

ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS: CONFLICT OR CONCILIATION*
by Dr. Ismail Zayid

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is frequently described as a very complex one, and I want to submit before you that the problem is fundamentally a very simple one which was simply summed up, in the words of a simple Palestinian farmer in Jericho, quoted by the distinguished man of conscience and educator of this very great university where we stand today, the late Frank Epp, the then President of Conrad Grebel College of the University of Waterloo who told Frank Epp:

"Our problem is very simple. A foreigner came and took our land, took our farms and our homes, and kicked us out. We have in mind to return. It may take a hundred years but we will return."

This, in a nutshell, is the Palestine problem and the essence of this conflict. A country, Palestine, has been dismantled, its people uprooted from their homeland and replaced by an alien people gathered from all corners of the globe and a new state, Israel, created, in its place forty-four years ago. This tragedy, and the ensuing conflict that brought about repeated wars in the Middle East is a direct outcome of the introduction of political Zionism into the Middle East.

Before dealing with the proposed resolution of this conflict, I think it behoves us to understand how this problem came

about. To do that, let's delineate the context of this discussion and identify what is Palestine and who are the Palestinians?

The land of Palestine has been inhabited since the dawn of history. Its name, Palestine, is derived from the Philistines, who lived there, and later the Arabic name Falastin. The Palestinian people of today are the indigenous people of Palestine. They make no claim to racial purity, being the cumulative descendants of the Canaanites and other Arabian semetic tribes like the Jebusites and Amorites, as well as the Philistines compounded with all the conquerors, including the Hebrew tribes, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Turks and British who conquered this land and ultimately departed from it. The Palestinians, however, remained there throughout history. The French Jewish historian, Professor Maxime Roddenson of the Sorbonne University of Paris asserts:

"The Arab population of Palestine is native in all senses of the word. Their roots in Palestine can be traced back at least forty centuries."

It is this long continued possession of the land that firmly establishes the legal entitlement of the Palestinians to

their homeland, by international law. In contrast to this, the Zionist historic claim to Palestine based on a short-lived external invasion by the Hebrew tribes, which was terminated nearly two thousand years ago is feeble in the extreme and has no legal validity in international law.

Lord Sydenham said in the House of Lords, in 1922:

"Zionists have no more valid claim to Palestine than the descendants of the ancient Romans have to this country (England)."

The U.S. King-Crane Commission stated that the claim:

"...often submitted by Zionist representatives that they have a 'right' to Palestine, based on an occupation of two thousand years ago, can hardly be seriously considered."

I stated earlier the fundamental nature of the conflict, in the words of othe Jericho farmer, and how it was brought about by the introduction of political Zionismin Palestine. In any attempt to relate the factual history of how Zionism brought about this human tragedy, one must face the enormous task created by the Zionist propaganda and the resultant massive mythology and falsification of history, it created. It was in direct reference to this that the noted British

historian, Professor Arnold Toynbee wrote:

"Right and wrong are the same in Palestine as anywhere else. What is peculiar about the Palestine conflict is that the world has listened to the party that has committed the offence and has turned a deaf ear to the victims."

The results of this propaganda are well described by William Zukerman, editor of the Jewish Newsletter who wrote in 1959:

"To this observer, nothing demonstrated more sharply the terribly uncanny power of modern propaganda to control minds, sway emotions and brutalize people than the Zionist propaganda on the Arab refugees during the last decade. It literally succeeded in turning black into white, a big blatant lie into truth, a grave social injustice into an act of justice glorified by thousands."

Much as I would like, I do not have the time to relate to you the entire factual history of this problem but I propose to ask you to stop and look with me at three specific dates.

The first is the 2nd of November 1917, when Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, issued his infamous declaration, in the form of a letter written to an English Jew, Lord Rothchild, which read:

"His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

It is interesting to note that the four-letter word "Arab" occurs not once in this document. To refer to the Arabs who constituted, at the time, 92% of the population of Palestine and owned 98% of its land, as non-Jewish communities, is not merely preposterous but deliberately fraudulent. I do not need to tell you that this letter has no shred of legality, as Palestine did not belong to Balfour to assume such acts of generosity. The words of the famous British historian, Professor Arnold Toynbee describe the British role, in issuing this document, accurately:

"We were taking it upon ourselves to give away something that was not ours to give. We were promising rights of some kind in the Palestinian Arabs' country to a third party."

