
PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

Palestinians in Lebanon Conference Report

Report on the Conference held at Oxford
from 27th–30th September 1996

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Palestinians in Lebanon:
Conference Report

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Introduction

The *Palestinians in Lebanon* Project, launched in spring 1995, provided both the Centre for Lebanese Studies and the Refugee Studies Programme with an ideal opportunity to work together. The two institutions co-operated in devising a research and documentation programme which culminated in the international conference held in Minster Lovell at the end of September.

This report summarises the key themes and issues presented and discussed at the conference. The papers presented at the conference, which are at present being revised for publication, constitute an important body of background information and reference.

We would like to thank all the funders for their generous contributions without whose donations the project and the conference would not have been possible. These include the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK, the Government of Canada, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden; the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, the European Commission Directorate of External Relations, and the Ford Foundation, Cairo.

We would also like to acknowledge all the members of the Core Group for their contributions at the initial meeting. They provided a network on which the project relied in all stages of its implementation. Thanks are also due to all the members of our Academic Advisory Board for their valuable suggestions during the research and documentation phase. Dr. Laila Parsons, the co-ordinator for Phase Two of the project, takes all the credit for commissioning the

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conference papers, collecting the documentation and compiling the bibliography. Our thanks and appreciation to all the paper writers and conference participants who contributed to the meeting's lively debates.

Fida Nasrallah of the Centre for Lebanese Studies, Marie-Louise Weighill and Belinda Allan of the RSP all contributed to the conception, planning and fundraising of the whole project. We would also like to express our gratitude to Ms Weighill for the production of this report.

Dr. B. Harrell-Bond
Director, RSP

Mr. N. Shehadi
Director, CLS

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Background to the *Palestinians in Lebanon* Project

Rationale

The *Palestinians in Lebanon* project was initiated in 1995 by the Centre for Lebanese Studies and the Refugee Studies Programme in response to the importance of the Palestinian refugee issue within the peace process and its high political salience within Lebanon. As the multilateral working group agenda was formulated, it became clear that negotiations on the final status of 1948 Palestinian refugees would be deferred until the future of the Occupied Territories and the status of 1967 refugees had been addressed.

In the interim period, it was felt to be vital that the core issues of the current situation and future interests of 1948 refugees be analysed. In addition, the importance of the impact of the 1948 refugees on the society, economy and government of the host countries was considered to be inadequately covered in the ongoing political and academic discourse. Of all countries hosting Palestinian refugees, Lebanon was recognised to be confronting the most serious and urgent problems.

Lebanon has been host to a proportionately significant number of refugees since 1948. The origin of the majority of these refugees lies outside the parameters of a future Palestinian entity or state as envisaged by the current peace process. One result of the signing of the Oslo Accords and Declaration of Principles was to postpone discussion of the fate of the Palestinian population in Lebanon until the summer of 1996. This led in turn to rising concern within Lebanon that the current peace negotiations would leave the issue

of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon unresolved and end ultimately in their *de facto* permanent settlement.

During this interim period, the refugees in Lebanon would continue to face serious problems: the after-effects of population displacement and the destruction of camps during the civil war; severe fighting amongst different Palestinian factions; and growing hostility to their continued presence. In addition, refugees also faced a severe economic crisis precipitated by the loss of remittances following the mass expulsion of Palestinians from the Gulf, a crisis intensified by the loss of financial support from the oil rich countries, the switching of donor interest from Lebanon to the West Bank and Gaza and the withdrawal of PLO services on which the community had heavily relied.

Given the vital importance of the issue, there was a serious lack of accessible and reliable information on the subject. Of all the countries hosting Palestinian refugees, Lebanon is the one on which least information is available. Documentation on the legal, economic, social and political situation of Palestinians remained scattered and inaccessible.

In response to the socio-economic and political difficulties faced by the refugees in Lebanon, the regional and international importance of the question of the Palestinian refugees and the dearth of information on the subject, the *Palestinians in Lebanon* project was initiated. The basis for the co-operation of the Centre for Lebanese Studies and the Refugee Studies Programme was that the two institutions would each provide the project with distinct yet complementary disciplinary and regional approaches and perspectives.

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The original proposal was based on the collection of relevant documentation and the commissioning of research papers and analytical studies culminating in the organisation of a major international conference. The proposed conference would analyse the current socio-economic and political position of the Palestinians in Lebanon, assess the impact of the multilateral and bilateral peace negotiations on the security and well-being of the Palestinians and identify strategies for the future which would take into account the needs and aspirations of both Palestinian refugees and the people of Lebanon.

Core Group Meeting

Recognising the necessity to involve Palestinians, Lebanese, academics and members of the international community in the design and implementation of the project, the original proposal envisaged the organisation of a Core Group conference at the start of the project. Thanks to the generous funding provided by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Core Group was able to meet at a three day workshop held at the Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford, on 14-16 March 1995. Those who attended the Core Group meeting are included in Appendix I.

The objective of the Core Group meeting was to provide direction and input for the project as a whole. As the co-Chairs explained, the intention was to ensure the project as a whole would serve as an effective forum for discussion and that the Core Group would critique and modify the original project proposal. In addition, the meeting provided an opportunity to identify gaps in the literature, secure the collaboration of all present in locating the necessary documentation, assess the key topics to be covered in the final conference, and draw up a plan of how the conference should be organised. An account of the discussions, exchanges and modifica-

tions to the original proposal can be found in the *Report from the Core Group Meeting* published by the Refugee Studies Programme and the Centre for Lebanese Studies.

Documentation Collection

The second phase of the project entailed the collection of documentation and the commissioning of research papers in preparation for the final conference. The documentation collection was funded by a grant from the European Commission, Directorate of External Relations. A consultant, Dr. Laila Parsons, was employed through this grant to design and implement a documentation collection programme and to assist in the identification of potential paper writers and the commissioning of papers. The collection of documentation involved extensive consultation with and contribution from the Core Group and required several research trips to Lebanon and France. Documentation was secured with the co-operation of the Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, the NGO Forum, Beirut, UNRWA, Beirut, Save the Children, Sidon, Association Najdeh, Beirut, the Kanafani Foundation, Beirut, the Middle East Council of Churches, Beirut and Cyprus, ESCWA, Amman; UNICEF, Beirut and the Middle East Research Service, Beirut. A bibliography of documentation collected in the course of the second phase, together with a limited number of published sources has been published by the Centre for Lebanese Studies and the Refugee Studies Programme.

The commissioning of the papers for the conference was made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation, Cairo. Based on the recommendations of the Core Group meeting, the content and academic direction of the conference was also assisted by the appointment of a conference Academic Advisory Committee, based

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in Oxford. The members of the Academic Advisory Committee are included in Appendix I.

The Conference

The international conference *Palestinians in Lebanon* was held at Minster Lovell, near Oxford, on 27-30 September 1996. Funding for the conference was provided by the Government of Canada, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the European Commission Directorate of External Relations, and the Ford Foundation, Cairo. Over fifty participants attended. The full programme of the conference is given in Appendix II. A full list of participants, together with their institutional affiliations is found in Appendix I.

As discussed above, the conference was designed using the input and advice of a wide range of individuals. In keeping with the awareness from all sides of the importance and sensitivity of the topics, presentations at the conference were kept to a limited time to ensure that there was sufficient opportunity for a free and comprehensive discussion. The conference organisers would like to thank the paper writers for their valuable work and all the participants for their thoughtful and constructive contributions to the discussions at the conference.

Dissemination

The *Palestinians in Lebanon* project aimed both to generate information and understanding concerning the situation and future of the Palestinians in Lebanon and to disseminate this information to as

wide an audience as possible. Accordingly, the report of the Core Group meeting was circulated and the project itself was publicised by contacting a broad range of academic centres, policy institutes and key individuals as well as through the internet. The bibliography, thanks to European Commission funding, will be printed and distributed in early 1997 and the availability of the documentation holdings in the Refugee Studies Programme Documentation Centre will be circulated in the hope that researchers will take advantage of it. In addition, it is hoped that the holdings of the Documentation Centre, including the Palestinians in Lebanon material, will soon be available in digitised form.

Structure of the Report

Rationale of the Report

This report aims to bring the main themes of the discussion at the conference *Palestinians in Lebanon* to a wider audience. Drawing mainly on the oral presentations and discussions offered at the conference, it synthesizes the main ideas of the debate in concise terms. It should be seen as an accompaniment to the publication of the proceedings of the conference and is intended not to duplicate the content of the papers presented but to allow as many parties as possible access to the input of the participants in the conference and to encourage consideration of and debate on the issues raised.

In keeping with the aims of the project and with an awareness of the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, the report is presented thematically and without attribution.

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Common Themes

As is described in the project outline above, the *Palestinians in Lebanon* project had three central aims—the generation of information and analysis on the current socio-economic and legal situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon, the facilitation of debate on current political processes, particularly the multilaterals, and the clarification of perspectives and policies of the main international and regional actors. Consequently the report is structured around four central themes, reflecting both the direction of argument at the conference and the nature of the discussions and debates which took place. The themes are: the current situation confronting Palestinians in Lebanon; the nature and impact of the multilateral peace process and the pressures which influence the position of the Lebanese Government and the Palestinians on the peace process; appropriate policies within Lebanon; and the overriding importance of the fundamentals of the Palestinian case and the necessity of understanding the situation not only as a domestic issue but also as a regional and international responsibility.

Current Situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon

As explained in the outline of the project above, *Palestinians in Lebanon* aimed, in part, to address the current lack of data on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon. While it was not possible to undertake comprehensive research surveys, some key and, in certain cases, unexpected information was brought to light. The discussions summarised below reflect the interrelations of the socio-economic conditions faced by the Palestinians within their marginalised and constrained political situation in Lebanon. This is, in turn, directly connected with events since

1990—the financial collapse of the PLO and the consequent collapse of Palestinian service institutions, the loss of aid from the former Communist and Arab countries, the effect of the switch of donor commitment to the West Bank and Gaza after the Oslo agreement, the impact of the peace process on both the Palestinians themselves and on Lebanese attitudes to their presence and future.

Demography

On the key question of demography—how many Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) as living in Lebanon are actually in Lebanon—the lack of a comprehensive survey and consequent information was most acute. Anecdotal evidence suggested that there are in fact less than the supposed 350,000. One conference participant suggested a figure as low as 200,000 pointing out that among his extended family of 1,200 only 200 are now living in Lebanon, the rest being in the Gulf, other Arab countries, Europe and the United States. These figures, however were challenged by other participants, who put the number of Palestinians residing in Lebanon at about 400,000.

Without a census, however, it was agreed that the ‘concoction of numbers’ was potentially dangerous and that the existing UNRWA figures be used. (UNRWA has proposed the establishment of a Unified Registration System in Lebanon which would establish the number of registered refugees in the country. It has so far proved impossible, however, to secure funding for this project.) It was pointed out that there are a number of Palestinians in Lebanon who have never registered with UNRWA or acquired Lebanese nationality despite having lived there since 1948. In addition to these

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'stateless' Palestinians there are also Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon who were originally registered in Jordan or the West Bank and Gaza. These refugees came to Lebanon during the period 1970 to 1982 and their status and future remain uncertain. Equally, a large number of Palestinians left Lebanon following the 1982 Israeli invasion and there continues to be a steady exodus from the deteriorating political, social and economic problems confronting the Palestinians in Lebanon.

