

## Visitation at Yad Vashem

James Tunstead Burtchaell

I went finally to Yad Vashem. I had lived in Jerusalem as a graduate student in the early sixties, and had gone back nearly ten times since. Somehow, until the summer before last I had never visited Israel's memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. The museum is a long, dark cavern built into the limestone hillside, where one enters through graphics and texts into a world of death.

The story begins, of course, with the pre-war persecution, promised in Hitler's program and unleashed as soon as he came to power in 1933:

Thirsting for conquests, [a poster recounted] on the plea that Germany needed "living-space" (*Lebensraum*), Germany broke her international treaty obligations. Immediately on assuming power, the Nazis began rearming with all speed and setting up a modern army establishment.

Here was one more European power, craving land for itself, but with this new aggressive twist: a passionate determination to cleanse this Greater Reich of Jews, to make it *judenrein*.

Beginning in Germany, then further through the territories they annexed or occupied, the Nazis

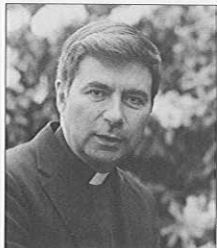
foresaw no peace until they had rid themselves of the Jews: first by contempt and violence, then by putting them to flight, then by expelling them, and lastly, when they were huddled in ghettos and camps, by slaughter. The process was relentless, versatile and single-minded. And it was sheerly racist, not political, for Jews were *personae non gratae* no matter what their citizenship or politics or religion.

### A repugnant comparison

As a younger man (Gentile by my mother, but enough of a *Mischling* by my father to have perished with him had we been in Europe), I had pondered the Holocaust. I had come to think of it as the incarnation, the dark sacrament, of evil. And in my work as an ethicist I reckoned that

*As a younger man (Gentile by my mother, but enough of a Mischling by my father to have perished with him had we been in Europe), I had pondered the Holocaust.*

in this epicenter of human hatred, both banal and savage, the mystery of evil was laid bare in ways that we are all compelled to understand. But as I was walking down that dark and violent corridor, making the stations of the Catastrophe, my mind and memory could not avoid distract-



Gary Mills

tion by the images and the stories I had brought indoors from the light of the present day. Had not the survivors of this carnage, journeying as "a people without a country to a country without people,"<sup>1</sup> but finding none, determined instead to take a country from its people?

From being rightful owners, by purchase, of seven percent of the land (only 1.5% acquired from Palestinians), had they not then taken the sovereignty of rule by force of

arms, and the title of ownership by seizure, by expropriation, by terror-induced flight, and by hounding its owners into camps? And just as the annexations and occupations by the Nazis had only enlarged their expansive drive to rid the Greater Reich of Jews, I could not prevent myself

Father James Burtchaell, C.S.C., is professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. He studied at Jerusalem's Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française and has led many study groups through Palestine. His forthcoming book *From Synagogue to Church* will be published next spring by Cambridge University Press.

**AMEU Board of Directors:**

**Hugh D. Auchincloss**  
Atwater, Bradley & Partners, Inc.

**John V. Chapple**  
Former C.A.R.E. Director, Gaza Strip Project

**Paul Findley**  
Lecturer, author, member of Congress, 1961-82

**Henry G. Fischer**  
(Vice President), Research Curator in  
Egyptology, Metropolitan Museum of Art

**Grace Halsell**  
Writer

**Robert E. Marsh**  
Independent Consultant

**Paul N. McCloskey, Jr.**  
Attorney

**David Nes**  
Retired Foreign Service Officer, Class 1

**John G. Nolan**  
(Secretary), Bishop, Archdiocese for the  
Military Services

**Joseph L. Ryan, S.J.**  
Amman, Jordan

**Talcott W. Seelye**  
Former U.S. Ambassador to Syria

**Robert L. Stern**  
Secretary General, Catholic Near East Welfare  
Association

**Jack B. Sunderland**  
(President), President, American Independent  
Oil Company

**L. Humphrey Walz**  
Associate Executive, H.R. Presbyterian Synod  
of the Northeast

**Mark R. Wellman**  
(Treasurer), Financial Consultant

**Marshall W. Wiley**  
Attorney; former U.S. Ambassador to Oman

**AMEU National Council:**  
Hon. James E. Akins • Isabelle Bacon • Dr. H.  
Kenn Carmichael • William R. Chandler •  
David S. Dodge • Barbro Ek • Dr. Francis H.  
Horn • Dr. Cornelius B. Houk • O. Kelly In-  
gram • Moorhead Kennedy • Ann Kerr • John  
D. Law • Prof. George Lenczowski • Dr. W.T.  
Mallison • Sister Blanche Marie McEniry • Wil-  
liam E. Mulligan • Floyd W. Ohliger • C. Her-  
bert Oliver • George L. Parkhurst • Marie  
Peterson • Donald L. Powers • John J. Slocum  
• Dr. John C. Trever • Donald W. Wagner, Jr.  
• Dr. George H. Weightman

**AMEU Staff:**  
John Mahoney, *Executive Director*  
Shubabaw Wubetu, *Accounts Manager*  
Joan Dombrowski, *PBVM, Administrative Assistant*

AMEU (ISSN 0024-4007) grants permission to re-  
produce material from *The Link*, in part or  
whole, with full credit given to AMEU, which re-  
quests one copy of the work upon publication.

All correspondence should be addressed to:  
Room 241, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY  
10115. (212) 870-2053; FAX: (212) 870-2050

## About This Issue

For fifty years the Jewish need of sanctuary from Nazi atrocities has motivated U.S. support for the Jewish settlement of Palestine. For fifty years the United States has acclaimed the building up of the modern State of Israel by millions of ingathered Jews.

Seldom, though, have we been shown the dark side of the moon. Seldom have we been told that ingathering occurs by cleansing the land of its inhabitants; that legal rights extended only to Jews legitimate discrimination against all non-Jews. For fifty years we have shut our ears to the proverb's warning that the worst taskmaster is a former slave.

This September the U.S. Congress will consider Israel's request for an extra \$10 billion for resettling hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews into Palestine. Pro-Israel supporters will profess the humanitarian need of ingathering persecuted Jews. But who will speak for the persecuted Palestinians as they face the threat of yet another displacement?

Father James Burtchaell does in this issue. He has lived in Jerusalem and, as he notes, is Jewish enough on his father's side to have suffered Hitler's madness. The Notre Dame University professor visits Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, and there, in its silence, he speaks on behalf of those now suffering the new taskmaster's whip.

For readers wishing background information on Father Burtchaell's article, we have devoted our entire Book Section to a survey of available books, videocassettes and daily updates. Our own office receives the Jerusalem Press Daily fax Report. Each morning the Report begins by listing the names and ages of Palestinian women whose pregnancies were aborted that previous day due to tear gas inhalation. The tear gas carries a production date only two weeks old. And it comes straight from the United States.

John F. Mahoney  
*Executive Director*

from pondering whether there were any parallels in the way the acquisition of *Lebensraum* in Greater Israel, by progressive conquest, seemed only to have intensified Israel's compulsion to have it free of its residential people.

Comparisons of Israel's conduct to South Africa are now commonplace. "South Africa abolished the 'pass laws' for the nonwhite residents," stated a *Ha-Aretz* editorial, and "the State of Israel [which has required Palestinian workers crossing the "green line" for work to carry similar racial identification] is liable to find itself now on the road that South Africa abandoned."<sup>2</sup> Meron Benvenisti compares the Intifada to Sharpeville in 1960 and the Soweto riots in 1976.<sup>3</sup> This is an especially mordant comparison, on the heels of a report that Israel has helped South Africa develop an intermediate-range ballistic missile.<sup>4</sup>

But the one comparison sure to trigger fury and resentment is that suggested by the Nazi crimes.<sup>5</sup> Several days earlier I had seen in Bethlehem a graffiti of the Star of David intertwined with the Swastika. *The Jerusalem Post* carried the counter-assertion by an observant and peace-seeking Jew that "comparisons to Nazi tactics and government-sponsored pogroms remain both abhorrent and unfounded."<sup>6</sup> I confess that the events certainly did suggest the comparison to me, as he described them:

"Settlers setting out on rampages through Arab villages, indiscriminately shooting and burning as they go; soldiers accompanying these vigilantes, using their spotlights to illuminate potential sources of violence; Arab victims of excessive [sic] beatings, gratuitous humiliation, and senseless revenge; demolition of homes which may or may not have harboured stone-throwers and their families without due process of law; the dismissal of Arab labourers prevented from coming to work because

of curfews in the territories; and others permitted to enter Jewish towns only if they carry cards identifying them as foreign workers." [Palestinians were being charged more than a full day's wages for each card, to subsidize protective costs for Jewish settlers. It was not forced to think of the European Jews who were obliged to prepay the costs of their own expulsion.]