Similarly, the well known Jewish writer, Arthur Koestler, summed it up aptly when he described the Balfour Declaration as a document in which "one nation promised a second the country of the third".

The second date I want you to look at is the 29th of November 1947 when the United Nations General Assembly under tremendous pressure, threats and blackmail from the United States, passed its Resolution No. 181 to partition Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state, and an international zone for Jerusalem. The Jewish population of Palestine has by then, through immigration, reached close to one-third of the population and owned 5.6% of the land of Palestine. This one-third of the population, many of them illegal immigrants and not legal citizens of Palestine and owning less than 6% of its land were granted 56% of Palestine by the United Nations to establish their state.

It is interesting to note that times have not changed since 1947 and the United States got the General Assembly to delay a vote "to gain time to bring, by coercion, certain Latin American, Asian and African countries into line with its own views". Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles stated:

"By direct order of the White House, every form of pressure, direct and indirect, was used to make sure that the necessary majority would be gained."

Members of the U.S. Congress threatened cutting economic aid to several Third World countries, if they did not toe the line to U.S. wishes.

Subsequent to the passage of this resolution, a carefully calculated Zionist plan was carried out, through terror and massacre, to force the defenceless Palestinians out of their farms, homes and land. By the end of July 1948 over 750,000 Muslim and Christian Palestinians were driven out and soon after that, Israel, through military power and in defiance of repeated United Nations ceasefire resolutions, had occupied 78% of the land of Palestine, leaving in Arab hands little more than half of the area allotted by the United Nations to the Arab state, namely the West Bank and Gaza, constituting 23% of the area of Palestine.

In 1967, through an act of aggression and in violation of the U.N. Charter, Israel occupied the entire area of Palestine as well as parts of Syria and Egyptian territory. Excluding Sinai, Israel continues to refuse to comply with repeated U.N. Security Council resolutions demanding Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

In 1982 Israel's warlords, Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin invaded Lebanon, in brutal war that brought about the devastation of cities and villages and killing of tens of thousands of innocent civilians and finally orchestrated the brutal massacres of Sabra and Shatilla that horrified the entire world in its brutality.

Today, in 1992, of the 5 million Palestinians, nearly one-half are living in exile, uprooted from their homeland, while 750,000 are living as second-class citizens in the State of Israel and 1.75 million in the West Bank and Gaza have been living for twenty-five years under oppressive alien and illegal military occupation, against the horrors of which they have no protection. Walking and sleeping, they are at the mercy of a military authority which has the power, and uses it freely, to invade their homes, arrest them, detain them without trial, subject them to torture, expel them from their land, demolish their homes, uproot their trees, impose collective punishment on their communities and dismiss and expel their elected mayors. Their publications are censored, they may not engage in any political activities and their right to assemble for any purpose is

rigorously controlled. Their schools and universities are arbitrarily closed and disrupted and their curricula and textbooks are altered and censored, denying them the basic principle of academic freedom. Their lands are confiscated to hand over to Jewish settlers in a barefaced program of colonization. They are terrorized, their homes broken up and their fields defoliated with impunity by these settlers. Their children are callously beaten and their limbs broken and they are brutalized and killed.

All these acts of violation of human rights are carried out in open defiance of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention which stipulates how a military occupier should behave towards civilians under its occupation. After the Second World War, and to prevent the recurrence of atrocities committed by the Nazis against civilians under its occupation, both Jewish and non-Jewish, the world community formulated an international convention, the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which all countries of the world, including Israel, Canada and the United States, are signatories. Ironically, however, the State of Israel today violates every article of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We do not have the time to go through the mammoth brutality that Israel practises against the civilians of the occupied West Bank and Gaza but I can relate to you that numerous human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, the I.C.R.C., the International Commission of Jurists, the U.S. National Lawyers Guild and Israeli human rights organizations, amongst others, have repeatedly condemned Israeli practices against the Palestinians, but to no avail.

