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Editorial

Within the context of solidarity campaigns in support of the Palestinian people, the question of military cooperation between Switzerland and Israel occupies an important place, as is shown by the protest demonstration of last 23 February, which was organized by the *Collectif Urgence Palestine* (of which the CETIM is a member). The second series of round tables and public debates, organized by the CETIM and the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (IUED) and which ended last February, echoed this question.

Like the previous series, dealing with Switzerland and South Africa, the purpose of these round tables was to examine in a critical manner the consistency of Swiss policy toward Israel and to shed light on the connections, often little studied, between the two countries. In fact, these relations turn out to be considerable and touch economic, diplomatic, political, humanitarian, military, cultural and other areas, while at the same time demonstrating obvious contradictions, as the various speakers did not fail to point out.

This bulletin presents summaries, plus substantial extracts of the interventions, which will give an idea of the main arguments and observations presented during these round tables. You will also find a written statement that the CETIM submitted to the Commission of Human Rights during its 60th session, denouncing, not only the extent of human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people by Israel, but also warnings to several Rapporteurs and UN agencies concerning the humanitarian catastrophe already developing in the Occupied Territories.

A succinct presentation of the last series of the program, which will deal with the relations between South Africa and Israel, is to be found on page 6.

Second Series of Round Tables on the Relations between Switzerland and Israel

November 2003 – February 2004

This series on the relations between Switzerland and Israel comprised five round tables. These could not have taken place without the support of the Geneva Federation for Cooperation and Development (GFCD) and the support of other sister organizations whom we would like to thank. Themes as diverse as political, economic and military relations between these two countries were developed and discussed. The peace initiative, dubbed the Geneva Initiative, or the question of the respect of the Geneva Conventions, and thus that of the protection of civilian populations during armed conflict, were not absent from the debates either.

Thus, as several participants remarked, Switzerland, guardian of the Geneva Conventions, renown advocate of human rights and main supporter of the initiative, is very

interested in the violations of the fundamental rights of the Palestinians by Israel but continues, all the same, secretly and surely, to collaborate, as one of our participants reported, in the military domain with Tel-Aviv (through consultancy services and arms sales). In short, it takes back with one hand what it gives with the other.

Those in attendance at the various round tables were able to reflect and debate on these different paradoxes and what is at stake before attending an evening of synthesis and conclusion devoted to actions under way or to be undertaken to which militants and sympathizers could contribute, for this program also has the goal of launching current and future courses of action.

A few quotations drawn from interviews conducted in parallel by the newspaper *Le Courrier* are reproduced below. We would like to thank this daily for its precious support during this series and for the publicity it has given to it. To facilitate the reading, the interviews are in italics. The articles are available in their entirety on our web site.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ROUND TABLES

Relations between Switzerland and Israel: Swiss diplomacy and policies

This round table aimed to explore the evolution of diplomatic and official relations between the two countries. These relations have been, from the beginning, sustained by a mutual sympathy that has deteriorated somewhat over time owing to, in particular, the increase in the repression and the oppression by Israel of the Palestinian people. The image of Israel has changed from that of a country whose existence is threatened to that of an occupying power that with almost complete impunity disregards international humanitarian law and human rights. In spite of numerous Israeli espionage affairs on Swiss territory, which have annoyed Switzerland and given rise to tension, Switzerland continues to be implicated in the search for a pacific solution to this conflict and in humanitarian aid.

In parallel, and while official relations between Switzerland and Israel have been developing, a part of Swiss civil society has shown more and more sympathy for and interest in the fate of these "native people" previously so neglected and forgotten, the Palestinians, especially since the first people's uprising, the Intifada.

It was also instructive to take note of the evolution of the position of the Swiss left, a political force of some influence in the formulation of Swiss policy toward Israel. With the exception of its extremes, the Swiss left from the beginning supported the creation of the state of Israel, especially the civilizing aspect this project was supposed to bring to the region. The left was "unaware" of the existence of the Palestinian people until they rose up and demanded their rights. If European colonizing behavior has permeated the reactions of

the left, it should now examine itself and reposition itself in a consistent manner regarding Zionism and its implications, the return to tribalism and to religious fundamentalism and regarding the creation of one or two states in the former Palestine mandate territory.