Social and Economic Situation

In exploring the current situation of Palestinians in Lebanon, presentations focused on the key sectors of health, education, housing and employment. Within these themes, papers sought to establish the current circumstances for Palestinians throughout Lebanon and their impact on the various sectors in the Palestinian community, particularly women and the younger generation. In focusing on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinians, however, it should not be forgotten that the fragile economy and unstable job opportunities, the collapse of government services, particularly in education and health, and the difficulty in recovering from the after-effects of fifteen years of civil war are not factors confined to the Palestinian community and that many Lebanese continue to face significant socio-economic challenges.

Health

In the session on health, considerable stress was laid on the impact of the decline of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) services since 1982. The loss of PRCS secondary and tertiary services had led to an increased reliance on UNRWA provision as

well as a loss of employment and training opportunities in the health sector. The loss of PLO salaries following the Oslo peace accords together with declining donor interest in supporting the Palestinian health sector, whether through UNRWA, PRCS or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had led to a declining provision at a time when economic decline and the continuing after-effects of the war (disability, mental trauma and displacement) meant that Palestinians were unable to fund their own health care.

The current shortage of staff and facilities meant that, for example, UNRWA doctors were seeing an average of 73 patients per day and that the provision of subsidised hospital beds available for those who were not able to pay for hospital treatment was less than 1 per 4000 of the population. A call was made for international donor funding for the establishment of one central and four regional hospitals to help alleviate the acute lack of hospital beds. The proposed project would result in the provision of three hundred beds at a cost of approximately thirty million dollars. Such a project, as was pointed out in the subsequent discussion, would, in addition to the immediate health benefits, act as a source of training and higher education as well as employment for up to a thousand Palestinians. Some discussants questioned the feasibility of the proposed hospital network, however, pointing out that the current total health budget (excluding salaries) is only 3.7 million dollars a year and suggested that even if the funds to build the hospitals could be secured, there would be grave problems in covering the running costs. In addition, there would remain significant institutional questions surrounding such a project. The level of investment would suggest to some Lebanese that this was a precursor to *tawteen*. If the funds were channelled through UNRWA, the Agency would be seen as investing in long-term services for the Palestinians, implying that they would be remaining permanently, if the

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funds were handed to the government, that would be interpreted as an official acknowledgement that the Palestinians were going to remain in Lebanon.

Attention was drawn to the negative impact of the camp environment on the refugees. Poor infrastructure and sanitation are seen as responsible for a major proportion of health problems experienced by refugees. The issue of camp environment was highlighted as a possible locus of co-operation between Palestinians and Lebanese—one participant considered it to be 'quite impossible to deal with the health conditions of the Palestinian refugees isolated from the same conditions of the Lebanese community ... all we can claim is similar treatment so that the camps would be considered with the Lebanese reconstruction plans provided that costs related to the camps be contributed by the donor countries'. Others, however, felt that such an approach was not feasible under the current circumstances.

Employment

In the presentation on the employment rates and opportunities for Palestinians in Lebanon, the picture that emerged was a bleak one. It was felt that the key vulnerability faced by Palestinians are the Lebanese labour laws as they relate to Palestinians. Palestinians are excluded from certain professions and are compelled to apply for work permits in order to undertake all but the most casual jobs. Hence, Palestinians are forced to work in the informal sector with accompanying low wages, insecurity and no benefits.

Even within the informal or 'black' economy, Palestinians face competition from migrant workers from Asia, Egypt and particularly Syria. Daily wages for casual labour have declined in the past year from \$12 to \$8. Within the 'Palestinian' sector—that is

UNRWA and the PLO or NGO institutions—wages are lower than those received by Lebanese in the government and private sectors, reflecting the lack of funding. A PRCS doctor currently receives a salary of just \$120 a month.

Discussions on the current employment situation of Palestinians initially focused on the legal situation and the Palestinians lack of a 'right to work' in Lebanon. This concept, linked to that of civil rights for the refugees within the Lebanese polity, proved to be a contentious one. Some discussants felt that the Lebanese refusal to issue work permits to Palestinians and the law preventing Palestinians from engaging in certain professions were to blame for the high unemployment within the Palestinian community. Others responded that these circumstances were not unique to or targeted at Palestinians—professional associations in Lebanon operate tightly restricted 'closed shops' and prevent non-Lebanese, whatever their nationality from entering. There is no legislation which specifically bars Palestinians from employment—it is simply that they are subject to the same restrictions that are applied to all foreigners. A crucial difference between the Palestinians and other foreigners remains, however—the fact that Palestinians in Lebanon, unlike foreign workers, cannot 'go home' if the search for employment proves a failure. Palestinians, of course, have no country to which they can return.

The restrictions on the issuing of work permits, some suggested, are a bureaucratic rather than an authoritarian measure. The work permit fulfils the same function as a national insurance number in the United Kingdom or a social security number in the United States—it registers a worker with the government and entitles the holder to receive state benefits, unemployment benefit, health insurance and so on. In the case of Palestinians with work permits,

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and due to the absence of reciprocity, taxes are paid without entitlement to state benefits, although there are certain clauses in the new employment law which favour Lebanese-born Palestinians and those with one Lebanese parent. It is possible, though precarious and insecure, to work without a permit. While this is technically illegal, Palestinians are able to work without permits, with the Lebanese government turning a 'blind eye' to this practice. The work they are able to find under this system, however, is temporary and casual and lack of documentation leaves Palestinian workers open to exploitation and makes it difficult for many to find employment.

A response to this pointed out that the current rate of unemployment among Lebanese citizens—40 per cent—was identical to that among Palestinians. In such a situation, it was unfair to suggest that the unemployment rate among refugees was solely the responsibility of the government. Further, it was asserted that Lebanon, due to its fragile economic state, was in no position to offer Palestinians the economic benefits, or entitlement to those benefits which accompany registration and the provision of a work permit. However, those who supported the granting of what were termed 'civil rights' to Palestinians maintained that if Palestinians were allowed to work in the formal sector, they would contribute taxes to the state and thereby benefit the Lebanese economy.

Education

With regard to the falling education levels among Palestinians, it was maintained that current problems had to be seen in the light of past achievements and expectations. Another impact of the collapse of PLO-financed Palestinian institutions in Lebanon was the loss of educational facilities, training centres, scholarships to private secondary schools, and nurseries and kindergartens. These facilities,

combined with other assistance provisions—elementary and primary level UNRWA schools—had achieved enviable results. At the university level many Palestinians in Lebanon had previously been able to take advantage of the opportunities offered for higher education in Egyptian and other Arab universities. Those, however, were now under severe strain. The reconstruction of Lebanese higher education, particularly the move to vocational and polytechnic training, had not benefited Palestinians since they are excluded from these institutions. Further, Palestinians are also finding it impossible to enter the government secondary schools.

The educational achievements of Palestinians had been based on the assumption that employment at a skilled or professional level would be available in the Gulf or elsewhere. Travel restrictions on Palestinians in Lebanon and the closing of the Gulf to them have meant that even those Palestinians who have been able to obtain qualifications cannot obtain remunerative employment in the Arab world or elsewhere. These socio-economic developments have contributed to the decline in enthusiasm for and commitment to education among the younger generation of Palestinians in Lebanon.

The problems facing education are most starkly indicated by the current high failure rate in the official examinations (the pass rate has dropped from 70 per cent to 30 per cent in both the Palestinian and Lebanese communities). Within the Palestinian community, there is an alarming drop-out rate among students even at the initial elementary stage. It was estimated that presently 6 per cent of students leave formal education without completing the elementary cycle (that is before the age of 12) compared to 2 per cent of students in Syria. At the preparatory stage, between 15 and 39 per cent of students drop out. Group interviews in camps with school-age

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participants revealed frustration and despair with the whole concept of education. In contrast to past generations, the current cohort of students dismiss the possibility of education as a means of personal and family advancement, a highly alarming indicator for the future.

The reason for the drop-out rate and concomitant frustration and despair was seen as the poverty facing the Palestinian population in Lebanon. At least 20 per cent of the community are living in absolute poverty and can see no means of escape or advancement. If, it was suggested, the Palestinians are to remain in Lebanon for an interim period of perhaps fifteen years while negotiations continue, then investment in the educational sector is vital. Rather than relying on the government secondary schools, UNRWA should take responsibility for providing education to Palestinian children at secondary level. If this is to be achieved, the onus is on the donor community who currently refuse to provide funding for schools and education, to adjust their policies and take a longer-term view of their obligations to the Palestinians in Lebanon. Further, since education is valuable largely as a means to gaining employment, Arab countries should take steps to open their labour markets to Palestinians from Lebanon by lifting restrictions on visas and work permits. The alternative, it was suggested, is the creation of a 'marginal, uneducated, unskilled community in Lebanon'.

Housing

With regard to the housing situation for Palestinians in Lebanon, a key factor identified was the changing distribution of the population. There has been massive displacement of individuals and families since 1982. According to one survey, between 1972 and 1988 ninety per cent of Palestinians had been forced from their homes once, two thirds had been forced from their homes twice and

twenty per cent had been displaced three times or more. There are currently 3,500 displaced families without any home at all.

The current housing situation for Palestinian refugees was presented thus fifty-three per cent live in UNRWA refugee camps, fourteen per cent in informal concentrations known as 'unregistered camps' and thirty-three per cent scattered through Lebanese villages, towns and cities. It was asserted that the percentage of the total population living in the camps is increasing as people are driven back by lack of economic and employment opportunities. This in turn puts more strain on UNRWA's resources as the Agency is forced to provide services to a rising number of beneficiaries, who had previously paid for their own education and health services, while its resources remain static.

Within the camps there are three different modes of construction. Eighteen per cent have roofs made of anodised iron (zinc), two per cent are built of wood and tin cans, and eighty per cent of the shelters are built with concrete. With regard to tenure, the position is somewhat complicated. Eighty per cent of camp inhabitants claim to 'own' their homes while the rest rent from other refugees. However, since the land on which the camps are built is leased by UNRWA from Lebanese landowners, refugees have no legal right of ownership of their homes. Consequently they cannot raise money using their homes as security in order to finance home improvements or rebuilding.

The average size of camp houses is forty square metres, comprising 2.2 rooms per dwelling. Housing density is estimated at 5.6 inhabitants per house. There are restrictions on building second storeys onto camp houses—hence expansion must encroach on the streets and alleyways of the camps. Housing problems are exacer-

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bated by the poor state of infrastructure and services within the camps. While ninety per cent of homes have access to water and electricity and include a kitchen and toilet, less than two-thirds are connected to even a basic sewage system. Open drains and no asphalt mean that the roads within the camps are often impassable.

If the camps are in an unacceptable condition, the prospects for those outside them are even worse. A case study was presented during the conference which indicated the highly political nature of the housing sector and the extent to which the Palestinians are frozen in a 'no-win' situation. The housing project (Qariya) discussed was one which exemplified the narrow parameters within which interventions on behalf of the Palestinians can be designed. There are over 6,000 displaced Palestinian families in Lebanon as a result of the reconstruction of Beirut. These families had been displaced during the civil war from two camps which had subsequently been destroyed. In developing a policy to deal with the situation, four main policy alternatives were articulated.