I do not think that many of you will disagree with me if I say that for such a situation to continue anywhere in the world is plainly immoral and intolerable. This is what has driven the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza to rise in a spontaneous massive human uprising, the Intafada, and raise their fists with stones and in anger to stop this oppression and call on the human world conscience to come forward and speak out. In May 1990, a study by the Swedish Save The Children Organization documented that:

"The Israeli army has systematically become child killers. Between December 1987 and December 1989, one hundred fifty children under age 16 were killed by soldiers. The average age of the dead was 10 years. Between 50,000 - 63,000 children were beaten, gassed or wounded. More than half of those

killed were not near a demonstration when they met their death. Only 19% were involved in stone-throwing."

To add insult to injury, the Israeli Landau Commission, which investigated the reports of torture and killing of Palestinian prisoners, confirmed this but proceeded, incredibly, to sanction the use of "moderate physical pressure" during interrogation.

Here a judiciary commission sanctions torture giving it a new name, "moderate physical pressure", in violation of international law and every notion of civilized behaviour. This ingenious description of torture as "moderate physical pressure" reminds me of the Orwellian newspeak of 1984. Israeli leaders have a great skill at this and, perhaps while we are at it, I might give you a few examples: the territories under Israeli occupation are not occupied but "administered" territories. A policy of expelling Palestinians from their homeland is not described as expulsion or more appropriately as national genocide against an entire nation, but "transfer". The Israeli war of aggression against Lebanon, killing 20,000 Palestinians and Lebanese civilians, was called "peace for Galilee". The

stainless steel bullets, with a thin coating of rubber, that kill Palestinian children, are called "rubber bullets".

Incarceration without charge or trial is "administrative detention" in Israeli lingo, and I could go on and on. I am afraid George Orwell must be shaking in his grave to realize how excelled he is now by Israel's leaders in this newspeak.

This is the situation that we are dealing with today and for which we must seek a resolution by peaceful means. For, otherwise, the repeated wars that we have faced during the last forty-four years with devastating results to the people of the area with an increasing threat of wider conflagration and the possibility of use of more destructive weapons, including chemical, biological and nuclear warfare.

Palestinians, for decades, have proposed the most humanistic and just solution, namely that all people who live in this land, Jews, Christians and Muslims should discard their fears and hatreds and live in one secular state as equal citizens without any discrimination, based on ethnic origin, race or religion. The great Jewish humanists, Professors Judah Magnes and Albert Einstein, supported this idea of a

bi-national state for Arabs and Jews and opposed the exclusivist racist ideology of a Zionist state, which maintains an official division of its population into "Jews" and "non-Jews" where some are more equal than others.

However, for the time being this must remain a dream and we propose a more achievable solution based on justice and international legality. I know that the Palestinians are aware that the massive injustice, to which they have been subjected, is now impossible to redress completely and they have accepted to be content with a modicum of justice. This must be based on the following conditions, namely: (1) complete Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the West Bank, Gaza and Arab Jerusalem. This act of occupation is illegal and was committed in violation of the U.N. Charter. Repeated U.N. resolutions have called for this withdrawal and compliance by Israel is overdue. (2) The Palestinians should be allowed to practise their fundamental inalienable right of self-determination and the right to establish their own independent state on a portion of their own country.

As to the right of self-determination, the cornerstone of this doctrine was President Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points. This principle was accepted by the League of Nations and is enshrined in the U.N. Charter.

The U.N. General Assembly in a series of resolutions has continued since 1947 Resolution #181, to affirm the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state. U.N. General Assembly Resolution 31/20(31) on November 29, 1976, reaffirming earlier resolutions, stated:

"Reaffirming that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, inter alia, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations."

(3) The Palestinians must be allowed to practise their fundamental inalienable right of return. This right is fundamental in the universal declaration of human rights and a right that has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the United Nations since the General Assembly Resolution #194, on

December 11, 1948, which resolved that:

"Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and those wishing not to return should be compensated for their property."

The U.N. mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, stated in a report to the United Nations:

"It would be an offence against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and, indeed, at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries."

Count Bernadotte paid heavily for stating this obvious principle and was assassinated by the Stern terrorist gang, on direct orders of none other than Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, on September 17, 1948 in Jerusalem.

