be upon all His Prophets from Adam ﷺ to His final Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ.

The *Justice in Palestine* conference held on 24/25 July 2002 in Johannesburg raised many issues but in particular attempted to draw upon the South African experience for the liberation of Palestinians.

It is easy to be overawed by the might of the Israeli apartheid state as it continues its illegal occupation, but the same was true of the apartheid state of South Africa. However, dwelling on the power of the oppressor is the first step towards impotence for the oppressed; this was the first lesson, conference delegates learnt.

To the bitter end the South African apartheid regime had the internal infrastructure and sufficient external support to continue its policies relatively unchallenged. The catalyst for change was the inability of the apartheid regime to govern effectively the oppressed South Africans plus the overwhelming support of ordinary people worldwide who made it morally indefensible for their own countries to continue aiding the apartheid regime.

Secondly, South African freedom fighters focused on liberation, whatever the cost. Some took to the streets in peaceful vigils, others resorted to confrontational demonstrations; yet others eschewed diplomacy and some took up arms to challenge the mighty state. The variety of approaches was not only accidental, but it was a deliberate and calculated stratagem.

Thirdly, South Africans confronting the apartheid regime did not allow the state's "divide and rule" tactics to work to any great degree of effectiveness.

Finally, anti-apartheid campaigns across the globe gave unconditional support for whatever the liberation tactics employed by South Africans.

It is clear for those working towards the dismantling of the world's last bastion of apartheid state need not only to learn from the South African experiences but also to develop them to tackle Zionism. The power of Israel, its support from the US and UK, the barbarity of its actions and its apparent immunity from

international laws and conventions need no further explanation here. The reiteration of the facts will not and cannot change the status of the Palestinians. It is a huge mistake to assume that the liberation of Palestinians will be promoted by Israel. Colonial powers do not give up their dominance without a struggle, as Franz Fanon famously wrote, freedom cannot be given, it has to be taken, otherwise the subservience of the by now ever so grateful "free" subjects remains as a legacy of the colonial power.

What is of paramount importance, to use an old adage, is for anti-Zionist apartheid groups to get their house in order. Like any colonialist occupier, Israel has worked within Palestine to divide the Palestinian society into segments while brutally crushing anyone struggling for genuine liberation. In the international arena, Israel has sought support for its brutal illegal occupation, with the use of colonialist ideology as a result of which Israel is now simply an outpost "of civilisation" representing the former and present day superpower. This was the intention behind the Balfour Declaration and other deceitful instruments of transfer in the first place.

Palestinians within the occupied land desperately need to define an *initial* reference point, an initial destination they are seeking to arrive at and thereafter allow each organization the freedom to work towards the common goal, as each organisation and institute deems appropriate. Once such a reference point on the road to liberation has been defined many of the differences fostered by the occupying power will begin to evaporate.

The international community has no option but to help the Palestinians in their legitimate struggle against Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid policies. Justice-loving people all over the world must work to make Western aid for Israel untenable on moral and ethical grounds. Blaming the oppressed for their predicament is neither acceptable nor honest, and placing pre-conditions on support for them at a juncture when the oppressor works with impunity hinders the likelihood of a peaceful solution. As vital cracks begin to appear in Zionism's previously impregnable position, for the first time in over 50 years the power of the Israeli Goliath shows signs of weakness.

FRIENDS OF AL AQSA YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Friends of Al Aqsa is providing an ideal opportunity to work, learn and understand the situation in Palestine by providing a work experience. You can learn at first hand the problems faced by Palestinians and also help them with your efforts.

Qualifications

No professional qualifications are required, but a good command of the English Language is helpful. Skills in computers, Internet, educational and health profession will also be of benefit but not essential.

Interpersonal and communication skills, ability to work with a team and to be self-motivated is helpful.

Work

- ◆ Editing news and material in English language and assisting in publishing related work.
- ◆ Assisting in education and related work.
- ◆ Establish communications for network building.
- ◆ Establish contacts internationally with youth organizations
- ◆ Facilitate with workshop and office general practices.
- ◆ Basic communication skills, including open discussions with students and staff.
- ◆ Participation in general office tasks with staff and students.
- ◆ If any of the above mentioned tasks suits you, or you wish to offer your services in general work do not hesitate to apply, or consult us.

Accommodation

University Flats are available free to Volunteers, a short distance from the University. Because of the financial situation, food and transport is not included. There are two sections of flats, one for females and one for males. City flats can be arranged at a cost.

Duration

You are welcome any time of the year and duration of time.

Experience Gained

- ◆ Benefit from meeting the Palestinian people, staff and students.
- ◆ Understand the plight of the Palestinian people.
- ◆ Appreciate and exchange a new cultural difference.
- ◆ Be part of their life style under Israeli occupation.

AN EXPERIENCE YOU WILL NEVER FORGET!

For further details contact: **Sister Salma Ravat,**
Friends of Al Aqsa P.O.Box 5127, Leicester. LE2 0WU
E-mail: info@aqsa.org.uk

**A YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME WITH
AN NAJAH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, NABLUS, PALESTINE**

Opening address – ‘Justice in Palestine Conference’

Rt Hon Mr Aziz Pahad*

I am honoured to have been asked to give the opening address to this important gathering that has brought together Government Ministers, eminent members of civil society and invited guests from around the world, to discuss ways in which the international community and South Africa in particular, can work better together in order to strengthen our solidarity with the Palestinian people during the current onslaught of repressive measures that they are facing.

This gathering also affords us the opportunity of assessing various aspects of the situation on the ground in order that we might better understand how to move forward towards the goal of fulfillment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to national-self determination, without which there can be no lasting regional, or indeed global, peace and security.

The South African Government is playing an active and considered role in international efforts towards finding a lasting solution to the conflict. There are a number of key elements that underpin our work and these guide us in voicing our positions consistently and coherently in bilateral relations with Israel and Palestine, within multilateral fora such as NAM, the UN, the OAU and now the AU; and with other role players such as the US, the EU and the Arab World. I would like to focus here briefly on the two overarching elements, namely solidarity and a shared vision for peace.

International solidarity was a pillar of our own national liberation struggle. We actively sought to engage the international community in efforts to put pressure on the apartheid regime and to support our movement. The relations that we developed during those years with other liberation movements were based on a common purpose and in Government, we continue to value the special relationships that we have evolved. Our historical

commitment to the struggle of the Palestinian people continues to guide our engagement.

There is no doubt solidarity extends beyond formal Government structures and, as with our own experience, people to people expressions of support have an extremely important role to play as they, in turn, influence the politicians. As I am sure you are aware, my recent visit to Israel and Palestine was intended to coincide with the delivery of a consignment of humanitarian aid that the ‘Gift of the Givers’ organisation had purchased from donations from civil society. Regrettably, the flight was not able to arrive whilst I was in the region. I am sure that you have followed the media coverage of the issue. I am delighted to report that the aid flight will be departing tomorrow evening. What we, as Government, felt was our ability to assist civil society in a practical expression of people to people solidarity.

Solidarity also extends into the larger political arena. In solidarity with the Palestinian people we are supporting the voices for a just peace on both sides of the conflict. A shared vision for peace exists. The voice may be small at the moment, but it is a challenge and the responsibility of the international community to help amplify these voices.

Reflecting on our own aspirations for the international community as a liberation movement we know that practical and concrete demonstrations of solidarity and support are the most welcome. This is particularly true at the current juncture of the Palestinian struggle, where the Israeli Prime Minister has sought to kill off the notion of Palestinian controlled areas with a military onslaught and increased repressive measures whilst the US is

In solidarity with the Palestinian people we are supporting the voices for a just peace on both sides of the conflict

* Rt Hon Mr Aziz Pahad is the Deputy Foreign Minister, South Africa.

Lecture delivered at the, ‘Justice in Palestine’ conference in Johannesburg, 20th July 2002. Hosted by Friends of Al-Aqsa in conjunction with Jamiatul Ulama Transvaal and KwaZulu Natal (Council of Muslim Theologians), Al-Aqsa Foundation (South Africa) and the Muslim Judicial Council (Cape Town).

Fundamental to the resolution of the conflict is the creation of an independent Palestinian State. We can't escape the reality that violence will continue until this objective is achieved

promulgating its 'regime change' scenario. South Africa firmly believes that the elected leadership of the Palestinian people cannot be ignored, sidelined or de-legitimised by anyone or anybody.

We are quite clear on this point, and we have demonstrated, at senior Ministerial level, our solidarity. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs led a NAM delegation of seven Ministers to pay a solidarity visit on President Arafat at the beginning of June, in fulfilment of a mandate given by the NAM Committee on Palestine meeting held in Durban in April this year and I myself visited the President during my recent visit two weeks ago. I must say that to personally experience the town of Ramallah under reoccupation and total curfew and to see the realities of the siege that President Arafat is under was quite shocking. He told us that he was sleeping under the table at which we held the meeting due to the artillery bombardment on his office compound.

The spate of suicide bombs must be condemned unequivocally. We are convinced that we must intensify all efforts to end the deadly logic of attack and counter attack.

President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority have consistently condemned terrorist attacks against civilians. They have constantly reiterated their condemnation of terrorism and ordered their security forces to "prevent all terrorist operations against Israeli civilians".

Terrorism is the symptom and not the disease. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's statement – "He who rises to kill us, we will pre-empt and kill him first", is not helpful.

We can't ignore the reality that the "peace dividend" which brought hope to so many Palestinians after the historic Oslo Accord in 1993 has not materialised.

Nobody can challenge the fact that since 1993, Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory has continued unabated, the freedom of movement of Palestinians has been systematically curtailed and Israelis continue to impose collective punishment on the Palestinians.

Fundamental to the resolution of the conflict is the creation of an independent Palestinian State. We can't escape the reality that violence will continue until this objective is achieved.

US Secretary of State, Colin Powell recently stated, "Prime Minister Sharon has to take a hard look at his policies and see whether they will work. If you declare war on the Palestinians and think that you can solve the problem, by seeing how many Palestinians can be killed – I don't know that, that leads us anywhere."

The Israeli logic of "seeking out" and destroying "terrorist bases" and "terrorists" fails to understand that the Palestinians are ready to die because it is no longer possible for them to live as dispossessed people. No amount of violence against the Palestinians will stop their struggle for their own state.

This will be the only secure guarantee for the right of Israelis to live in their own state within secure borders.

We are deeply concerned about the dangerous escalation of violence. We can't insulate ourselves or the world from the consequences of the deepening crisis in the Middle East. There is a serious threat to international peace and security.

The Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan has said, "Self-defence is not a blank cheque. Responding to terrorism does not in any way free Israel from its obligations under international law, nor does it justify creating a human rights and humanitarian crisis within the occupied Palestinian territory. Urgent need to comply with all provisions of international law, particularly those that ban indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force, as well as the humiliating treatment of civilian forces."

Both sides must build a shared vision of peace and future relations in time of peace. You make peace with your enemies not with your friends. Peace turns enemies into friends.

The conflict cannot be resolved through violence and military means and that the only guarantee for stability and security is peace. Start negotiations without pre-conditions. Pre-conditions places in the hands of the men of violence, the right to veto any discussion and engagement of an agenda for peace.

We have learnt, from our own experiences here in South Africa that the maintenance of effective channels of communications at all times and under all circumstances is a vital requirement. The legitimate representative of each side is a partner, and the peace camps need to strengthen and mutually empower each other.

There is a need to take into consideration the fears and concerns of the other side and to engage seriously with them. Negotiations should not be approached from the perspective of a winner or loser. It is in each party's self-interest that its interlocutor is satisfied by any agreement reached.

No amount of violence against the Palestinians will stop their struggle for their own state

The South African Government's diplomatic dialogue and exchange with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, is unequivocally predicated upon conveying this message over and over again.

No nation's security can be predicated upon the occupation and suppression of another nation.

The recent Summit of Arab League held in Beirut supported the initiative of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia which called for Israel to fully withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as well as the land for Peace principle, and Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This decision by the League emanates from the conviction of the Arab countries that a military solution to the conflict will not achieve peace or provide security for the parties.

As I have said, like the rest of the world, it is impossible to insulate ourselves from the deepening crisis. The death and destruction of both Palestinians and Israelis must stop. Violence only begets more violence. Both groups have the right to live in conditions of safety and security.

Fundamental to the resolution of the conflict is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The incontrovertible reality is that the conflict will not end until this objective is achieved. No amount of violence directed at the Palestinians will stop their struggle for the establishment of their own independent homeland.

South Africa will make particular efforts to create and exploit opportunities to strengthen pro-peace lobbies, even beyond Israel and Palestine. The argument that there will be no substantive negotiations until peace is achieved, is unsustainable. Peace negotiations are necessary to end the conflict and violence!

The peoples of Palestine and Israel are condemned by history to live together and they have no choice but to succeed or live in

perpetual conflict together. The leaders of Israel are repeating the same costly mistakes made by the apartheid leaders of South Africa. During the apartheid struggle, the uprising of our people was attributed to the so-called agitators and terrorists. The apartheid regime did not want to recognise the reality that the people had risen against oppression.

Resolution 1402 and 1403, which calls for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied Palestinian territory, must be implemented immediately. It is clear that the Palestinian people themselves want to see positive, inclusive and democratic reforms. However, there is a marked difference between a process of inter-Palestinian political rejuvenation and reform and that of external states predicated their willingness to restart negotiations by demanding whom the Palestinians should and should not choose as their leadership. I cannot overstate the dangers that lie within this strategy.

I re-iterate, South Africa firmly believes that the elected leadership of the Palestinian people cannot be ignored, sidelined or delegitimised by those who genuinely seek to see a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

Despite of the current violent and repressive situation on the ground, much work has been done. There is no inevitability to the continuation of the conflict. If the political will can be unlocked, then humane values can prevail. Indeed, ultimately, there is no reasonable alternative.

It is our challenge, as defenders of those values, to give solidarity through sharing our own South African experience in order to assist and energise the beleaguered peoples of the region. We have been through a similar period in our own history. We have been through very dark days when the end goal seemed almost unattainable.

The peoples of Palestine and Israel are condemned by history to live together and they have no choice but to succeed or live in perpetual conflict together



LITERATURE FROM FRIENDS OF AL-AQSA

1. LEAFLETS: [FREE]

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Qty | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jerusalem The Open City | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jerusalem Fact Sheet |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Centrality of Masjid Al-Aqsa in Islam | <input type="checkbox"/> | Christian & Jewish Fundamentalist |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attacks on Masjid Al-Aqsa Since Occupation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Boycott Zionist Israel |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Palestinian Refugees: Reclaiming the Right of Return | <input type="checkbox"/> | USA Aid to Israel |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Friend of Al-Aqsa | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you Know? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Israel Apartheid to Int'l Environmental Laws | <input type="checkbox"/> | Water |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Historical overview – Who are the Palestinian Refugees? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Christians in the Holy Land |

2. VIDEOS:

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Qty | <input type="checkbox"/> | The History of Al-Aqsa Mosque | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Return! |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | An Occupation Set In Stone. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Blood in the Ibrahimi Mosque |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jerusalem the Promise of Heaven | <input type="checkbox"/> | Minarets of Jerusalem |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | On the Boundaries of the Home Land | | |

3. BOOK: [£2.00 inc P&P]

- Qty The History of the Fartherest Mosque

4. POSTERS:

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Qty | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Al-Aqsa Mosque [60x84cm] | <input type="checkbox"/> | Virtues of Masjid-ul-Aqsa [34x48cm] |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Al-Aqsa Mosque [42x60cm] | | |

5. STICKER

- Al-Aqsa Mosque sticker [Size 15cm X 9cm £1.00 inc P&P]

6. PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION: [loan only]

- Qty Nearly 50 photographs showing the condition of Palestinians under Israeli rule and of Masjid Al Aqsa.