Even to one inclined to deny any resemblances in Palestine and Israel to the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis, the mere fact that the Jewish man published his statement with impunity in the public press while the Palestinian, for his scrawled statement, risked a beating and imprisonment, made it difficult to reject the analogy outright.

Every element of Hitler's program required the use of force, and the exhibit displayed how massively Germany was called to arms. One recalled that Israel's armed strength is ranked third or fourth in the world today. But sheer armed might was not what the Shoah was all about. There was something special about those German troops. The purposes they were directed to serve could be seen in their full perversity only if you looked closely at their awkwardly but effectively allied forces: the brown-shirted terrorists before they came to constitutional power, and the SD, SS and Gestapo afterwards. The Irgun Tzvai Leumi and LEHI (Stern) terrorist groups before 1948, and the Shin Bet, the Border Police and armed posses of settlers since then, may reveal more clearly the full determination of the Zionist enterprise than the Haganah or its official successor, the Israel Defence Forces. If Germany had to sponsor auxiliary forces to perform a range of tasks beyond what its army could morally undertake, is that true of Israel now as it was earlier?

"German Jews were stripped of their property, deprived of their means of livelihood and thrown out of their jobs, which were given to non-Jews," read the text on the wall,

and the museum gave sorrowful illustration of the expolation. The Jews fled the Nazi rule, "voluntarily or under duress." Out of 520,000 German Jews, 300,000 took flight, leaving their homes, property and wealth behind. But that, I knew, was very much like what 700,000 out of 1,400,000 Palestinians had done in 1948-49. Today two-thirds of the 5,000,000 Palestinians are refugees. Three-hundred-eighty-five of their villages were destroyed. Sixty percent of their agricultural investment was seized. In 1948-49 four-fifths of Israel's citrus holdings, 10,000 of its shops and stores, and one-quarter of its buildings were seized from Palestinian owners. More confiscation, mostly of land, would ensue in 1967.<sup>8</sup>

## The Camps

For the Jews in occupied territories who could not or did not flee Nazi rule, there were the ghettos, "isolating the Jewish population behind walls and barbed wire, where they could wear them down by starvation, forced labour, overcrowding and epidemics." This was not entirely unsuggestive of the Palestinian camps, where they were forced to live under canvas for nearly a decade, then in shanties with open sewers (in the years I lived in Jerusalem, I was told that a total annual subsidy of \$60 per person was allotted for their shelter, food, education and health). The camps offered no security. There were refugees who were driven from their homes in 1948 to the camps in West Bank Jordan; in 1967 they were driven once more before the invading Israeli army across the river to camps in Jordan; yet again, in Black September 1970 they were driven from Jordan by its army to southern Lebanon to still other camps; then in 1982 thousands of them were massacred there in a combined operation of Christian militias and the Israel Defence Force.

In 1941, the population of Greater

Warsaw numbered about 1,300,000 souls. The Jewish population of the Ghetto, which included people deported from provincial towns, numbered about half a million. The Jews, who constituted 37% of the local population of the city, were crowded into 4.6% of its area.

But the Gaza Strip is itself a ghetto, one which now entraps 700,000 Palestinians. Into that terribly overcrowded enclosure have come 2,500 Israeli settlers, less than one-half of one percent, who have seized more than two-thirds of the land and one-third of the water. In the West Bank, settlers whose numbers equal about 5% of the Palestinian population have taken from them more than half of the land and 35% of the water; another 35% of that water is piped out for the use of Jews in Israel.<sup>9</sup> And even Palestinian citizens of Israel see their public and private properties being expropriated around them. Nazareth, to take but one example, has had more than half its lands seized.

## An economy strangled

"When the Nazis took power," the Yad Vashem exhibit explained, "they initiated an economic boycott of the Jews, their elimination from the economic and social life of the country, anti-Jewish legislation, harassment and persecution, and even riots." How could one not recall what has been going on in Palestine and Israel?

Palestinians for decades were forbidden to join the Histadrut, the Jewish trade union, and Jews were ordered not to employ them. They have been forbidden to organize unions of their own. Now that they constitute an essential and exploited element in the workforce they must belong to the Israeli union and pay dues, but they are excluded from the housing grants that only Jewish

members can draw from the union.<sup>10</sup> Whether or not they are citizens, they pay taxes but are excluded from compensation for damaged crops that is extended to Jews.<sup>11</sup> If they live in the occupied territories but work in Israel, they pay both dues and taxes but are disqualified from most of the welfare benefits.

There are many social services that governments commonly provide that are handled otherwise in Israel. The Israel Lands Authority, for instance, operates as a private trust under government policy. Its support comes largely from foreign contributions, which for Americans are tax-exempt. Israel, after confiscating about 92% of all land in the country, together with its buildings, entrusted this property to the ILA, which leases virtually all the nation's housing to Jews... and only to Jews. No Gentile can legally lease, live or work in these properties. The violation entailed by having foreign Christians living in *kibbutzim* was simply overlooked; the regulation was eventually altered to allow cheap Palestinian migrant labor to spend the night on Israeli premises. But the brunt of this is that Israeli Jews have access to free land and subsidized housing; Israeli Palestinians have none.

Jewish religious schools are fully funded by the government; Muslim and Christian schools are not. Jews have free hospital treatment; private Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank, by contrast, have had to pay taxes even on their purchased medical and surgical supplies. Jews have free transport through the *Magen David Adom* national ambulance service. This is denied to many Palestinians because most municipal expenses are covered by revenue-sharing grants from the government. But by refusing municipal status to Palestinian towns Israel effectively denies them access to normal services. For instance, the second largest Palestinian town in the Galilee, Um el Fahem, with 20,000 inhabitants,

was for years denied recognition as a municipality: no funds, and so no sewers, libraries, playgrounds, clinics or new schoolrooms. Without municipal status Palestinian towns are classified as "villages," and are governed by the Ministry of the Interior, traditionally a portfolio in the hands of one of the extreme rightist religious parties. Services for Palestinians under that jurisdiction are not unsuggestive of the ghetto.

One Palestinian author and teacher, who is an Israeli citizen by virtue of having been "annexed," testifies to the economic disparities:

"Even before the Intifada began, most of the villages around Jerusalem merely appeared on city maps—they never received any city services. Here, inside the official city limits, look at the difference between the roads in Jebel Mukaber and East Talpiot. There is no sewer system here, nor any kind of city services. And since the beginning of the Intifada, the municipality is no longer issuing building permits." [Houses built without a permit are subject to destruction, and the owner is billed for the bulldozer.]

"The only time they remember that this is part of Jerusalem is when they send around those who collect taxes. They told us that each dunam [quarter-acre] in the village is worth \$100,000. I think perhaps that's the price of a building in north Tel Aviv. The real price, the price usually quoted when villagers sell their land, is \$15,000 per dunam."<sup>12</sup>

As a punitive measure for families of whom any member may be merely under suspicion, olive and other economically precious trees have been uprooted: more than 100,000 of them. If the trees were ever replaced, they would require from 20 to 50 years to regain their productive capacity.

Palestinians need a permit to sink a well. Permits are almost never granted. Palestinian merchants in the more recently seized territories require a permit to import their materials or export their products. Permits

are almost never granted. Instead, they have been an enormous captive market for Israel, buying a billion dollars worth of Israeli products annually. As Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained in the Knesset just a week before my visit, the occupied territories are essential precisely because Israel needs the cheap manpower; and it is kept available by depriving the Palestinians of any economic infrastructure of their own.<sup>13</sup>

As an Israeli research group sums it up, the economy of occupied Palestine had regressed to a condition worse than before the invasion of 1967: after 22 years, a net loss. To put this into perspective, it must be remembered that Palestinian income had already dropped 80% from 1942 to 1952. "An Israeli citizen's average income is four times higher than that of a Palestinian in the West Bank, and ten times more than in the Gaza Strip."<sup>14</sup>

*German Jews were stripped of their property, deprived of their means of livelihood and thrown out of their jobs, which were given to non-jews." I found it written at Yad Vashem. That is history that a Palestinian can understand.*

"German Jews were stripped of their property, deprived of their means of livelihood and thrown out of their jobs, which were given to non-Jews," I found it written at Yad Vashem. That is history that a Palestinian can understand.

## Despoiled of learning

I walked further along the dark and doubly painful corridor and beheld a German mob burning Jewish books. "The Nazis restored a mediæval tradition by setting bonfires to books, the fruit of Jewish creativity, as well of non-Jewish liberal thought ... On 10 May 1933, German students in Berlin burned some 20,000 books." The abiding (and perhaps envious)

hatred for Hebrew and Jewish culture struck at one of the elite traditions of literacy in Europe. Intellectuals were removed from academic life. Authors were banned and libraries destroyed. Jews were excluded from access to higher education.