The repeated conflicts and wars in this region have pushed the Swiss public to react. Since the nineteen seventies, the image of Israel has had more and more nuance to it, for a change in perception has taken place. From a country until then perceived as the torch-bearer of Western modernity to a "backward" and rather hostile world, Israel has experienced growing criticism with the occupation of the Palestinian territories, and acts of resistance on the part of the Palestinian population are no longer condemned de facto, as they once were, as acts of pure violence. In 1976, the Swiss-Palestine Association (ASP) was set up independent of the various leftist tendencies in Switzerland, but it received only limited attention. At the same time, in the media, criticism regarding Israel, according to Françoise Fort, one of the founders of the ASP, has evolved, for the first Intifada changed things, a public opinion realized that Israel was not conducting a "soft occupation in the Occupied Territories, but represented a veritable organized repression. Starting from this, the world has come to realized that David is in fact the child Palestinian who is throwing stones at the Israeli tanks and no longer Israel surrounded by supposedly hostile countries"...



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Economic relations between Switzerland and Israel

"The truth is that Switzerland was not opposed to playing the role, which the new state expected it to play in economic development, [...] In 1949 Switzerland exported products worth approximately 6.8 mi to Israel, however it only imported Israeli products worth 2.8 mi. This imbalance could well have jeopardized the development of economic trade", claims Antoine Fleury. Despite the fact that Israel resembled a developing country for quite some time, nevertheless it had substantial financial resources. Israel wanted to direct the development of its economy and in 1954, "...after having managed to cut down on Swiss purchases, the representative of Israel declared that from then on, the Israeli government would only purchase products in those countries with whom it had trade agreements and who were buyers of Israeli products. Tel Aviv wanted to ensure the viability of its citrus fruits at a time when Spanish competition was making its presence felt between 1954 and 1955." The Swiss Confederation rejected this offer but endeavoured to strike a compromise. This deal

initially consisted of a private financing agreement, which later took on an official nature because of a need for transparency. "An agreement was signed on the 14th September 1956 in the form of a "protocol" and a "secret letter", outlining the modus operandi." The outline of this agreement, according to Antoine Fleury, was the following: "Israel will continue importing Swiss products and grant the appropriate licences and in addition, Israel agrees to import a small quota of Swiss watches (which up until then had been banned from the Israeli market as "luxury goods"). Under the seal of secrecy with regard to its other partners, Switzerland agreed to create a fund to subsidise Swiss exports to Israel, meaning exporters could claim back 3% of the total amount. This fund was also designed to pay subsidies to all companies importing non-competitive Israeli products to Switzerland, including those who transited products destined for a third country. The fund was to be administered by the Swiss national bank. Importers would only receive subsidies for Israeli products whose prices were higher than those in Switzerland or in the final country of destination. The subsidy was not supposed to exceed 10% of the total product value. The agreement stipulated that a subsidy could be paid to a Swiss importer of products destined for other countries. Moreover, the fund could be used to support Israeli exports in the advertising or propaganda industry." However, the secret nature of this agreement put the Swiss Confederation in an awkward position because, aside from other considerations, secrecy did not strictly conform with the rules governing free trade, which Switzerland staunchly supported... Thus Switzerland requested the agreement be abolished.

Weapons trade, among other types and relations between the Swiss and Israeli secret services have formed the object of appeals or motions to the Swiss National Council (Swiss parliamentary lower house) on a regular basis. Swiss Members of Parliament even visited Israel and the occupied territories in 2002-2003. Some MPs showed a keen interest in Israeli exports of products labelled "made in Israel" but which were made in the colonies and which were sent to EFTA zone countries. A motion was tabled in the Swiss National Council, requesting an investigation into and the ban of exports to Switzerland. The National Council failed to give clear answers on this matter, however the parliamentary movement continues.