7. BACK ISSUES OF AL AQSA JOURNAL: [£5.00 inc P&P Each Volume] _____

- Qty From Vol. 1, No. 1 — Vol. 4, No. 2 Please specify the Vol.

8. "Al Aqsa" NEWSLETTER: [Free]

- Qty Published Quarterly now at Issue 12

9. Audio Cassettes

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| Qty | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1998 Conference set of 3 tapes £6 [inc P&P] | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2000 Conference Set of 4 tapes £8 [inc P&P] |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | History of Al Aqsa [8] Tapes, £16.00 [inc P&P] | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2002 Conference Set of 3 tapes £5 [inc P&P] |

10. Miscellaneous

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | T-Shirt —Free Size. With the motif "Hands off Al Aqsa" [£2.50 each] | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Desktop Calender [A3 size] £1.50 each | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ribbons [FREE] | <input type="checkbox"/> Fridge Magnet with Al Aqsa Photo [£1.50 each] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Key Ring with Al Aqsa Photo [£1.50 each] | |

ORDER FORM

I enclose the sum of £ _____

Or SAE for FREE literature. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Post To: Friends of Al Aqsa, P.O. Box 5127, Leicester. LE2 0WU

South African Experience in Resolving the Middle East Crisis

Rt Hon Mr Abdullah Omar*

I thank you for inviting me to be part of this historic occasion. I also greet and congratulate the various constituents making up the Association for Justice in Palestine. Friends of Al-Aqsa (UK); Jamiatul Ulama (Transvaal); Al-Aqsa Foundation (South Africa); Jamiatul Ulama (Kwazulu Natal) and Muslim Judicial Council (Cape Town).

I greet all participants with the universal greeting Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakutuhu. I want to convey a special greeting to our brothers, sisters, comrades and friends who may be here with us from Occupied Palestine. I believe all of us want to say unequivocally that we support the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination. We convey solidarity and support to all those who currently live under the yoke of Israeli occupation. Very powerful forces in the world today seek not only to impose their domination over all aspects of the lives of people across the globe, these same powerful forces seek to impose upon ordinary mortals across the globe what we should think and how we should think. Therefore we should in the face of such powerful forces say over and over again that the struggle of the Palestinian people is a just struggle. It is a struggle for freedom and justice. It is a struggle against domination and aggression. It is a struggle against the myriads of humiliation suffered by the Palestinian people twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year. The struggle of the Palestinian people is a struggle for dignity.

The central issue is that Palestine is under occupation. Powerful forces in the world may want us to forget key United Nations resolutions calling upon Israel, the occupying power, to withdraw from all occupied territories and to recognize the right of the Palestinian people and to determine their own future. International Law is very clear; resistance to occupation is the legitimate right of the victims of occupation.

There are dark clouds across the Palestinian horizon acting under license from the most powerful nation on earth, enjoying material, financial and military support that no other people have enjoyed. The Zionist entity of Israel not only refuses to end its occupation of Palestine, instead more and more voices within that entity see the current conjuncture as an opportunity to aggressively extend Judaization across the whole of Palestine. The Zionist objective of expansion has never been abandoned and now leading voices in Israel have created the clear impression of this policy currently being implemented.

One of the lessons many draw from the past decade is that Israel has never been serious about a peaceful solution based upon the recognition of the rights of Palestinian people to self-determination. The impression created is that drawing the Palestinians into negotiations has been a ploy to disarm the Palestinian people and to weaken the resistance to Israeli occupation, thereby creating the conditions for Israel to achieve its long-term objective of a greater Israel.

I say that there are dark clouds over the Palestinian horizon because there is no indication that Israel intends to allow the Palestinian people to determine their own future. There is every indication that the post 9/11 situation is being used to destroy the Palestinian struggle under the guise of fighting terrorism and to impose a situation upon the people of the Middle East which will forever keep the region subjected to those powerful interests that have dominated the region for decades.

So when today we rise in support of the people of Palestine we know that there will be no easy victory. We know that victory may be a long way off. We know that

The struggle of the Palestinian people is a struggle for dignity.

International Law is very clear; resistance to occupation is the legitimate right of the victims of occupation

* Rt Hon Mr Abdullah Omar, Minister of Transport, South Africa. Lecture delivered at the, 'Justice in Palestine' conference, Johannesburg, 20th July 2002.

I say that we were able to move towards negotiations the way we did only because mass struggles continued even during negotiations

victory may take a very different form and route from what we currently imagine. We are not in the struggle because we are assured of victory. We are in the struggle because of the justness of our cause. We may lose many battles on the way, but we believe that in the end justice must triumph and justice will triumph. But nothing happens spontaneously and nothing happens automatically. The struggle requires people and we are part of that people. So we want to say to the people of Palestine we are part of your struggle and know your struggle is our struggle. This is what antiapartheid militants said to the world during the struggle against apartheid that the struggle against apartheid in South Africa was not just a South African struggle, it was a world struggle against injustice.

Now, more than ever we need to stand up and give moral, public and material support to the struggle in Palestine. There is something for each of us to do. Whether it is standing with a placard, proclaiming support for the Palestinian struggle, whether it is collecting more humanitarian support, whether it is championing the cause of Palestine on world forum there is something for each one of us to do.

It is in this spirit that I am with you in this conference. It is not prudent to transpose the South African experience on wholesale. That is the process through which apartheid was ended and a democracy established. I say it is not possible to transpose this experience on another situation, let alone the so-called Palestinian conflict. However, there are lessons, which we learnt, and maybe some of these lessons maybe useful.

One of the important lessons of the South African experience is that no ruling class in history has been known to depart from the scene of occupation voluntarily. South Africa has been no exception. The negotiation process in South Africa must be understood in the context of titanic mass struggles, which were engulfing our country in the 1980s and early 1990s. The apartheid regime though militarily in full control was no longer able to govern. Unceasing mass struggles in South Africa also enjoyed increasing international support. The international isolation of the apartheid regime was intensified.

On the military front things were different. The liberation armies gathering in our neighboring countries were growing. But the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc cut off the support enjoyed by the liberation army. In addition, the major Western

powers made it clear time and time again that they would not allow the apartheid regime to be defeated.

I say that we were able to move towards negotiations the way we did only because mass struggles continued even during negotiations and we never demobilized the masses during the period leading to South Africa's first democratic elections.

An important lesson, I say, is that the struggle must continue at all levels. The weaker you are the less you can achieve through negotiations. The stronger you are the better chance you have of achieving your objectives.

A second lesson to be drawn from the South African experience is that unless there is agreement on the objectives to be attained, you will never reach agreement on the means to get there. If your destination is not the same then you will never travel in the same direction. What happened during the course of the South African negotiations, supported by the ongoing struggles, is that the leadership of the apartheid regime was compelled to agree to certain objectives. Agreement on destination made it possible for us to say lets move together to arrive at that destination.

The third lesson to be drawn from the South African experience is that there must be good faith on all sides. This is always difficult to judge and in the South African negotiations we remained suspicious almost to the very end. But ultimately we have been able to say that there were good faith negotiations between the apartheid government led by F. W. De Klerk and the African National Congress led by President Nelson Mandela.

The lesson to be drawn from the South African experience in this regard therefore is that it will be very difficult to move together unless there is agreement on the objective to be attained. It is foolhardy to make compromises and give up positions purely on the basis of hope that something good will arise. Without a clear agreement on objectives – in this case it would be ending the occupation of Palestine and recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own state with Jerusalem as its capital, negotiations will falter.

The problem in the Middle Eastern conflict has been varying strong views, perhaps justified, that Israel has never negotiated in good faith.

It is foolhardy to make compromises and give up positions purely on the basis of hope that something good will arise

Finally, in the South African transition there were always attempts to divide the liberation forces and to pit leader against leader. In our case Nelson Mandela in prison was pitted against Oliver Tambo in exile. The external struggle based in Lusaka was pitted against the internal struggle in South Africa. Fortunately, people in the South African struggle were very conscious of these ruling class maneuvers and never allowed themselves to be divided. Developing unity of the liberation forces is an essential requisite for success.

I have made references to some aspects of the South African struggle in the hope that we do not learn the wrong lessons from the South African experience. There was no easy peaceful road to the new South Africa. Negotiations itself became a site of struggle.

May I conclude by once again thanking the organizers for giving me this opportunity of being with you. Together with you I pray that no matter how long and hard the struggle, justice in Palestine will triumph in the end.

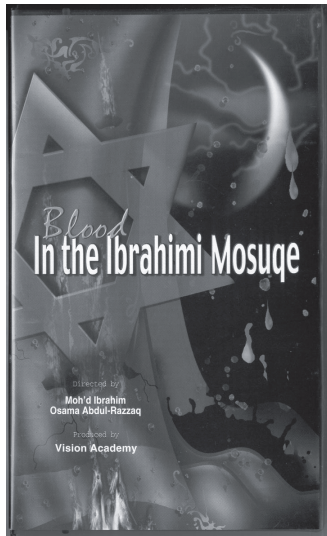


**All the leaflets are
FREE.**

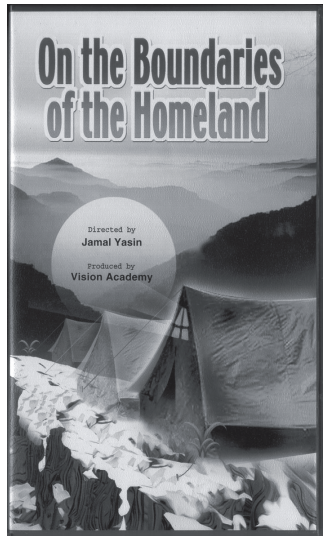
*Order single or large quantity for
distribution*

AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES

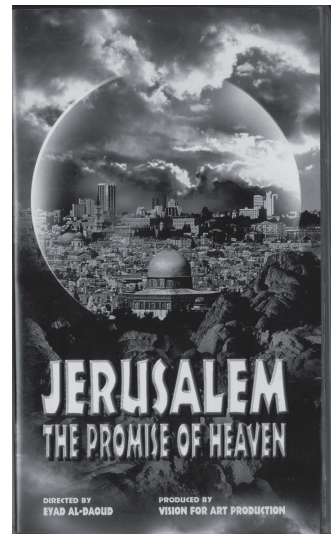
Please fill the order form on page 8



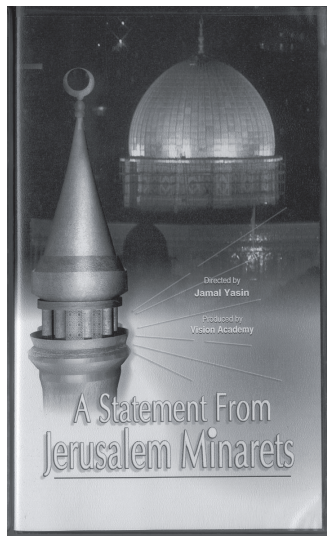
Blood in the Ibrahimi Mosque, £6.00 (VHS)



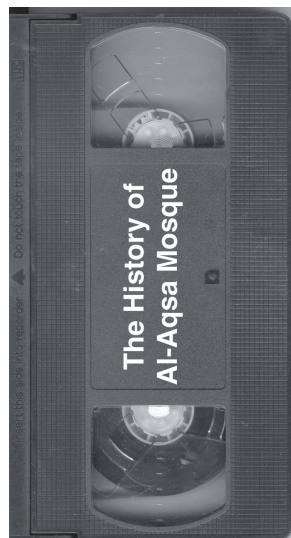
On the Boundaries of the Homeland, £6.00 (VHS)



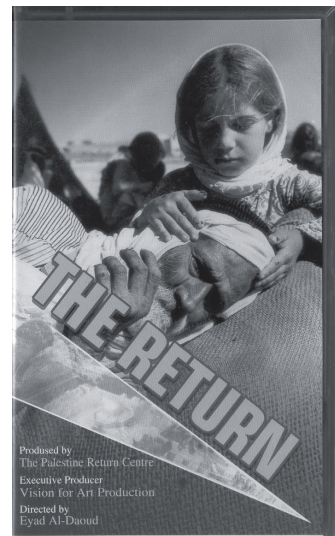
Jerusalem the Promise of Heaven, £6.00 (VHS)



A Statement from Jerusalem Minarets, £6.00 (VHS)



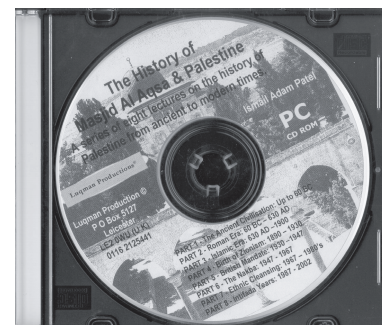
The History of Al-Aqsa Mosque, £3.50 (VHS)



The Return, £6.00 (VHS)



Justice in Palestine Conference, S.A. July 2002, set of 3 Cassettes, £5.00 a set



The History of Al-Aqsa, CD Audio 8 Lectures, £5.00

Inequity of distribution of Resources in Palestine – Apartheid in the Holy Land

Rt Hon Mr Ronnie Kasrils*

Next month here in Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa will host the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which will primarily focus on three pillars, namely social development, economic development and the protection of the environment. In order to eradicate poverty, the prevalent disparities in international trade, access to markets, exploitation and monopolisation of the raw materials need to be addressed. President Thabo Mbeki's lamentation of the massive subsidisation of European and American farmers is a clear illustration of the need to establish a concrete programme in the areas of water, health, agriculture, education, energy and biodiversity. If there is to be sustainable development in the world for this and future generations, there must be respect and equality between nations, co-operation and justice between the developed and the developing countries and what we in South Africa like to refer to as the levelling of the playing fields. This will never be possible under a world order of colonial and colonised peoples. While there are still massive disparities in the new global order, change with justice is possible if we work hard enough for it. Spare a thought then for the struggling Palestinian people caught up in the maelstrom of a cruel time - lock that has no place in the 21st century - no place in a world where for the most part direct colonial subjugation is a distant memory.

The cruel and unjustified occupation of Palestine is a microcosm of the lopsided and iniquitous development of colonialism of the worst kind. It is not simply rhetoric that has caused a London Rabbi to refer to Israel as the last colonial power, where, I may add, a colonial State where its citizens are gathered from different parts of the world have been superimposed and settled on the territory of a colonised and plundered Palestine. There is no way that a Zionist Israel or colonial power

of any kind can "radiate as a light unto nations" on the basis of conquest and dispossession. This has been attested to all too frequently in history. Here in South Africa we of the liberation movement refer to apartheid as 'colonialism of a special type', where white South Africa was the colonial state, not ruling from across the sea, somewhere in Europe, but occupying the same territory as the colonised black people. Apartheid stripped blacks of all rights and those who were not required as cheap labour in the white mans metropolis were banished, transported or expelled to the impoverished Bantustans. Israel maintains a Palestinian community (sometimes referred to as Israeli Arabs), within its borders as downright and discriminated second class citizens. The rest of the Palestinians, approximately three million, have been reduced to occupying some 22% of historic Palestine under cruel occupation for 36 years with vicious measures of control, siege, humiliation and destruction that in the words of an eminent South African church leader made the treatment of blacks under apartheid, whether they lived in townships or Bantustans, appear as a 'picnic by comparison'.