The first policy alternative proposed that the destroyed camps be rebuilt and the *status quo ante* restored. However, the owners of the land (including the Maronite Church) on which the two camps had originally been built refused permission. Further, since the camps had been cleared originally as a result of attacks on them, it was felt that the refugees would not be secure if the camps were rebuilt. The second option, rehousing the refugees within existing refugee camps was impossible. Infrastructural problems and the already dangerous overcrowding meant that only 2,000 families could possibly have been re-housed. Another possibility was to provide government compensation to the displaced Palestinians, as was the case for Lebanese citizens displaced by the reconstruction programme, to enable them to build or buy homes elsewhere in

Beirut. Although 3,500 Palestinian families benefited from such a scheme (US\$ 5,000 per family), compensation was criticised on the grounds that it would be seen as an initial step towards the incorporation of Palestinians into Lebanon as a whole.

Hence, if the previous options were not viable, the only remaining alternative was to build a new camp or housing project for Palestinian refugees. The Minister for the Affairs of the Displaced proposed the construction of a new housing project specifically for Palestinians. The storm of protest in Lebanon which this plan provoked resulted in its effective abandonment; no alternative plan has been raised for the housing of the displaced. Thus the plight of the six thousand families exemplifies the predicament of the Palestinians in Lebanon the camps that have been destroyed cannot be rebuilt, there is no room in existing camps; not all are eligible for government compensation schemes; and no new housing project can be built to accommodate them.

Women: Education, Employment and Opportunities

In a major survey undertaken for the conference of the situation of 1,500 Palestinian women in Lebanon, the themes raised throughout the review of the socio-economic circumstances for Palestinians in Lebanon were underlined. Perhaps the most striking revelation was the declining educational status of Palestinian women. Among the respondents, eighteen per cent had never attended school and a third described themselves as functionally illiterate. A further forty-two per cent had not completed the preparatory cycle of education. In terms of employment, forty per cent of the respondents were heads of household, solely responsible for the support of their families. Sixty four per cent of women worked within the refugee camps or in close proximity to them, reflecting a profound isolation from the wider Lebanese labour market. Among unskilled workers,

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three quarters were found to earn less than the statutory minimum wage.

The isolation of women within the labour market is reflected also in the growing isolation of the women's organisations. Since the signing of the Oslo agreements, the concomitant decline of Palestinian institutions, and the increasing marginalisation of the Palestinian community in Lebanon, there has been a perceptible decline in co-operation between the Palestinian and Lebanese women's movement. If responses to the current situation are to be formulated, this gap will have to be addressed since 'self-reliance without skills, self reliance without education, self-reliance without self-confidence is very hard to acquire'.

In the discussion of the presentations on current socio-economic circumstances, attention was initially focused on the continuing confusion over figures and numbers. However, without a comprehensive census which, it was agreed, would be both prohibitively expensive and politically inopportune, the situation could not be addressed. Perhaps the most serious indicator of the deteriorating situation for Palestinians was felt to be the increasing disaffection with education and the accompanying drop out rate. As is so often the case, the problems facing the community as a whole had its strongest impact on women. The dangers of the current marginalisation and impoverishment of the Palestinians were considered acute; immediate action was urged to alleviate the situation and donor countries were called upon to prioritise the needs of Palestinians in Lebanon in funding initiatives.

Levels of Assistance and Self-Help Initiatives

The issues of designing and implementing appropriate responses to the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon received considerable attention. The loss of PLO-financed Palestinian institutions had had a tremendous impact and the extent to which UNRWA and the emerging NGO sector were able to compensate for the loss was problematic. The international donor community had withdrawn considerable support from Lebanon, leaving NGOs in a particularly difficult position. NGOs and Palestinian initiatives were now largely reliant on international funding—a development which had led to increased competition, lack of co-ordination and in some cases duplication.

The activities of the multilateral process in calling for an increase in donor support to the Palestinian community were noted. The Refugee Working Group had succeeded in securing some commitments for Peace Implementation Plan projects in Lebanon and had raised the profile of the assistance needs of the Palestinians. This, however, was not considered an unmixed blessing by all—a concentration on welfare was seen as distracting the RWG from securing the national aspirations and rights of the Palestinian refugees. Assistance has a vital but limited part to play compared with the importance of political progress on these issues.

With regard to the form of assistance provided to the Palestinians in Lebanon, questions were raised concerning its flexibility, appropriateness and the extent to which it caused dissent between the refugees themselves and the host community, that is the Lebanese. 'Status-centred' assistance for which only refugees were eligible had, it was argued, contributed to a 'zero-sum' situation where any

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benefit to the refugees was seen by the host community as taking place at the expense of its own interests. Further, the obsession with *tawteen* had led to a situation where necessary infrastructural repairs to the camps and the provision of adequate housing was seen as a step towards the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon. The confusion was born of the lack of international legal protection for Palestinian refugees. Unlike other refugees who fall under the aegis of the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees and the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Palestinians were only afforded the services of UNRWA, whose remit was limited to assistance and which was not empowered to offer the refugees legal protection.

Hence, assistance was seen as a substitute for protection and therefore focused on the separation of refugees from hosts. It was urged that UNRWA seek to undertake more flexible and accountable assistance initiatives, where appropriate in concert with the Lebanese government, and that protection for the legal rights of the Palestinian refugees, as laid out in the relevant United Nations resolution, be the responsibility of the international community.

The Future of UNRWA

In the discussion of the socio-economic situation, frequent reference was made to UNRWA's 'reduction of services' and its policy being based on the proposed dissolution of the Agency as a result of the ongoing peace process. In the light of the creation of the Palestinian Authority, it was 'obvious' that UNRWA is destined to disappear gradually as the peace process progresses. It would be impossible to have two parallel administrations in the West Bank and Gaza. The decision to move the UNRWA headquarters from Vienna to Gaza City was seen as expressing the realisation that UNRWA would merge with the Palestinian administration in the

areas under PLO control, leaving the refugees outside to fend for themselves. The dissolution of UNRWA would mean that the international community had abrogated its responsibility for the Palestinian refugees. It was suggested that a decision had already been taken that UNRWA would cease operations at its next renewal date, scheduled for 1999. An individual who worked for one of UNRWA's major donors described this as a rumour and insisted that there was no such prospect and pointed out that the Agency had just secured sufficient extra donations (reportedly ten million dollars) to cover its acute funding crisis. The US had pledged almost half of this sum and the EU had undertaken to raise its donations to UNRWA by three per cent per annum. In addition, the donor community had taken cognisance of the fact that UNRWA suffered from an endemic structural deficit and it was expected that the international community would increase funding to cover this. UNRWA was now seen as a vital component of the peace process and would not be dissolved in the foreseeable future.

In a review of UNRWA's operations in Lebanon, it was pointed out that the problem was not so much one of falling expenditure but rising demands. In response to the deteriorating economic situation, many Palestinians in Lebanon who had previously been able to cover their own medical expenses or to use the PRCS services, for example, are now relying on UNRWA, which has been unable to secure additional funding with which to respond to the increased demand. UNRWA also has myriad acute claims on its resources, including the fifteen thousand refugees who are currently homeless or displaced, the disabled and those still suffering the after-effects of the war. In such circumstances UNRWA was unable to undertake the massive infrastructural investment that was so obviously needed in the camps. In addition the Lebanese government has refused permission for several key housing and infrastructural proj-

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ects (including drains and the building of apartment blocks within refugee camps) on the grounds that they would constitute *tawteen*.

In the discussion of UNRWA's future, participants were assured that 'UNRWA is here to stay as long as the refugee issue is not settled'. In response to suggestions that UNRWA's policies might change to accommodate the perceived intention of resettling the Palestinians in Lebanon permanently, it was denied that such a plan was even under consideration. However, UNRWA would adapt in line with the progress of the peace negotiations, 'as is often the case in such situations, implementation or at least preparations indicative of a policy adopted by a host country might well be set in motion before the end of negotiations on the principles'. Faced with this prospect, it was maintained that UNRWA must adapt its *present monolithic structures and gear itself for an appropriate adjustment to whatever direction each host country chooses to follow*. To promote the necessary flexibility there should be a structured dialogue between the Lebanese government and UNRWA covering issues including the provision of infrastructure and housing within the camps. While trenchant criticisms were made of UNRWA's policy and practices—its 'top-down' implementation structures, it was agreed that the current political situation required UNRWA to remain more or less in its current form. The transformation of assistance from a 'status-based' approach to one focused on need was politically untenable in the current circumstances, it was feasible, however, to put pressure on the international community to raise the level of their funding for Lebanon.

Non-governmental Organisations

A review of current NGO activities among Palestinians in Lebanon showed that activities were concentrated in the fields of education, vocational training, health and assistance to the disabled, social

care, cultural heritage, emergency relief and child rights. The major burden felt by the NGO sector was that they were in no position to mitigate the effects of the decline in UNRWA and PLO services and the loss of funding from the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. The NGOs operating in Lebanon are overwhelmingly dependent on external funding from the West; between eighty and ninety per cent of their resources came from outside donors, rendering them extremely vulnerable to current changes in donor priorities and the switch in attention from Lebanon to the West Bank and Gaza.

The difficulties Palestinian NGOs experienced in operating after the abrogation of the Cairo agreement and the disunity and competition between the various agencies made co-ordination difficult. Attention was also drawn to the low level of engagement between research institutions and NGOs which made the design of timely and appropriate interventions problematic. The creation of an NGO Forum had been the first step towards an integrated approach but significant problems remained with regard to co-ordination with Lebanese NGOs and the legal problems stemming from the fact that Palestinians in Lebanon have no right to form associations. The scale of the problems facing Palestinians in Lebanon made the NGOs' task almost impossible—how, with a total budget of not more than three million dollars, could they hope to compensate for the loss of PLO services which had, at their high, a budget twenty times as large? The inadequate resources available to NGOs were being further stretched by the demands of emergencies—the mass flight following Israel's 'Grapes of Wrath' operation in the south had placed huge demands on all NGOs in Lebanon.

Problems which needed addressing within the sector were identified as a lack of flexibility, weak co-ordination and the reconciling of social and cultural work with political action. Calls were made

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for the strengthening of grass roots organisations, wider links with Palestinian organisations outside Lebanon and the transfer of emphasis in NGO operations from the provision of services to action on social transformation and mobility processes.

In the discussion on what mechanisms could best be used to address the problems facing Palestinians in Lebanon, it was urged that donors reverse the tendency to follow what were perceived as high salience issues and raise the level of their contribution to the Palestinians. Participants pointed out that the Israelis received an additional grant of over five hundred million dollars after their operation in the south (for the creation of a satellite defence system), while UNRWA and Palestinian NGOs had to scramble for funds even to maintain their existing operations.

Civil Rights and the Position of Palestinians in Lebanon

A major issue raised in the discussions of the current situation of Palestinians in Lebanon was that of the Palestinians' freedom to operate both as individuals and as a community within Lebanon. Some argued that rather than concentrating on assistance and relief initiatives, the focus should be on the legal position of Palestinians in Lebanon. Indeed, if the Palestinians were afforded the right to legal employment and to organise, then they could contribute not only to their own support but also, through paying taxes and state insurance, to the reconstruction of Lebanon as a whole.