The Palestinians are the most educated people in the Middle East, in terms of both basic literacy and of higher education. Their educational level has been reckoned as the equivalent of that in France or Czechoslovakia. I know one Palestinian village, for instance—a rural and highly agricultural village—where about 65 of its 300 citizens hold either the master's or doctor's degree. The Palestinian universities have been so repeatedly closed over the last decade that hope of preparing for the qualifying examinations has been all but extinguished. And because of the ex-

clusion of Palestinians from professional and commercial life in Israel, the best employment most young men or women with a college degree could look forward to is that of a hotel waiter. Family after family with the ambition and the determination to have its children given a higher education is sending them out of the country ... thus ensuring that the next generation of their people will have no intelligentsia left in the homeland.

Even for Palestinians who hold Israeli citizenship, discrimination is a formidable barrier within Israeli universities. One young man I know holds his degree in aeronautical engineering from the university in Haifa, with excellent grades. But because he is Palestinian he was never once permitted to touch an actual aircraft.

At the earlier levels of schooling it is even worse. Permits for new school buildings are denied or blocked—in one typical case, "because the foundation of the new building is ten meters too far in one direction."<sup>15</sup> In the West Bank the past two academic years had been nullified by closure of the schools. In 1988-89 secondary students were allowed only two weeks of schooling; elementary schools were given a few weeks more and then shut. Teachers were laid off or their salaries were reduced to less than half.<sup>16</sup> In the occupied territories it was made a punishable crime to teach, or even to prepare homework kits so that students could learn on their own.

All Palestinian publications are severely censored, whether in Israel or in the occupied territories. Al Bader, a magazine in Jerusalem, regularly publishes a notice of those who have perished in the Intifada, giving a photograph and the victim's age, date of death, and hometown. The only way this material can be published is if the dead person's family pays for it as an obituary notice and the editor submits to the censor a copy of the receipt. It cannot be reported as a news item. The Palestinian press is not even free to reprint many such materials that have already appeared in the Israeli press.

The gag on thought and expression is very broad. It is a punishable crime to sing certain Palestinian songs, to make the V-sign with the fingers, to exhibit or even to possess the Palestinian flag or colors. It is a crime punishable by banishment to form a union or an action committee. Whatever Palestinians read is subject to military scrutiny. Several days after my journey through Yad Vashem I sat in a rural restaurant and watched the buses of a local route being stopped one after the other. Two Israeli soldiers sat across the street in the shade. All the young men had to dismount and stand in the sun (while everyone else had to wait), and one by one they were sum-

moned across the road. Each handed over his ID card, which was sometimes handed back and sometimes flipped on the ground for him to recover. Their books and any notebooks they carried were then examined and then either returned, tossed in the dust, or kept.

*During my entire visit I never saw a single book burned, nor heard of one. But was it a distortion to see abroad in Jerusalem that same mindless spirit that lit the bonfire in Berlin 56 years earlier?*

During my entire visit I never saw a single book burned, nor heard of one. But was it a distortion to see abroad in Jerusalem that same mindless spirit that lit the bonfire in Berlin 56 years earlier?

## Wounds that cannot heal

The Nazis, as we were shown so sorrowfully in the museum, progressively withheld from their Jewish victims any fair access to medical care. This has not been a matter missing from the Israeli agenda. There were fewer hospital beds in the West Bank than when they had been occupied 22 years earlier, despite the fact that the population in need was now much more numerous. Israel has closed two hospitals, and denied a permit to a badly needed hospital in Ramallah to have been opened by outside philanthropy.

Since it is the hospitals that receive the Intifada casualties, they suffer daily scrutiny and intrusion from the military. There are bitter memories: tear gas canisters fired into a labor room, and into a neonate nursery; an anaesthetist arrested and removed during the course of surgery; hospital administrators threatened not to release information about patients to the press; critically injured patients seized in emergency rooms and even in surgical theaters; a hospital administrator dismissed for

linkages with the Israeli Peace Now organization; an ambulance driver shot and killed by troops on his way to the hospital, causing the patient's death as well. Ambulances have been forbidden access to critically injured Palestinians, or sent to interrogation centers with the wounded

instead of to hospitals, or held up for hours so that wounded youths died without medical aid. And Palestinians shot by the military have been killed if an Israeli ambulance has taken them to the hospital.

For Palestinians under arrest, there is medical treatment under the auspices of the Israeli military. The week of my visit, I learned of a 23-year old Palestinian woman, imprisoned for alleged "membership in an illegal organization, distributing leaflets of the uprising and giving about [\$35] to someone to buy material for a Palestinian flag." She suffered from chronic active hepatitis, and had for three months been denied the opportunity to go to a hospital for examination and treatment since, in the words of the police attorney, "Her release on bail will endanger the security of the state."<sup>17</sup> An Israeli physician consulted said that a prison health service which

In the Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, only five doctors were available to treat 74,000 internees under nightmare public health conditions.<sup>19</sup> Clearly this is not Auschwitz. But how far is it from, say, the Ghetto of Lodz?

One theme presented in the Yad Vashem documentary was the cultivation of insult and degradation. For some helpless Jews this symbolic injury must have been more bitter than damage to property or body. Old *hasidim* forced to scrub sidewalks on their hands and knees, with toothbrushes. Bearded observant old Jews stood in the stocks for public ridicule. Men, women and children segregated with the yellow badge. Passports and ID cards marked with the contemptuous "Jude". Torah pages cut and used as inner soles of boots or as lampshades.

But a traffic of degradation shows itself now between Jews and Palestinians. Government ministries have what is called a "Minorities Section": not for Falashi Jews from Ethiopia, but for Palestinians. Instead of being a facility better equipped to serve different linguistic and cultural needs, it is an alternate bureau where forms have to be written in Hebrew (a Palestinian has to write even a confession in the police station in Hebrew) and clientele can wait hours or even days for transactions which their Jewish fellow-citizens handle in mainline offices without delay.

*Clearly this is not Auschwitz. But how far is it from, say, the Ghetto of Lodz?*

took two weeks to get the results of a blood test "is not an appropriate place in which to take care of the illness." After three months of repeated appeals from The International Centre of Information on Humanitarian Law of War in New York and Paris, Israeli Women for Palestinian Women Prisoners, Mme. Mitterand, Jimmy Carter, and a member of the Knesset, the Minister for Defence finally agreed to release her.<sup>18</sup>

A young Palestinian was returning from his sophomore year at the American University in Cairo. While crossing the Allenby Bridge he was stopped and told to report at the Shin Bet (secret police) office near his home several days later. He reported as ordered at 6:00 in the morning while his terrified father waited across the street. For thirteen hours, until 7:00 in the evening, he was left standing without a chair, without a

bite to eat. When he was finally called in by the officer, it was to be asked a single question: what was his academic standing in Cairo? He replied that he was first in his class. He was then told to leave.

I could not help trying to imagine how I would feel if I were a Palestinian youngster and an Israeli soldier urinated on my head from a rooftop, or if I were a Moslem and knew the soldiers were using pages from the Koran as toilet paper, or if I had to exhibit a Palestinian badge on my jacket to report for work. How would it strike me that in ordinary Hebrew, where the word *ish* ("man," or "fellow," or "person," as in "A fellow (*ish*) from Haifa told me yesterday ...") has commonly been replaced by Israelis with *Yehudi*: "A Jew from Haifa [who might be a Circassian or a Palestinian] said to me yesterday ..." What does it say to Palestinians when Israeli public opinion polls systematically exclude Palestinian citizens from their national sample?

A six-year-old village girl from near Ramallah was stopped by a soldier who was searching her house. Looking through her notebook, he found she had drawn a Palestinian flag. "Why did you draw that?" he asked. "Because," she replied as six-year-olds do. With that he took her wrist, held her hand on the table, and pummeled it with the truncheon he carried. An hour later the little girl had a hand the size of a grapefruit.

That additional torment which insult gives to injury is what I had always identified with anti-semitic contempt. I did not want to see it at large in Israel.

## Judicial injustice

One of the pictures one exhibits early in the Yad Vashem exhibit is of German judges taking a loyalty oath at the outset of the Nazi gov-

ernment. "The Government apparatus, jurists, workers in the fields of culture and education, workers in mass communications, were all harnessed to serve the Nazi regime and to carry out its anti-Jewish policy." From that moment, Jews lost all protection under the law.

The Nazi police apparatus and in particular the *Gestapo* (secret political police) under the command of Himmler became one of the most important and efficacious instruments at the disposal of the Hitler regime for the suppression of its political opponents. It constituted an independent power, wielding unlimited authority to make mass arrests without any judicial proceedings, to carry out its investigations with the aid of medieval tortures, and even to murder those arrested.