The wilful and deliberate destruction and exploitation of Palestinian resources is not simply an act of war. It is a diabolical plan based on the idea and vision of an exclusivist Jewish state which aimed to establish and then expand Israel's territories and destroy the economy of the indigenous inhabitants as a prelude to their ejection. In the same way colonial and then apartheid South Africa systematically destroyed the economic independence and viability of our indigenous people.

Joseph Weitz, former director of the settlement department of the Jewish

There is no way that a Zionist Israel or colonial power of any kind can "radiate as a light unto nations" on the basis of conquest and dispossession

the treatment of blacks under apartheid, whether they lived in townships or Bantustans, appear as a 'picnic by comparison

* Rt Hon Mr Ronnie Kasrils is the Minister of Water and Forestry, South Africa. Lecture delivered at the, 'Justice in Palestine' conference, Johannesburg, 20th July 2002.

The incredible amount of financial aid received by the state of Israel from outside, US\$4 billion per annum from the USA alone, it becomes clear that, in this field, there is not the slightest “miracle of Israel”

Agency, wrote in 1940 “Between ourselves, it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country- The only solution is Eretz Israel, at least the Western Israel, without Arabs, and there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries”. Colonial South Africa transferred non-productive black labour to the impoverished rural reserves and apartheid confined them to the Bantustan homelands.

The most precious and fundamental resource any country depends on, are its people and land to inhabit, cultivate and sustainable develop. In order to grab Palestinian land and to give credence to a Machiavellian myth of “a land without people for a people without land”, the Zionists embarked on a programme of ethnic cleansing, a process that continues to this day and with increasing Palestinian resistance the Israeli policy has become even more cruel and aggressive. For Israel, with the war criminal Sharon at its helm, the aim of his military solution is to grind the Palestinians into the dust. The Sharonite solution for the Palestinians is indeed the peace of the graveyard.

In Palestine, according to the British census of 1918, there were about 700,000 Arabs and 56,000 Jews: the Arabs formed about 90% of the population. In 1947/8, after perpetrating a number of horrific massacres by Zionist terrorist groups and despite the huge immigration of Jews, the Palestinians still had a two-to-one majority – 1,269,000 Arabs to 678,000 Jews. Palestine had a thriving and vibrant economy until the arrival of the Zionist Colonial Settlers. This is collaborated by a statement made in 1891 by Asher Ginzberg who under the pseudonym Abed Ha’am (“One of the people”), wrote after a visit to Palestine: “We abroad are accustomed to believe that Palestine nowadays is almost entirely desolate: a barren desert where anyone can buy land to his heart’s content. In fact that is not so. All over the country it is hard to find arable land that is not cultivated...” The only places not under cultivation, he pointed out, were sand dunes and rocky hills where nothing but fruit trees could grow, and then only after much hard work at clearing the soil. In reality, before the Zionists came, the Palestinian farmers exported 30,000 tonnes of wheat per year; the area of Arab owned orchards trebled between 1921 and 1942; that of the groves where oranges and other citrus fruits were grown was multiplied sevenfold between 1922 and 1947; and the production of vegetables was in 1938 ten times what it had been in 1922.

To take only the example of citrus fruit, the Peel Report presented to the British Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in July 1937, basing itself on the rapid growth of the orange groves in Palestine, estimated that of the 30,000,000 cases of winter oranges by which world production was expected to increase in the following ten years, the producers and exporters would be as follows:

Palestine	15,000,000
U.S.A	7,000,000
Spain	5,000,000
Other countries (Cyprus, Egypt, Algeria, etc)	3,000,000

Source: This “projection” and the data on which it was based can be found in the Peel Report, Chapter 8, paragraph 19 page 214.

If we take account of the progress of agriculture in the world during the last fifty years, and especially of the incredible amount of financial aid received by the state of Israel from outside, US\$4 billion per annum from the USA alone, it becomes clear that, in this field, there is not the slightest “miracle of Israel”. The myth of the historical and geographical “void” was to serve as the basic postulate of Zionist policy in Israel, to justify the establishment of an exclusivist Jewish state mid the expulsion of indigenous Palestinians.

Between 1948 and 1967 the Zionists expelled 800,000 Palestinians. They occupied 526 Palestinian towns, cities and villages, and totally eradicated hundreds more where parks and ornamental forests now stand to hide the shameful crime. They usurped houses and lands without any compensation and converted them into Jewish settlements. Between 1967 and 1989 the Zionists expelled another 300,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, usurped 65% of their land and 95% of their water resources. Today the refugees in the diaspora number 5 million, whilst 3 million Palestinians reside in the West Bank of Gaza and one million in Israel which itself has a total population of 6 million.

Legalised Discrimination

The exploitation of Palestine by a racist Israel manifests itself in many ways. There is, to start with, legalised discrimination against non-Jews living in Israel, which is

sometimes quite blatant, at other times quite subtle. Arabs in Israel make up 20% of the population but only hold 2.5% of the land on which to build. With their increase in population the situation is worsening, for there is no way to go. The 'redemption (geula) of land' doctrine for instance states that, 'if a plot of land anywhere in the whole "Land of Israel" is either' collectively or individually owned by the Jews it is "redeemed" and if it is not, it is "unredeemed" What this means in reality is that "to redeem land", that is, 'to transfer it from non-Jews to Jewish ownership is a foremost national obligation, whereas failure to do so is calamitous.'

Under this doctrine which is taught to every Jewish child in every school in Israel and to the children of staunch Zionists living elsewhere, it does not matter who the non-Jewish owner of so-called 'unredeemed' land is. It may be an indigenous Palestinian whose link to the land goes back centuries but a Zionist would regard it as a national obligation, in fact a religious duty, to acquire it. By the same token land occupied by a Jew, perhaps someone who has just migrated from the former Soviet Union, South Africa or any other country, would be considered 'redeemed'. If this were not bad enough the situation is worsening. Two Arab Israeli deputies have recently slammed Israel's newest Land Bill as racist, comparing it to Nazi Germany and apartheid. "This law is similar to the Nuremberg laws in Germany which favoured only Germans, and in apartheid South Africa, where they favoured just the whites - here the laws are just for Jews" one of the deputies, Mohammed Baraketi, stated of a bill approved by cabinet aiming to circumvent a ruling by the Supreme Court banning discrimination by Jews and Arabs in the allocation of state land. (Pretoria News 12/07/02).

The redemption of land' doctrine is not the only form of legal discrimination in Zionist Israel. The Israeli Lands Authority (ILA) has a rule, which allows anyone registered as a Jew to lease a plot of land or house or apartment in a housing project in most parts of the country. A non-Jew, on the other hand, is barred from occupying real estate in most places. The area where this and other similar racist restrictions apply, amounts to 92 per cent of the land of pre-1967 Israel. It is a situation, which clearly parallels apartheid South Africa where 87% of land was owned by whites!

Discriminatory laws pertaining to land and housing may not be that well known outside

Israel. But the law of return has acquired some notoriety. Under this law, any Jew from any part of the world has the right to settle in Israel. Jews do not need official permission from the authorities. In fact, the Minister of Interior does not have the authority to deny any Jew this right of return and, by implication, the right to settle in Israel. According to one source 'Jews arriving in Israel from abroad almost immediately receive an "immigration certificate" which provides them with "citizenship by virtue of having returned" as though they had been citizens of the country for generations. They also immediately acquire the right to vote in elections and to be elected to the Knesset (Parliament).' For such a reason amongst others, I as a South African of Jewish descent took a decision whilst still a youth not to set foot in Israel. As an outsider might I add that their Chief Rabbi, A Britain based in South Africa, angrily alleges that I cannot speak about Israel because I have never been there. The apartheid rulers of South Africa used to castigate international anti-apartheid activists who criticised but refused to visit South Africa in the self-same intolerant terms.

Contrast the treatment accorded to returning Jews with the cruel, inhuman discrimination of Palestinian Arabs living in their own land - a land whose very name, history and culture bear their birthmark, and yet Palestinians do not enjoy the most basic legal rights, which any citizen in any civilised society would be entitled to. It goes to show how racist the Israeli regimes policy is with regard to the non-Jewish population, be they Muslim or Christian.

WATER

Israel's discriminatory practices become even more blatant when we turn from law to the actual policies and practices that the regime pursues. Take for instance water the most precious of all resources.

Water is scarce in Palestine, and Israel is employing all means possible to divert the meagre water resources for itself and further punish the Palestinians by denying them the basic essential of life, as the following facts starkly illustrate.

Background

- ◆ On 15 August 1967 [Israeli Military Order 92] Israel transferred the

The area where this and other similar racist restrictions apply, amounts to 92 per cent of the land of pre-1967 Israel. It is a situation, which clearly parallels apartheid South Africa where 87% of land was owned by whites!

Palestinians are only allowed 83 cubic metres for each Palestinian per year whereas the Israelis use 333 cubic meter for each Israeli per year i.e. one Israeli consumes 4 times more water than a Palestinian.

A single water tap at the end of the street serves 30 to 50 homes, shades of Apartheid South Africa at its worst!

authority – over West Bank and Gaza Strip water resources to Israeli military command. Palestinians civilians and farmers lost control over their own land.

- ◆ On 19 November 1967 [Israeli Military Order 158] Israel forbade the unlicensed construction of new water infrastructure [i.e. wells].
- ◆ On 19 December 1968 [Israeli Military Order 291] Israel confiscated all Palestinian water resources declaring them Israeli state property.
- ◆ In 1982 the Israeli water authority, Mekorot, took over control of all Palestinian water sources. Further, Palestinian wells were destroyed and supplies dried up by widespread digging and pumping from deeper wells for Israeli use.

It should be noted that although the pretext for Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is security, the desire of Israel to control water resources is in fact the main reasons why Israel is reluctant to withdraw and end occupation.

Water Consumption

- ◆ 75 % of the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip renewable water resources are used by Israel.
- ◆ Three million Palestinians are allocated 250 million cubic metres per annum while six million Israelis enjoy the use of 2.0 billion cubic metres.
- ◆ Palestinians are only allowed 83 cubic metres for each Palestinian per year whereas the Israelis use 333 cubic meter for each Israeli per year i.e. one Israeli consumes 4 times more water than a Palestinian.
- ◆ Further, each Israeli settler is allocated 1.450 cubic meters of water per year.

Water Resources

Water resources in the West Blank are scarce. Groundwater is the main source of water for Palestinians and Israelis. The shared West Blank aquifer is the main source for both. Some 80% of this water is siphoned away from Palestinians to Israelis. Settlements are strategically located to control the aquifers and are placed at highly sensitive water areas.

There are 527 springs in West Bank, which, provide Palestinians with around 5% of available water and there are 750 wells prior

to 1967; Israel destroyed over 50% of them and only around 350 still function.

Impact of Israeli Siege on Water Supply

Many towns and villages are suffering from a sever water shortage as a result of closing the Palestinian territories. Most Palestinians living in refugee camps do not have running water taps in their homes. A single water tap at the end of the street serves 30 to 50 homes, shades of Apartheid South Africa at its worst! In the Gaza Strip the problem of water shortage is compounded by the poor quality of water flowing through the pipes. The poor condition of the water seriously affects the quality of life of the local residents and exposes them to sever health risks.

Israeli newspaper, the Ha'aretz published figures on 31/07/1998, that in Hebron the Jewish settler consumes 547 litres of water per person per day as compared to 58 litres by a Palestinian. Many villages in the Jenin area are suffering from serious water shortage due to Israeli siege. The Municipality is not able to import needed spare parts for the well pump. Water tankers cannot reach the villages due to the closure. Continuous Israeli settlers' attacks on Palestinian water tankers prevent Palestinian water tankers from reaching their water supply source-taps, which have been cut off by local Israeli settlers who solely own and control the flow of water in the region. As a result of the cut-offs, the price of tanked water for Palestinians increased from \$2.5 per cubic meter to \$7.5 per cubic meter. As a result of the drastic rise in the price of water, the amount of income spent per family on water has increased by 12%, making it more difficult for families to meet their basic domestic and vital needs.

Well pumps have been shut off because of fuel scarcity. The Israeli soldiers have targeted water roof tanks of Palestinian houses near the Israeli checkpoints. Israeli helicopters have routinely during the Al Aqsa Intifada bombarded Palestinian water tanks and wells. Only 37.5% of Palestinian homes are connected to the sewage system posing an environmental hazard.

Experts estimate the compensation for damage to Palestinian water resources caused by Israel 'and for Palestinian water used by Israel over the years at a minimum of 45 billion US dollars [Ref Jad Issac,

Water and Palestinian-Israeli Peace Negotiations, presented at the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine, 19 August 1999].

AGRICULTURE

The Zionist policy of controlling and weakening the Palestinian population through its discriminatory water policy should be viewed in conjunction with its attempt to destroy Palestinian agriculture. In the last four or five years, the Zionists have destroyed thousands of citrus and guava fruit trees belonging to Palestinians in the Gaza strip and the West Bank. Thousands of acres of agricultural land in the Gaza strip have been confiscated from Palestinian owners and transferred to Israeli settlers. Even when the Palestinians produce some fruit and vegetables, all sorts of restrictions are imposed to thwart the marketing of their crops.

HEALTH

Medical care is another area where there is stark discrimination. Although a sizeable portion of their small income goes for health insurance, Palestinians receive only marginal benefits, as the writer Donald Werner points out, 'when a (Arab) worker from Gaza is injured in Tel Aviv, he usually receives only provisional emergency care, then is sent back to Gaza. In Gaza City the government hospitals are crowded, dirty, understaffed, and ill equipped compared to the facilities in Israel proper. The situation is reminiscent of the past situation in South Africa with its stark contrast between the elegant hospitals for whites and the sorry hospitals for blacks. In truth, the brutal and pervasive discrimination against Palestinians in Israel is nothing less than apartheid'.

EDUCATION

Discrimination also extends to education. In Israel itself there is the same separation between Jewish and Arab schools, as there was in apartheid South Africa and the resources and amenities for Israeli Arab school children is woeful when compared to the privileges accorded to Jewish pupils and their teachers. In the Palestinian territories, particularly after the occupation of 1967, Israel's leaders, aware that young Palestinians were eager to pursue education to the highest levels possible, began to place all sorts of obstacles in their path. Government budgetary allocations for Palestinian schools were much less than what was given to Israeli

schools. Official approval for Palestinian colleges was deliberately stalled. Curricula in both Palestinian schools and colleges were subjected to tight control. However, in spite of all these restrictions Palestinians continued to study hard and produce individuals of outstanding talent and ability reflected in the professions, arts, business, politics and civil society with an articulate, cultured intelligence that clearly alarms Israel's rulers as much as does the agitation in the streets.

Then, the Palestinian uprising (the Intifada) essentially a youth revolt-began in December 1987. It provided the Zionist authorities with the big opportunity they were waiting for. Shortly after the Intifada, they closed down all schools, colleges and universities in the West Bank. Though many schools and some colleges have started to function again, the breaks on education remain one of the most cynical weapons of the oppression and discrimination against the Palestinians. So too with the Verwoedian dream of Bantu education that wished to reduce South African blacks to hewers of wood of drawers of water.