The debate centred around the concept of 'civil rights'—a term which was found to be defined differently by the various participants in the debate. It is important to note here that 'civil rights' in

this context has taken the meaning of non-political rights in the internal Lebanese sense, it is a combination of Economic and Social Rights with some degree of political autonomy and political recognition. For some the issue was not the numbers, circumstances or potential contribution of the Palestinians but how the issue of their presence is regarded in Lebanon, how the state regards Palestinians. Following the abrogation of the Cairo Agreement (which had allowed the PLO to set up institutions and to organise as a community within Lebanon as well as to launch attacks on Israel from Lebanese soil), Palestinians have been subject to laws which prevent them from travelling outside Lebanon with the assurance of being able to return, from obtaining work permits and from being able to live where they choose. This was interpreted by some as part of a concerted state policy aiming to marginalise and impoverish the Palestinian refugees. The state measures were seen to be in contravention to international humanitarian law and pressure should be laid on the Lebanese government to lift these restrictions.

In response, a distinction was first made between individual civil rights and what might be termed corporate or community rights. The creation of a virtual 'PLO state within a state' in the 1970s is viewed by many Lebanese as a direct cause of the civil war and any move to reactivate the rights enjoyed by the PLO or Palestinian organisations and institutions before 1991 would be unacceptable to a majority of the population. As far as individual civil rights are concerned, the form of citizenship law operating in Lebanon would not allow the naturalisation of the Palestinians as citizens and the problem with offering individual rights on a level with Lebanese citizens was that this would be interpreted as a *de facto* naturalisation of the Palestinians and therefore unacceptable.

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Some respondents felt that unreasonable demands were being placed on the Lebanese state. Provision of civil rights would involve the provision of health and security benefits to Palestinians at a time when the state was hardly able to fulfil its obligations to its own citizens. The Lebanese themselves have suffered from decline in Palestinian services and cannot afford to compensate them or give health and social security rights to 200,000 people. It was pointed out however, that 50,000 Sri Lankans had work permits and over 600,000 Syrians were currently working legally without permits, following an agreement between the Syrian and Lebanese governments. These communities send their wages outside the country in the form of remittances while wages earned by Palestinians would be spent in Lebanon. The Syrian workers, it was pointed out, though, are in Lebanon at the insistence of the Syrian government and there is little the Lebanese government can do to prevent them from coming. Finally, it was argued, if the Palestinian refugees are of such immense potential benefit as a resource for the reconstruction of Lebanon, why do other countries refuse to admit any Palestinian even on a tourist visa?

In terms of the immediate future, one in which it is accepted by both sides that the Palestinians will remain in Lebanon, some legal framework for their residence is necessary. For some, a new legal category, based on the United States 'Green Card' and the French *permis de sejour* would both enable the Palestinians to operate, on an individual level, as legal entities within Lebanon and stop short of naturalisation (although the question of the potential right of the children of the holders of a *permis de sejour* or 'Green Card' to claim Lebanese citizenship was raised). If such a framework could be established, then Palestinian refugees would be able to claim the protection of their nationality as theoretical or virtual citizens of the as yet non-existent Palestinian state and would be able to exer-

cise rights of residence and work in Lebanon. Such a strategy is, however, contingent on the establishment of a Palestinian state and the successful conclusion of the ongoing peace negotiations, an outcome over which the Lebanese state and the Palestinians in Lebanon have little leverage. Calls for 'civil rights' in Lebanon intensified after the Oslo agreements and, if granted, would be seen as 'compensation' for the losses and compromises necessitated by the post-Declaration of Principles situation. The creation of a civil rights framework prior to the conclusion of negotiations on the status of 1948 refugees was not feasible; Lebanon could not be seen to have 'solved' the problem of refugees prior to it reaching the negotiating table.

While recognising the validity of these pressures, many participants felt that the dangers posed by a marginalised and powerless community in Lebanon should not be ignored. The younger generation, in particular, was being prevented from making a contribution, individually or collectively, to society and there was a strong probability that they would become radicalised through despair. Far from constituting a threat to Lebanese security, sovereignty and prosperity, it was suggested, a powerful and self-confident Palestinian community in Lebanon could organise to resist an imposed permanent settlement and challenge its marginalisation from the peace process.

The Peace Process and the Palestinians in Lebanon

Throughout the conference, discussions continually returned to the centrality of the ongoing peace process (both the ongoing multilateral process, particularly the Refugee Working Group (RWG)

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which forms part of it, and the bilateral negotiations between Israel and Jordan and potentially Israel and Syria) and the alienation felt by both Lebanese and Palestinians concerning a process over which they have no effective control or even influence. Since the Oslo agreements of 1993, Palestinians in Lebanon have become marginalised by a framework of negotiations in which they have no viable representation—many Palestinians feel that even were it effective, the Palestinian negotiating team at the RWG would remain more concerned with the future of the West Bank and Gaza than with the future of Palestinians outside while the Lebanese government is not even an observer at the RWG multilaterals.

The Multilateral Negotiations

Profound suspicions were voiced concerning the agenda and motivation of the multilaterals. Remarks made by the representatives of the United States, the European Union and Canada at the negotiations which spoke in terms of a future for the Middle East where 'in ten to fifteen years no-one will call themselves a refugee', combined with a perceived lack of commitment to the implementation of the fundamental United Nations Resolutions which guard the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homes, have left many onlookers concerned that the multilaterals will result in the abandonment of the Palestinians in Lebanon. According to this scenario, the multilaterals will frame a 'comprehensive peace' involving some degree of autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza and the effective settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Criticisms of the multilateral process were focused on its interminable length, the lack of clarity in its agenda and workplan, and the perceived refusal to pressure Israel into meaningful concessions.

Those involved in analysing the multilaterals agreed that given their significance to the future of all Palestinians and indeed the

whole Middle East, there had been a lack of clarity in how the negotiations were presented and inadequate briefing of the media. While accepting that there was a problem with regards to the lack of transparency, supporters of the multilaterals pointed to the need for open dialogue where not everything spoken had to be 'official policy'. The multilaterals should not be evaluated, it was argued, by their progress towards solutions but by their success in the building of fora in which constructive dialogue could be achieved. The multilaterals are pre-eminently a learning process for the participants. In addition, the extent to which the multilateral process was serving Israeli ends should not be overestimated. The Israelis themselves did not consider the multilaterals to be sympathetic to their ends (indeed some Israelis had privately described them as 'a fix') and the Palestinian negotiators had succeeded in ensuring that the refugee issue was acknowledged as an essential part of the process. In this sense the multilaterals could be seen as a concrete acknowledgement of the fact that there cannot be an Israeli-Palestinian peace without a settlement of the refugee question—this was a significant advance on the past.

For most of the participants from the region, though, the multilateral process is fundamentally flawed in its apparent bypassing of the essential core of the Palestinian issue—their violent dispossession by Israel in 1948 both as a nation and as individuals and the right of the refugees to return to their homes as laid out in United Nations Resolution 194. The timetable of the multilaterals—negotiations over the future of the Occupied Territories, followed by negotiations over the status and return of 1967 refugees, and only later negotiations over the 'final status' of the 1948 refugees—was felt to relegate the central point of the Palestinian case to the lowest of international priorities. Since the overwhelming majority of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the descendants of 1948 refugees

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from the Galilee and the north, negotiations over Hebron, Gaza and Jerusalem are of limited salience. For one participant at the conference, the Oslo Declaration was 'not a declaration of principles but a postponement of principles'.

Fears were also expressed as to the ability of the PLO adequately to represent the Palestinians in Lebanon and the other host countries as well as negotiate for the securing of some form of autonomy for the Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza. The effective withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon after 1991, the cessation of salaries, and the downsizing of Palestinian institutions have contributed to a sense of marginalisation and lack of representation among Palestinians in Lebanon vis-à-vis the peace negotiations.

For Lebanese, Syria's decision to boycott the multilateral talks and the subsequent withdrawal of the government from the bilateral negotiations have contributed to an atmosphere of distrust. Within the media, as will be described later, there are reports of a 'plot' being hatched at the multilaterals which will end with the refugees being permanently settled in Lebanon. It was suggested that the attitude of the Lebanese government towards the multilaterals could be more constructive; there seems nothing to be gained from remaining outside the process. The Lebanese rejection of the process has not acted, as some had hoped, as a brake on the forward dynamics of the process. However, some conceded that a change is unlikely in the foreseeable future since the policies of Syria and Lebanon regarding the peace process are undertaken on the basis of 'total co-ordination'.

The economic and political future of a Lebanon in the process of reconstruction is inextricably linked to the peace process (indeed it was argued that the plans for Beirut as a new financial centre were

predicated on the successful establishment of economic co-operation between Israel and the new Middle East). Also, any escalation of the conflict, as was demonstrated during the Grapes of Wrath operation will have a direct and highly damaging impact on the country and its citizens.

For discussions on the potential of the multilateral negotiations to result in a meaningful and permanent peace in the Middle East, the role, attitude of, and responses to the state of Israel were considered crucial. In a review of Israeli policy towards the Palestinian refugee issue since 1948, it was shown that there has been a relatively consistent policy aimed at the settlement of the refugees in the host countries. Support for international peace moves in the 1950s and proposals for the payment of limited compensation for 1948 losses were based on the assumption that no refugees would ever return to their homes. In this sense there has been some movement on the Israeli side—the limited compromises achieved in the negotiations on family reunification and return of 1967 refugees to the West Bank, and the acceptance of the return of a considerable number of Palestinians (estimates ranged up to 100,000) to the Gaza Strip as part of the Palestinian Authority's personnel.

On the fundamental issues—the final status of the 1948 refugees, the implementation of 194 and the right of return—there has been no such compromise. The 'final status' negotiations which opened at Taba in May have reached stasis not solely because of the change in government in Israel but also because of the fundamental opposition of Israel to recognising 194. While it is true to say that there is a division between Labour and Likud on the question of the 1967 refugees, with Labour having shown far more flexibility than Likud seems able to contemplate, on 1948 there is a shared rejection. Any acceptance of 1948 refugees into Israel will be only on

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Israeli terms as part of a 'humanitarian' family reunification scheme—though even this seems increasingly unlikely.

Projected Outcomes: Return, Compensation, Resettlement and the Centrality of National Rights

For many participants, their disquiet concerning the multilaterals was based on the fact that the discussions of the range of possibilities open for negotiation on the final status of refugees seemed already to assume that United Nations Resolution 194 was a dead letter. Return was operationalised in terms of Palestinian refugees leaving Lebanon for the Palestinian areas not return to their original homes in what is now Israel. Thus proposals for a combination of limited return, compensation for losses, and limited settlement of refugees in Lebanon seemed to assume that an implementation of 194 is simply unfeasible. Certainly, for the Israelis, an implementation of 194 is unacceptable—one participant described an Israeli negotiator refusing to contemplate 'even one sterile grandmother'. If Israeli intransigence is accepted as a given, that there are no conceivable set of circumstances in which return could be implemented, then the focus of negotiations should pass to the issue of compensation and the capacity of the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority to absorb refugees from Lebanon.