It was interesting that a few weeks ago in the Globe and Mail of May 22, 1992, Mr. Joel Cuperfain, an ardent Zionist, wrote that it is "outrageous and unprecedented" for the Palestinians to claim the right of return. This is ironic when the Zionist ideology entitles every Jew from any corner of the Globe, including millions of Russian Jews who, and their ancestors, had never set foot in Palestine, to have

their "right of return", while the Palestinians who were born there and their forefathers had lived and cultivated the land of Palestine for thousands of years, are now denied this right, which is described by Zionists as an "outrageous claim". Only in Zionist philosophy and rewriting of history can such an incredible statement be made.

It should be stated that, in accordance with international law, that the denial of the right of self-determination and the right of return, are international crimes.

The question must be raised, at this stage, why has this conflict continued to simmer and boil over more frequently than not, despite repeated United Nations and Security Council resolutions and despite the unquestionable assertions in international law of these fundamental rights for the Palestinians. This question, I think, deserves careful scrutiny.

The title of our deliberation speaks of conciliation. Ironically, the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly created in its Resolution #194 of 11th of December 1948 the mechanism of a Palestine Conciliation Commission

based in Lausanne, Switzerland, which was to achieve the object of conciliation and resolution of this conflict by peaceful means, having failed to achieve this by the use of the U.N. mediator, Count Bernadotte, who was assassinated, on the orders of Mr. Shamir.

It is interesting to note that Israel, in its application for membership to the United Nations, undertook to comply with the General Assembly resolutions relating to the partition of Palestine, Resolution 181, and the right of return for the Palestine refugees, Resolution 194. The representative of the government of Israel stated in the General Assembly on the 13th of April 1949 that his government would pursue "no policies on any questions which were inconsistent with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council" and with particular reference to resolutions #181 and #194. Accordingly and conditional on this, the state of Israel was admitted to membership of the United Nations in a Resolution 273, of 11th May 1949 which stated:

"Recalling its resolutions of 29th November 1947 and 11th December 1948 and taking note of the declaration and explanations made by the representative of the government of Israel before the ad hoc Political Committee in respect of the implementation of the said resolutions, the General Assembly decides that Israel is a peace-loving state which accepts

the obligations contained in its charter and is able and willing to carry out those obligations."

It is interesting to note that within hours of the passage of this resolution, the state of Israel refused to continue to participate in the Palestine Conciliation Commission in Lausanne. I do not need to remind you that since that date, the state of Israel has continued to refuse to comply with repeated U.N. General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and has been condemned more than any other state by such bodies. In fact, Israel is the only state that was accepted into United Nations membership on a conditional basis and thus it is easily argued that having not complied with these conditions, its membership is null and void, on this basis. To this day, Israel continues to treat U.N. and its resolutions in contempt. This contempt cannot be more flagrant than the statement by Mr. Abba Eban, Israeli Foreign Minister, who stated in the very U.N. General Assembly on June 16, 1967:

"Even if the U.N. votes by 121 votes to 1, we will not withdraw from the territory we have occupied."

A British Member of Parliament, Mr. F. Hoaley, wrote to the Guardian on August 16, 1967 and stated:

"During the ten days of intensive discussions that I have had with Israeli politicians and leaders, I found nothing but contempt for the United Nations."

This is, in essence, the reason why conciliation has so far failed to resolve this issue because the state of Israel refuses to comply with international law and repeated U.N. resolutions, and is unquestioningly supported by the U.S., which continues to give the political, military, and financial support to allow Israel to continue this defiance of U.N. international law and maintain its illegal occupation of other nations' territories.

It is relevant to note, that when in 1956 Israel invaded and occupied Sinai, in collusion with Britain and France, Mr. Ben-gurion declared at the time that this is 'liberated' territory from which he would not withdraw. It took President Eisenhower to go before American TV public on February 20, 1957 and raise the question of economic pressure and he stated:

"Should a nation which attacks and occupies foreign territory, in the face of U.N. disapproval, be allowed to impose conditions on its own withdrawal?"

If we agree that armed attack can properly achieve the purpose of the assailant, then I fear we will have to turn back the clock of international order."