ENVIRONMENT

The Palestinian environment, its natural resources and biodiversity have been under sever pressure since the Israeli occupation making environmental conditions more severe as the potential for environmental protection and biodiversity is diminished. Along with the wanton destruction of olive trees and orchards, continued land confiscation, reduction of built-up areas to rubble, expansion of settlements and movement restrictions of entire communities, Israel is polluting the West Blank and its natural resources through dumping the liquid and solid waste generated from Israel's colonies and its industrial zones into adjacent land which is usually a Palestinian village. Moreover, Israelis also illegally transfers toxic waste generated inside Israel into the West Bank and Gaze Strip in violation of international convention Israel itself has signed. Such practices are an environmental and health crime against the Palestinian people and their natural resources including their precious and limited sources of drinking water. In fact the contamination of the West Bank aquifer system will affect Palestinians as well as Israeli's.

Thousands of acres of agricultural land in the Gaza strip have been confiscated from Palestinian owners and transferred to Israeli settlers

In truth, the brutal and pervasive discrimination against Palestinians in Israel is nothing less than apartheid

FRIENDS OF AL-AQSA

invites you to become a friend.

Why You Should Be A Friend?

1. Palestinians are living under an apartheid regime, which needs to be abolished.
2. The human rights abuses and the right of return of Palestinian refugees need a pro-active approach by the morally conscious citizens of the world.
3. Al-Aqsa the first qibla of Islam, for over 14 centuries has formed an important article of faith and played an important role in the Islamic Civilisation.
4. Al-Aqsa and those worshipping within it have been victims to numerous attacks since the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem.
5. Several Tunnels dug under the Al-Aqsa sanctuary is undermining the structure of the Mosque and scientists claim the slightest earth tremor is likely to bring the Mosque down.
6. Extreme Zionist organisations have openly declared to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
7. The Palestinian people have suffered tremendous human rights abuses and at the same time made many sacrifices in defence of Al-Aqsa.

Name: _____

Address _____

Post Code: _____

Country: _____

Occupation: _____

I enclose a sum of _____ (minimum £10)
made payable to 'Friend of Al-Aqsa'

Signed _____ Date: _____

Your affiliation will be an appreciation of their efforts and a show of solidarity.

AL-AQSA

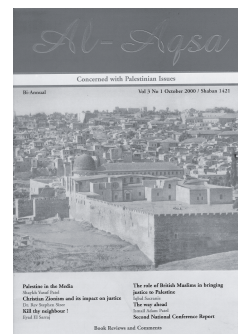
Subscription

A Bi-Annual referenced Journal on Palestinian Issues

RATES

3 Issues

UK £10.00 Rest of the World £20



Subscription Form

Payment by cheque should be drawn on UK Banks only and made payable to
'Friends of Al-Aqsa' Payment Enclosed £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Country _____

Post To: Al-Aqsa, P.O. Box 5127, Leicester. LE2 0WU. England

The Muslim' Attitude Toward the Jews in the West

Dr Azzam Tamimi*

It has been fifteen centuries since the Muslims established themselves as a state in which followers of all three monotheistic religions coexisted peacefully and equitably. Until the beginning of the 19th century the Islamic empire, whose terrain extended over three continents, provided a milieu of tolerance that, in contrast to the history of Europe and the Western world in general, prevented the progression of ideological and religious differences into physical conflict. Islam, whose values and principles governed the public and private conduct of individuals and groups, recognised Christians and Jews as legitimate members of the community within the Islamic State and accorded them inalienable rights. In accordance with these rights, their blood, honour, wealth, faith and shrines were sanctified. This recognition enabled the followers of these creeds to realise their potential capabilities and thus innovate and participate on equal footing with the Muslims in building the Arab-Islamic civilisation.

Muslims never used the term 'minorities' to describe fellow-citizens who belonged to other religions. Furthermore, the Islamic State opened its gates wide open and provided a safe haven to those oppressed and discriminated against elsewhere in the world. Jews in particular, who suffered persecution and banishment at the hands of European Christians who blamed them for every single crisis or catastrophe incurred, benefited from Islam's veneration of the right to human dignity irrespective of one's creed or race. It was only in Muslim lands that the Jews found peace, security and freedom.

The Muslims' perception of the Jews remained unchanged during the first 13 centuries of Islam. They saw them as People of the Book who, together with the Christians, shared with the Muslims common values of faith and conduct that entitled them to citizen

rights in the Islamic state. Such perception began to change after the Zionist movement managed to embroil Jews in its colonial project with the aim of solving the Jewish problem in Europe by establishing a national home for the 'Jewish People' in Palestine.

In the wake of the Second World War, and as a result of the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, the scene was set for the accomplishment of the Zionist dream. The determination of the world order to enable the Zionists to establish a Jewish state in Palestine turned Jews into enemy number one of both Arabs and Muslims.

The Muslim hatred for the Jews was augmented by the fall of Arab Jews in the trap of Zionism. Historic homes of Jewish communities, such as the Arab Maghreb, North Africa, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen, witnessed massive exodus of Jews who migrated to the recently established Zionist entity in Palestine. It turned out later that it was the Zionist movement's acts of terror that intimidated the Arab Jews into emigrating. It was then that the Arabs no longer discriminated between the Zionist invaders who came all the way from Poland, Russia, America, Western Europe or South Africa and the Jews who had been living with Arab Muslims and Christians, and who, for many centuries, shared the same history and civilisation with them.

In spite of the undisguised secularist – even atheist – root of the Zionist project, some Arab and Muslim thinkers deemed it necessary, perhaps useful, to focus on a purely religious explanation for the Zionist phenomenon. Through a re-reading of history aided by a re-interpretation of the sacred text, these thinkers sought to prove that Jews, by virtue of some inherited

Recognised Christians and Jews as legitimate members of the community within the Islamic State and accorded them inalienable rights

* Azzam Tamimi is the director of the London based Institute of Islamic Political Thought and a researcher at the Centre for the Study of democracy, University of Westminster and a visiting lecturer at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE)

It was this Zionist project that embroiled Judaism in its intrigues so as to bestow religious legitimacy on itself and to gain the support of the world's Jewry

Anti-Zionist Jews are now believed to be on the increase

characteristics, have always been corrupt, mischievous and ill intentioned.

In fact, the real input into this new Muslim attitude of hostility toward the Jews and Judaism came from Christian anti-Jewish writings. The most influential document in this regard has been the one entitled "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", which concludes that Jews have hatched a global conspiracy aimed at imposing their control over the world and at subjugating all else to their influence so as to serve their own interests. The occupation of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state in it have been said by the believers in this theory to be a crucial part of this Jewish conspiracy. Some Muslim writers have gone as far as interpreting the Qur'anic narrative vis-à-vis the Israelites and the Jews in light of what the Protocols had claimed. Hostility to the Zionist project may have blurred the eyes of many Muslims from seeing the difference between the Qur'anic chastisement of bad conduct and ill-manners, which some Israelites and some Jews practised – and which Muslims and Christians have been warned from copying, and the Qur'anic injunction concerning the right of Jews, as well as Christians, to Covenant rights the violation of which by Muslims is a sin in the eyes of God.

Undoubtedly, the Zionist project bears full responsibility for this shift in the Arab and Muslim perception of Jews and Judaism. After all it was this Zionist project that embroiled Judaism in its intrigues so as to bestow religious legitimacy on itself and to gain the support of the world's Jewry. The myths of a 'Jewish nation', the 'Land of Promise' and the 'Chosen People of God' were revived in order to convince the Jews, most of whom had initially been opposed to Zionism, to adopt the Zionist solution to the Jewish problem in the West. The ultimate objective had been to persuade the Jews to sponsor the State of Israel, which had been given a theological dimension that transformed it in the *Zionised* Jewish conscience into 'the end of time Messiah'. The ideology was in the beginning condemned by Jewish religious leaders as an adulteration of Jewish faith that had been predominant until the beginning of the 20th century and which forbade Jewish migration to Palestine with the purpose of settling there permanently. Jewish Orthodoxy viewed such migration as a violation that entailed the forcing of the will of God and that amounted to the sin of apostasy.

Many Arabs and Muslims still do not realise that anti-Zionist Jews, who do not recognise

the legitimacy of the state of Israel, do still exist. In spite of the gradual decline in their numbers during the first seven decades of the 20th century, anti-Zionist Jews are now believed to be on the increase. There are indications that the trend of Jewish anti-Zionism is growing. This may, at least partly, be due to the increasing public consciousness of the inhumane, racist and fascist nature of the State of Israel whose policy and actions contravene the sublime values which people of religion from all faiths respect and seek to protect.

In essence, the Zionist project is a Western colonial enterprise whose success depends on two main factors. The first factor is the determination of a powerful West to see this enterprise continue. The second factor is the weakness of the Arabs and the Muslims who have lost the ability to cohesively defend themselves.

As for the first factor, so long as the Zionist project serves the purposes of the current World Order, and so long as the economic and military capabilities of this World Order permit it to prolong the life of Israel, no effort will be spared in sustaining Israel. However, those who have learned the lessons of history find it plausible to believe that this situation cannot continue forever. The imperialist West is in retreat and its escalating domestic problems will soon preoccupy it and divert its attention away from a number of foreign affairs that have so far been considered of strategic importance or of great interest. Israel, as an entity or a modern territorial state, simply lacks the ability to self-sustain and therefore cannot survive without the U.S. and Jewish Diaspora umbilical cords that supply it with funds and weapons.

As for the second factor, the weakness of the Arabs and Muslims is only temporary and will sometime in the future be reversed. Evidently, the Muslim world is witnessing a massive awakening that is destined to initiate the transformation from weakness to strength. When the Arabs and Muslims' gain of strength and confidence coincides with the retreat of the World Order due to the shrinkage of the material and military resources available to it and as a result of the augmentation of domestic crises, the end of the Zionist project will come and the State of Israel will be no more. The steadfastness of the Palestinian people, and the escalation of their uprising to a level that has caused the Israelis to panic in confusion and to question the viability

of their own state, is one clear signal that the “post-Israel” era is imminent.

Muslims may contribute effectively to bringing about a just resolution to the conflict in Palestine by sparing no effort they can exert in order to expose the inhumanity and racist nature of the Zionist entity in Palestine. Some of this effort must be directed towards the Jewish communities in the Diaspora to convince them through debate and dialogue to end their support for Israel and to dissociate from the Zionist project. The Jews of the world need to hear from the Muslims that “we believe your support for the Zionist project will not do you good” and that “the conflict in the Middle East is not between the Muslims and the Jews or between Islam and Judaism for Islam does recognize Judaism as a legitimate religion and accords its adherents with respect and protection.” They need to be told too that “we believe Israel will eventually crack and come to an end but the Jews and the Muslims will remain and have to live together in peace as they did for many centuries before.”

The task of talking to the Jews and debating with them lies first and foremost with the Muslims who live in the West where they have no option but to deal with the Jews and coexist with them as citizens of the societies in which they live. The Muslims in the West just cannot avoid the Jews, who have over the years established themselves well political and economically and who have great influence over the media and consequently over the formation of public opinion. The Jews had already secured powerful positions in all the sectors of society and departments of government that the Muslims today seek to enter and associate with.

But to do this, Muslims need first to correct some of the erroneous conceptions that have spread among them, especially in the West. This should involve a revision and elimination

of false concepts that make no distinction between Jews and Zionists. The first is a bearer of Jewish faith and if not involved in aggression against the Muslims is entitled to the right of Covenant. The second is a bearer of a settler colonial enterprise, an act of aggression that should be resisted and deterred. This revision necessitates restoring respect to the contextual interpretation of the Qur’anic text which clearly distinguishes in its narration of the history of the Israelites and the Jews between those who do good and those who do mischief and between those who are righteous and those who are deviant. Labelling and name-calling of Jews, such as the widely used phrase in some Arabic literature describing Jews as descendents of pigs and apes, is racist, inhumane and, therefore, un-Islamic. Muslims are advised to refrain from resorting to fabricated documents such as the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” and rise above employing conspiracy theory in explaining or analyzing past and present events.

Respect should also be reinstated to the Qur’anic justice-based on *tadafu’* (interaction or interplay) explanatory paradigm, which is much more credible and more explanatory than conspiracy theory. While the Qur’anic paradigm provides motivation and hope, conspiracy theory provides nothing but frustration and despair.

To sum up, Muslims need to develop a rational and convincing discourse that encompasses a clear and sound conception of what the Jews represent to us and what their position is in our faith and history. This is particularly important in the West, and specifically in the case of Muslims involved in community relations and in various state institutions, where questions are constantly raised about how Arabs and Muslims view the Jews.

the conflict in the Middle East is not between the Muslims and the Jews

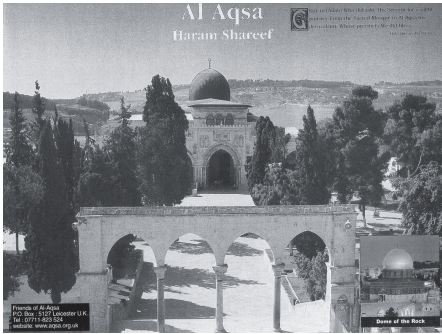
Al Aqsa

Editor

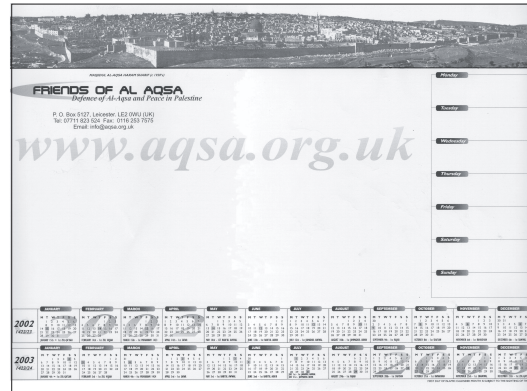
The Articles published in this journal **do not** necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board or of Friends of Al-aqsa

ARTEFACTS

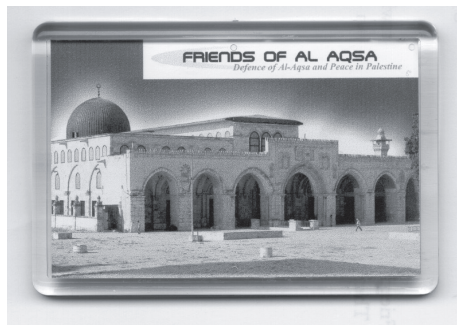
Please fill the order form on page 8



Poster of Al-Aqsa, (60x84cm), £5.00
(42x60cm), £2.00



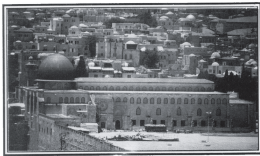
Desk Top Calendar,
£1.50 (42x30cm)