Compensation is an issue which has only recently acquired salience and still remains profoundly understudied. The sums involved derive from estimations of the losses experienced by Palestinians as a result of the war in 1948, and range from forty to ninety billion dollars. While such sums may reflect the scale of losses endured by Palestinians, they have little operational or policy-formation utility, there is no agreement on figures or mechanisms of collection, the international community has shown no sign of being prepared to contribute such sums while Israel, if one extrapolates from offers

made during the 1950s, would not be willing to contribute more than one billion dollars. However, it was suggested that the issue of compensation could provide a framework for negotiating a settlement. Rather than a system of compensating individuals for specific losses, a system both cumbersome and inequitable, the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza might, for example, receive funding to aid the absorption of refugees from other host countries. Alternatively, payments could be used to fund a development bank which would improve the lives of both refugee and host communities throughout the Middle East.

Proposals for the absorption of the refugees into the West Bank and Gaza were considered to be ill-advised and precipitate at this stage of the negotiations. Further, while there might indeed be some economic, social and political space for the absorption of refugees from Lebanon into the new Palestinian areas, any realistic calculations of the time-scale or programme of such a process has to assume that the Palestinian Authority is in a position to develop its economy in its own interest and has control over fiscal policy, trade and exploitation of natural resources. As a review of the currently precarious economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza demonstrated, this is very far from the case. Israel retains control over almost every aspect of the Palestinian economy. What prospects for the generation of absorptive capacity in the West Bank and Gaza exist are contingent on the ability of the Palestinian Authority to operate freely—something the Israeli government seems to have no intention of allowing.

Such proposals, however, raised doubts among several participants. What is viewed by some as 'realism' might be taken by others as an abnegation of the central rights of the Palestinians. If the Israelis could not conceive of circumstances in which they would allow the

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refugees' return, should that automatically be accepted as a given within the negotiations? Given the degree of acceptance of the Israeli position, some felt that calling on Lebanon to grant civil rights to the Palestinian refugees was hypocritical. No parallel pressure had ever been placed on Israel in relation to its violations of human rights in the West Bank and Gaza or south Lebanon. For some, then, the proposals of those concerned with the multilaterals for civil rights for the Palestinians in Lebanon sounded hollow. If the negotiations were based on dialogue, why were the positions of the Palestinians on their national rights as well as 194 or the Lebanese refusal to accept *tawteen* seen as less concrete and immovable than those of the Israelis? There was a danger perceived in the 'creeping concessions' offered by the negotiations and, too often, the Refugee Working Group at the multilaterals concentrated on the welfare of refugees, designing assistance policies and raising funds, rather than on the enforcement of their rights.

Clarifying the Positions of the Palestinians and Lebanese

One of the central purposes of the *Palestinians in Lebanon* project, and of the conference in particular, was to offer an opportunity for a delineation of the positions of Palestinians vis-à-vis the refugee issue. Since the topic is complex, value-laden and highly emotive, the opportunity to discuss issues and set out agendas in a neutral and non-coercive atmosphere was highly appreciated. However, a caveat must be given on the limits of the discussions reported below. They are not, nor were they ever intended to be, official statements on government or PLO policy, nor are they statements made as part of a negotiating process. Rather, they represent an exploration of the dimensions of the problem and an attempt to set

out the perceptions, processes and pressures which shape the Palestinian and Lebanese responses to the current situation.

Given these limitations, it was however possible to achieve some clarification of the situation for Palestinians and Lebanese. Within the discussions, the principal themes included the impact of past history in terms of both conflict and co-operation on present attitudes, the role of the peace process in both marginalising and raising the profile of Palestinians in Lebanon, and the degree of division and congruence between official and non-official opinions on both sides.

Commonality and Conflict: The History of the Palestinians in Lebanon

In the context of a Lebanon in the process of reconstruction and a rapidly changing Middle East, there was an opportunity to evaluate the 'common history' that Palestinians and Lebanese have shared since 1948. Indeed, the degree of commonality before that date was also emphasised. Despite the sometimes bitter divisions that have emerged since 1969, Palestinians and Lebanese are still united by ethnic origin, culture and language. In the opening session, the various phases of the Palestinian involvement in Lebanon were delineated: the dispossession from their homeland, the 'ascendancy' after 1969 when Palestinians were able to organise and operate in Lebanon, the civil war and the post Taif agreement era. Key themes explored in the discussion were the oscillations in the power and effectiveness of the Lebanese state, the degree to which the Palestinians represented a 'state within a state' in the period after 1969, the demographic balance within Lebanon and the Palestinian im-

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pact on it. Participants with experience of other refugee situations raised points of comparison—the effect of refugees on ‘ethnic balance’ within the host country and the difficulty faced by all refugee groups in that by organising they automatically challenge the host country’s sovereignty and often security.

Some responses suggested that it was illegitimate to compare the Palestinian case with other refugee situations since it involved a unique set of circumstances. Rather than being refugees from civil conflict or persecution in their country of origin, the Palestinians were supplanted by another nation. In addition, the Palestinians had a long struggle to define their situation in terms of self determination—to become a noun rather than an adjective qualifying ‘refugees’ and the current multilateral peace process is in this sense a retrograde step since it seeks to define the problem as a refugee rather than a national one.

In reassessing the past, there was a remarkable absence of blame and condemnation. While the impact of the rise of the PLO in Lebanon on the collapse of the state was noted, attention was also drawn to the extent to which the two communities were mutually reliant during the period up to 1982, and examples of the degree to which Palestinian institutions provided both services and employment to Lebanese were offered. Cognisance was also taken of the impact of almost fifty years of coexistence between Palestinians and Lebanese and the extent to which the communities have mingled: of the current ‘third generation’ of Palestinians in Lebanon, twenty three per cent have a Lebanese parent.

Mapping the Lebanese Position

During the presentations and discussions of the Lebanese position on the future of the Palestinians, references were repeatedly made to the pressures exerted on Lebanese state and society by the rigours of the post-war reconstruction process—the continuing political uncertainty in both domestic and foreign policy spheres, the confessional and sectarian fissures that remain within the Lebanese polity, the continuing economic fragility of the Lebanese recovery, and the profound fear that the multilateral peace process will lead to the settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon without regard to the interests or wishes of Lebanon itself.

For Lebanon, the post-Taif situation has involved a delicate balance of attempting to reassert state control and writ after over a decade of state collapse which resulted in virtual cantonisation, while dealing with both an Israeli occupation in the south and a Syrian hegemony in the rest of the country. Within this context, the issue of Palestinian presence and future in Lebanon has gained a high, perhaps even disproportionate salience in political discourse. This is partly due to the aftermath of the civil war—a consensus has emerged that the Palestinian presence as an organised, armed and autonomous actor in Lebanon was a direct cause of the civil war. Hence, fears about the fragility of the post-war stability of the Lebanese state are expressed as opposition to the settlement of the Palestinians among all confessional and sectarian groups in Lebanon. In a review of two recent events in Lebanon—proposals for a housing project at Qariya for displaced Palestinians and reactions to the expulsion of Palestinians from Libya—the intense level of public hostility to *tawteen* was underscored.

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The housing project at Qariya, as described above, aimed to re-house six thousand families displaced by the reconstruction of Beirut in a new designated area. The opposition it aroused was intense and centred, it was argued, on the core concerns of the Lebanese concerning the future of the Palestinian refugees. The project, it was suggested, was seen as a first step towards the naturalisation of the Palestinians as citizens. It was also criticised for constituting an endorsement of the perceived direction of the peace process towards the settlement of the Palestinians in Lebanon since it was to be funded by the Canadian government as a Peace Implementation Project (PIP). Another concern was that the project favoured Palestinian interests over those of the Lebanese displaced by the same process, who remained without homes, not to mention the 450,000 Lebanese who remain displaced as a result of the war. Finally, and most seriously, the project was interpreted as an attempt to change the demographic balance in the proposed project area—raising the spectre once again of the Palestinians undermining the delicate sectarian balance of post-war Lebanon. There were even more extreme reactions to the proposal that Lebanon admit the Palestinian refugees expelled from Libya (who had originally been registered in Lebanon). The prospect of an increase in the number of Palestinians in the country caused intense disquiet and anger that Lebanon should be forced to assume responsibility for refugees whom no one else seemed ready to assist.

As regards the official government stance on the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon, the situation is clear. As articulated by a Lebanese diplomat at the conference, whose contribution was much appreciated, the government position is based on four central points. First, the Taif agreement at which parliamentarians redrafted the constitution of Lebanon specifically rejects the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon. There is a broad and unchanging

consensus in support of this position among the Lebanese citizenship and there is no reason to suppose that the consensus will not remain. In addition, Palestinians themselves have, through political action and, for example, demonstrations in support of the Intifada in the West Bank and Gaza, expressed their continuing commitment to return and the securing of their national rights. Permanent settlement would not, then, be in the interests of either party. Secondly, the current situation in Lebanon is a direct result of the expulsion of Palestinians by Israel in 1948. Therefore, it is Israel's moral, legal and political responsibility, not that of Lebanon. If pressure is to be placed on a party in the Arab/Israeli dispute let it be on Israel rather than on Lebanon.

Thirdly, the situation of the Palestinians is the collective responsibility of all the Arab states, not merely Lebanon. The Arab League has articulated its support for and commitment to the Palestinian cause; there should be concerted action by the Arab countries on this matter. Finally, the international community bears a major responsibility in the matter of the Palestinians—United Nations Resolution 194 is an international legal and political commitment and must be upheld, not only by Lebanon and the Palestinians but also by the United Nations.

For many Lebanese, then, the concept of permanent settlement is untenable. It contravenes the post-war settlement which ended over fifteen years of civil war and threatens the consensus which has preserved peace in Lebanon since 1991. It would place a further burden on an economy which is currently ten billion dollars in debt and where almost thirty per cent of the population live in poverty. Finally, it ignores the international obligation to protect and enforce the Palestinian right of return. It might well be argued that there are other, more pressing, threats to Lebanon's future secu-

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rity—the Syrian presence, the unconstitutional nature of the elections in 1992 and 1996, the continuing occupation of the south by Israel—and that the emphasis on opposition to settlement is due to lack of freedom of expression on other matters. Yet, if a genuine solution to the question is to be achieved, the strength of public opinion on the matter of the Palestinians cannot be ignored or dismissed as ‘hysterical’.

In assessing the role of the Palestinians in Lebanon’s future, it was argued that the establishment of meaningful democracy and state autonomy in Lebanon could only assist the Palestinians. There was a direct link between the reconstruction of the Lebanese political and economic system on the one hand and the future of the Palestinians. In such a situation there might be room for creative solutions, such as a modified *permis de sejour* system which would accommodate Palestinian needs but not result in their permanent settlement. However, such a prospect was contingent on Israel, the Arab world and the international community assuming their share of the burden. Prior to the demonstration of such a commitment, the Lebanese government could not take any formal decision to alter its policy towards the Palestinians since any such move would be interpreted both inside Lebanon and by the other regional and international actors as an endorsement of the peace process before that process has negotiated the central components of the Palestinian issue. At the present time, as one participant put it, ‘the state does not perceive itself as strong enough to be magnanimous’.

In this context, it was highlighted that the issue of the plight of the Palestinians in Lebanon is not high on Lebanon’s priorities. This is true on both official and unofficial levels. Lebanon emerging from a civil war has other preoccupations and problems which mobilises its energies and resources. The conditions of the Palestinians,

therefore, are only significant on the political level particularly when it comes to the issue of *tawteen*. The country's severe economic and social crises make the problems faced by the Palestinians of secondary importance in public debate.