And I am afraid this is exactly what has happened since then; the clock of international order has been turned back and subsequent American governments have allowed Israel to continue its violation of international law, the integrity of the Charter of the United Nations and the human rights of some of its citizens and those under its military occupation, despite condemnation by various international bodies.

False hopes were also raised when on January 15, 1991, President Bush ordered his troops to proceed with the most massive bombardment and destruction of a whole country, namely Iraq, because of Iraq's illegal occupation of neighbouring Kuwait and its refusal to comply with the Security Council Resolution 660. Mr. Bush stated then:

"No nation must be permitted to brutally invade its neighbour."

He went on to say that: "we cannot allow Security Council resolutions to remain unimplemented".

However, it was clearly evident then that the destruction of Iraq was on the U.S. agenda for different reasons and the moralizing about the integrity of the U.N. and its resolutions and the unacceptability of invasion of neighbouring countries was entirely hypocritical and cynical. All the Security Council resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian territory were of no consequence, nor were the repeated resolutions about compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and the condemnation of expulsion of people from their homes and the confiscation of properties and the creation of illegal settlements on occupied territory; all this did not deserve the attention of Mr. Bush, Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Major. I want to submit to you that we do not need half a million troops to be sent to Israel to enforce Security Council resolutions, as we did in Iraq, but what we need is a single standard for the resolution of international conflicts and a true genuine understanding of a New World order, not the New World order of Mr. Bush and his associates, where American interests only come first and last. What the United States and European powers and Canada need to understand is their obligation to comply with international law

and cease the economic aid that allows Israel to maintain its illegal occupation, the confiscation of other people's land, and the continuing acts of aggression and international piracy by bombing refugee camps and villages in Lebanon and the bombing of Tunisia and the assassination of Palestinian leaders in Europe and elsewhere.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we need conciliation to achieve peace in the Middle East. As resolved by the permanent Court of International Justice:

"A state which violates rights is required under international law to restore the situation as it was before the illegal act."

Restoration must

"... as far as possible, wipe out all the consequences of the illegal act and establish the situation which would, in all probability, have existed that act had not been committed."

In essence what we require today is for the aggressor to pay heed to international law. We cannot continue to call on the victim for continuing victimization and increasing concessions that violate the sanctity of human decency and morality. The Palestinian people have made tremendous concessions in their hope for conciliation and peaceful

resolution. They have declared in the Algiers Palestine National Council Conference, in 1988, their acceptance of Israel's existence and are willing to accept to establish a state in little more than one-fifth of their country, namely the West Bank and Gaza, constituting 23% of their land. The Palestinian people have agreed to co-exist peacefully with a neighbouring Israel, if this recognition is reciprocated. They have accepted to participate in the so-called Peace Conference, orchestrated by the U.S., under humiliating conditions. The same U.S. administration that sent half a million troops to enforce the Security Council resolution in The Gulf, has allowed Israel to dictate the exclusion of the United Nations from the so-called International Peace Conference, where the U.N. was allowed to participate only as a silent

observer. This is the very body that we thought its resolutions must be implemented under any circumstances, even if that required the use of military force. Israel insisted that the Palestinian representatives must exclude any residents of the city of Jerusalem or Palestinians from the Diaspora. This is a unique experience. In the history of human conflict, it has never been demanded or accepted that a party to the conflict dictates who represents its foes.

However, it was not a revelation to us who have lived this conflict with the Zionist movement, to hear Mr. Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel, declare after his defeat in the recent elections that it was his clear policy to continue to procrastinate these negotiations for at least ten years so that the occupied territories will be fully occupied by new Jewish settlers. This will explain to you the nature of this conflict and why conciliation, on the part of the Palestinians alone, has not achieved any results. What Mr. Shamir is stating is a frank and honest expression of the true nature of the ideology of Zionism, an ideology that first refused to acknowledge the existence of the Palestinian people and then chose to dehumanize them, a policy that continues to this day.

