

such logic, Palestinian retaliation is, invariably, «terrorist» in nature.

A closer inspection of Israeli «retaliation» will reveal the true nature of the Zionist state and its duplicitous partner, the United States (herein, I shall use the U.S. only, because it leads the West in an all-out support for Israel). On April 9, 1984, the Irgun-LEHI (Stern Gang) groups massacred 250 innocent men, women and children in the village of Deir Yassin. The survivors of that massacre were taken to Jerusalem and paraded through the streets to instill fear in the indigenous population, which effaced the expulsion of 300,000 Palestinians the following month. In October 1953, unit 101 commanded by Ariel Sharon attacked the Jordanian village of Qibya,★ which killed 70 people; again innocent men, women and children (note that as of yet there is no PLO). The following description was given by UN military observers: «Bullet-riddled bodies near the doorways and multiple bullet hits on the door of the demolished houses indicated that the inhabitants had been forced to remain inside until their homes were blown up over them... Witnesses were uniform in describing their experience as a night of horror, during which soldiers moved about in their village blowing up buildings, firing into doorways and windows with automatic weapons and throwing hand grenades.»¹ It is interesting to note that Sharon, who was responsible for a great many other massacres, is being hailed as a hero within Israel and the West.

In December 1954, Israeli military aircraft captured a Syrian civilian airliner in order to use the passengers as hostages for exchange with Israeli soldiers captured by Syria. Former Israeli Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett, states in his diary: «Our action was without precedent in the history of international practice.» The euphemisms used to describe this event were «diversion raid» or «retaliatory raid.» A parallel act committed by Palestinians is termed «hijacking,» «terrorism» or «barbarism.» The preferential use of epithets by Israel and the West has always been an effective tool in the construction of the Manichean view of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; namely that Israel is the bastion of civilization in the Middle East and the Palestinians are «barbarians» bent on the destruction of «innocent» Israel.

THE QUESTION OF TARGETS

Referring to a Palestinian attack on Ma'alot settlement in occupied Palestine, Rafaat Georgy writes, «Granted that the killing of 20 (Israeli) youths was without justification and immoral...» We feel that this merits comment: The main line of the Palestinian resistance is, of course, to strike Zionist military targets. However, it is necessary to point out what this means in the specific context of the national liberation struggle in occupied Palestine. 'Israel' is a settler-colonial state. This means it is not only the occupation army and police forces that directly deprive the Palestinian people of their land and rights. Zionist settlements, of which Ma'alot is only one, are built on Palestinian land that was either occupied by force of arms, or confiscated through unjust, racist laws. In either case, the rightful owners are evicted. The settlements are moreover armed, serving as *de facto* extensions of the Israeli army and in some cases actual military posts. This has been very obviously demonstrated by the armed settlers' movement in the West Bank, but it is a characteristic of Zionist settlements throughout occupied Palestine. While recognizing Mr. Georgy's right to make his own evaluation, we maintain that attacking

Zionist settlements is a legitimate and necessary part of the Palestinian liberation struggle.

IRRATIONALITY OR STRATEGY?

The essay says, «When a Palestinian witnesses his whole family massacred by Israeli bombs, supplied by the United States, his rational mode of reasoning ultimately loses out to irrational behavior.» This is in the context of explaining the conditions under which the Palestinian people live. We greatly appreciate Mr. Georgy's exposition of the bad conditions under which Palestinians live, and we are certain that anyone can find instances of irrationality on the part of some Palestinian individuals or groups, like among any population. However, we hope Mr. Georgy does not mean that the Palestinian armed struggle as such is the result of reasoning losing out to irrationality. The line of armed struggle was adopted due to the lessons of the Palestinian people's experience and the assessment that only through revolutionary violence, combined with other methods of struggle, can Palestinians regain their rights. Armed struggle is a conscious strategy that has proved its validity in Vietnam, Algeria and other anti-colonial struggles.

In March 1978, Israel invades Lebanon leaving 250,000 people homeless and 2000 dead. By June 1982, Israel again invades Lebanon with far greater destruction; leaving over a million homeless, 20,000 dead, 48% of which were civilian population, and 30,000 injured. (The figures are from the UN. They are undoubtedly conservative figures). It is of some interest here to note how Israel is writing history by using an Orwellian language to describe the 1982 invasion; it was appropriately termed «Operation Peace for Galilee.» Language here is being used to change the epistemological construction of Israeli society and, to a large degree, the West. The thousands of Palestinians and other Arabs who die under Israeli «retaliation» become obscure numbers in the media; they are, and this is most unfortunate, pro-

grammatically destined to become historical footnotes.

In comparison, when Israelis are killed by Palestinians or other Arabs they (Israelis) are accorded front page news and extensive television coverage. We are bombarded with platitudes and inculcated with interviews of the survivors and relatives of the survivors. In May 1974, the PLO captured 20 teenage Israeli hostages (the Ma'alot attack) from a paramilitary youth group (Gadna) and after Israel refused negotiations, the 20 youths were killed in a rescue attempt. The incident enjoyed sensational coverage by the American media and, as usual, the event was reported without any context; thus leaving public opinion to render blind condemnation. Granted that the killing of 20 youths was without justification and immoral, ➤