Mapping the Palestinian Position

Responses to and analyses of the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon were affected by three central concerns: the parlous socio-economic condition of the majority of Palestinians in Lebanon; their worsening political, social and economic marginalisation within the Lebanese state and the wider society, and the fear that the continuing multilateral process was both undermining their ability to survive in Lebanon and leading to the loss of their right to return to their homes and achieve self-determination.

While there were no official delegates of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation at the conference, considerable attention was paid to its role not only in the civil war but also in the post-1991 era. There was a general acceptance of the damage done by some Palestinian actions in the period 1969 to 1982 as well as an appreciation of the support Lebanon had given to the Palestinian cause during that era. The Palestinians had emerged as a highly politically involved community partly due to the liberal environment offered in Lebanon. The conflict that ensued was in great measure due to the continuing lack of a base for the Palestinian movement as a whole since 1948 and was perhaps inevitable given the international community's lack of support for Palestinian national rights. Without a physical base of their own, Palestinians had been forced to extend their autonomy at the expense of Lebanon's sovereignty a

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zero-sum game which has ended in the current political powerlessness and ineffectiveness of the Palestinians in Lebanon. While it was recognised that the current situation was an entirely new one and that there could be no return to a pre-war situation, the Palestinians' inability to function within or contribute to the society was highlighted as a serious and potentially dangerous development. Protracted marginalisation and impoverishment was a threat not only to the Palestinian community but also to the security of Lebanon and the region as a whole.

In addition to their marginalisation within Lebanon, the Palestinians currently face isolation from the rest of the Palestinian people, whether refugees in other host countries or in the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. The PLO was perceived by some as concentrating on the welfare and interests of the areas now under its control at the expense of its position as the representative of the Palestinians wherever they might be. Its relative impotence in Lebanon, together with the decline in its services, had left the Palestinians without support or representation.

The decline in PLO activity was linked by some to a potentially damaging change in the perception of the Palestinian case. While the PLO in Lebanon had been instrumental in transforming the terms of the debate over the Palestinians from a question of *refugee* rights to one of *national* rights, the negotiations were currently framed around the Palestinians as refugees. It was considered important to retain a conception of the totality of the Palestinian experience of dispossession and loss of country. The future of the Palestinians in Lebanon is not an isolated, internal issue but part of a wider and fundamental question which is at the heart of any meaningful peace process.

With regard to the multilaterals, there was some agreement with the Lebanese position permanent settlement was unacceptable and negotiations with regard to the future of the refugees in Lebanon should be based, without equivocation, on the fundamental principles of UN Resolution 194 and the right of the refugees to return to their homes. This has been the stated position of the PLO at the multilaterals and received broad support from many at the conference. The coalition of interests between Palestinians and Lebanese is a limited one however—the Lebanese seek to prevent *tawteen* on their territory while the Palestinians have the wider and longer-term objective of the restoration of their rights.

Palestinians in Lebanon: An International Responsibility?

As can be seen, there was broad consensus between Palestinian and Lebanese participants at the conference with respect to both the potential dangers and the most desirable outcome of the current peace negotiations. Both sides recognised the role of the negotiations, from which both sides feel marginalised, in exacerbating the structural tension and misunderstanding between the two communities. There was a shared sense that the fundamentals of the issue are not covered in the current process and that models of compensation and resettlement articulated in some analyses of the possible future development of the process are unacceptable.

Palestinians in Lebanon—Palestinians as a Nation

One of the most serious impacts of the current peace process was felt to be the relegation of the question of Palestinian problems in Lebanon to the status of a domestic or internal issue. The international community seemed to be proposing that it was Lebanon's responsibility to provide Palestinians with the means to gain a live-

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lihood (through the provision of civil rights) and the Palestinians' responsibility to accept the outcome of a peace process in which they held no real stake.

Absent from such a framework is an awareness of first, the responsibility of Israel in creating the Palestinians refugee problem in the first place and subsequently exacerbating its impact on Lebanon by a policy of 'raising the costs' of Lebanon's harbouring of the Palestinians by a systematic policy of retaliation and aggression which culminated in the invasion of 1982 and still persists in the illegal occupation in the south of the country. Second, the responsibility of the international community must be underlined. The situation in Lebanon—the dismal socio-economic position of the Palestinians and the hostility of the Lebanese to the prospect of their settlement—is the direct result of the continued refusal of the international community to enforce the resolutions passed by the United Nations dealing with the Palestinian national rights.

Some accused the international community of restricting its role to the provision of limited and conditional assistance and calls for the Lebanese to reverse their policies towards the Palestinians in the name of human rights. For some, this indicated a double standard. While the provisions of the UN Convention on Human Rights on the rights of aliens and refugees to work and enjoy civil rights within a host country was cited in criticism of Lebanon, no complementary pressure was discernible on Israel with regard to its consistent human rights and international law violations. Further, the European Union is currently insisting that the government of Lebanon accept the return of several thousand 'illegal immigrants' (including both refugees and Lebanese) from Europe to Lebanon as part of negotiations on new assistance packages for the reconstruction programme. If the EU is resisting the presence of a few thou-

sand in a population of hundreds of millions, how can it insist that Lebanon incorporate hundreds of thousands into a population of less than four million?

A Return to Fundamentals: The Centrality of Palestinian National Rights and Resolution 194

In seeking to protect the centrality of fundamentals, both Palestinians and Lebanese might be accused of rejectionism and a chronic lack of realism. If the Israelis will never contemplate return, what is the point of reiterating a commitment to it? However, as one participant pointed out, 'demanding the impossible' is itself sometimes an act of realism. For Palestinians and Lebanese alike, acceptance of the validity of 194 is the only stage from which the peace negotiations can move forward. Any other end to the multilaterals—particularly one which entails the permanent settlement of the Palestinians in Lebanon—will not be a solution but the precursor of new conflict. The only way that the current peace process can succeed is to secure the trust and commitment of both Lebanese and Palestinians. In order to achieve this, the importance of supporting the central rights of the Palestinians and the commitment of the international community to secure the implementation of these rights is paramount. In a long-term scenario, the absorption of perhaps fifty thousand Palestinians into the Lebanese polity is not a 'metaphysical, demographic or political impossibility'. To assume permanent settlement as an outcome prior to the start of negotiations can only end in the collapse of the peace process.

What potential there is for co-operation between Palestinians and Lebanese lies not in the imposition of one unwilling community on another but in the focus of mutual interest—opposition to *tawteen*. For the Palestinians such opposition is based on a determination to secure their national rights; for the Lebanese it is based on concern

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For the future security and prosperity of their country. For both parties to the situation in Lebanon, the key remains meaningful negotiations, without prior assumptions as to the outcome, based on the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestinian national rights. In this mutual recognition of the abiding importance of the historically based legal rights of Palestinian refugees, Lebanese and Palestinians may yet prove that revolutionaries are the greatest realists.

Suggestions for Further Research

It was agreed at the conference that some information was still lacking and more research needed to be conducted to put the problem of the Palestinians in Lebanon in perspective.

- The economic dimension The need to evaluate the economic implications of the presence of the Palestinians in Lebanon and analyse them in the light of the demands that are being made on the Lebanese state.
- The demographic dimension. Finding a realistic demographic figure of the Palestinians in Lebanon given the political implications of the issue of numbers.
- Defining Civil Rights. Throughout the conference, civil rights, human rights, social rights and economic rights had been used inter-changeably. It is necessary to have a theoretical study of the various implications of these terms in the context of Lebanon.
- Lebanese labour laws and their implications for Palestinians. This needs to be linked with research on trade unions and professional associations, each of which operates under its own set of rules.
- Palestinian labour force in Lebanon.
- Compensation and its implications for the Palestinians in Lebanon.
- Political Status. Palestinian individual versus community rights under Lebanese law.
- Representation Who represents the Palestinians if they are considered a community in the interim period prior to the establishment of a Palestinian state.
- Security considerations for the Lebanese state

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Opinion surveys of Palestinians and Lebanese.

The NGO sector. Identifying its potential and role in filling the gap resulting from the absence of PLO institutions, the suspension of help from the Eastern block, the Gulf and Arab states, and the reduction of remittances from abroad and of UNRWA's effective budget. All this needs to be put in perspective in the country which is coming out of a civil war.

The Future of the Palestinian camps: Taking into consideration Lebanese reconstruction plans; implications for Palestinian society, and the final status of refugees in the peace process.

Appendix I—Palestinians in Lebanon Project: Participants

CG Core Group AAC Academic Advisory Committee CP Conference Participant

MAHMOUD ABBAS was born in Alma, Palestine in 1948. He is a graduate in Political Science and has been involved in human and social work in the refugee camps. He currently works as a coordinator of the Palestinian popular committees in Lebanon and has done a number of studies on the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinians in Lebanon. **CP**

NAHY ABDUNNUR graduated from Beirut University College with a business management degree and from the University of Connecticut with a degree in Social Sciences. Worked as an Educational Assistant at the University of Connecticut graduate school for 10 years. Joined UNICEF in 1990 as Programme Officer, head of the Palestinian Section. The Palestinian Programme in UNICEF addresses the needs of Palestinian children and mothers complementing as much as possible the services offered by UNRWA. **CP**

AS'AD ABU KHALIL is Assistant Professor of Political Science at California State University, Stanislaus and Research Fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Government from Georgetown University and an M.A. in political Science from the American University of Beirut. He has published extensively and his publications include *The Politics of Sectarian Ethnicity*, *The Clash of Political Identities in Lebanon* (forthcoming). **CG**

GHASSAN ABU SITTAH graduated in 1993 with an MD from the University of Glasgow. From 1987 to 1994 he served on the Ex-

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ecutive Committee of Scottish Medical Aid for Palestinians. In 1991-92 he served as a medical volunteer in Burj el-Burajneh camp in Beirut and in Burj el-Shamali refugee camp in South Lebanon. Since 1995 he has served as Middle East Co-ordinator for the Centre for Economic and Social Rights with projects in Iraq, Gaza and Lebanon. Has written on colonic cancer, spinal injuries and infant mortality as well as on Middle Eastern politics. **CP**

BELINDA ALLAN is Development Officer of the Refugee Studies Programme. **CG; CP**

GEORGE ASSAF is a Human Rights lawyer and President of the Legal Aid Commission of the Beirut Bar Association. He is also Secretary General of the Justice and Peace Commission and advisor on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law to the Lebanese NGO Forum. Mr. Assaf is Chairperson for the Task Force on Internally Displaced Persons for the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), Geneva. He is the correspondent for the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (New York) and the International Movement of Catholic Jurists (Barcelona). **CG; CP**

RIMA AWAD is Operations Co-ordinator at the Welfare Association, a privately funded non-profit foundation registered in Geneva. She is responsible for the administrative follow-up of the Association's programmes among indigenous Palestinian communities. She holds an M.A. in Political Science from the American University of Beirut. **CP**

YVES BESSON was Special Advisor to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA on secondment by the Swiss Government dealing mainly with the peace process in the Middle East. From 1990 to 1992 he was Director of UNRWA Operations, West Bank (Jerusa-

lem) He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva) and a Masters degree in History from the University of Geneva. His publications include *Identites et conflits au Proche-Orient* (Paris: 1990). **CG; CP**

