

## Israeli lawyer in Berlin: 'We must forge peace'

For years Felicia Langer, the Israeli attorney who has defended thousands of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, has thought of herself as "a lone voice in the wilderness." For her efforts to protect the human rights of the Palestinians, she won the Alternative Nobel Prize in 1990 and the Kreisky Prize in 1991. "With sorrow and indignation," she reports, she had to close her law office after a 23-year struggle, and leave Israel, because she was able to successfully defend only 2 or 3% of her clients. Now she travels from country to country reporting on the Palestinians' plight and appealing for peace in the Persian Gulf.

"The policy of the Israeli government is an example of the flouting of international law," she said on Feb. 18 in a speech at the Berlin Technical University in front of thousands of listeners. She said that she herself is the attorney and witness for a "two-tiered society, a two-faced justice."

"For 23 years the Palestinians have lived under Israeli occupation, the U.N. resolutions have been ignored, and the world has kept silent. For Israel there were no ultimatums and no sanctions." Mrs. Langer quoted Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who said in response to the latest U.N. resolutions against Israeli actions, "This resolution will turn to dust in the archives like so many others." The resolution had condemned the deportations of Palestinian settlements and the massacre on Temple Mount in Jerusalem in October 1990.

Mrs. Langer reported on the actions against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories which are in violation of international law. "I have seen the torture wounds on the bodies of many of my clients myself." Humiliations, deliberate killings, deportations, destruction of houses

and constant detentions without trials, or trials without proof of guilt—Felicia Langer has documented and made public many of these "measures."

"Israel had believed after 20 years of occupation that they had achieved their goal—the reduction of the Palestinian people to a controlled mass of degraded workers." But the Israeli regime was deluded. No one reckoned with the Intifada, the Palestinian uprising. Now, with the onset of the Gulf war, the Jerusalem government took the opportunity to carry out an "apartheid policy" against the Palestinians, a collective punishment—strict curfews, withdrawal of water, forced closings of all schools, and a general ban on work. "They live as if in a huge prison," Mrs. Langer said, and called for a solution: "Two nations, two states," she said, and demanded the immediate convening of a Middle East conference which would establish the withdrawal of all troops from all occupied territories and thus establish the basis for peace.

Langer considers Saddam Hussein a bloody criminal, but says, "We cannot redress crimes with even bigger crimes. That will never end, neither for us Israelis, for the Americans, or any other people." She expressed fear about her friends in Israel, but also about all the people in the Occupied Territories, and sorrow over all the victims of this bloody war in Iraq.

"What is Mr. Bush's new world order?" she asked, and explained, that a friend of hers from Pakistan, with whom she had recently talked by telephone, reported to her that people in his country already fear that Pakistan could be the next victim of this new world order. "This new world order is the most gruesome neo-colonialism," Felicia Langer stated in Berlin.

Two months ago, Felicia Langer spoke before one of the largest peace demonstrations and said, "Time is blood." Every day of the war has raised the toll in blood. So in Berlin, the courageous lawyer appealed, all the more passionately, "We must not wish for mutual annihilation, but rather to forge common interests."

—Birgit Brenner

other motive for this apparently self-evident about-face to participate in an unjust war. There are goodies to be distributed here, intangible and material, and no one wants to be left out. That again shows how great the power of the United States is.

There might be another reason for buckling under to the Jews. I ask myself: Why is the rational working out of a guilt feeling so difficult? To be sure, the monstrosity of what had happened was without precedent. But there is perhaps something else, which I only want to pose as a hypothesis. Might it not be, that a continuing irrational sense of guilt

and continuing smoldering anti-Semitism mutually keep each other alive? That includes the thesis, that a widespread smoldering anti-Semitism in Germany is still there. I hesitate to say that, because I have made no empirical investigations, and because I have myself experienced nearly no anti-Semitism over the course of my 40-year sojourn in this country.

But I would like to mention an astounding, small observation, which concerns something which is universally prevalent in Germany, but which is so insignificant, that it should not seriously worry anyone. No matter which country one happens to be in, sooner or later one is usually asked whether