Following the regulation on dormant Jewish funds, the round table discussion also raised the issue of funds released by Swiss banks and the way Israel used them. According to Shraga Elam, Israel misappropriated a large percentage of this money, spending it on the Israeli army and on education and awareness campaigns on the Holocaust. These campaigns were counter productive because they were sometimes hijacked for more aggressive purposes. According to Shraga Elam, there is "firstly, an imbalance between firstly, the actual amount of dormant funds, which, according to Israeli experts, is calculated at approximately 50 million Swiss francs and secondly, the 1.25 bi dollars, agreed upon in the framework of the Global Settlement. Thus a large percentage of the funds will go neither to the victims, not to their heirs and these funds could, directly or indirectly, support Israeli military action. Secondly, because I base my theory on past experience. [...] Following the Second World War, the funds allocated by the Allies, (in the context of the Washington and Paris Agreements), were supposed to be used to assist the refugees in Israel. However, according to a range of witness testimony, those who arrived were given hardly any support whatsoever. Therefore it is improbable that the funds were used to this end. The action taken by Switzerland in this respect is pertinent to the discussion. The Swiss Confederation originally agreed to pay 50 million francs to Israel, but it delayed the procedure

and in 1948, only 20 million francs were actually paid. Israel was at war in 1948, so it is improbable that this money was earmarked for refugee assistance. I have conducted research into the matter but have no evidence to prove that the army benefited directly, although it is highly likely. Moreover, there is no doubt whatsoever that the funds paid by Germany in 1953 to Israel on behalf of the Jewish victims of the Second World War contributed to developing both industry and the Israeli army and thus facilitated the Israeli attack of 1967"¹.

Shraga Elam concluded by highlighting the fact that campaigns in Switzerland are both feasible and necessary to ensure that Israel makes different use of the funds it has received.

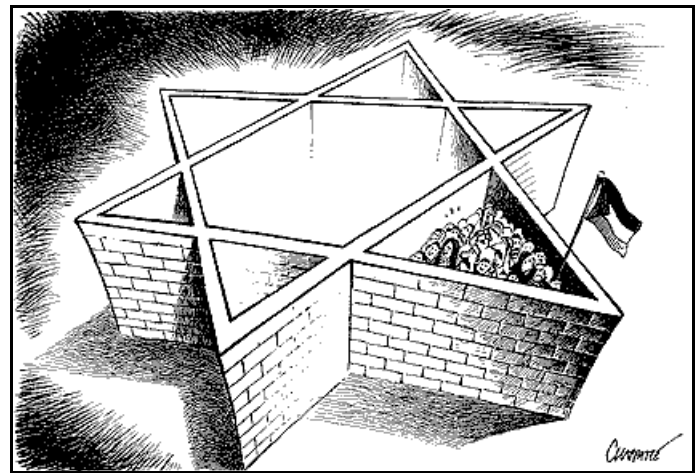
**Ambiguities in Swiss policy:
Protecting human rights in Palestine and military cooperation with Israel**

This round table discussion raised the following paradox: While Switzerland claims to foster the search for a peaceful solution and commits itself to defending the human rights of the Palestinian people, continuing to support Israel is a hypocritical position, in particular through the RUAG, which is state-owned. The objective of the evening was to denounce the military cooperation between Switzerland and Israel, particularly in the context of fragmentation bomb manufacturing, the most dangerous kind of weapons for civilian populations. It has been revealed that this military cooperation has developed over decades and even today, the Israeli military continue to make visits to Switzerland. Matthias Hui revealed that "there is cooperation between the two armies on many levels. Firstly, they have official relations. This year [2003], two Swiss military delegations went to Israel, where they were received by members of the army. However we are unaware whether there is also collaboration between the intelligence services, but we presume this is the case. Moreover, the Swiss army has no qualms about buying weapons parts from Israel, including Cargo ammunition, which has been widely disputed [shell transporting sub-ammunition], while the Hebrew state is at war. Thirdly, the arms company RUAG, which has been privatised but which is still controlled by the Swiss Confederation, cooperated with an Israeli company to develop military equipment. The most well known outcome of this collaboration has been the development of drones [crewless remote controlled planes]. Thus, there are many levels of controversial cooperation between the Swiss and Israeli army but to date, the National Council has refused to put an end to it."²