And is it otherwise for the Palestinians? The military authorities over the occupied territories had had untrammelled discretion to imprison any Palestinian without evidence or charges for six months. The limit means little. The prisoner can simply be put under continuous periods of detention. Taysir Aruri, a distinguished professor of physics at Bir Zeit University, was held from 1974 to 1978, and during our visit he was again under extended arrest, ostensibly for membership in a political party, despite a petition on his behalf from over 1,100 of the world's leading physicists, including sixteen Nobel laureates.

He was to be expelled from his country, which means in effect that he would be pushed out of a helicopter somewhere on a road in southern Lebanon. Though "deportation" orders are appealable to the Israeli Supreme Court, none has ever been overturned. The Court has repeatedly set aside the objection that expulsion from one's native land is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The Knesset has thus far refused to abide by the protocols of this international code which, ironically, was enacted in re-

sponse to Nazi war crimes during World War II.

Edward Witten, from the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, reports on the case:

"Many people have asked what Taysir Aruri is accused of. The answer to this question is that we do not know. The charges and evidence are secret. Indeed, the legal proceeding used against Aruri—and frequently used in the occupied territories in the last 22 years—is one in which the accused person and his lawyers may not review the charges and evidence against him."<sup>20</sup>

Israeli authorities have also been free to dynamite houses or weld them shut at will in the territories. A wall demolished because it bore a painted Palestinian flag,<sup>21</sup> a home for a family of ten blown up because someone, not any family member, hit a soldier with masonry thrown from the roof<sup>22</sup>—this is the daily revenge that had to date destroyed more than 700 homes. Sometimes they are blown up by the dozens.

In the well-known incident the previous year at Beita, near Nablus, a group of Israeli children went on a hike near the Palestinian village in order to assert their rights over the territory. Along the way one of their two armed guards shot and killed a shepherd boy leaning against a tree. They continued their hike. By the time they reached Beita the mother and sister of the slain boy came out and assailed the guards furiously; one guard first shot another Palestinian and then fired a shot that killed one of the Israeli girls. That evening, before it could be learned that the village families had actually been pulling the Israeli children into their houses to shelter them from the melee, or that the girl was shot by an Israeli, not a Palestinian, or that the man responsible for all three deaths, Romam Aldubi, a student from the very bellicose Joseph's Tomb Yeshiva in Nablus, was under military order specifically forbidding him to be in the area—before

any inquiry or discovery of these facts, the army dynamited 14 houses in the village and expelled several of its residents. I drove by Beita shortly after the visit to Yad Vashem; none of the houses had been rebuilt and none of those exiled had been allowed to return.

An American observer has calculated that 15 out of the 30 articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 are denied to the residents of occupied Pales-

we would not like to use because they do not normally befit a democratic society. But a democratic society that is fighting for its right to exist is entitled to use [these] measures ... Unfortunately, all these measures are part of the reality that this war has imposed upon us. We cannot find the solution to the Intifada by means of law alone. The law must be balanced to fit the needs of those fighting the war and still be in accordance with the values of society."<sup>26</sup>

*Is it any wonder that a person whose conscience and ears had been newly sensitized by that vile narrative at Yad Vashem, would hear in this statement a clear and forceful echo of what had been said by way of defense in Nuremberg?*

ine.<sup>23</sup> For all practical purposes, the people there lie subject to the arbitrary will, not even of martial law, but of military might without the law. Nevertheless during the very week of my visit Mr. Rabin, the Defence Minister, called upon the Knesset to strengthen the hand of the military. He proposed to detain Palestinians without charges for twelve months, not six (a regulation he did enact some weeks later) and to expel Palestinians without the delay required by legal appeals (let them, he proposed, negotiate their appeals from abroad in absentia through their lawyers). He also sought authority to demolish or seal houses without judicial appeal. Present measures, he grieved, were not harsh enough to break the spirit of the occupied people.<sup>24</sup> Political commentator Oz Frankel sums this up as a plan simply to remove the entire military government of the territories from judicial scrutiny.<sup>25</sup> When Israeli jurists appealed to Dan Meridor, Minister of Justice, to oppose the Rabin plan as a suppression of civil rights, Meridor replied:

"We are discussing trials, punishment, and administrative steps that

Is it any wonder that a person whose conscience and ears had been newly sensitized by that vile narrative at Yad Vashem, would hear in this statement a clear and forceful echo of what had been said by way of defense in Nuremberg?

In Silwad, Abd al-Ra'uf Hamed, 22, was shot dead because when the army raided the village at dawn he ran from them.<sup>27</sup> No judgment was given. Judicial review may mean little anyway if the witnesses whose word is taken to be most credible at the bar of justice are those who hold the weapons. A Jerusalem man explains:

"I was reaching for my identity card in my shirt pocket when a Border Policeman struck me on the wrist with his club and said to his officer that I refused to give him my papers. Things like this happen all the time.

"One woman from Jebel Mukaber [a Palestinian neighborhood], in her early twenties, was arrested and held for five days after East Talpiti [a Jewish neighborhood] youngsters pointed her out to the police and claimed she'd been throwing rocks. Just before they called the police, the same youngsters jeered and abused

her and told her to get lost. The police weren't interested in her version of what really happened."<sup>28</sup>

Published reports are clothed in a literary style found nowhere else in the Israeli press. A typical press report: A boy is shot; "The IDF said troops had fired only in the air, and it was unclear how the youth was wounded."<sup>29</sup> A story on racial unrest notes: "Police counted eight incidents perpetrated by Arabs from Gaza and three by Jews," and then the article goes on to describe seven of the eleven clashes: but only those ascribed to Palestinians.<sup>30</sup> After the entire population of the Nuseirat refugee camp has been forbidden outside of their houses, even to obtain water or food, for the space of a month, except for 48 hours, an eight-year old boy is found playing in the street and shot through the head. After the ensuing uproar the army spokesman reports eight residents shot; hospital records put the number at 33.<sup>31</sup> When an Israeli air strike in Lebanon destroys a school, the official explanation allays concern: it was a "Fatah-RC camp for training guerilla cubs below (age) 10."<sup>32</sup>

And even when judgment is given, Palestinians know there is a double standard.

A military prosecutor drops homicide charges against the deputy commander of a military prison. According to the testimony of two soldier witnesses, when he saw an inmate lying on the ground immobilized by pain after being seriously wounded after assaulting a guard, the officer ran to his room, fetched his own pistol, then came out and shot the prisoner in the chest, killing him.<sup>33</sup> The officer was cleared as having acted in self-defense. "The military prosecution ordered that security deficiencies in the detention camp be remedied."

When a Palestinian prisoner was beaten to death, a military tribunal sentenced the arresting officers to six or nine months in prison, "a very severe punishment." Their terms



were later reduced by three months by their commanding general on account "of the difficult circumstances that soldiers must face in the occupied Gaza Strip."<sup>34</sup> The officers who ordered the beating and the soldiers who inflicted it were not brought to trial. The colonel presiding over the military tribunal said the incident "symbolizes perhaps a breakdown in values which, if continued, would endanger the basic values that are the true heritage of our country."<sup>35</sup>

Shortly afterwards 35 Palestinians were sentenced to one or two years in prison and fined about six-months' wages each for "throwing stones and disrupting public order."<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile three militants of the Jewish Underground, convicted of a grenade and gun attack on students that had left three dead and thirty wounded, and of maiming two mayors with car bombs, had been sentenced to life imprisonment in 1985. The President of Israel reduced their sentences to 24 years, then to 15, then to 12. Finally, "convinced that the three had expressed unambiguous and honest regrets," he released them after less than seven years served, the last of 27 comrades to leave prison. Their leader forthwith denied any sense of regret. West Bank settlers danced with joy at the prison gates and carried them off as "heroes" on their shoulders. A Palestinian was shot that day for wounding three Israeli soldiers.<sup>37</sup>

## Legal dispossession

I pressed on in my dark and painful walk through Yad Vashem, and was presented with repeated evidence of the consistent determination of the Nazis to obtain legal cover for their most ruthless acts. The legitimacy, however, was of the kind that would always be established in the absence of the victim.

*At the Munich meeting on 29 September 1938 between Germany and Italy on the one hand and Britain and France on the other, in the absence of representatives of Czechoslovakia, the Western Powers continued their policy of concessions to and appeasement of Germany, and they signed a treaty ceding the Sudeten territory of Czechoslovakia to the Reich, thus opening the way to the extinction of the State of Czechoslovakia six months later.*

To a Palestinian this assignment of sovereignty, not by a land's own people but by foreign powers, would evoke the Sykes-Picot treaty whereby Britain (acting with the morality of any European power at the time), having promised self-determination to the Arabs in return for joining World War I on their side and revolting against Turkey, simultaneously signed a secret treaty with France to carve up the Middle East between them. That Palestine was subsequently assigned as a Mandate territory under Britain by the League of Nations, with the explicit charge to establish there a "national homeland" for the Jewish people, made the occupation seem legal, perhaps, to everyone except the Palestinians, who would be at a loss to understand who had conferred upon the League the authority to establish another people on their homeland. This was not all the work of Zionists alone, but it helps explain that the Palestinian perception of being disposed of "legally," yet with ruthless injustice, provides a larger context in which Israeli occupation seems to be in moral continuity with a process one can see at work in pre-war Europe.