REX BRYNEN is Associate Professor of Political Science at McGill University and Research Coordinator of the Inter-University Consortium for Arab Studies (Montreal). He is author of *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon*, and editor or co-editor of four other books on the contemporary Middle East. He is currently working on the Palestinian refugee issue as Jules Leger Fellow at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada. **CG; CP**

JOHN BULLOCH was Middle East Editor of The Independent and Middle East Correspondent for the Daily Telegraph. He is also author of several books on the Middle East. **AAC; CP**

ANA GONZALO CASTELLANOS is the administrator responsible for Lebanon at the Directorate General of External Relations of the Commission of the European Communities. She holds a Doctorate of Applied Science in Urban Planning and a Masters in Economics and Geography from the Catholic University of Leuven, and a B.Sc. in History and Geography from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. **CG**

KHALIL CHATAWI is Director of the General Directorate of the Affairs of Palestinian Refugees which is attached to the Ministry of the Interior in Lebanon. He is a medical doctor specialising in Public Health with particular reference to emergencies and disasters. He has also done research and published on the subject of food aid and famine relief. **CP**

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DAWN CHATTY is Senior Research Officer and Academic Head of the Education Unit at the Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford University. She is a graduate in Social Anthropology from the University of California and a specialist in nomadic pastoral societies in the Middle East. She has taught at the American University of Beirut, the University of Damascus, Sultan Qaboos University, University of California at Santa Barbara and now at Oxford University. Her most recent publication is *Mobile Pastoralists. Development Planning and Social Change in Oman* (Columbia University Press, 1996). **CP**

MAHMOUD CHREIH has been writing for *Al-Nahar* since 1977 and is currently doing a Ph.D. at Hull University. He was chief translator at UNRWA headquarters in Vienna. From 1976 to 1979 he was Assistant to the American Cultural Attaché in Abu Dhabi. He holds an M.A. in Philosophy from the American University of Beirut at which he has taught. Mr. Chreih has published widely and has translated Sharabi's *Neopatriarchy A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*. He is editor of a review of modern Arabic poetry. **CG**

YOUSSEF CHOEIRI is a Fellow at the Middle East Centre and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Lebanese Studies. He is lecturer at the department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Exeter University. **CG**

DEIRDRE COLLINGS is currently a MacArthur Ph.D. scholar in the global security programme at Cambridge University. She was formerly a Research Fellow with the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS) and was in charge of running the Institute's two-year project on Lebanon. She is Board member of

Canadians for Education, Development and Reconstruction International which is an NGO working mostly in Lebanon. Her publications include the edited volume *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction* (Rienner: 1994). AAC; CG

SIR JAMES CRAIG is President of the Middle East Association. He was lecturer in Arabic at Durham University from 1948 to 1955. Joined the Diplomatic Service in 1955 until 1984. He headed of the Near East and North Africa Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1971 and 1975. He was subsequently Ambassador to Syria from 1976 to 1979 and to Saudi Arabia from 1979 to 1984. After retirement he was Visiting Professor in Arabic at Oxford between 1985 and 1991. He was Director General of the Middle East Association from 1985 and 1993 and President of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies from 1986 and 1993. CP

SELMA DABBAGH is currently working with the Centre for Economic and Social Rights on a project on the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon. She will complete her LLM in Law and Development at the School of Oriental and African Studies in September 1996. In 1992 she graduated with a B.A. in Law from Durham University and has worked for the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre in Jerusalem and the Legal Research and Resource Centre for Human Rights in Cairo. In 1994-5 she was Technical Specialist for the Legal English/Legal Rights English programmes at AMIDEAST, Cairo. CP

VINCENT DE PAIGNE is the administrator responsible for Lebanon and Jordan at the Directorate General of External Economic Relations of the Commission of the European Communities. CP

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CATHERINE ESSOYAN has been working as Regional Desk Officer for the Middle East at NOVIB, a Dutch development co-operation agency in the Hague. Before joining NOVIB in 1992, she worked for 10 years with the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)—initially on Lebanon relief and reconstruction in the wake of the 1982 Israeli invasion, later directing the Quaker Legal Aid Office in East Jerusalem—and from 1987 co-ordinating the AFSC international programme in the Middle East. She lived in Lebanon from 1965 to 1973, graduating from high school in Beirut. She has a B.A. in literature from Yale University and a M.A. in Middle East Studies from Harvard University. **CP**

BEN FENDER is Assistant Desk Officer for Palestinians and the Middle East Peace Process at the Near East and North Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. **CP**

MICHAEL GILSENAN is Chairman of the Research Committee of the Centre for Lebanese Studies. **CG**

SARAH GRAHAM BROWN is a writer specialising in the Gulf. She was senior editor of the Middle East Magazine; co-ordinator of the Gulf Information Project at the British Refugee Council and a member of the Oxfam Middle East Committee. **AAC**

YOUSSEF HAJJAR is Consultant with the Communications Division of the British Refugee Council where he is in charge of its international work, including the Middle East Committee. He is also Trustee and Coordinator of the Arab Resource Collective, a regional non-profit organisation which produces material for the use of Arab NGOs in primary health care, early childhood care and development and other similar fields, and organises networking activities for local and northern NGOs working in Arab countries.

He has extensive work experience with Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs CG

AZIZ HALIME is a Palestinian Refugee living in Oxford. CP

TOMAS HAMMERBERG is Ambassador and Special Advisor to the Swedish Government on Humanitarian Issues; Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia; Swedish representative, Refugee Working Group within the multilateral Middle East Peace Process; Special Co-ordinator for children and youth programmes, Member and vice-chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Chair, Technical Advisory Committee, UN Study on the Impact on children of Armed Conflict He was born in Sweden in 1942 and is a graduate of the Stockholm School of Economics. CP

BARBARA HARRELL-BOND is Director of the Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford. A Social Anthropologist, her research and writing has covered family and marriage, ethnicity, migration, urbanisation, development, international organisation and refugees. Among her principal publications are: *Modern Marriage in Sierra Leone* (Mouton, 1975), *Community, Leadership and the Transformation of Freetown* [with A. Howard and S. Skinner] (Mouton, 1977), and *Imposing Aid Emergency Assistance to Refugees* (OUP, 1986). CG; AAC; CP

ALI HASSAN is a general surgeon in Beirut hospitals. He is Chairman of the executive committee of the NGO Forum and a Professor at the Lebanese University. He was responsible for surgery at the Palestinian Red Crescent Society during the Lebanese war. CP

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JEHAN HELOU is a Palestinian journalist and researcher working in the Arabic press in London. She was a member of the Executive Committee of the General Union of Palestinian Women and of the Palestine National Council. She is involved in NGO work on Palestinians in Lebanon and was a researcher at the Institute for Palestine Studies and the Palestine Research Centre in Beirut. **CG; CP**

KHALIL HINDI is Professor of Engineering Systems at Brunel University. He is a Palestinian born in Tantoura near Haifa, a village that no longer exists. He was a member of the Palestinian Delegation to the Steering Committee of the Multilateral Peace negotiations and has several publications on Palestinian issues. **CP**

SHAFIQ AL-HOUT was Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in Lebanon since its inception in 1964. He was also elected twice on the PLO Executive Committee, in 1967 and 1991 until his resignation in 1993. **CP**

MICHAEL HUDSON is Professor of International Relations and Government, and Seif Ghobash Professor of Arab Studies in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He is a member and former Director of Georgetown's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and former president of the Middle East Studies Association. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Yale University. Professor Hudson's numerous publications include *The Precarious Republic*, *Political Modernization in Lebanon*, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*, and an edited volume, *The Palestinians: New Directions*. **CG; CP**

HANA JABER is a researcher at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen Orient Contemporain in Amman working on Palestinian issues. **CP**

CARLA JAZZAR is Consul at the Lebanese Embassy in London. **CP**

PAUL JEREMY was administrator of the Lebanon Information Processing Service at the British Refugee Council from 1984 to 1993. He also worked on international law relating to the human rights of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. **CG**

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GHADA EL-KARMI is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Durham. She is also Chairman of the International Campaign for Jerusalem. Dr. Karmi is a medical doctor and writer on Middle Eastern Affairs. **CP**

AHMAD KHALIFE is Editor-in-Chief of *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Falastiniyya* (Beirut) and Senior Researcher at the Institute for Palestine Studies. He was Head of the Hebrew section at the PLO Research Centre from 1970 to 1972 and head of the monographs section and the IPS Bulletin from 1977 and 1982. He has written extensively on Israeli and Palestinian affairs. **CP**

FARID EL-KHAZEN is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut. He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University. He has written numerous articles on

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DAVID MCDOWALL is a Middle East specialist who has worked with UNRWA and with voluntary agencies in the Lebanon and is now a full time writer. He is the author of *Palestine and Israel the Uprising and Beyond* (London: I B. Tauris, 1989), *The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1994), and *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I B. Tauris, 1995). **AAC; CP**

PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

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FADLE N NAQIB teaches mathematical economics and macroeconomics in the Department of Economics at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. Worked as a consultant to the Canadian Economic Council, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He has written various articles and books related to issues of capital accumulation, supply of labour, the economics of the West Bank and Gaza and the Israeli economy. **CP**

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SOUHEIL AL-NATOUR was born in Acre, Palestine in 1947 and has been a refugee in Lebanon since 1948 where he studied Law and Arabic Literature. His previous experience includes working at the PLO Research Centre (1972-75, 1982-83) and in *al-Hurrieh* magazine and is currently Editor-in-Chief of *Tareek al-Watan* Palestinian newspaper in Lebanon. He is a member of the General Union of Palestinian writers and journalists, a member of the General Union of Palestinian jurists and Secretary General of the Democratic Cultural Club. His publications include *The Status of Palestinian People in Lebanon* (1993). **CP**

NAILA NAUPHAL is a doctoral student at Wolfson College, Oxford University working on the issue of repatriation as a solution applied in order to implement social and political reconstruction in Lebanon. In 1994-95 she was Research Fellow at the Refugee Studies Programme, the University of Oxford where she conducted research on the internally displaced Lebanese and Palestinian refugees. She was Research Officer at the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, Geneva. She has written contributions in a number of reports for the United Nations and edited the Bureau's Report on Indigenous Peoples. She also wrote the Report from the Core-Group Meeting of the Palestinians in Lebanon. Ms Nauphal was production assistant for a television documentary and has also written several synopses for documentaries. She holds DEA in Comparative Literature. **CG; AAC**

AUGUSTUS RICHARD NORTON is Professor in the department of International Relations at Boston University and Visiting Research Professor at New York University. His books include *Amal and the Shia* (Austin, Texas 1987), and *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Editor), in 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1994 and 1995). **CG; CP**

LAILA PARSONS holds a D.Phil. from St. Antony's College, University of Oxford. She was the co-ordinator for Phase Two of the Palestinians in Lebanon Project where she designed and implemented a documentation collection programme, compiled the bibliography and assisted in the identification of potential paper writers and the commissioning of papers. Dr. Parsons has worked in Gaza with UNIPAL. AAC

JOEL PETERS is Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Reading and Associate Research Fellow, Middle East Programme, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. He holds a D.Phil. in International Relations from the University of Oxford. His publications include *Building Bridges: The Multilateral Arab-Israeli Peace Talks* (London: RIIA, 1994), with Keith Kyle (ed.) *Wither Israel: The Domestic Challenges* (London: I.B. Tauris and RIIA, 1993), *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship* (London: British Academic Press and I.B. Tauris, 1992). CG; CP