The lack of coherence in Swiss policy, in addition to the secret nature of this cooperation were raised on several occasions by the speakers, who justifiably called the Geneva Initiative into question. Provided that Switzerland continues to wear two hats, it erodes its credibility as a neutral intermediary trying to strike an agreement between the two parties. Matthias Hui has rightly raised the following question: *In the context of the Geneva agreement, in which Switzerland endeavours to play the role of a facilitator and a neutral intermediary, how can it be credible, particularly in the eyes of the Palestinian society, when it is clear that Switzerland and Israel cooperate militarily. This situation has also created an credibility issue in the eyes of Swiss citizens. As a Swiss taxpayer, it is difficult to reconcile the fact that Switzerland actively pursues a policy of development aid using large sums to Palestine -17 million CHF per year- and at the same time, collaborates with the Israeli army, who ultimately compromise the success of this first mission because of the destruction they leave in their wake. Moreover, Switzerland, which has made compliance with international law a priority of its foreign policy, should attempt to*

exercise more political leverage on Israel, who is guilty of numerous violations of the Geneva Conventions, because Israel has allowed the destruction of houses and the establishment of colonies in Palestine territory, among other violations. Swiss policy is still inconsistent in this regard. I also believe that the Swiss Confederation should dare ask the disturbing questions surrounding the Geneva Initiative, which is a political compromise and which still fails to respect international law, in particular with regard to the colonies and the Palestinian refugees' right of return.

This conference has served the campaign to urge Switzerland to put an end to the military cooperation between the RUAG and the state of Israel. This movement submitted a proposal to the Swiss National Council, entitled "Putting an end to the purchase of military weapons from Israel". Unfortunately it was rejected on the 17th March last month, (87 votes to 63 with 9 abstentions), however the movement continues.



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The Swiss Press's slant on Israel

Two speakers pulled out 3 days before the conference. Mr Reto Breiter, a journalist for *24 heures* and Elisabeth Eckert-Dunning, a journalist at *La Tribune de Genève* very kindly accepted to replace them at the last minute.

The evening was devoted to their speeches. Mr Breiter spoke of his experience, as a journalist covering the situation in Israel and in the occupied territories, as well as the various pressures he is subjected to in his daily work. Mrs Eckert-Dunning told of the investigation that she and one of her colleagues had undertaken, following the publication in June 2002 of a series of Zionist advertisements in the French-speaking Swiss press. These advertisements created a lot of agitation at the time, including among the Jewish community. Writing under pen names, the creators of these advertisements acted in a spirit of "vengeance", believing that Israel continued to be the focus of attacks by Western journalists.

The other topic to emerge from this round table discussion was that the Swiss press's slant on the evolution of Swiss-Israeli diplomatic relations, which began pro-Israeli and are now less conciliatory and lacking in cultural subjectivity. Luis Léma has highlighted the fact that experience in the field has also changed the way the conflict is depicted by Swiss journalists. In addition to this, the Swiss public is better able to accept and understand criticism directed at policy and at the exactions carried out by Israel. "This conflict has been one of the conflicts most closely followed by the press in the world", says Luis Léma, "but it is the sole conflict, where journalists are immediately categorized as pro or contra...".

Those journalists present at the conference maintained that they endeavour to adopt a non-partisan and non-ideological approach to their work, while respecting their code of professional practice.

Roundup Evening and Conclusion:

To what extent do the Swiss people support the movement in favour of a just solution to the conflict?

This final round table was essentially focussed on the urgent campaigns currently underway, in particular the movement for Civil missions to protect the Palestinian people and the campaign calling for an end to military cooperation with Israel. Françoise Fort, from the Swiss-Palestine Association (ASP), and Tobias Schnebli, from the Groupe pour une Suisse sans armée (GSsA) spoke on these issues. Information on the campaigns is available on their associations' respective internet sites.³

Given the current climate, we believed it was necessary to analyse the Geneva Initiative in a critical manner and to point out its lack of clarity regarding European responsibility in this conflict. Pascal de Crousaz introduced this topic when he spoke about the way the West has become fascinated with Israel and Mr de Crousaz stressed that this represents an obstacle in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In his words, *Westerners have added their own stakeholders and issues to this conflict. As a result, they have tended to overcomplicate the issue, to distance themselves from reality and to inflame the quest for a solution. For example, the international community are still unable to enforce the application of the United Nations' resolutions, which were drafted in a cold, objective and purely legal context. Notwithstanding, the resolutions are transparently clear. They acknowledge the existence of 2 peoples, equal rights and the fact that occupation and colonisation are illegal acts.*⁴

Rudolf El Karreh has analysed the Geneva Initiative from a critical perspective and uncovered the aspects which fail to correspond to the definition of a just peace, which its founding fathers claim to have prioritised. This initiative is partly based on the same errors that were the downfall of previous peace agreements. In addition to the lack of clarity regarding Europe's responsibility, Mr El-Karreh has stressed that this project is problematic because of the following issues: "the right to return, the religious and ambiguous identity that has been attributed to the state of Israel as a Jewish state and militarisation in the region."

