

Zayyad, mayor of Nazareth and member of the Israeli Knesset, who warned of the dangerous Israeli-US partnership, as seen in the growing military capability of Israel. There was a question and answer period after the panel statements. Then a statement condemning the recent Israeli bombing of the refugee camps in southern Lebanon was read out.

PALESTINIAN POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The work of the meeting continued, focusing on the topic: Palestinian Political and Human Rights. This panel included statements by Dr. Hatem Abu Ghazalah, chairman for the Care of Handicapped Children in the Gaza Strip; Dr. Latif Dori, founder and secretary of the Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue; Mr. Amnon Zichroni, executive director of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and Mrs. Rimonda Al Tawil, Palestinian writer and journalist.

The panelists focused on the violations of the Palestinian people's political rights and on the miserable health, educational and social conditions in the occupied territories, due to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli military government. They also urged an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in order to pave the way for peace in the Middle East.

After the panel discussions, four workshops began on the questions of mobilizing public opinion, creative arts and the Palestinian struggle for national identity, community development and relief work, and mobilizing the international peace movement for a nuclear weapons-free Middle East.

There was also a special session to discuss organizational development and the planned NGO activities for 1987-88.

NGO representatives met to discuss the report of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs, to draft the final declaration and special resolutions and to elect the new coordinating committee. After the elections, there was a closing ceremony.

FINAL DECLARATION

Below we print some of the main points of the NGO meeting's final declaration:

5. We recognize the need for and the urgency of convening the International

Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with UN General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D. We are concerned at the delay in convening the conference and gravely concerned that any further delay will worsen conflict in the Middle East, intensify the suffering and oppression to which the Palestinian people are daily subjected and increase the danger of global conflagration.

6. Accordingly, we call on all Governments to work for the convening of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the UN, as a matter of utmost urgency, the participants to include the five permanent members of the Security Council, the PLO, Israel and all other parties to the conflict, and other concerned States on an equal footing and with equal rights.

7. We express our conviction that one hope for peace lies with a concerted European initiative to bring Israel and the United States to accept the international peace conference as called for in resolution 38/58 C. To this end we urge the NGOs in the EEC countries to persuade their Governments to revise the Venice Declaration of 1980 to be in conformity with the principles enunciated in resolution 38/58 C.

8. We recognize that the self-determination of the Palestinian people, with all that it implies, is a central requirement for peace and security, as well as being fully in accord with one of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the UN. Therefore, we call on all Governments to recognize that right.

9. We confirm absolutely the international consensus that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the



Palestinian people in their just struggle for their inalienable rights. Accordingly, we call on all Governments which do not recognize the PLO to do so.

11. We are greatly concerned at the discrimination practiced by the Israeli Government against Palestinians Arab citizens of Israel. We condemn the continuing repressive measures of the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian population in the occupied territories (arrests, shootings, torture, demolition of houses, closure of educational institutions, and land requisitions), and we call upon all Governments and peoples to press the Israeli Government to end these practices. Special attention should be paid to the plight of the often neglected Palestinian Bedouins.

12. We note with great concern the situation of the Palestinian camps in Beirut and in southern Lebanon. In order to end the blockade of the camps and to normalize the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon, we call for the establishment of an international fact-finding delegation of eminent persons to study the situation in the field and to report its findings.

13. We urge our Governments to contact the appropriate parties to lift the blockade, to permit the immediate entry of the ICRC into the camps and the dispatch of medical and food supplies. We also demand the reconstruction of dwellings and the re-establishment of social and educational services.

14. We call for the ending of the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the intervention in Lebanese internal affairs through political coercion and oppressive action. We demand the immediate Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and for the release of all those held in prison.

16. We NGOs condemn the introduction of nuclear weapons by Israel into the Middle East. We urge the United States and western European states to terminate all cooperation with Israel in the field of nuclear weaponry. We further call upon Israel to dismantle its nuclear weapons, to open its nuclear facilities to expert inspection and to sign the non-proliferation treaty. The world has a right to know, the Israeli people have a right to know about Israel's nuclear capacity and the threat to regional and world peace which that capacity represents.