Some will say we have a new government in Israel and Mr. Rabin will bring a new face to Israel. Yes, it is true Mr. Rabin will bring a new face to Israel but only, I am afraid, a new appearance but not a new reality. It was Mr. Rabin whose troops, in 1948, drove the citizens of Ramleh and Lydda at gunpoint from their homes. It was General Rabin who conducted the war of aggression of 1967 that

brought about the current occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. It was Mr. Rabin who ordered the destruction of total Palestinian villages, including Imwas, Yalu, and Beit Nuba (my own home town), committing a war crime by all recognizable tenets of international law. It was Mr. Rabin, as Prime Minister of Israel, who continued the expropriation of Palestinian land and the creation of illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. It was Mr. Rabin who in 1988 ordered the brutal beating and breaking of bones of Palestinian children who dared to throw stones at his soldiers. Is this the new Mr. Rabin that is going to deliver peace and tranquility to the Middle East?! I have to confess to you that I am not optimistic but I will maintain a hope. My hopes will increase if I cease to hear the pretexts of security. Mr. Rabin is now talking of stopping political settlements but will continue strategic settlements. All settlements on illegally occupied and expropriated territory are illegal. Israel is the mightiest nation in the Middle East, armed with nuclear weapons. Security cannot be achieved by occupying someone else's land. It is the Palestinians and Lebanese who need security.

Finally, if there is to be peace, there has to be compliance *with*
~~on~~ international law and justice. The Palestinians are
calling for a modicum of justice, for if there is no justice,
there will be no ~~pe~~ace for Arab or Jew in the Middle East.

FINAL SUMMATION

It was Dr. Frank Epp of this great university, who wrote twenty years ago:

"Rarely has a people suffered so much injustice so passively for so long, waiting for the powers-that-be to redress the inflicted wrong."

Similarly it was the distinguished philosopher Lord Bertrand Russell who stated addressing an international conference, in 1970, the following:

"The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was 'given' by a foreign power to another people for the creation of a new state. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict. No people anywhere in the world would accept being expelled en masse from their country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homeland is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East."

It is true, my friends, that the Palestinian people have endured so much wrong and injustice but I assure you that the Palestinian people's tenacity is unyielding. Our people are willing to struggle and sacrifice and you cannot defeat a people with this tenacity, when a child turns his little hand into a fist, with a stone, that defies the oppressor. The oppressed people of South Africa were able to teach F.W. de Klerk a lesson that had made Mr. de Klerk declare that the book on Apartheid is closed. I am afraid the book on the Zionist ideology is not yet closed but I can assure you that Zionism, like Apartheid, is running against the natural course of history and I am optimistic that right will overcome wrong. I am also optimistic because there are Jewish voices who are speaking out. The late great Jewish journalist, I.F. Stone, wrote a few years ago:

"How can we talk of human rights and ignore them for the Palestinians? How can Israel talk of Jewish rights to a homeland and deny one to the Palestinians?"

Similarly, Professor Israel Shahak Chairman of the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights said:

"The majority of the Israeli public are shutting their eyes to the simple human cry of the Palestinian."

He warned his people "not to allow the experience of the German people between the two worlds to befall them. I am not afraid to say publicly that Israeli Jews and with them most Jews throughout the world, are undergoing a process of Nazification". He went on to state that he is saying this:

"so that no one can say as the German people did, 'I did not know'. And like Albert Speer, I am trying to act before it is too late."

This is the kind of authentic Jewish voice that I am happy to say gives me hope that, in time, there will be more people like I. F. Stone, Israel Shahak, Felicia Langer and other great Jewish men and women of conscience. For if the other voice, the voice which has come to dominate Israel and Zionist thinking, arrogant with power which thinks only of territorial expansion and practised discrimination and terror, the voice of Ariel Sharron, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin, if that voice should continue to speak for Israel, then Israel will bring, I am afraid, tragedy on herself and the Palestinians and very likely on the rest of the world.

The Old Testament prophets were incredibly prophetic in foretelling what would happen if the Jews turned aside from

what they knew to be the truth of justice. Let me end by quoting to you some verses from the prophet Micah, who might have been writing for today when he gave this warning:

"Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the House of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong.

"Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins."

My friends, there is still time to prevent that prophecy from coming true in our own day. But there may not be very much time.

The Palestinian people are calling for a modicum of justice, for without this modicum of justice, I am afraid, there will be no peace for Arab or Jew in the Middle East.