Fridge Magnet, £1.50

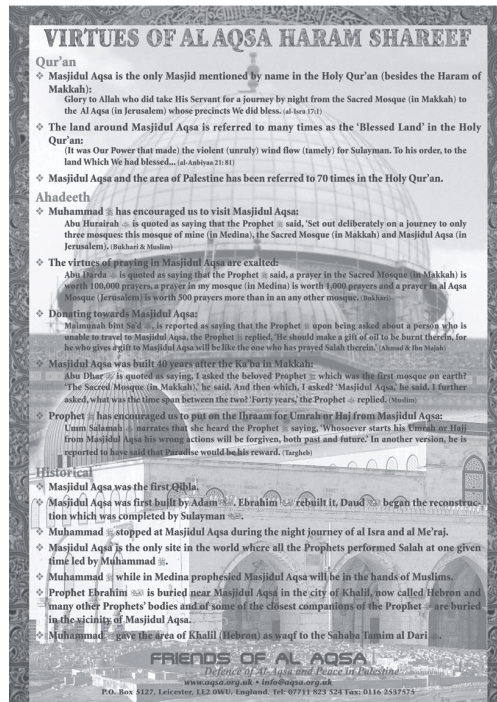
The Furthest Mosque

The History of Al-Aqsa Mosque
from Earliest Times to the Present Day



Islamic Concern for Palestine

The Furthest Mosque: The History of
Al-Aqsa Mosque, £2.00 (PB)



Poster Virtues of Al-Aqsa Mosque
(34x48cm), £3.00



Key Ring, £1.50



Metal Lapel Badge, £1.50



T. Shirt (Hands off Al-aqsa),
£2.50

New Zion and Old Zion Under Flags of Convenience

Muhammad Siddique Seddon*

It is no surprise to see Israeli flags and Union Jacks flying side by side in Northern Ireland. This is a clear indicator of the religious fundamentalist psyche of the far right Loyalist movement. In displaying their support of Zionist Israeli brutality they are endorsing Israel's wrongly perceived legitimacy and its extended territorial claims. For the Protestant extremists the Israeli government's brutal and murderous expansionist policy in Palestine must be supported in order to vindicate and legitimise their own historical occupation and settlement of Northern Ireland by their English ancestors. It is in much the same way that the right-wing evangelicals in America validate a Jewish 'homeland' in the Holy Land of Palestine. British territorial claims to both Ireland and America were theologically, and therefore religiously justified within Protestant Christian interpretations of the Old Testament. New lands and potential colonies were presented as the religious Zion in accordance with Biblical teachings; God's 'chosen people' were spiritually justified in their holy war for the Holy Land. In the case of Ireland the indigenous Irish Catholics represented no less than theological anti-Christ's and for the colonialist in the 'new world', the American Indians were a plausible 'demonic' and 'barbaric' other. The perceived religious deviance of the Irish Catholics and apparent 'heathenness' of the American Indians by the Protestant English were in themselves justification for occupation, domination and annihilation – Old Testament style. British Colonialists began to graph Biblical history onto the political landscapes of colonised Ireland and the newly discovered America. These new 'Israelites' had found the pretext and a religious reasoning for their imperialism and colonialism.

Furthermore, the Protestant obsession with Jewish 'restorationism', a peculiar form of non-Jewish Zionism which started in the

17th century as part of a theological reworking of Christian eschatology born out of the ideas of Protestant 'chosenness' and staunch anti-papal and anti-Muslim sentiments added weight to Zionist claims in Palestine. It was believed that if the Protestants could 'restore' the Jews to Palestine, they would then rise up and annihilate the 'Turks', 'Barbarians' and 'Saracens', all Elizabethan misnomers for Muslims. Thereafter, it was believed that the Jews would convert to Christianity or rather Protestantism. The removal of Islam and Judaism would give Britain control of Jerusalem in preparation for the Messiah. Such a reductionist secular and religious ideology served both British imperial assertions and the Protestant millenarianist eschatology. It is remarkable how some three centuries later this *Pax Britannica* vision was partially realised with the creation of the state of Israel in 1947.

The ideology of religious imperialism – Zionism, was also applied to Britain's past global expansionism in India, South Africa and beyond. Modern America, a distinctly secular state with no apparent religious agenda, has begun to mirror the 'chosen' Protestant mind-set employed to legitimise earlier British colonisation. Although the religious aspirations of America's new form of imperialism are clothed in less conspicuous terms, its new nomenclature – globalisation means much the same thing. Cashing-in on secular fears of religious encroachment, largely seen as being perpetuated by Muslims, has meant that any words or acts of protest to America's vision of globalisation can be translated and transposed on to 'Islamic fundamentalism'. By cleverly further substituting 'Islamic fundamentalism' with 'terrorism' within the terminology and rhetoric used to identify its 'enemy', America has been able to make

The perceived religious deviance of the Irish Catholics and apparent 'heathenness' of the American Indians by the Protestant English were in themselves justification for occupation, domination and annihilation – Old Testament style

* Research Fellow, The Islamic Foundation.
Ph.D. research student in Religious Studies at Lancaster University.

Muslims synonymous with terrorism. Hence, any criticism of Israel and empathy of the Palestinian struggle by prominent westerners, Teddy Turner and Cherie Blair respectively, are seen as anomalous out-of touch comments divorced from reality. Yet despite the efforts of a very powerful pro-Zionist lobby voices of reason and questions concerning real justice are being evermore heard.

However, this frighteningly manipulative interpretation of Muslims as terrorists by America has been left largely unchallenged by the 'free-thinking' media. As a result, Palestinian defence of their land, lives and property and their opposition to Zionist Israeli expansionism is interpreted by America as no more than acts of terrorism. America and Britain, the economic financiers and political sponsors of

the state of Israel are also forced to ideologically support Zionism in the Holy Land. If they concede to the rightful and legitimate claims of the indigenous Palestinians then they must revisit and rectify their own forms of Zionism committed against the American Indians and the Irish Catholics. The reluctance to enforce the return of land to Palestinians or even to endorse an unsatisfactory scenario of the creation of a 'Palestinian state' by both America and Britain could lead to legitimate claims for the same appropriate measures for native American Indians and the Irish mainlanders. It is indeed no wonder that flags of convenience fly in tandem in Northern Ireland.



Books Available For Review

1. Israel – Challenges to identity, democracy and the state. - Clive Jones and Emma C Murphy
2. Atlas of the Arab-Israeli conflict. - Martin Gilbert
3. Muslim Palestine – The ideology of Hamas – Andrea Nusse
4. The Middle East and Europe – B.A. Roberson
5. The Middle East from the end of Empire to the end of the Cold War – P.J. Vatikiotis

Interested individuals contact Friends of Al-Aqsa

Planning for Jenin

Yvonne Ridley*

During a rare interview from his private office, Iraq's deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, launched a scathing attack on the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, calling on him to use his influence to stop America from bombing his country instead of "pandering to the whims" of US President George Bush. On learning that 159 British MP's have now signed a parliamentary motion against such action, Aziz afforded himself a wry smile. Warming to the theme he challenged Blair to a televised debate to produce evidence that Iraq was producing weapons of mass destruction.

I was sitting in his oblong office in the opulent government headquarters known as "The Mother of Battles building" which was built three years ago. His office was modest by comparison and dominated by two deep red Persian-style rugs sitting on a moss green carpet. The furnishings were a mixture of 70s kitsch and included several glass topped coffee tables, sofas and armchairs scattered liberally around the spacious room. A cheap, false ceiling which could have come from a 60's tower block, clashed with a magnificent marble wall. The room reflected a bizarre mix of luxury and austerity a bit like Iraq itself.

Towering above Aziz was an extravagant 7ft flagpole holding his nation's colours and on his left hand side was a poster in praise of Palestine. The normally polished politician, regarded as the acceptable face of a ruthless dictatorship, seemed unusually ruffled as the war of words between Washington and Baghdad increased. Aziz seemed almost resigned to the fact that his country will soon be at war with the world's most powerful nation.

Less than 24 hours earlier the US secretary of state, Colin Powell, indicated that America might take action regardless of Baghdad agreeing to allow UN weapons inspectors to return to Iraq. The hardening lines in both

Washington and Baghdad could have been political sabre rattling but Aziz's tone had altered dramatically from the previous week, when he had indicated that Saddam Hussein would allow the weapons inspectors back.

Two weeks ago the Sunday Express revealed satellite pictures identifying a site where chemical weapons are allegedly being produced. I looked Aziz straight in the face and told him that Bush said he had "conclusive proof" that Iraq was manufacturing weapons of mass destruction. This proof, I added, was also shown to Blair who was equally convinced.

Aziz returned my look with a steely gaze. He paused and then replied that perhaps George Bush and Tony Blair were looking for a pretext to attack. He denied that weapons of mass destruction were being produced. His response prompted questions about the consequences of a US-led attack and invasion of Iraq if no agreement was reached. Clearly irritated, but equally defiant, he accused America of terrorism.

"When you have a terrorist [the US] who acts alone to reach his greedy ambitions, what choice do you have except to try to minimise civilian casualties? Sometimes you have no other choice but to defend yourself."

Aziz said that while Iraq was willing to reach a compromise, the UN inspection should not be open-ended as it was between 1991 and 1998, when the inspectors left saying their work was being obstructed by Iraq. US and British fighter planes bombed targets in Baghdad as a direct result. He did however renew an offer to let a British team visit Iraq to investigate allegations of manufacturing weapons of mass destruction.

We were led off in a convoy of blacked-out Mercedes cars for our hotel.

The Sunday Express revealed satellite pictures identifying a site where chemical weapons are allegedly being produced

* Yvonne Ridley, Sunday Express reporter visited Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, and Iraq's deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, with a British delegation consisting of MPs, journalists and government officials in mid 2002. This is a report based on her observations.

Although our aim was to try and see Yasser Arafat in his besieged Ramallah compound, it felt as though it was the Israelis who were under siege

The Al-Rashid, where every guest entering the building has to walk on a mosaic depicting former US President George Bush senior with the letters “war criminal” branded beneath his face.

Later I ventured out alone into the capital and took a cab to Baghdad University where I arrived unannounced to try and talk to some students. As I walked through the campus gardens there were hundreds of young people laughing and talking, debating and arguing.

I introduced myself to Raya Al-Nakshabandi, head of the English Department, College of Languages – the first female to be installed as head of a university department – and told her I would like to speak to some students. I was taken to half a dozen outside who were very robust in their views of their “beloved” President and became quite angry when I suggested they had, perhaps, been “brainwashed”. One girl replied: “Do we look like we are prisoners? Do we look scared? This is rubbish. We are free to think and do what we want. “Our country is the cradle of civilisation. There are more PhDs in Baghdad than anywhere else in the world. We are all encouraged to be highly educated yet when we go on the internet and talk to Americans they have no idea where in the world is Iraq. They don’t even know where is the Middle East. We are very dismayed at their lack of intelligence and yet they try to make Iraq out to be primitive,” she said.

From Iraq our party flew to Jordan and headed for the battered towns of Jenin and Nablus, and the besieged compound of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Ramallah.

If I thought security in Iraq was tight at the border, checks in Israel were beyond anything I’d ever experienced before and a true indication of how vulnerable and fearful Israelis felt about their own security and safety. As our group went through the Allenby bridge checkpoint from Jordan, every individual item was scrutinised by intense young Israeli conscripts. My electric toothbrush, for instance, was removed from my cosmetic bag and x-rayed three times before it was released, and our suitcases were unpacked several times.

Although our aim was to try and see Yasser Arafat in his besieged Ramallah compound, it felt as though it was the Israelis who were under siege. As we headed towards Nablus our bus, guided by a Foreign Office car sporting a Union Jack flag, was stopped by teenage soldiers. The sight of ‘our man in Jerusalem’ failed to impress the conscripts and one even pulled a face and made

mocking gestures as he was told this was a high-powered delegation from the UK including a Peer of the Realm and three Labour MPs.

Our party was made to wait in the blistering heat for more than an hour at the Beit Eil checkpoint but at least we were protected from the harsh sunlight by remaining in the bus. Hundreds of Palestinians queued on either side waiting to go about their businesses. Those who had jobs to go to, or had lost patience crossed a sort of no man’s land in single file which made a mockery of the checkpoint. Each one risked coming under fire by taking this route home.

By the time we reached the Nablus checkpoint there were similar scenes. Two ambulances with lights flashing approached from the town and were kept waiting for more than 30 minutes. This could explain why many Palestinian babies are born at checkpoints in the Occupied Territories.

As we entered Nablus there were three makeshift tents by the side of the road where a seven-story building had stood before being knocked down by the Israelis. Part of the building had been a garage selling cars that were now mangled wreckage.

A man came running out and stopped our bus. He cried at our guide who translated the following: “Please, please tell the world what has happened here. We have no homes, we have no business, we have nothing. Who will come and help us? Please tell your Tony Blair what has happened. Even the Arabs won’t help us. We were given five minutes to get out of here by the army before they blew up our building”. “Nobody hears our plight and no one cares.” Just then, our guide, himself a Palestinian broke down in tears and sobbed as he stammered through the final words of this wretched man. “Please help us. Even the animals in Europe have a better life than we have.”

Our group fell silent and virtually everyone was moist eyed as we pulled away, but his pathetic cries barely prepared us for what we saw in Nablus’s historic old city. Tiny warren-like streets had been sprayed with shells from Apache helicopter gunships. Rooftops blown apart by F16 jets and bullet marks scarred walls, windows and doors. Men, women and children were expressionless as we were taken through the streets that had been devastated by the might of the Israeli army.

Please help us. Even the animals in Europe have a better life than we have

We then arrived at Ramallah where the siege of Yasser Arafat's headquarters had finally been lifted. The delegation pushed its way through 7ft high barricades of sandbags and up a staircase to see the Palestinian leader in his battered presidential compound.

We were taken to his Spartan, oblong office where he sat at the end of a long table with a handgun by his right side. He barely raised an eyebrow as he was told Israeli leader Ariel Sharon planned to have him exiled. The silence was almost deafening and then he replied in a cool, calm voice: "I will die here (West Bank) fighting before I go to exile. They can kill me but they cannot exile me."

Mr Sharon renewed his exile threat after cutting short his Washington visit because of a Palestinian suicide bombing near Tel Aviv that killed 15 Israelis. Arafat condemned the suicide bombing and promised that steps would be taken to try to prevent them. He said for the first time that he would consider calls to unify the diverse Palestinian security forces.

Israel, the US and European governments have been pressing Mr Arafat to bring his Palestinian police, the border guards, his own personal guard Force 17 and other security branches together to make them more effective in tackling the Palestinian militant groups responsible for suicide attacks.

Mr Arafat, who had just been released from an Israeli siege, took questions from a British parliamentary delegation, led by Labour MP George Galloway, and accompanied by British journalists, about security and the prospects of reviving a peace process. He was not optimistic of a diplomatic solution in the near future and feared that Mr Sharon was about to embark on another military offensive. Mr Sharon "is threatening to continue his military escalation either here in the West Bank or on the Gaza Strip. He mentioned it clearly."

Mr Arafat, whose health has sharply deteriorated since last summer, still looked pale and feeble after being holed up in one room of his compound for six weeks. The compound itself is littered with rubble, wrecked cars and other debris from the attack. He was adamant that he will not be forced out of the Palestinian Authority territory: "This is my homeland. I was living here before he [Sharon] arrived in this country. I was born here in Jerusalem beside the Wailing Wall. My mother's family is from this area [in Ramallah]."

Asked if he could understand the mindset of the suicide bombers, he replied: "What the Israelis are doing is humiliating our people, killing or people, making massacres

everywhere. No doubt this is creating a very bad but strong reaction, especially from this small group of youths who have lost any hope to live".

