

Thatcher Visits 'Israel'

As the president of Britain's Conservative Friends of Israel, Margaret Thatcher has been in the Zionist state before. However, her latest trip assumed more than the usual significance, for she is the first British Prime Minister to make an official visit. Margaret Thatcher is also infamous for launching the most drastic attack on the rights and living conditions of the British working class since World War II. She has moreover doubly earned her nickname -the Iron Lady- by staunchly withstanding all attempts to have Britain impose sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa. Nonetheless, her visit to 'Israel' was billed as one based on concern for the Middle East 'peace process' and the 'quality of life' for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

As Reagan's closest ally among western European heads of state, Thatcher did indeed have a specific mission in occupied Palestine, but it was far removed from the platitudes mentioned above. According to a senior British official, "It's a question of edging the parties towards direct discussions rather than a British plan". David Kimche, Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, was even more specific in spelling out what the Israelis want from Thatcher. In a May 24th interview with BBC, the day Thatcher arrived in the Zionist state, he said that 'Israel' hoped she would persuade Hussein to enter direct negotiations with 'Israel' -without the PLO.

Making such negotiations appear as a 'solution' to the Palestinian problem was in fact the essence of Reagan's plan

Britain's Iron Lady Clasps Zionism's Iron Fist

announced in the autumn of 1982. It is this 'peace process' which Thatcher went to 'Israel' to push forward. Indeed, Britain has previously served as a conduit for the secret dialogue between Israeli Prime Minister Peres and King Hussein of Jordan. Most recently was in January, when both Peres and Hussein "happened" to be in London. As a logical extension of this, the two are making 'private' visits to the US in June, and Hussein at least will stop in London on the way.

British colonialism bears a heavy responsibility for the 1948 occupation of Palestine. Britain not only facilitated the Zionist movement's colonization in Palestine, but also installed the Hashemite monarchy next door in Jordan, to act as a buffer for the Zionist presence and absorb the Palestinian identity. It is this historical link with Zionism and Arab reaction on which Thatcher relies in doing her part for imposing imperialist hegemony in the Middle East today, Reagan-style.

WHEN TERRORISTS MEET

Margaret Thatcher allowed the US air strike on Libya to be launched from Britain. She then went to Tokyo to engineer the "anti-terrorist" resolution which was so important for Reagan in imposing US policy. Next, the Iron Lady sat down to talk business with Peres and Rabin, the terrorists respon-

sible for the iron fist against Palestinians under occupation. Margaret politely 'pleaded' for improving the quality of life in the West Bank, allowing the Palestinians to manage some of their own affairs, permitting municipal elections and/or appointing a UN official to supervise the West Bank. Her various proposals were intended to create a facade whereby Hussein could agree to 'power-sharing' with the Israelis on the West Bank, without losing face.

Peres and Rabin, not quite so politely, refused her proposals with the usual Zionist 'security' pretexts, but this didn't bother Thatcher in the least. She evaluated that the talks went well, because the Israelis were willing to listen. The real reason for this charade was so that Thatcher would have something to present when she met with a handful of carefully selected Palestinian 'moderates' whom she wanted to encourage to rubber stamp the Jordanian option. (However, though these Palestinians are indeed supporters of the Amman agreement between Yasir Arafat and King Hussein, they informed the Iron Lady that they would do nothing without the PLO's consent.)

Undaunted, Thatcher declared in Jerusalem at the end of her three day visit, that Britain no longer considers the PLO to be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians, but that other alternatives must be found. The Zionists -and Reagan- can indeed rejoice over the results of the visit. Britain is to assume the presidency of the EEC in July, and can now be counted on to work for western European consensus on the imperialist settlement without a Palestinian role whatsoever.