The memorial displays the meticulous legal care with which the Nazi bureaucracy assured that regulations were in place to justify everything done during the Holocaust. But the Jews of Occupied Europe, like the Arabs of Occupied Palestine, faced a consistent and relentless de-

struction under a code of law fashioned with a single purpose in mind: first their subjection, then their elimination. Novelist Amos Oz put it most sharply:

"A small sect, a cruel and obdurate sect, emerged several years ago from a dark corner of Judaism; and it is threatening to destroy all that is dear to us and holy to us, and to bring down upon us a savage and insane blood-cult... Israel's government of occupation in the territories has become a monster; a monster which has long since crossed the Green Line, removed its masks and even boasts of its monstrosity. Armed gangs sally forth to wreak vengeance upon Arabs, and sometimes upon Jews who have the bad luck to look like Arabs, and upon Jews 'who deserve to get shot like Arabs,' and upon Jews who 'look like Arabs who deserve to get shot.'

"Remember: this cult got the rifles and the machine-guns from the State of Israel, from us ...

"Day in and day out we hear the confused voices of President Herzog and Prime Minister Shamir and Defence Minister Rabin and all kinds of other figures who are stricken with blindness, pleading limply with this unclean cult 'not to take the law into their own hands.' But what does 'taking the law into their own hands' mean? The shocking meaning of this phrase is that the law is sadism, pogromism, blind vengeance and indiscriminating slaughter—but the sadism and the slaughter must remain the monopoly of our men in uniform. Of the State.

"Thus we degenerate day by day from a situation in which patently illegal and patently inhuman deeds are done practically unhindered—to a situation in which the law itself, and in one or two cases even justice, are beginning to display signs of being swept in the direction of this savage cult."<sup>38</sup>

## Prophetic voices

The story told at Yad Vashem put on display the public statement of welcome issued by Cardinal Inzitzer, Archbishop of Vienna, when Hitler's armies annexed Austria. Much more could have been shown to make us aware of the cowardly hush which came over most Christian churchmen in the face of the Nazi atrocities. I asked myself, at that point in my dark journey, what voice Israel's religious leaders might be raising to their countrymen. Admittedly, in a country where 80-90% of the Jewish population is religiously non-observant, a prophetic voice might have a poor hearing.

The voices most loudly heard were those of rabbis like Moshe

all as having been brought about by the God of history. It will be a "sign and wonder" not because of any supernatural quality but because of the unusual cooperation of diverse natural forces and the idealism of Zion's sons and daughters.

"If, however, the Return should be perceived as coming about through thievery and chicanery, by aggression against the innocent and insurrection against legitimate authority, then it all turns to ashes and becomes a desecration of the Name of God. So far, world public opinion has not been taken in by the "big lies" of "Zionism is racism" or Israel as the "brutal occupier." We can still successfully argue the moral quality of the modern Return to Zion before the bar of objective judgment."<sup>40</sup>

### *The inference was clear: that killing isn't murder if the victim is a Gentile.*

Levinger (of the *Gush Emunim*, an armed messianic group determined to displace the Palestinians by seizing their land for settlements), and the late Meir Kahane (of the Kach party) who advocated driving all Palestinians out of the land by force, and who saw in the massacre of thousands of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps (by Lebanese Phalange militia, while the Israeli forces stood guard) a judgment from God.<sup>39</sup>

Much less heard are the prophetic peacemaking efforts of religious leaders such as Yehezkel Landau from *Oz veShalom* and the fearless rabbi Yeshayahu Leibovitz (who coined the term "Judeo-Nazi"). But when Israel's religious spokesmen are given their say, a statement such as this one of Shubert Spero, Irving I. Stone Professor of Jewish Thought at Bar Ilan University, is taken as moderate:

"The religious Jew believes that the Return to Zion which was promised by all the literary prophets, when it comes to pass, will be perceived by

I'm not so sure anymore. The most repeated rabbinical judgment on the matter at the time of our visit came from Yitzhak Ginsburg, Romam Aludbi's mentor in Nablus: "Jewish blood and a goy's blood are not the same." The inference was clear: that killing isn't murder if the victim is a Gentile.<sup>41</sup>

One would have to conclude that the prophets are honored pretty much as they always were.

## No other Holocaust

My meditation in Yad Vashem took me, inevitably, to the next station: the actual extermination during the war years. Here all comparisons collapse. Yes, nearly three million residents—approaching two-thirds of the Palestinian people—have been driven from their land, and hundreds of thousands are held in camps. During the Intifada up to the time of our visit 463 Palestinians had been killed, by gunfire and beatings, electrocution and gas and burns: mostly

youngsters. Twenty thousand had been arrested. Approximately 400 abortions had been attributed to the use of gas on pregnant women.<sup>42</sup>

But this is not Auschwitz.

One comparison—minor but not insignificant, did catch my attention. It was the resort to euphemisms. The Nazis, as we all know, never permitted open reference to what was being done. Arrest and dispatch to destruction was called "resettlement." Extermination centers were called "concentration camps." I noticed something similar at work in official Israeli parlance. Palestinians are "Arabs" (meaning: they are generic ethnics who belong in any Arab-speaking country, not necessarily here). Expulsion from one's own country is "deportation." Banishment of the entire Palestinian people would be "transfer." Anyone killed in Lebanon is a "terrorist." Invaders are "settlers." Slugs of hardened metal alloy thinly coated with plastic are "plastic bullets" and steel slugs thinly coated with rubber are "rubber bullets." The reason for every form of persecution is "state security."

## Resistance

The third segment of the museum recounts the resistance movements among the European Jews. The actual scope of Jewish resistance was given a high accent, possibly to soften the disappointing fact that when uprisings did occur in victim Jewry, they were very late. They involved relatively few people. The Warsaw Ghetto rose in wrath after 90% of its people had been taken away to die. Most partisans took to the woods only late in the war, a decade after the Nazis began their persecution. A reason often given is that the step-by-step nature of the dispossession and savagery deluded the Jews into temporizing, trying to withstand, one grief at a time, rather than to fight.

One might add to this that the Jews had had to "behave themselves" for so long, because they were always in someone else's power, that they were simply not a truculent people.

And that, for me, seems also to account for the fact that Palestinian resistance to aggression was so little and so late. Their first, fumbling gesture towards self-determination in 1915 had the leadership of their professional classes handed by the Turks. When they were occupied by Britain with the announced intention of establishing another people in their land, their anger found only spasmodic expression. For the General Strike of 1936, once more the national leadership was thoroughly purged—this time by banishment. And when most of their people had been driven from their homes, and one third lived as stateless strangers in other lands, another third lived in tents in concentration camps, and the last third lived under martial law as Israeli "citizens," there was no significant resistance until the mid-sixties, when Al Fatah was formed by a band of university students ashamed of their fathers for passively sitting in the camps and accepting the catastrophe. Even then the resistance was pathetic and spasmodic. Palestinians were not parties to the wars of 1948, 1956, 1967 or 1973: all of those were fought over their heads. The first war they fought was when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, and even then most of the 18,000 killed were civilians.

Their first determined act of resistance was a civilian one: the Intifada, 70 years after the Balfour Declaration, nearly 40 years after Israel had taken away 80% of their land, and 20 years after they had taken the rest.

The Palestinians, quite like the European Jews, had never been a truculent people. They took ever so long to act on their wrath in resistance to those bent upon their banishment and destruction.

## The children first

I recalled another couple of linkages between the Jewish and Palestinian resistances. The first is the prominent and intrepid role taken by the children.