"We are not asking for the moon. Sharon said no to the international conference. How can he dare refuse the international conference? How is this acceptable? There must be a big and quick push to stop this. Our people are paying a very high price," he said.

By a big push, he meant that the US had to put pressure on Israel as it had in the past, as George Bush's father had done in getting an Israel-Palestinian peace process underway more than ten years ago. It was a particularly poignant meeting for George Galloway who first met Arafat in a bombed out, shelled office in Beirut, 25 years ago. His visit to the Ramallah compound gave the Labour MP a feeling of déjà vu, 25 years on.

We left and headed for Jenin. At the final checkpoint we were delayed for more than an hour by nervous young conscripts armed with AK-47's. Determined to gain access to the town our party remained patiently for more than an hour. We had been assured that all the checkpoints in the area were aware of our delegation and had been instructed by senior officials to give us a free passage – however these particular young soldiers refused to let us through for more than an hour.

Eventually we were allowed through but our euphoria at getting access was short-lived. What we found in Jenin was beyond comprehension. A huge swathe of homes had been reduced to rubble and townsfolk were still searching for bodies, a week later.

A young Palestinian boy, probably no more than nine, looked at me and said: "There is no point in rebuilding. There is no hope, no-one cares about us. The outside world doesn't care." I could barely meet his penetrating gaze and the lump in my throat remained with me for several hours.

A man called Marwan got hold of my arm and told me how he watched his 18-year old brother bleed to death after he was hit by a shard of metal from a tank shell. It took eight hours before the teenager gave up his fight for live. "The Israelis would not let ambulances in to Jenin, nor the injured out. I couldn't do anything for him although a doctor who examined his body said he could have been saved with medical attention," said Marwan.

What we found in Jenin was beyond comprehension. A huge swathe of homes had been reduced to rubble and townsfolk were still searching for bodies, a week later

I went to walk away but he pulled me back and told me how, two days later, his 58-year old mother was hit by a metal splinter that pierced her skull. She had been preparing a family meal in the home when the building, now rubble, was shelled. “My father pleaded with the soldiers to get medical aid and let in the ambulances. She bled to death after ten hours.”

But perhaps the most disturbing aspect of my visit to Jenin came right at the end when I was shown a ‘top secret’ military map the

Israeli Army had left behind among the rubble. It clearly showed an aerial photograph of the entire town with certain houses targeted for military action and included the 500 by 700 metre section in the centre of the town which was obliterated by the army using an array of weapons designed for a major war.

The map was originally dated 1997 and was then updated in 1999 - and clearly indicates the Jenin atrocity had been planned at the height of the peace talks.



Information on Palestine

www.aqsa.org.uk

Journal – Referenced articles from previous issues of Al Aqsa.

Newsletter – Quarterly printed by Friends of Al Aqsa.

Publications – History of al Masjidul Aqsa and Guide to al Masjidul Aqsa.

Flyers – On Jerusalem, Refugees, al Masjidul Aqsa, UN Resolutions and Much More

News From Palestine – Important news and views from Palestine.

Photographic Gallery – Photos from the ground in Palestine.

Book Reviews – Reviews on books related to Palestinian issues.

PLUS * CAMPAIGNS * ACTIVITIES * EVENTS AND * MUCH, MUCH MORE

Justice in Palestine – Conference Report

Indaba Hotel, Sandton (Johannesburg)
Saturday, 20th July 2002*

Khalid Dhorat

Shaykh Ebrahim Bham, General Secretary of Jamiatul Ulama Transval began addressing the delegates at a packed conference hall emphasising that justice is the objective of every person, giving everyone his fair due. This encompasses all dimensions of life, as well as all dilemmas in life. Scientists demonstrate that humans can live beneath the ocean, and in space, but the portion in-between (the earth) is becoming difficult to live in. The current world atrocities, particularly in Palestine, are an example of this.

Shaykh Ebrahim further emphasized there are two impediments for justice: Love and hatred. When there is an excess of this in either case, justice will not be reached.

I hope that justice will prevail in Palestine, a land much revered by several religions, but riddled with injustice which bears an uncanny resemblance to Apartheid South Africa. The resemblance diverges in that in Israel, persecution with helicopter gun-ships, and other forms of military hardware takes place, whereas in the “Bantustans” in South Africa, this did not happen.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s epitomisation of hardship in a township was read out which appeared in the Sunday Tribune, which also showed that there is an uncanny resemblance to Israel. Many politicians in South Africa also feel the same frustration, and share the same sentiments on Israel, “Lies written in ink can not be blotted out by truth written in blood.”

The tone set by Shaykh Ebrahim was endorsed by all the speakers, without exception. The Opening address was by the Rt Hon Mr Abdul Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, South Africa. Who called upon all the South Africans to work

together with the Palestinians in their oppression. ‘Let us look back not in anger, but in hope. Palestinians have suffered enough’.

He continued by stating, ‘this meeting affords us the opportunity to better understand the plight of the Palestinians and to chart the way forward. The Palestinians must have an independent State, there is no such a thing as a peaceful settlement now in the face of Israel’s continued breach of human rights and UN resolutions, and flaunting of human dignity’.

He finally again reiterated that the South Africans must do everything they can to ease the problem.

The second to take the the floor was the Rt Hon Abdullah Omar, Minister of Transport, who drew parallels between Israel and South Africa under Apartheid.

Mr Omar cautioned not to transfer the ANC policy wholesale to the Holy Land. He was particularly clear in emphasizing that it is not possible to negotiate from a point of weakness.

The final speaker of the morning session was Hannan Ramahi, A School Principle, from Ramallah. The school works to reacclimatize foreign Palestinians who decide to return home. She discussed about her personal experiences and began by narrating her difficulties in getting to South Africa.

‘I left Ramallah two days before flight time whilst still in a state of curfew, the journey which should have taken her few hours. At various checkpoints, she pretended to be sick, suffering from chest pains’.

Humans can live beneath the ocean, and in space, but the portion in-between (the earth) is becoming difficult to live in

Love and hatred. When there is an excess of this in either case, justice will not be reached.

* Friends of Al-Aqsa in conjunction with Jamiatul Ulama Transvaal and KwaZulu Natal (Council of Muslim Theologians), Al-Aqsa Foundation (South Africa) and the Muslim Judicial Council (Cape Town).

Apartheid was smashed between a hammer and an anvil – ‘the hammer of the arms struggle and the anvil of international solidarity

She stated, ‘curfew and siege are the most difficult forms of collective punishment, it is as though someone else has the total control over your life. As one vegetates at home, the worries become intensified’.

To compound the problem, ‘there is no water, telephone, and electricity. You see only tanks going by. A feeling that Israel is too strong tends to grip you, and helplessness sets in’.

‘What hurts the most is the silence of the International community. Such silence will lay heavily on their conscience. Children can not play in the street, attend school, and many of the sick lose their lives as they can not reach hospital. Pregnant, the sick, and the injured, die at roadblocks. Israel is stalling, it is a lost cause. We will win, it is only a matter of time’, she emphasized.

The second session’s chair was Ebrahim Fakude and first welcomed Mr David Makula, Provincial secretary of the ANC, who discussed, ‘The role of the ANC in the Palestinian Cause’.

He emphasized on seven points:

1. In South Africa, our solidarity action should be based on what the Palestinians want. We will not and should not dictate their strategy.
2. There are too many fragmented factions on the issue, this conference should bring all this together. All of South Africa should pool into a united front, or else we will weaken the struggle. We must look at the struggle as a long-drawn one, and mobilize for the long-term effort needed. This conference should lay the basis to do this. The UDM (United Democratic Movement) was formed in this way.
3. We need to intensify efforts. Governments are there to be pressurized; on their own, they are vulnerable and have their own limitations. Even at the diplomatic level, more can be done if there is a united voice.
4. This is a defining and dividing issue in international relations. South Africa is clear where it stands. We have to demand justice for the Palestinians. However, in South Africa, you cannot stand on the other side of the fence. Progressive people cannot be those who do not support the Palestinian cause.
5. In the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, the South African government will use the

opportunity to have a day for the Palestinians. All “progressives” will support it. The September 11 distortion of international relations will be highlighted, which is nothing but an attempt of supporting terrorism in line with Bush’s position.

6. There is a huge problem with our local media reports. The public broadcaster should be conscious of their reporting. CNN broadcasted for over 12 hours a day on the national broadcaster when it is well known that it is biased. Many ordinary people are not getting the truth. Not only Palestine, but news of the entire Middle East, like Iraq, is manipulated.
7. Finally, governments require social mobilization to push the message through, as on their own, they are vulnerable.

George Galloway, MP of the UK Labour Party, took to the floor with a big ovation who discussed, ‘USA: Honest Peace Broker?’

He began with his experience Seventeen years ago in South Africa, he said, ‘I found myself in a police cell in Guguletu (Cape Town) facing the hot breath of Sergeant Campbell for speaking out against apartheid. Today, I would like to say to him. ‘We are victorious, and will also be victorious in Palestine’.

Apartheid was smashed between a hammer and an anvil – ‘the hammer of the arms struggle and the anvil of international solidarity, including ostracism and boycott. The hammer, without the anvil would not have succeeded. Both need each other. Racist Zionism can be defeated using the same mechanism’.

‘I spent my entire life in the British left, and working with many currents. Since September 11, we have marched three times with tens of thousands of people on Trafalgar Square. This year on September 28, we will put the biggest crowds ever there. Look out for it!! People will be made to see the double-standards of the west. The problems in the East will be shown to be the result of prejudiced western policy towards them’.

September 11 has unleashed a swamp of bin Laden fever, he said, ‘How many mosquitoes can you kill in a swamp? You can never get rid of them unless you drain

them of the hatred. Unless the west reforms their policy, no matter how many countries they bomb or destabilize, the problem will always re-arise in ever more violent and negative forms’.

Is USA an honest broker? ‘I recall the story of the scorpion and the dog. The scorpion asks the dog to give him a lift over the river. The dog says: “No, you will sting me,” but then he feels pity and agrees. Half way across the river, the scorpion stings the dog. The dog, in his dying moments, asks: “Why did you do that?” “Because I am a scorpion!!!” Israel is the same. It is supported by a people who like imperialism. Not because they like Jews, or hate Arabs. Israel, from the beginning, and now, is a strategic asset for imperialism in the Middle East. Maintaining Israel equates maintaining imperialism in the Middle East’.

To make his point he reminded, ‘Minister Balfour was a Jew hater. He promised the land of one people, to a second people, for the settlement of a third people. The vast majority of Jews at this time were in the front of progressive politics in the world. Israel was promised to a tiny minority of Zionists. The Palestinians were least consulted in this “journey to hell”, he put it this way, “A people without a land for land without people.” His motivation was thus not to favour the Jews, but to get rid of them’.

‘It has been 100 years, the Arab lands are still ruled by puppets who are impotent. The Arab regimes even shot down people who wished to show solidarity to people affected by oppression in the Middle East. The bankrupt Arab system is not helping Palestine, but is complicit and collaborating in the massacre of the Palestinians.

If the USA continues to support Zionism, it cannot be regarded as an honest broker. The UK and France fell by the wayside in their support, but the USA continued with this in order to promote imperialism. Every Palestinian child knows that if it were not for the USA, they would not be persecuted. The F16s and the Apache Helicopter is given free to the Israelis. Twenty five million dollars a day from the USA taxpayers funds find their way into the Israeli treasury, besides various other private funds’.

The USA fooled the Arabs in the Gulf War. They said: “Help us to destroy an Arab country (Iraq), and we promise you that the Palestinian issue will be settled.” The Arabs joined, and were betrayed. The Oslo Accords was also a disaster, it was nothing but a confidence trick.

‘The Palestinian hammer will be in action for a long time, and we have to be there as

the anvil. We have to give unconditional support to everything the Palestinians decide, not only to this issue or that.

What the Palestinians want is beginning to change. They supported Oslo, now no more. They will now fight for freedom of their entire country. For a start, they are asking South Africans to boycott Israel. No one should buy a single item made in Israel. No civilized person should go as a visitor, to attend a function, conference, etc to Israel. Should there really be an Israeli Embassy in free, democratic South Africa? A confident people like you who fought the beast of racism can achieve this’.

The final speaker of the second session was the Jewish minister of South Africa the Rt Hon Mr Ronnie Kasrils, Minister of Forestry and Water whose theme was, ‘Inequitable Distribution of resources between Israel and Palestine’.

‘Whenever I don the Arab scarf, the symbol of the Palestinian struggle, it gives me an identity of my Jewishness. Jews also have a similar scarf, which they use when praying’.

Zionism, he said, ‘ must never succeed in doing what it is doing. There will always be Jews who will stand up against Zionism and what Israel is doing, although it has brainwashed many but it is not compatible with Judaism’. He recalled, ‘as a child, we were encouraged to donate our pennies to Israel for the planting of trees. I later learnt that trees are planted upon the remains of bulldozed Arab villages to mask the cries of the affected, and to prevent their return’. ‘The West would like to see the developing world kept in a subjugated way all the time, so that equitable competition on the open market is impossible for developing countries’.

He concluded by saying, ‘Israel is a colonial power, and has strong parallels with apartheid South Africa. It is an anomaly, as Rabbi David Goldblood said: “Israel is the last colonial power.”

The final session was chaired by Ismail Adam Patel, who welcomed Rev. Njongonkulu Ndungane, Anglican Church of South Africa, to discuss, ‘Human Rights Violations’

His message was, ‘Everyone are members of the human community, all people are created in God’s image. Everyone has dignity and worth. No life is indispensable. Every person is important in the eyes of God. This makes us concerned of Palestine too’.

Whenever I don the Arab scarf, the symbol of the Palestinian struggle, it gives me an identity of my Jewishness

Apartheid was nothing compared to what we saw

He further stated, 'this is God's world, and we have a responsibility in it in order to share in it so as to live in dignity. Christian scriptures say that we are all God's works of art. We are concerned where there is no peace, and where there is violence.

Various UN Resolutions have been passed, we only ask for their implementation. All groups have to work together to bring about peace'.

I visited Jerusalem accompanied by Archbishop Tutu and emphasized, 'apartheid was nothing compared to what we saw'. 'Recently, the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem called upon the Church the world over to pray for peace in the region. The problems of the Middle East is not only an issue for the Muslim or the Jewish people, it is for all. God's people should live in peace wherever they may be. Christians, Jews, and Muslims are part of one Abrahamic faith, apart from sharing a common humanity. All are guardians of eternal values, values that respect sovereignty and independence, worth, and dignity, and that recognizes that we will be accountable before God.

No one should suffer alone, no one should die alone, let us show that we are in solidarity. When the Middle East sneezes, we all cough, so the matter concerns us all. Nothing is impossible for those who have faith. Struggles for freedom is like running a marathon which requires strength and stamina.'

The next to take the floor was Rev. Canon Naim Ateek, from Jerusalem who is the Chair of the Sabeel, Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. He discussed, 'Christians in Palestine'

'I bring you greetings from the Muslims and Christians of Jerusalem. I am an original Palestinian Arab of Bizan, a town with abundance of water and vegetation. In 1948, the Zionists occupied the town. They gave us an ultimatum of two hours to get out, and 6000 people were evacuated. A similar thing happened to 100s of villages. The villages were then bulldozed so as to prevent any return of the Palestinians. Israel did not differentiate between Muslims and Christians in their persecutions.