The issue of acknowledging European countries' explicit responsibility in 50 years of war could also be raised. Switzerland is one of these countries, which labels itself neutral. Is it not time that these countries cast aside their neutrality and explicitly acknowledged that their inability to manage problems of racism and anti-Semitism is one of the underlying causes of the conflict and that by not acknowledging their share of the responsibility, these countries are part of the reason why all the previous peace plans have failed? Is it not high time that we consider the resolution of the "problem" in the Middle East as vital to the survival of international justice and respect for human rights and thus, time to harness all our efforts to achieve a just peace?

¹ Cf. Interview from the newspaper *Le Courrier* "Les fonds versés par la Suisse pourraient bénéficier à l'armée israélienne", 19 November 2003.

² Cf. Interview from the newspaper *Le Courrier* "La politique de la Suisse au Proche-Orient est incohérente", 2 December 2003.

³ ASP Website: <http://www.palaestina.ch/> and GSsA Website: <http://www.gssa.ch/>.

⁴ Cf. Interview from the newspaper *Le Courrier* "Face à Israël, l'irrationalité l'emporte", 5 February 2004.

"Security fence" versus international humanitarian rights

The "security fence", built unilaterally by Israel and which first preparations go back to 2002, extends deeply into the West Bank. Its tortuous course is far from respecting the "Green Line" of 1967 that traditionally separates the Palestinian Territories from Israel.

Built of reinforced concrete and 8 meters high, in certain locations, it is a fence in name only. It is nothing less than a "wall" that constitutes an outright annexation of the best Palestinian agricultural land, olive groves and water tables. By the time of its completion, more than half of the 400,000 colonists illegally settled in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem will *de facto* be integrated into Israel. This wall is a clear curb on the freedom of movement of the Palestinians and on their territorial sovereignty and the few gates¹ that are dug here and there and open sporadically won't change anything.

United Nations' stands

The Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, John Dugard, has written, regarding the "wall" and the illegal annexations carried out *de facto* by Israel: "Annexation of this kind goes by another name in international law – conquest. Conquest, or the acquisition of territory by the use of force, has been outlawed by the prohibition on the use of force contained in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 and Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations. [...] This prohibition is confirmed by Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and the Oslo Accords, which provide that the status of the West Bank and Gaza shall not be changed pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations". The Special Rapporteur remarked in his last report that "At the time of writing some 150 kilometers have already been completed, and building constructors are working frenetically to finish it as soon as possible. [...] Israel has undertaken to install some 27 agricultural crossings and 5 general crossings for traffic and persons through the barrier but as yet little progress has been made on these crossings"². When it comes to the wall, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Jean Ziegler, doesn't hesitate to speak in his last report of an "apartheid wall" and of "bantustanisation" of the Palestinian Territories in reference to the South-African project under apartheid³.

The Human Rights Committee has condemned the construction of the "wall" in these terms: "The State party [Israel] should respect the right to freedom of movement guaranteed under article 12 [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights]. The construction of a "Seam Zone" within the Occupied Territories should be stopped"⁴.

As for the United Nations General Assembly, besides the immediate cessation of construction⁵, it requested, last December, an opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the building of the "wall"⁶. The ICJ will return its opinion in a few weeks⁷.

¹ Cf. the report of The Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON) on the implications of the wall; website: <http://www.pengon.org>.

² Cf. Last report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, UN reference: E/CN.4/2004/6.

³ Cf. Last report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, UN reference: E/CN.4/2004/10/add.2.

⁴ Cf. Paragraph 19 of the "Concluding Observations" of the Human Rights Committee, UN reference CCPR/CO/78/ISR, 21 August 2003.

⁵ General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-10/13, 27 October 2003.

⁶ General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-10/14, 12 December 2003.

⁷ For those who wish to know the documents presented before the International Court of Justice as well as the evolution of the case, website: <http://212.153.43.18/cijwww/cdecisions.htm>.

In the framework of the 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights that is now being held in Geneva, the CETIM denounced in a written statement the flagrant violations of human rights carried out by the State of Israel towards the Palestinian people. You will find below excerpts of this statement.