*One-and-a-half million children perished during the Holocaust. Jewish children were the first group to be slated for extermination in the Nazi plan for the "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem in Europe," as they were the biological continuity of the Jewish people as well as a "non-productive" element according to Nazi ideology. As a result, the children were murdered during the first Aktionen, together with their mothers and the elderly. The older boys were sent into forced labour with the adults, and suffered from starvation and the torture inflicted by the Nazi oppressors. In the ghettos many children were involved in smuggling food, and in this way actually supported many others; in the underground organizations and partisan units they were used as scouts and messengers and were credited with numerous heroic actions.*

Three-quarters of the Palestinian population under occupation is below the age of 21. They were born with the Israelis standing armed guard, most of them to parents themselves born in the camps. And it is the children who are the front line of the Intifada. They have

*There is, however, one special poignancy reserved to many of the Palestinians: they not only perished in camps: they were born and spent all their short lives there.*

been denied education, something which the Nazis did not think of doing. In the camps some Palestinians had been locked in their houses for as many as 200 days of curfew in the previous year and a half. About 90 children under the age of 17 had been killed at the time of my visit, 20 of them 12 years old or less. At least 30 more were dead after gas inhalation. Children injured were es-

timated conservatively at 25,000. Palestinian children, from precocious exposure to violent death before their eyes, have begun to display serious signs of long-term emotional disturbance.<sup>43</sup>

The most recent new addition at Yad Vashem is a separate memorial to the children. One enters an utterly darkened chamber. In the center of the chamber are five very large beeswax candles suspended invisibly from floor to ceiling. The entire surface of the room—floor, ceiling and walls—is sheer mirror, exploding those five still fires into a galaxy of small flames. Voices memorialize, one by one, the 1,500,000 Jewish children who perished:

*Julie Erkrantz, ten years old,*

*Poland*

*Moshe Reinschenk, funf Jahre alt*

*[5], Ukraine*

*Sasha Avratson, ben shmoneh*

*[3], Lithuania*

This firmament of mourning was, I would say, the most poignant of the memorials at Yad Vashem. But I could not see those flames flung across the dark inner sky without hearing other names in sacred memory:

*Ahmad Sha-Alan, 13 years old,*

*Dheishe Camp*

*Nahil Al Tukhi, ibn t'nash [12],*

*Al Amari Camp*

*Deah Hammad, five years old,*

*Nablus*

The Palestinian children lost would be but a single constellation beside the great galaxy of Jewish victims in this starburst of sorrow. There is, however, one special poignancy reserved to many of the Palestinians: they not only perished in camps: they were born and spent all their short lives there.

The Jewish resistance was also intensified by its courageous women.

Mordechai Ben-Porat recalls the Jewish underground in Iraq:

"Many girls were attracted to the underground, and their role there was very marked and far beyond what could be expected, given the status of women in traditional society... In the underground they found purpose and action. For instance, they used to transport arms. In one instance, a basket a girl was carrying broke in the middle of the market and bullets spilled out on the pavement. She somehow managed to retrieve them and make a hasty getaway... In the underground, the various social classes mingled. We had quite a few marriages that would not have been contemplated in normal times, when the social stratification was unassailable."<sup>44</sup>

Two weeks later I read that weapons had been spirited out of sight of the police by Palestinian women under their dresses.<sup>45</sup> The women have formed cooperatives to stimulate economic independence from the Israelis, and it is often they who distribute the leaflets which give orders for the Intifada. In one village I spent the afternoon with a young and very beautiful woman who had lost a brother and a brother-in-law to Israeli bullets, and whose husband was sentenced to be expelled from his country for helping organize a union, leaving her alone to support two sickly grandmothers and five children. Ten years ago, whatever her personal strength, it would not have had much public occasion to assert itself. Standing there that afternoon, she was one of the most intrepid and articulate persons I had ever seen. It is ironic that the younger Palestinian women have adopted, as their sign of patriotism, the very conservative dress first designed by the Iranian nationalists: a habit of female reserve, paradoxically assumed at the moment of their most forthright militancy.

Paralleling the Israeli experience, the resistance movement (Intifada, usually translated "Uprising," actually means "Rising up and shaking

off") has amalgamated the peasantry and the gentry within a previously very class-conscious people. And the partnership of Muslim Yasser Arafat and Christian George Habbash in the PLO stands for a solidarity among religious groups beyond any unity in recent memory.

## The more unthinkable

As I emerged from that melancholy hillside shrine, I had no desire to disrespect or to trivialize the incomparable anguish of the Jewish victims to Nazi extermination. The cup of suffering forced to the mouth of the Palestinian people could be filled and refilled many times over from the flagon of woe that the European Jews had had to drain.

To my Jewish friends—and to myself—I would have to say: No, what the Israelis have done to the Palestinians is no Holocaust. There are no cattle cars, no selections, no shooting pits, no crematoria, no six million slaughtered.

But I would also have to say that there was virtually nothing done to the Jews in the first phase during 1933 to 1939, so powerfully chronicled at Yad Vashem, which is without its parallel in the treatment of the Palestinians from 1939 to 1989... and beyond.

What Nazis did to the Jews from 1939 to 1945 was the "unthinkable." But Christopher Browning describes them for us: "already deeply involved in and committed to 'solving the Jewish question', [for them] the final step to mass murder was incremental, not a quantum leap."<sup>46</sup> If the unthinkable was going to be done, perhaps the only people prepared to enact it were those who had already treated the Jews the way they had from 1933 to 1939.

And so I fear for the future. The people of Israel, I believe, have neither the wish nor (perhaps) the freedom to exterminate the people whose homeland they want for themselves. Yet, on my last day in the Land a companion asked me abruptly as we walked beside the Old City, "Do you think the Jews will drive them all out?" That day I had returned to walk through Yad Vashem again, trying to respect the *Shoah* in its uniqueness, yet unable to deny the many ways its theme was repeating itself in the invasion, the occupation and now the Intifada. His question brought back the quotation from Heinrich Heine that confronts one at the threshold of the museum:

Where books are burnt, human beings are destined to be burnt too.

Granted what has now been done in like spirit to the Palestinians, who can say what might follow?

Among the Israelis there is a swell of prophetic utterance against this injustice. There are fearless calls for peace, and outright denunciations of the government (far bolder than any I can hear in America). Israeli Jews have marshalled scores of feisty action groups that call their compatriots to justice and to peace. Thus far, however, they have had no more effect upon their government than Helen Suzman had on hers in South Africa.

Behind the present determination of Israel I believe one can still hear the voice and the mood of "freedom fighter" Avraham Stern (companion-in-arms of Mr. Begin and Mr. Shamir), who said this in 1939:

"Force always proves decisive in the lives of conquerors and freedom fighters; force always shaped the fate of nations... This force was forged in the underground by dreamers and fighters, breakers of oaths, violators of agreements and lawbreakers, national revolutionaries. Not on this or that agreement did they build their country's future, ... neither was the opinion of

internal traitors or external public opinion taken into account, neither did they believe in the conscience of the world and in justice ... The right to life is given only to the strong... There is only one force that can break the Arabs—to bow their necks to the dust and to conquer the country from them.<sup>47</sup>

There are other voices, prophetic voices, that one hopes will prevail. But they cannot prevail with honor until the children of Israel can understand the rage of a people assaulted in their own homeland, despoiled, imprisoned and banished ... in the sight of all nations. This is something Jews *should* be able to understand.

## A Fearful Standpoint

This was visited upon me once more at our departure, as we were walking back down the *Allee* of live-oaks, each rooted in the remembered deeds of a Righteous Gentile who offered up his or her life (or, as we might say, truly found it) by sheltering Jews from the *Shoah*. Moving along that fragrant hillside which slopes down toward the sea from high Jerusalem, suddenly I realized the significance of where I stood. Just to the south of us stood Ain Karim, a Palestinian village whose Palestinian residents had been rounded up and driven out, to be replaced by an Israeli art colony.

Over the crest, just yards to the north of where we now stood, had been the village of Deir Yassin. Deir Yassin! During the night of the ninth of April 1948, a combined force from the two major Jewish terrorist groups—Yitzhak Shamir's LEHI and Menachim Begin's Irgun—broadcast orders from a loudspeaker that everyone in the village should evacuate. About a hundred persons ran out; those who remained hoisted white flags. Fif-

teen minutes later the attack came; they killed 254 persons, more than a hundred of whom were women and children. The International Red Cross representative who found the bodies several days later declared it a "deliberate massacre." Begin, in his memoirs, resented the criticism: four of his own men had been killed in the attack, and besides, they had given a warning; the Arabs who stayed had accepted the risk. (He did not mention, in his account, that surviving women and children were loaded in trucks and paraded through the Jewish sector of Jerusalem, in a hail of curses, spitting and rocks, before being dumped at the edge of the Palestinian sector and chased away in a hail of small arms fire.) From that day on, Begin admitted, their troops could evacuate villages and whole towns simply by shouting "Deir Yassin!" when they attacked. One Arab leader said it was the moment when they knew their cause was lost, because they knew, as never before, who their enemy was and what he meant to do.<sup>48</sup>

One day later Begin's group issued a press release:

"Nazi-Britain will not rule in our country... Any attempt to extend or renew a regime of occupation in our country, under one guise or another will bring on such an offensive against the oppressors as has not yet been seen during all the years of our fight for the liberation of our country."<sup>49</sup>

His comrade, Yitzhak Shamir, had already said:

"Neither Jewish ethics nor Jewish tradition can disqualify terrorism as a means of combat. We are very far from having any moral qualms as far as our national war goes. We have before us the command of the Torah, whose morality surpasses that of any body of laws in the world: 'Ye shall blot them out to the last man.'<sup>50</sup>

My mind was filled with violent memory walking down that slope.