The Christian community of Palestine is the oldest in the world. It was here, in Bethlehem, that Jesus was born, and he was brought up in Nazareth. He ministered around the sea of Galilee. Jesus suffered and died, and was raised to life here by the power of God. On the day of Pentecost, the Church was born here. On that day of Pentecost, 3000 people believed in God and were baptized in

this land. The Book of Acts provides their names. The day of Pentecost implied that Christianity was to spread, and not be restricted to one place. Christianity thus spread beginning from Palestine.

Palestine had a population of approximately two million people at the time of Jesus. It was a melting pot of people then, the Romans, Greeks, Samaritans, Cannonites, Arabs, Jews and others. By the 1st Century, Palestine became a Christian country, and most of the Jews left.

Between the 5th and 7th century, the Christian community weakened due to five major factors in principle:

1. Internal Christian struggle. Theological controversies devastated the whole Middle East.
2. The coming of Islam in the 7th century, and the new relationship with the Muslims who conquered it in 736 AD.
3. Coming of the Crusades who were western Christians, not only against the Muslims, but against the Eastern Christians too.
4. The rise of western powers and colonialism in the 18th century.
5. The rise of Zionism and the establishment of Israel.

In the 19th century, there was a steady flow of immigration of Christians from Palestine to Latin America in order to escape Turkish rule, as well as North America, USA, and Canada.

Many think that Christians in Palestine were first Muslims, then they became Christian. Before Islam too, there were already many Arab Christians, just like some Greek and the Cannonite Christians. There are also certain Palestinian's who are neither Muslims nor Christians, like the Armenians.

Most of the Palestinian Christians have left the Israeli occupied territories and now they represent only 2% of the population, around 150,000.

The main challenges, which Muslims also share with us, are: 1. Unity: There are many denominations. 2. Many still emigrate, especially to North America. There are many forced emigrations too as Israel has revoked their citizenship. Israel's policy is that there cannot be more than 30% of the entire population who are non-Jews. If there are more than 30% of non-Jews, the 'excess' are deported to maintain the balance. 3. Islamic fundamentalism, which emerged in the first Intifada in the late 1980s. One of the problems was that it started off on the premise that Palestine

Israel's policy is that there cannot be more than 30% of the entire population who are non-Jews. If there are more than 30% of non-Jews, the 'excess' are deported

was exclusive to Islam, and the Jews spoke of it as exclusive to them, and brought scriptural proof to the effect. The ideal would have been that Palestine was for the Palestinians, irrespective of race and creed. However, the problem started with the Jewish Fundamentalism, and not the Muslims, in the 1970s. 4. Christian Zionism an aberration, started in Europe, then moved to the USA, supports the State of Israel blindly. They believe in the second coming of Jesus, so Jews must all return to Israel. They need to build the Temple of Solomon on the site of the Dome of the Rock. The Christian Zionist do not regard us as Christians. 5. We all struggle for justice and peace. The ideal is one state, not two. One democratic state where Muslims, Jews, and Christians can live side by side. Israel insists on a Jewish State, and everyone speaks of it in these terms. We want to build a culture of peace and democracy. How do you build it under 50 years of occupation? Daily, things become worse, at least I can move about where I want, but others cannot. There are many challenges, and we are working to find solutions. We need strong faith in God, the God of Justice, and we hope that Muslims and Christians can build a country of justice, peace, and above all, reconciliation and healing’.

The final speaker of the day was Dr Azzam Tamimi, from the UK, who discussed, ‘Trends of Political Thought in Palestine: Past and Present’.

‘The Palestine problem cannot be disjointed from the outcome of the World War I, which was aimed at changing the entire world. Trends diverged in three ways: 1. Diagnosis, 2. Vision, and 3. Remedy or methodology.

Almost the entire Jewish population of present-day Israel are immigrants, or children of immigrants. They started coming in large numbers in the name of Zionism, and after the “blessing” of the British. Most Jews were opposed to settling in Israel before the coming of the Messiah. Their scriptures prohibited this, and they settled in every part of the world except Israel.

For 13 centuries, Muslims and Jews co-existed peacefully, and Muslims gave Jews sanctuary from European persecution on many a time. Asylum were given to them in all places, however the Jews themselves desisted from settling down in Palestine due to their scriptural prohibition.

The problem in Palestine is not a religious one or a communal one, but one of invasion. This must never be forgotten.

Three strategies of the colonialists:

1. Divide and rule via territorial states. The formation of 22 Arab states was not what the Arabs chose. The victors of world War I needed to perpetuate their victory, and they did this by dividing the Arabs.
2. Plant military outposts to perpetrate paralysis, division, and discord. Israel is one such outpost in the Middle East.
3. Promote nationalism and secularism to weaken, if not uproot, any element of resistance. The whole message of Islam came to break such nationalistic divisions. In Islam, the standard of preference is piety. Nationalism, is territorial, he is a Moroccan, Algerian, Jordanian etc.

They needed to create a division and it was the ‘Ulama and the Sufis amongst the Muslims who resisted the colonialists like ‘Umar ibn Mukhtar and the Mahdi. They only relied on the awqaf (pious endowments) and their credibility as leaders of the Ummah to lead the resistance. Their call to jihad was heeded. The colonialists needed to isolate them, and they propagated to remove the clergy, but there is no clergy in Islam. They introduced the secularization of religion. Today, Arabs need a visa to visit another Arab country. They created the Arab countries in a way to suffocate the whole area.

The value of justice is not relative, it is absolute. A Zionist State is pure racism like Apartheid. Will you South Africans accept something (bantustans) that you abhorred for yourself, and wish it for the Palestinians? There are already 22 Arab stupid states, why do you want another one?

Don’t fall for the notion of a modern territorial state, it is only to perpetuate colonialist designs. You do not share your home with a burglar and a thief, why wish this for the Palestinians.

What about the forgotten refugees? Over 5 million are rotting in the refugee camps of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza (the most densely populated place on earth), and West Bank, but they keep up their spirits. All these people were forced out from their homes and land.

Israel is the only country who has legalized torture. Sharon enters into Masjid al-Aqsa, which sparks of the third Intifada. A surat in the Qur’an will not allow us to

Almost the entire Jewish population of present-day Israel are immigrants, or children of immigrants

Will you South Africans accept something (bantustans) that you abhorred for yourself, and wish it for the Palestinians?

forget the sanctity of Masjid al-Aqsa. "Don't mess with our Mosque!" The Al-Aqsa Intifada is horrendous, and there has been many casualties, but the Palestinians are not complaining. They are the victims, and they have the right to fight. Our history is made by blood and sweat.'

DISCUSSIONS

Question: There is a need to take a united approach to free Palestine from occupation. Is it possible for South Africans to unify the various groups engaged in the struggle within Palestine?

Answer (Abdullah Omar): We cannot dictate as to how the Palestinians should do things. We must only find a way of ensuring that the struggle remains united. The Palestinians must decide themselves as to who must lead them.

Question: How did South Africa unify against the apartheid regime?

Answer 1 (Abdullah Omar): We operated on a few levels: military level, the underground struggle, mass mobilization, and a concerted campaign to isolate the apartheid regime internationally. We tried to mobilize the masses on immediate small-term objectives like protesting against the evil pass-laws, which would not bring about the demise of apartheid, but would bring the people together and focus on the larger issues.

Answer 2 (Hannan Ramahi): The international community should stop dictating to the different Palestinian factions on how to resist, they should only support in whichever way they can. This is creating a fissure. For us, time is not an issue, ultimately we will win as the Israeli struggle is illegitimate. Sharon is buying time: the wall, the siege and the curfew are only stalling measures.

Question: What is the definition of occupation? Is occupation in 1948 correct, and in the 1980's not correct?

Answer 1 (Aziz Pahad): Since 1967, 27% of land was ceded to Palestine, but in the last few months (after the coming of Sharon), most of it are now occupied by Israeli troops. Despite the UN resolutions and the pressure of many governments, the Israelis continue with their illegal settlements unabated. Under occupation, Palestinians cannot work in Israel, and much of Palestinian resources have to come through Israel. Thus far, 7.2 billion dollars worth of damage has been done to Palestinian infrastructure. We need to

understand what the Palestinians have sacrificed, they can not sacrifice any more. The illegal settlements on Palestinian land must be removed.

Answer 2 (George Galloway): I first supported the demand of one democratic state for both Israel and Palestine, as I did not support an exclusivist position (be it Jewish or Muslim). However, now I am in solidarity with the Palestinian resistance movement, whatever they decide I will follow. I boast of a 25-year friendship with Arafat, and I have just returned from Palestine. The Zionists, headed by Sharon, are killing the two-state compromise, and they have assassinated the Oslo Accords. The Palestinians are now saying that the Zionists will never agree to an independent State for them, and they are ready for a prolonged war, a war in which they will attempt to free their entire people and land.

Question: For civil society, there needs to be a commitment beyond the occasional march, Quds day, or conferences. On a governmental level, what diplomatic commitments will the South African government give, towards bringing peace?

Answer 1 (Aziz Pahad): We start by acknowledging that South Africa is the strongest in the whole of Africa on the Palestinian issue. However, whatever action we take or do not take, it must be motivated by an ultimate objective. We must do something meaningful, not just something for the sake of doing something. The matter should be constantly reviewed. We will do things in consultations with the relevant people.

Answer 2 (George Galloway): There is nothing wrong with marches and conferences. It helps to aggregate the consciousness, which is important, but there can be more effective moves. Twenty-two years ago, I flew the Palestinian flag in Dundee (UK), it was radicalism then; today however, the people of Dundee have the most consciousness of the issue, and refer to the cause as "our cause." I argue in the boycott campaign in England that we should target boycotting selected goods made in the USA, goods (like Coke and Nike, and smoking Marlborough), and those made in Israel. In countries like Egypt, it is already happening. The boycott against McDonalds has been so effective that it had to change its name. USA is responsible for Israeli aggression, thus it must also be boycotted.

Answer 3 (Ronnie (Kasrils): The Muslims who number just over one million in South Africa are a minority; all South Africans should thus be mobilized like Hindus and Christians who were also in the fight against Apartheid. Look trans-religion. The international community sees South Africa in a special way as we occupy the moral high ground. Marches and protests are important, but leaders from all fronts are needed and all should strategize and also work in their communities at grassroots level.

Question: The new-left (anti-globalization) movement is now growing in the world. The Palestinian campaign can also be taken to this level. Why do Arab leaders still ask the US to intervene in the Palestinian issue, and could the European Union assume the position as lead peace broker?

Answer (George Galloway): There is no problem to appeal to the USA for help, but the mistake would be to count on it, and to think they will do the job as you wish it to be done. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a catastrophe as the balance in the world politics was lost. I support the European Union, and feel that Europe should develop a political weight commensurate to its economic weight. In Europe, the UK is still on the fence: is it part of the USA or part of Europe? However,

the EU is currently developing independent positions. China in 50 years will be in a position to lead; they refuse to be presently drawn into confrontation as they quietly amass their strength. The Soviet is slowly regaining their dignity, and the Arabs will someday regain unity. The USA will then recede from the scene.

Question: People are concerned of the current leadership in the USA, how can the USA public be mobilized?

Answer (George Galloway): Only mass movements can put weight to what government demands. Demands on government should be backed by mass support. In the UK, people have some idea, but the USA is a long way down. The few voices that were there were drowned after September 11. Do not wait for USA to do something, do something in your country. We should support Palestine because of specific injustices committed against them, and be against Israel because they perpetrate them.

The day ended with a vote of thanks from the Palestinian Ambassador Mr Arifi and dua by Shaykh Abbas 'Ali Jeena, President of the Jamiatul 'Ulama Transvaal.



To receive news updates on Palestine visit

www.aqsa.org.uk

Register your E-Mail address



Al Aqsa
www.aqsa.org.uk

Quarterly Newsletter II FEB 2002

Are Israelis stealing body parts?

The bodies of Palestinian children have been violated by Israeli doctors and their vital organs extracted, according to a disturbing report by Islamic Association of Palestine based in occupied Palestine. The three Palestinian children, who had been murdered by Israeli soldiers ten days earlier, have allegedly had their organs illegally removed by Israeli doctors at the L. Greenberg Institute of Forensic Medicine at Abu Kabir.

In a separate investigation, The Jerusalem Post reports that the Greenberg Institute has been charged with the retention of body parts from Israeli soldiers. MK Anat Maor, Chair of the Knesset Science & Technology Committee, has called on Health Minister, Nissim Dahan, to immediately suspend the Director of the Institute, Professor Yehuda Hiss. The Ministry, which owns and supervises the Institute, had identified body tissue illegally stored there as belonging to four soldiers whose bodies had undergone autopsies.

Maor said the country's only forensic institute "treats bodies as if they are its personal property, holds them without approval and in contravention to the law, violates the sanctity of the dead, and prevents the families from carrying out their right to bring [all parts] of their dear ones' bodies to burial."

She added that the institute "is run almost as an underground facility, with more hidden than revealed, and this seriously harms its professionalism and reputation, thereby minimizing its legitimacy in the eyes of the public. She called on Internal Security Minister Uzi Landau to speed up the police investigation, which "was to begin three months ago but was launched only this week."

Health Ministry Associate Director General, Yitzhak Berlovich, told the Post that he did not know when the police would finish its investigation. "Until then," he said, "we have no basis to suspend Prof. Hiss, who is a civil servant." Last Spring the Greenberg Institute was put under the direct control of Berlovich, who suspended all research activity and obtained funds to renovate the 70-year-old building, whose autopsy rooms and refrigeration facilities were reportedly in a terrible condition.

This followed serious allegations by the Jerusalem Post, that the country's sole institution for autopsies in cases of unnatural death, had been involved in "selling" body parts removed from corpses without the families consent, to medical research institutes for use by medical students – a criminal offence. The paper also claimed that when the bodies were returned for burial, the organs were not returned but replaced by "broomsticks, cotton wool, garden hoses," and other objects to fill out the corpses.

Attorney Nitzana Darshan-Leitner, who has accused Hiss twice of violating corpses in cases she represented, is also calling for his suspension. In 1998, Darshan-Leitner sued the institute on behalf of the family of Alistair Sinclair, a Scotsman who died under mysterious circumstances in the Ben-Gurion Airport lockup. The institute conducted an autopsy and then sent the body back to Sinclair's parents, who discovered that their son's heart and other organs were missing. The institute sent the parents a heart and other missing organs, but the family is still not certain they belonged to their son, said Darshan-Leitner.

The Health Ministry told the Post it had no intention of taking any action against Professor Yehuda Hiss at the present time.

Syria Equates Israeli Action with Sept 11

Syria has equated the demolition of Palestinian homes by Israel, with the attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11th.

In his debut speech to the UN Security Council on 18 January 2002, Syrian representative, Fayssal Mekhad, also accused the UN of practising double standards in denouncing terrorism around the world but avoiding any condemnation of Israel.

He added: "We must note that the scene of tens of Palestinian houses demolished by Israeli tanks in the Rafah camps a few days ago, is not much different from the scene of the World Trade Centre destroyed by terrorists, whom we have all agreed here to combat and eliminate."