Human Rights Violations in Israeli-Occupied Palestine

The Israeli occupation is the source of daily violations of the human rights of Palestinians, violations arising in particular from the tightened and concentrated military control of the Palestinians territories; from the construction of a "wall"; from large-scale demolitions of private and public infrastructure. It has dire consequences for human rights, especially for the right to life of the Palestinians.

Tightened, Concerted Military Control over the Palestinian Territories

By means of concerted military control as well as the continuation of the colonization of the Occupied Territories, the Israeli government is doing everything to make the movements and the daily activities of the Palestinian people as difficult as possible and this in flagrant violation of both international law and international human rights conventions.

Some 140 permanent check-points have been set up by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank and 25 to 30¹ in the Gaza Strip, at the entry to the towns or at every major intersection. Further, there are dozens of "mobile" check-points. Besides controlling the comings and goings of the Palestinians, the Israeli authorities can close these points when they so desire, "imprisoning" *de facto* a whole people [...].

The UNSCO (United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process) had already drawn attention to this alarming situation in October 2002 as follows: the West Bank was totally closed, within, 66% percent of the time and partially closed 34% of the time; the Gaza Strip was partially closed 94% of the time². Combined with more than 200 roadblocks, the check-points divide the West Bank into 300 separate entities and the Gaza Strip into 3. To pass through these roadblocks and check-points, each Palestinian twelve years of age or older must have a permit from the Israeli administration. Some of these documents are valid for only one month, and obtaining them is laborious and does not at all guarantee freedom of movement within the Territories. Such freedom is reserved exclusively for Israeli colonists, who, whenever they see fit, can use the by-pass roads, built without the consent of the Palestinian Authority and which connect the illegal Israeli colonies in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip to each other and to Israel. These roads partition the Occupied Territories and make contiguity impossible. Any effort at development by the Palestinian Authority is impossible under such circumstances.

Because of the closings, the Palestinian economy is practically paralyzed: the GDP has dropped 38% relative to its 1999 level. At the same time, more than 100,000 jobs in Israel held by Palestinians have been lost, for with the beginning of the Intifada, their work and travel permits have been revoked. The estimated current unemployment level is more than 50%, and 60% of the Palestinians live on less than US\$ 2.00 per day.³

Large-Scale Demolitions of Private and Public Infrastructure

The destruction of private dwellings by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) is another facet of the repressive policy conducted by Israel against the Palestinian people overall. The total or partial destruction of more than 11,000 private houses in three years has made thousands of families homeless. Israeli bulldozers destroy businesses, wells, electric and telephone lines, water treatment plants, public buildings (schools, police stations etc.), as well as dozens of houses of worships (mosques and churches) and cemeteries. Such actions violate, with impunity, the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, which stipulate, among other things, that "Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social or cooperative organizations, is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations."⁴ And "it is prohibited: (a) to commit any acts of hostility directed against the historic monuments, works of art or places of worship which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples; [...]."⁵

Right to Food and to Potable Water

Following his mission to the Occupied Territories, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, denounced the alarming food security situation, going so far as to speak of a "humanitarian catastrophe".⁶

Access to clean water is no longer easy. [...] The majority of Palestinian towns and villages receive water for only a few hours each week, whereas Israeli military posts and the colonies are supplied twenty-four hours a day. Owing to the rise in transport costs due to the roadblocks, "the price of water brought in by tanker has increased 80% since September 2000"⁷. These measures are in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, which stipulates that "1. Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited. 2. It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as food-stuffs, agricultural areas for the production of food-stuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive."⁸

Repercussion of the Colonization Policy on the Health Level of the Palestinians

The Israeli colonization policy, the curfews and the roadblocks have a catastrophic impact on the physical and mental health of the Palestinian people. Very often, the Palestinians are refused access to hospitals and clinics, and ambulances are refused passage or detained by the IOF.⁹

The World Health Organization (WHO) has emphasized the role played by colonization in the degradation of the health of the Palestinian people and the total contempt for health standards on the part of the Israelis, citing several concrete examples: "Acceleration of the Israeli settlement activities brought yet another dimension to the humanitarian crisis. [...] The sewerage system of the settlements on the eastern hills and slopes north of Jerusalem has contaminated fresh water supplies for drinking-water and the irrigation of Palestinian areas up to Jericho." And "Humanitarian

conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip fell to levels unprecedented in 35 years of occupation."¹⁰