Here were two peoples—two Semitic peoples—struggling for land: one to possess a land; the other, to retain it. The one group, so established in its role of canonical victim, finds it repugnant to believe that so soon after their most tormented hour, there is now another people who could as easily have spoken Begin's words quoted above as these he spoke when Israel was born:

"We shall overcome all our enemies. They will never succeed in enslaving us again. Never. Even if they overwhelm us we shall throw off their yoke. If we have no arms, we shall make them. If we have no force we shall create it. They will not break us. The lore of revolt and the spirit of freedom will sustain us and our children."<sup>51</sup>

I had mourned the Holocaust, not at Treblinka or Dachau, but walking beside the ruined homes and lives of quite another people, dispossessed, massacred and put to flight by force of Jewish arms. And yet I had not been led by the Jewish museum to ignore or forget those Palestinian villagers torn from their ancestral homes and swept into the endless cycle of victimhood. It had become the place to honor them as well. And to think powerfully of peace. There can be no peace for either nation until the people in power realizes at last that it is no longer victim but overlord.

Peace cannot arise until the people in power can appreciate that Elie Wiesel's warning cry, "Never again!" must ward off not only the "unthinkable"—that Jews could be so victimized once more—but the doubly unthinkable: that it *could* happen again, and that Jews could then be on the other side of oppression.

That is the lesson I walked away with from Yad Vashem.

<sup>1</sup>Israel Zangwill, "The Return to Palestine," *New Liberal Review* 2 (Dec 1901):627 in *Palestine Diary ix*

*continued on page 16*

## CURRENT RESOURCES

The following agencies are monitoring the deteriorating situation of the Palestinians and are recommended as an update to Father Burchaell's article:

The **Alternative Information Center (AIC)**, a joint Israeli-Palestinian institute with strong ties to both the Israeli protest movement and Palestinian society, aims to provide the international media with information not easily accessible through Israeli channels. AIC produces two newsletters: **News From Within** and **The Other Front**, from which the excerpt on page 15 is taken. For subscription information write to AIC, P.O. Box 24278, Jerusalem, Fax 02-253151.

The **Co-ordinating Committee of International Non-Government Organizations (CCINGO-Jerusalem)** works with local Palestinian organizations in occupied Palestine. Its frequent press releases provide names and phone numbers for those monitoring human rights, the economic crisis, land expropriation, medical emergencies, and school closures. For information contact Brother Donald Mansir, Pontifical Mission for Palestine, P.O. Box 19642, Jerusalem via Israel, Tel. 02-284859.

**Translations From the Hebrew Press** prepared by Dr. Israel Shahak, Holocaust survivor and chairman of the **Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights**. These monthly, 50-page translations, many of eyewitness accounts of Israeli abuses, are available from the **American Educational Trust**, P.O. Box 53062, Washington, D.C. 20009, for \$30 a year. Fax 202-265-4574.

**Al-Fajr - Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly**, one of the most often cited English language Palestinian papers, is available for \$50 per year. Mail subscription payment to Al-Fajr, 16 Cromwell Street, Hempstead, N.Y. 11550.

**Palestine Perspectives**. This bimonthly publication offers political analyses and surveys of the U.S. and Israeli press. See excerpt on page 15. Send annual subscription of \$15 to **Palestine Perspectives**, 9522A Lee Highway, Fairfax VA 22031, Tel. 703-352-4168; Fax 703-352-4169.

**B'tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories** publishes an **Information Sheet** about once a month as well as in-depth reports into specific subject areas. Large reports cost \$10 each, smaller ones \$3. Those who contribute \$50 receive all publications. Contact B'tselem, 18 Karen Hayesod Street, Jerusalem 92149. Fax: 02-617946.

**Al-Haq: Law in the Service of Man** is the West Bank affiliate of the **International Commission of Jurists**. Their 1989 annual report **A Nation Under Siege, Human Rights in the Occupied Territories** (672 pages) is available for \$20 by writing to AlHaq, P.O. Box 14131,

Ramallah, West Bank, via Israel. **AlHaq** also issues **Occasional Papers** and has recently launched its first international campaign for Palestinian family reunification. Fax: 02-955194.

**Save the Children** organization in Sweden has issued a 1,000-page document **Israeli Atrocities Against Palestinian Children**, prepared by Anne Nixon, an American in **Save the Children's** Jerusalem office. For information write: **Save the Children**, Rabba Barnen, Tegeluddsvagen - 31, P.O. Box 27320, S-102, 54 Stockholm, Sweden. Fax: 468-611-5326.

**Physicians for Human Rights** has issued their **Health Care in Detention: A Study of Israeli Treatment of Palestinians**. Copies of this 1990 Report are available for \$6.00 from **Physicians for Human Rights**, 58 Day Street, Suite 202, Somerville MA 02144. Fax: 617-623-7234.

**Arab Association for Human Rights** issues a newsletter that is available by writing to **HRA**, P.O. Box 215, Mary's Well Street, 34/604 Nazareth 16101, Israel. Fax: 06-564934.

**Palestine Refugees Today** is a complimentary quarterly that is available from **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine**, P.O. Box 700, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, Attn: Mr. Emil Pyrick, Chief, Public Information Officer.

**Foundation for Middle East Peace** publishes a bimonthly **Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories**, which covers all aspects of this vital issue. It is available upon request by writing to **Foundation for Middle East Peace**, 555 13th Street N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20004-1109. Fax: 202-637-5910.

The **Jewish Peace Lobby** is the only American Jewish peace organization working full-time to directly affect American foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To receive its **Action Alerts** contact **The Jewish Peace Lobby**, Suite 317, 8401 Colesville Road, Silver Spring MD 20910. Tel: 301-589-8764.

**Middle East Justice Network** publishes **Breaking the Siege and Action Alerts** that are available by writing to **Middle East Justice Network**, P.O. Box 558, Cambridge MA 02238. Fax: 617-776-8926.

**Jerusalem Press Service** provides up-to-date information of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation; services include: a 5-8 page bulletin, faxed daily for \$50 per month or, for those without a fax machine, a 15-20 page summary mailed weekly for the same subscription rate. Send payment, stating preference, to **Jerusalem Press Service**, 4400 MacArthur Blvd., #305,

...And when the youth who just now was arrested awaits my orders with a kind of mixture of submission and panic and quiet pride, the associations [with the Jewish Holocaust] burst out. And when I simply survey my surroundings - people in cell-blocks, people in cages - the associations burst out of their own accord. And like a believer whose faith is cracking, I find myself going over the list of arguments, the list of differences: There were crematoria and here there are not, I remind myself. There was no conflict between the peoples, I remind myself. The Germans were in no danger, and so on and so on.

Until I catch myself understanding that the problem is not one of similarity. No one seriously thinks that there is real similarity. The problem is that there is not enough dissimilarity. The problem is that the dissimilarity is not strong enough - to once and for all silence the disturbing voices, the accusing looks. And maybe the fault lies with the detentions done by the Shabak: almost nightly, after interrogating a number of youngsters to the breaking point, the Shabak passes a list of the youngster's friends to the paratroopers in the city or to the Border Guard professionals. And you see them going to the curfew-bound city at night, to arrest the people who endanger the security of the state. And you see them returning - with 15 and 16-year-olds, teeth chattering, eyes popping, often already beaten and manacled. Even S., who has a factory in the occupied territories, can't believe his eyes. "We've come to this?" he asks, "We've reached the point where the Shabak [security services] run after children like these?" And groups of soldiers hang around the 'reception room' to observe them: to observe them while they undress, to observe them while they're in their underwear, and to observe them trembling in terror. Sometimes they land an extra kick, before they don their new prison uniforms. Sometimes they make do with a curse.

Or perhaps the fault lies with the screams: At the end of your watch, on the way from the tents to the showers, you hear humble screams. You are... carrying your washing kit, with your towel over your shoulder, and from over the galvanized tin fence of the interrogation section come hair-raising human screams. I mean that literally: hair-raising. And you of course have read the B'tselem report [describing systematic torture during Shabak interrogations of Palestinians], and you know that in the Gaza installation, they don't have 'coffins', for example. And you ask yourself, if so, what is going on here five meters away. Is it someone being tied in the 'banana' position? Or is it a simple beating? You don't know. But you do know that from this moment forth you will have no rest. Because 50 meters from the bed where you try to sleep, 80 meters from the dining hall where you try to eat, human beings are screaming.

And they are screaming because other people - wearing the same uniform as you - are doing things to them that make them scream. They are screaming because your Jewish state, your democratic state, in an institutionalized, systematic manner - and definitely legally - your state is making them scream.