ELIZABETH PICARD is Professor of Comparative Sociology at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris and at the department of Political Science at the University of Paris I, the Sorbonne. Since 1975 she has been a researcher in political science at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales (CERI) of the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. Professor Picard holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques. Her publications include *Liban: Etat de Discorde*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), *La Question Kurde* (Bruxelles, Complexe-CERI, 1992), and *La nouvelle dynamique au Moyen Orient* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 1993). CG

EMMA PI AYFAIR is a British lawyer specialising in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. She is Executive Director of INTERIGHTS, an international human rights organisation special

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ELIAS SANBAR is editor of the *Revue d'Etudes Palestiniennes*. He is head of the Palestinian delegation to the multilateral peace talks on refugees. **CG**

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KASTURI SEN is Lecturer in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. A social scientist by background she has worked in several countries of the world including the Middle East as health and social policy advisor since 1979. In 1981-82 she worked in Lebanon where she was evaluating the effectiveness of primary care services for the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. She is currently working on a research-policy project on the social and economic costs of traumatic injury related morbidity in the Middle East. Among her other interests include general health and social security in later life. She is Chairperson of a

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UK based charity which supports the work of the Lebanese based NGO, The National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT) involved in economic and social programmes with Palestinian refugees of Lebanon. **CG; CP**

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KAMAL SHEHADI is Research Director at the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Beirut. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University and a B.A. cum laude in Economics from Harvard University. He was Research Associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in 1993 and Dissertation Fellow at the John M Olm Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University from 1989 to 1992. His publications include *Ethnic Self-determination and the Break-up of States* (London: IISS, 1993). He has also published on issues of international political economy and international security. **CG; CP**

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ABBAS SHIBLAK is Director of the Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Centre (Shaml) in Ramallah. He is a former member of the Palestinian delegation to the Multilateral Peace Talks on Refugees. From 1992 to 1994 he was a researcher at the Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford. Other experience includes directing the Department of Palestinian Affairs at the League of Arab States in London (1985-1992), Researcher at the Palestine Research Centre in Beirut and London (1972-1985); and Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Law and Economics, Constantine University, Algeria (1968-1972). His publications include *The Peace Process and*

its Implications for the Palestinian Refugees' (in Arabic) in *al-Siyassa al-Filistiniyya*, Vol.2, No.6, Spring 1995. **CG; CP**

BASSEM SIRHAN is Associate Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut. He holds a Ph.D. from the American University in Washington, DC and an M.A. from the University of Alberta. His experience includes working as an Expert in Social Planning at the Arab Planning Institute in Kuwait and as Programme Co-ordinator of the Welfare Association in Lebanon. His research is related mainly to the Palestinians in Lebanon in the 1970s as well as on the Palestinians in Kuwait. He has done a number of sociological studies on social indicators of development, manpower development, deviance and social problems, poverty and social discrimination and socialisation. **CP**

RAGHID EL-SOLH holds a D.Phil. in Politics and International Relations from the University of Oxford. He is an independent writer and consultant on Arab and regional political affairs. He is co-founder and co-director of the Project for Democracy Studies in the Arab Countries, Oxford. His publications include *Britain's Two Wars with Iraq* (Reading Garnet Press, 1994); and 'Human Rights Association in the Arab World' Present Situation and Future Prospects', a study commissioned by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 1993. **CG; CP**

JABER SULEIMAN is a Palestinian Anthropologist and Social Researcher working among Palestinian refugee communities. He is the co-ordinator of the culture programme at the Arab Resource Centre for Popular Arts (ARCPA) in Beirut, Editor of *Al-Jana*, an Arab cultural periodical published by ARCPA and a member of the 'Palestinian Social Research Committee'. Jaber Suleiman was Researcher at the Planning Centre of the PLO (1974-1982) and a Re-

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search Assistant at the Refugee Studies Programme working on a study on Assistance to Palestinian Refugees in the Middle East (1994). Recent publications include 'Palestinians in Lebanon. From Deterioration of the Living Conditions to the Absence of a Referential Authority' in *Journal of Palestine Studies* No.19, summer 1994; and 'Palestinians in Syria: Date and Testimonies' in the *Journal for Palestine Studies* No.20, autumn 1994. **CP**

TIM SUMMERS is Desk Officer for the Near East and North Africa Department responsible for Palestinian affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. He studied theology and philosophy at Cambridge University. **CG**

NICHOLAS VAN HEAR is a researcher at the Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, the University's International Development Centre. He has written widely on refugee and migration issues, covering developments in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. He is currently concluding research on causes and consequences of the mass exodus of migrant and minority communities worldwide, in a study funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council. **AAC; CP**

LOUISE WEIGHILL is a researcher at the Refugee Studies Programme and wrote the EC Report 'Assistance to Palestinian Refugees in the Middle East'. She worked in the Gaza Strip for 3 years and is completing a Ph.D. on the impact of assistance on the interaction of refugees and residents in the Gaza Strip. **CG; AAC; CP**

DAVID WOLTON is former Chairman of Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) and publisher for Ithaca Press, London. **CP**

PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

LEILA ZACHARIAH is member of the Board of Association Najdeh, an NGO based in Lebanon dealing with Palestinian Refugee issues with particular reference to women and low income groups. She was Director of Najdeh from 1988 to 1995. **CP**

ANTOINE B. ZAHLAN is a member of the Board of Governors of the Palestine Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), and Director of its Planning Unit. Previously, he was Professor of Physics at the American University of Beirut (1956-76). Dr. Zahlan was Science Policy Advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations, the League of Arab States, UNIDO, Union of Arab Contractors, International Labour Office, and the Euro-Arab Dialogue. He is Founding Member and First Director of the Royal Scientific Society, Amman (1969-70) and is Founding Member and Member of the Board of Trustees of the Welfare Association, and the Centre for Arab Unity Studies. Professor Zahlan is the author of a wide range of publications which include *Science and Higher Education in Israel* (1969); and *The Arab World Year 2000* (1975). **CG; CP**

MAJED AL-ZEER is Chairman of the Palestine Return Centre in London. **CP**

JIHAD EL-ZEIN is Executive Director of *Assafir* newspaper in Beirut and a Political commentator and columnist. He holds a law degree. **CP**

CONFERENCE REPORT

Appendix II—Conference Programme

SATURDAY 28th SEPTEMBER

I. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION 9.00–10.30

Dr. Dawn Chatty (RSP) & Mr. Nadim Shehadi (CLS). *Introduction*

Professor Michael Hudson (Georgetown University)
Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story

10.30–11.00am Coffee

II. LEGAL STATUS 11.00–12.30

Chair: Mr. Jean-Pierre Raymond (Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs)

Dr. Souheil al-Natour (Editor of *Tariq al-Watan*)
The Legal Status of Palestinians in Lebanon

Dr. Bassma Kodmani Darwish (Institut Francais des Relations Internationales)
Comparing the Status of Palestinian Refugees

12.30–2.00pm Lunch

III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL 2.00–3.30

Chair: Mr. David McDowall

Dr. Ali Hassan (NGO Forum)

PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

Health Amongst the Palestinians in Lebanon

Dr. Hussein Shaaban (NGO Forum)

Unemployment and its impact on Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

Dr. Bassem Sirhan (American University of Beirut)

Education and the Palestinians in Lebanon

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas (Palestinian Popular Committees)

The Housing Situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon

Ms Laila Zachariah (Association Najdeh)

Palestinian Women in Lebanon: Health, Work Opportunities and Attitudes

3.30–4.00pm Coffee

IV. ASSISTANCE 4.00–5.30

Chair: Mr. Tomas Hammerberg (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Ms Marie-Louise Weighill (RSP)

Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: The Politics of Assistance

Mr. Jaber Sulayman (Arab Resource Centre for Popular Arts)

The Role of NGOs

8.00pm Dinner
Keynote address by HE Ambassador Andrew

Robinson

CONFERENCE REPORT

SUNDAY 29th SEPTEMBER

V. POLITICAL IMPACT ON LEBANON 9.00–10.30

Chair: Professor Michael Hudson (Georgetown University)

Dr. Farid al-Khazen (American University of Beirut)
Permanent Settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon. A Recipe for Conflict

Dr. Fida Nasrallah (Centre for Lebanese Studies)
Lebanese Perceptions of the Palestinians in Lebanon Case Studies

10.30–11.00am Coffee

VI. LEBANON: PEACE PROCESS AND THE
PALESTINIANS 11.00–12.30

Chair: Mr. Georges Assaf (Beirut Bar Association)

Dr. Kamal Shehadi (Lebanese Center for Policy Studies)
Peace and the Rebuilding of State and Society in Lebanon

Dr. Nawaf Salam (American University of Beirut)
Between Repatriation and Resettlement. Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

12.30–4.00pm Lunch and Break

VII. THE UNITED NATIONS 4.00–5.30

Chair: Sir James Craig

The Late Sir Anthony Parsons (Paper read by Sir James Craig)

PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

The United Nations and the Palestine Refugees with Special Reference to the Lebanon

Dr. Yves Besson (UNRWA)

UNRWA and its Role in Lebanon

5.30–6.00pm Tea

VIII. ISRAELI & PLO POSITIONS 6.00–7.30

Chair: Dr. Rosemary Hollis (Royal Institute of International Affairs)

Mr. Abbas Shiblak

The PLO Position on the Palestinians in Lebanon

Dr. Nur Masalha

Israel and the Palestinian Refugees An Historical Overview

8.30pm Dinner

CONFERENCE REPORT

MONDAY 30th SEPTEMBER

IX. FINAL STATUS 9.00–10.30

Chair: Professor A R Norton (Boston University)

Professor Rex Brynen (McGill University)

Imagining a Solution: Critical Perspectives on Final Status Arrangements

Dr. Joel Peters (University of Reading)

The Multilateral Arab-Israel Peace Talks: The Refugee Working

10.30–11.00am Coffee

X. PALESTINIAN ECONOMY 11.00–12.30

Chair: George Asseily (Schroder Asseily)

Dr. Fadle N Naqib (Waterloo University)

The Future of the Palestinian Economy in West Bank and Gaza and Prospects for Absorption of Refugees

12.30–2.00pm Lunch

XI. ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION 2.00–3.30

Chair: Mr. Nadim Shehadi (CLS)

Opening Remarks by.

Mr. Chafiq al-Hout (Former PLO Representative in Lebanon)

Dr. Khalil Chatawi (General Directorate of the Affairs of Palestinian Refugees)

3.30–4.00pm Coffee

XII. ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION 4.30–6.00

Chair: Dr. Salim Nasr (Ford Foundation)

The Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS) is an independent academic research institution. It was founded in 1984 and is affiliated to the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, Oxford. The Centre creates and publishes research papers and books on relevant historical, economic, political, sociological and cultural issues affecting Lebanon. It organises conferences and seminars in order that ideas and views on the country's state of affairs may be exchanged.

The Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) is part of Queen Elizabeth House International Development Centre, University of Oxford. It was established in 1982 for the multi-disciplinary study of the causes of forced migration through research, teaching, publication and dissemination. Independent of governments and assistance organisations, the RSP provides a neutral forum for discussion between refugee researchers, practitioners and policy-makers.