Conclusion

Israel steadfastly refuses to assume its international obligations as occupying power and is continuing its extreme policies of looting and destruction of Palestinian property and resources and of annihilation of the Palestinian people. It will continue to do so as long as there are no concrete measures taken against it, as has been recently confirmed by its government, which has already announced that it will not acknowledge the decision of the International Court of Justice regarding the construction of the "wall".¹¹

The search for solutions by certain parties outside the framework of the United Nations, as commendable as it may be, only prolongs the suffering of the Palestinian people. Thus, the CETIM exhorts the international community to take concrete measures against Israel in order to force it to respect the human rights of the Palestinian people, international law and international humanitarian law, and so to put an end to this policy of *fait accompli*. In this regard, there are two urgent measures that must be undertaken:

- 1) the suspension of Israel from the United Nations (as was done in the case of South Africa under its apartheid regime) as long as it refuses to respect the decisions of this institution;
- 2) the sending of an international protection force until the conflict is resolved in conformity with the resolutions of the United Nations.

¹ Cf. World Bank : "Twenty-Seven Months – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis: An Assessment", May 2003.

² Cf. UNSCO, "The Impact on the Palestinian Economy of Confrontation, Border Closures and Mobility Restrictions, 1 October 2000- 30 September 2001", October 2002.

³ Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, UN reference: A/58/311, 22 August 2003.

⁴ Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of August 12, 1949, Art. 53.

⁵ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, Art. 53.

⁶ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Jean Ziegler, Mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, E/CN.4/2004/10/add.2.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, Art. 54.

⁹ According to the NGO Miftah, since the beginning of the Intifada, 63 Palestinians have died following the refusal by the Israelis to let them get to a hospital.

¹⁰ Cf. the annual report of the WHO special representative and of the Director of Health of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for 2002, "Health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine", A56/INF.DOC./4, 25 April 2003.

¹¹ Cf. *Le Courrier* (Geneva), 30 January 2004.

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PROGRAMME OF THE LAST CONSTITUENT OF THE LECTURES ON THE ISRAEL-SOUTH-AFRICA RELATIONS

Thursday 29th April 2004 from 20:15 on. IUED, 24 rue Rothschild, Geneva, Bungener room.

Religious and ideological affinities between the State of Israel and South-Africa under apartheid ?

With the participation of **Mohammed Taleb**, historian and philosopher, author of **Le sionisme chrétien et la théologie de la prospérité : des Pélerins du Mayflower à la globalisation néo-libérale** (to be published in 2004/2005), his intervention will be on "Christian Zionism as historical cultural and ideological interface between Israel, Republic of South-Africa, Switzerland and the United States";

and of **Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi** (to be confirmed), professor in psychology and author of **The Israeli Connection** (New York: Pantheon, 1987) who will speak about "The ideological alliance between the two regimes during South-African apartheid".

Thursday 13th May 2004 from 20:00 on. Uni Mail, 102 bd Carl Vogt, Geneva, basement room MS 060.

What have been and still are the degrees of military, economic and political cooperation between South-Africa and Israel ?

With the participation of **Richard Labevière**, editor in chief at Radio France International (RFI) whose lecture will be about "The nuclear cooperation between South-Africa and Israel";

and of **Alhadji Boubou Nouhou**, researcher at the Centre of study and research on the Arab and Muslim world, University of Bordeaux-3 (CERMAM), author of **Israël et l'Afrique. Une relation mouvementée** (Paris, Karthala, 2003), who will present "The development of the political and economic relations between South-Africa after the apartheid and Israel".

Thursday 27th May 2004 from 20:00 on. Uni Mail, 102 bd Carl Vogt, Geneva, basement room MS 060.

Does the political situation in Palestine/Israel resemble South-African apartheid ? Which comparisons and differences can be suggested ? Is apartheid still relevant today ?

with **Uri Davis**, anthropologist and human rights activist in Israel/Palestine, author of **Apartheid Israel: Possibilities for the Struggle Within** (Zed Books, London, 2003) who will present "The movement against Israeli apartheid in Palestine".

This programme is available on our website : www.cetim.ch !