Try not to be over-sensitive, you tell yourself. Don't get carried away, don't jump to conclusions. After all, every state has its dungeons. It's just your bad luck that you've had the opportunity of actually hearing how this business sounds. Don't be over sensitive, you tell yourself, but the screams are getting louder. And you know that there is not one grain of truth in what you've just said. Because in this interrogation installation they do not question dangerous spies or traitors or terrorists about to blow up the Prime Minister's office (only one in 25 of those currently being interrogated is accused of murder - of a collaborator). Because in the interrogation installations in the territories they don't interrogate more than one or two dozen 'agents' in a year, but thousands and thousands of political prisoners... On any one day, some 14,000 people are imprisoned; nearly one percent of the [Palestinian] population of the territories. What is going on around you is not some sort of essential, defined and exact 'surgery' on the opposition spy network but the repression of a popular uprising. What is going on is that our entire population... is carrying out the task of imprisoning their entire population... And that is something the likes of which does not go on today in any other place in the world which is called 'proper'. And you are a partner, you are a collaborator. You are complicit. And now And now, when the screams are dying down, when they are turning into kind of whimpers, sobs, you know that from this moment forth, nothing will be as it was before. Because a person who has heard the screams of another person, is another person. Whether he does anything about it or not. And suddenly it is no longer the "Don't say 'I didn't know,'" which has faded so much over the three-and-a-half years of the intifada. Suddenly it is "Don't say 'I didn't hear'". And you do hear. Even if you plug your ears you go on hearing.

—Written by Ari Shavit, an Israeli soldier, for the Hebrew daily Ha'aretz and translated by Maxine Nunn for The Other Front, May 8, 1991.

Washington, D.C. 20007. Fax: 202-338-2748. See excerpt on page 16.

**Amnesty International offers Israel and the Occupied Territories**, a 20-minute video documentary on Israeli human rights abuses during the Palestinian intifadah. This is now available through A. M. E. U. for \$16.50, postage included. AI's latest 80-page report **Israel and the Occupied Territories: The military justice system in the Occupied Territories: detention, interrogation and trial procedures** was just released and is available for \$9.00 from Amnesty International USA 322 Eighth Avenue, New York NY 10001. Tel: 212-807-8400.

Readers wishing to inquire about joining a fact-finding mission to oc-

cupied Palestine may write to Rev. Don Wagner at Mercy Corps International, 175 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1800, Chicago IL 60604. Fax: 312-922-0932.

### Children Gassed

Sixty-six Palestinian infants were overcome by tear gas when an Israeli officer tossed gas canisters in a Gaza clinic crowded with pregnant and nursing mothers and their babies. The incident took place on 12 June in a clinic belonging to the United Nations Works and Relief Agency, which serves Palestinian refugees.

Israeli Television reported that the officer will be court-martialed "for using poor judgment." The Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot* said that he "will be incarcerated for ten days." A few days later, however, the Israeli commander of the Gaza Strip pardoned the responsible officer. A few days later, two Palestinian women from the Gaza Strip, 24-year-old Hanan Alloh from Bureij refugee camp and 18-year-old Mirvat Barrawi from Beit Lahya, miscarried in Shifa Hospital as a result of tear gas inhalation.

On the same day that the Gaza babies were injured, fifteen other Palestinian children suffered tear gas inhalation in Nablus when Israeli soldiers lobbed tear gas canisters at their homes.

—From *Palestine Perspectives*: July/August 1990

<sup>2</sup>New York Times 7 June 1989, 10Y.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times 24 January 1988, op-ed page.

<sup>4</sup>Jerusalem Post 21 June 1989, 12; New York Times 27 October 1989, p.1. See also Orit Shohat, "A Person Should Not Grow Tomato ..." *Ha-Aretz* 27 October 1985, for South Africa analogy (*National Catholic Reporter* 27 October 1989, p.20).

<sup>5</sup>New York Times 24 January 1988, op-ed page.

<sup>6</sup>Jerusalem Post 13 June 1989, 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid 13 June 1989, 2.

<sup>8</sup>Vicki Kemper, "The Road to Palestine," *Sojourners* April 1989, 20.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. Zeev Schiff, "A Human Time Bomb," *Ha-Aretz* 13 December 1987 (cited in *National Catholic Reporter* 27 October 1989, 20.)

<sup>10</sup>See also *Jerusalem Post* 15 June 1989, 12.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid 18 June 1989, 5.

<sup>12</sup>*Jerusalem Post Magazine* 23 June 1989, 7.

<sup>13</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 8 June 1989, 2

<sup>14</sup>Kemper, 19.

<sup>15</sup>Kim A. Lawton, "An Elusive Peace," *Christianity Today* 21 May 1989, 35.

<sup>16</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 14 June 1989, 4.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid 13 June 1989, 12.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid 15 May 1989, 1.

<sup>19</sup>Kemper, 22.

<sup>20</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 13 June 1989, 4; 12 June 1989, 10.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid 16 June 1989, 4.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid 14 June 1989, 1.

<sup>23</sup>Michael Adams, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza," in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *Palestinian Rights: Affirmation and Denial* (Wilmette, Medina, 1982) 67-78.

<sup>24</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 21 June 1989, 12; 22 June 1989, 1.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid 14 June 1989, 1; 22 June 1989, 2.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid 21 June 1989, 12; 15 June 1989, 12.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid 23 June 1989, 18.

<sup>28</sup>*Jerusalem Post Magazine* 23 June 1989, 7.

<sup>29</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 13 June 1989, 12.

<sup>30</sup>*Jerusalem Post Magazine* 8 June 1989, 4.

<sup>31</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 11 June 1989, 1.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid 18 June 1989, 8.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid 12 June 1989, 2.

<sup>34</sup>New York Times 30 September 1989, Y4.

<sup>35</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 16 June 1989, 20.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid 23 June 1989, 18.

<sup>37</sup>New York Times 27 December 1990, A3.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid 8 June 1989, 4.

<sup>39</sup>Larry Cohler, "Sanctity of life more important than territories," *Long Island Jewish World* 8-14 February 1985.

<sup>40</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 19 June 1989, 4.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid 12 June 1989, 4.

# JERUSALEM PRESS daily report

from the occupied territories

TUESDAY, JULY 30, 1991

VOLUME VI NO. 133

DAY 1330 OF THE INTIFADA

## INTIFADA UPDATE

### Eight Palestinian Women Miscarry

Gaza Strip: In a burst of overnight violence, soldiers threw poison gas at the residents, causing the following women to miscarry:

1. Sabra Al Bardin, 25, Rafah Camp, 4 months pregnant
2. Kifah Mansour, 19, Bureij Camp, 3 months pregnant
3. Mona Al Rawagha, 20, Jabalia Camp, 2 months pregnant
4. Nuhad Al Qanor, 20, Jabalia Camp, 5 months pregnant
5. Wardeh Hamad, 15, Beit Hanoun, 3 months pregnant
6. Faten Kheil, 29, Al Zeitoun, 2 months pregnant
7. Rasimeh Abu Tarabish, 28, Al Durj, 2 months pregnant
8. Suheila Halalweh, 25, Jabalia Camp, 3 months pregnant

<sup>42</sup>Ibid 15 June 1989, 12.

<sup>43</sup>*International Herald-Tribune* 1-2 July 1989, 5; The Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees Newsletter May 1989.

<sup>44</sup>*Jerusalem Post Magazine* 8 June 1989, 4-5.

<sup>45</sup>*Jerusalem Post* 23 June 1989, 18.

<sup>46</sup>Christopher R. Browning, "Bureaucracy and Mass Murder: The German Administrator's Comprehension of the Final Solution," in Asher Cohen et al, eds, *Comprehending the Holocaust: Historical and Literary Research* (Frankfurt & New York: Verlag Peter Lang, 1988), 173. Browning extends his point, finding that the perpetrators "spoke as if they too had been victims. But of course in reality they had choices and they made decisions, but these choices and decisions were spread out over time and flowed so naturally one after another that they were unconscious of any particular turning point... Instead the path was a gradual, almost imperceptible, descent past the point of no return." p. 174.

<sup>47</sup>*Jerusalem Post Magazine* 23 June 1989, 15.

<sup>48</sup>Robert John and Sami Hadawi, *The Palestine Diary, 2(1945-48)* (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, 1970), 327-329

<sup>49</sup>Eli Taviv and Yonah Alexander, eds, *Psychological Warfare and Propaganda: Irgun Documentation* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1982), 240.

<sup>50</sup>*Middle East Report* May-June 1988, p. 55, citing Al-Hamishmar 24 December 1987; Shamir published this in the summer of 1943.

<sup>51</sup>Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, trans. Samuel Katz, ed. Ivan M. Greenberg (London: W.H. Allen, [1951]), 380.



Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.  
Room 241, 475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115