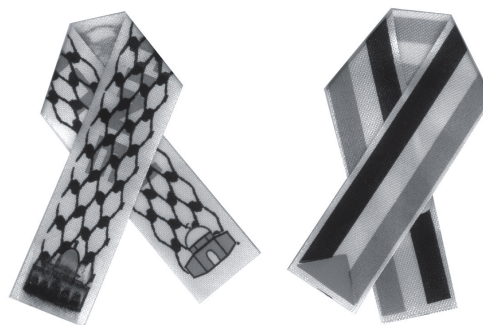
A US official described the comparison as "outrageous." "It's really unfortunate the Syrians took this opportunity of an open meeting on counter-terrorism to make what we saw as an outrageous speech. This is not the kind of speech we would expect to come from a responsible member of the Security Council," he said.

But Mekhad was unrepentant: "The problem is, if you only use one eye, you only see half the truth. Israel's 'daily acts' against the Palestinians, are war crimes, which require us to bring its perpetrators to justice."

Al Aqsa Newsletter: [FREE]
Published Quarterly. To be distributed via institutes and organisations. Please state quantity required.

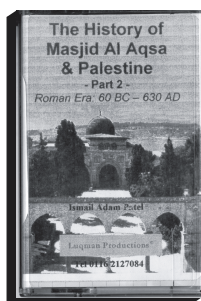


Bookmarks [FREE]



Ribbons [FREE]

Order single or large quantity for distribution



Audio Tapes

The History of Masjid Al Aqsa and Palestine

8 Audio cassettes in english
by Ismail Adam Patel,
based on lectures delivered in public

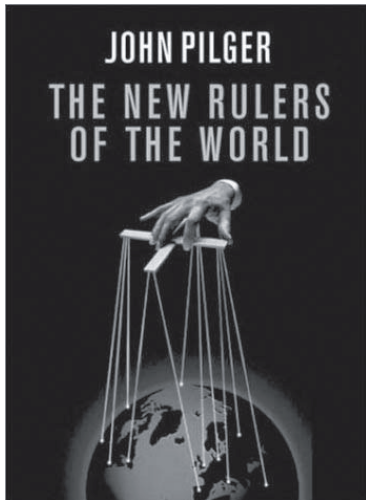
1. The Ancient Civilisation - upto 60 BC
2. The Roman Era - 60 BC-30BC
3. The Islamic Era - 630-1900
4. Birth of Zionism - 1890-1930
5. Under the British Mandate - 1930-47
6. The Nakba - 1947-67
7. Ethnic Cleansing - 1967-80
8. The Intifada Years - 1987-02

Complete set for UK residents £15.00 inc P.& P.
For overseas £20.00 [Cheques to be drawn on UK Banks only]

Cheque made payable to "Friends of Al Aqsa".
Post to: Friends of Al Aqsa, P.O. Box 5127, Leicester. LE2 0WU

THE NEW RULERS OF THE WORLD

by JOHN PILGER, Verso, London, Pp. 246. ISBN 1-85984-393-X. Price UK£17.95 HB



Mr John Pilger is no doubt a prodigy of his profession who with conscience, honesty and vividness takes the reader through the reality behind the façade of present day globalisation and democracy.

The four chapters covers to expose modern day myth makers, the media and politician, who shower themselves with undulating accolades and awards at the expense of humanity and justice.

The first chapter titled, 'The Model Pupil' reveals the real power behind General Suharto's seizure of power in Indonesia in the 1960s. The international corporate interest and Western governments' compliance in the genocide of over a million Indonesians is with evidence portrayed in a chilling way that will arouse any human being into shame for being part of Western 'civilisation' and despair against the mighty institutes at the same time.

In Nov 1967, following the capture of the 'greatest prize' the booty was handed out at a conference in Geneva. The American corporate magnets carved up sector by sector. They divided the country into five different sections: mining, services, light industry, banking and finance. "What Chase Manhattan did was sit with a delegation and hammer out policies that were going to be acceptable to them and other investors. You had these big corporate people going around the table, saying this is what we need..." the Indonesians merely obliged.

President Johnson wrote ..., "a magnificent story of opportunity seen and promise awakened". Wall Street

hailed the conquest. "The flow of American business has turned westward".

What the local Indonesian got if he survived Suharto's blood bath aided by America was exploitation by Western corporate companies like Gap.

The exploitation by 'Gap' of third world people is a classic example of a major brand where, women work in 40 degrees centigrade for as many hours as needed in cramped condition where even going to the toilet is routinely denied.

The workers taking home a wage of £10 a week, £1 a day to get pure water for drinking and what little is left for basic essentials for survival.

John Pilger exposes how once Indonesia owing nothing to the world is today indebted to the IMF at an estimated \$262 billion, "there is no debt like it on earth. It can never be repaid. It is a bottomless hole".

The second chapter, 'Paying the Price' describes the plight of the Iraqis and discusses Post September 11. A picture of a chilling reality with due concern is portrayed as it is shown how barbarity can be inflicted upon a fellow human once you mentally engineer your masses against 'them'.

The chapter begins with a quote from US Ambassador Madeleine Albright, when asked if the deaths of half a million Iraqi children were a price worth paying for sanctions she replied, 'We think the price is worth it...'

With evidence John Pilger proves what happened in the Gulf war was a form of nuclear warfare which has caused phenomenal rates of cancer amongst children. To compound the cruelty the UN's embargo on Iraq deny it equipment to decontaminate the battlefields and treat cancer patients.

John Pilger's thorough research brings quotes like that of Denis Halliday, who resigned after serving the UN for 34 years, 'I am resigning because the policy of economic sanctions is totally bankrupt. We are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is as simple as that...5,000 children are dying every month...I don't want to administer a programme that results in figures like these.'

The Oil for Food Programme reveals smoke screens behind which the UN is used to further destroy Iraqi people. Since 1996 Iraq has been allowed to sell some oil to pay for food. However, the money goes straight to an account controlled by the Security Council. Almost a third is not used on humanitarian aid, but pays the UN's expense, as well as reparation demanded by Kuwait and compensation claimed by oil companies.

In a damning way John Pilger exposes the US and British foreign policy which supported Saddam as he shows that within weeks of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the CIA was still feeding copious intelligence to Baghdad. Congressman Henry Gonzalez, said, 'Bush and his advisers financed, equipped and succoured the monster they later

set out to slay, and they were now burying the evidence.' In 2000, Hain, British Secretary of State, blocked a parliamentary request to publish the full list of law-breaking British companies. A prosecutor might ask why, then ask who killed the most innocent people in Iraq: Saddam Hussein, or British and American policy-makers? The answer may well put the murderous tyrant in second place.

The cruelty and insanity is highlighted during a debate in the British parliament, the parliament which was informed vaccines for Iraqi children against diphtheria and yellow fever would not be exported to Iraq as the children's' vaccine were, 'capable of being used in weapons of mass destruction'.

John Pilger quotes Thomas Friedland, The New York columnist that what Washington wants is 'an iron-fisted Iraqi junta', which would be 'the best of all worlds'. The clear conclusion is that they want another Saddam Hussein, rather like the one they had before 1991, who did as he was told.

The third chapter, 'The Great Game' lucidly exposes how western governments employ its military might in order to protect and promote western markets. The military might is used to allow western conglomerates to gain a foothold throughout the world. Terrorism and its genesis is also explored as John Pilger explains, 'Much was made of al Qaida training camps in Afghanistan, ...but these were kindergartens compared with the world's leading university of terrorism at Fort Benning in Georgia, USA. It trained some 60,000 Latin American soldiers,... 40 per cent of the cabinet ministers who served in the genocidal regimes of Lucas Garcia, Rios Montt and Mejia Victores in Guatemala are graduates.'

In the final chapter John Pilger exposes the exploitation of the aborigines by the white Australians behind a picture postcard image of Australia we have been brainwashed with. Much emphasis is placed on to 2002 Olympics held in Sydney behind a backdrop of Australian apartheid policies against aborigines and at the same time the reawakening of their struggle.

John Pilger argues, 'Like Britain and the US, Australia is a single-ideology state with two competing factions, discernible largely by the personalities of their politicians'.

New Rulers of the World is no doubt ground breaking not only because Pilger grinds against those with vested interest and power to do harm but for its stark reality, courage and style of writing.

This book is a must for all in an era where the western governments major policy is to invert reality for its vested interest and the greater public lay idly indifferent, as John Pilger says, 'Australians don't want their fun spoiled by social reality, but it's fair to say most would weep if they were taken on a tour of black sporting in Australia.'

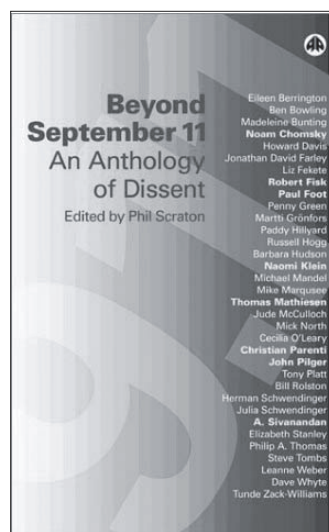
This book is no doubt a tour we all must traverse for the benefit of humanity.

Leicester

Abu Huzayfa

Beyond September 11: An Anthology of Dissent

Edited by PHIL SCRATON. Published by Pluto Press, 2002. Pages 251. Price £10.99 pb. ISBN 0-7453-1962-9



The devastating impact of September 11 left most of the world profoundly shocked. The impact within the Western world was to silence dissent and any alternative views to those of its political and military leadership.

However, it has not been all cosy for the hawks in the West and for those crying out for indiscriminate vengeance. Barely a year after the tragic events Phil Scraton has selected an anthology that challenges the wisdom of the powerhouses of America and the west. They are definitely not 'with us' as President Bush may want it but they are definitely for humanity and in the end despite Bush's amblyopic view for his country's and democracy's side.

This anthology is made up of 35 people and includes some of the most respected individuals in the academia, media and civil rights movement. Some from the academia include – Noam Chomsky, Jonathan Farley, Paddy Hillyard, Philip A Thomas and many others. From the media the contributors include - Robert Fisk, John Pilger, Madeleine Bunting, Paul Foot and Naomi Klein.

The topics vary from the morality of politics, America's Jihad, concept of terrorism to if Usama bin Laden had been a woman?

This book is a breath of fresh air and a glimmer of hope for humanity, as it proves not all, in this age of computer and super highway, have been infected by the 'white house' bug.

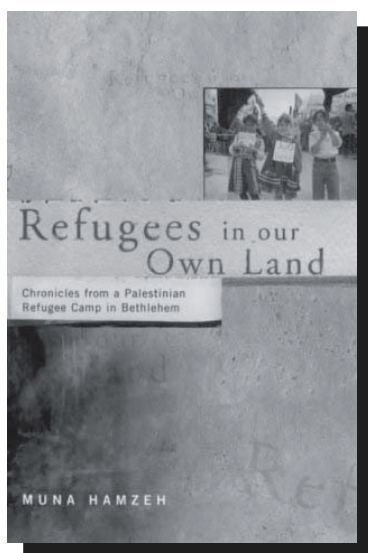
Beyond September 11's, contributors are the brave and strong of the community who not only have resisted the contamination of the 'white house' virus but have been working towards the immunising of others.

Leicester

Abu Huzayfa

Refugees in our Own Land: Chronicles from a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Bethlehem

by MUNA HAMZEH. Pluto Press, London, 2001.
Pp.166. ISBN: 0-7453-1652-2 (HB).



The reality of life as a Palestinian refugee is recounted within these pages with all the emotion of a people who have been refugees in their own homeland, for over half a century. A people whose sufferings have been ignored by the world community at large and who have been branded as terrorists while defending their homes, land and lives, often with mere stones. It gives a rare insight into what life is like for these refugees, many of them still carrying the keys to the homes from which they or their parents were evicted.

The Jerusalem born author, Muna Hamzeh, whose Christian mother and Muslim father were both half Palestinian and Lebanese returned to her occupied land of birth in 1989 from America, as a US citizen on a tourist visa, as paradoxically that was her only opportunity for entry into the country. From the First Intifada until a few months after the beginning of the Second Intifada, she continued to live as and write about the Palestinian refugee from her own perspective – personal testimonies of everyday events in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp, the largest of three camps located in Bethlehem and one of the oldest of the 59 Palestinian Refugee Camps established after 1948.

Hence, the book comprises of two parts; the author's diary kept between October and December 2000, the three months following the beginning of the Second Intifada; and a collection of her essays, offering glimpses of days in Dheisheh, since 1990. The second part of the book is thus chronologically earlier than the first part, which can be confusing to the reader.

This book does not give an analysis of the political, historical or theological backdrop, nor does it offer any in-depth solutions, rather it provides an idea of the social, sociological and psychological problems of the

Palestinian refugees in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp. Nonetheless, the reader becomes gradually aware that the Intifada is not sparked by terrorism, but it is the last resort of a helpless people in their search for justice, and that Palestine is not about religious affiliations or sympathies, but about Israeli state apartheid. In fact, these pages give vent to the anguish and humiliation of life under apartheid. The double standards of the UN when dealing with the 'Palestinian problem', the impotence of the Arab regimes and the Palestinian Authority's corruption are other sore points. Repetition and reiteration through the book, serve to emphasise the sense of frustration felt by the Palestinians at the lack of constructive action.

Yet, what makes this book unique, is the voices of the ordinary people that are audible through Hamzeh's narrative ('No one even thinks about death. We only think about an end to Israel's aggression against us' p.6. 'Ceasefires are reached between fighting armies, and we are not an army. We are civilians who are fed up with Israel's occupation of our land.' p.12.). The desperation which is so tangible, particularly in the emotionally charged journal entries, also provide an insight into the lengths that these ordinary people may go in their quest for justice; the suicide bomber, a case in point.

Moreover, due to the book's informal style, the human element, largely missing from the mainstream Western media, is ever present. One can feel Fatima's sorrow at her helplessness to feed her family a decent meal and the humiliation felt by Ahmad and his friends when they were forced out of bed by some Israeli soldiers in the dead of a cold winter's night and made to whitewash the graffiti of political slogans and calls for justice; the resilience of the old women walking the many extra miles, in order to dodge the military checkpoints, from their 'Bantustan' into the forbidden territory of Jerusalem only just to pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque; the boredom of those who cannot get to work in the city because of the curfews and general restrictions of movements; the confusion of Ziad, 20, whose eyeball fell into his hand when shot with a rubber-coated metal bullet, now blind in one eye forever; the grief of Mustafa's mother when finding out that her young son was shot by an Israeli sniper and the trauma of children who have seen such horrific sights.

However, behind these experiences and the dust and poverty of a refugee camp, there are celebrations of weddings and new babies born, the feeling of safety in a place free of crime - a place of love and caring where the author found her 'only true home' (p.vi).

Finally, although the Americanised translation of the Arabic conversations is sometimes a jar on the nerves ('I'm crazy about you, Auntie ...'), and the inconsistency in spelling names a nuisance, I believe this book will certainly go a long way in humanising the demonised Palestinian refugees.

Leicester

Khadija Ravat

INTERPAL



**COMMITTED TO HELPING
PALESTINIANS IN NEED**

Please send your donations to, or contact us at:

Interpal - PO Box 3333, London NW6 1RW

Tel: 020 8450 8002 Fax: 020 8450 8004

Email: info@interpal.org

Interpal Online: www.interpal.org

Reg. Charity No. 1040094