

Setting things right

That a crisis was in the making has been obvious since Operation Galilee when 1,150 Palestinian political prisoners were liberated in exchange for two Israeli soldiers captured by PFLP-General Command during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. This great victory for the Palestinian revolution was a source of bitterness, anger and heated debate in the Zionist society. The government came under hard criticism for releasing «hardened terrorists» especially as 600 opted to remain in the occupied territories. Many Israelis advocated that they all be expelled. There was also much speculation that the rightists in the government only approved the exchange in order to use it as an excuse for later releasing imprisoned members of the «Jewish underground». In fact, in late August, Police Minister Haim Bar Lev proposed releasing 1000 Israeli prisoners for the coming Jewish New Year, among them persons detained for terrorism against Palestinians.

In reality, the Zionist government was forced to concede the exchange, and the current repressive campaign is its way of setting things straight. The campaign also aims to insure that any peace negotiations will involve only Jordan, not the PLO.

Fighting the crisis

There are other things that the Israeli government is trying to set straight:

namely the economic crisis and imbalance in the immigration-emigration ratio. Despite US doctoring with massive aid injections, the Israeli economic crisis remains essentially unresolved. The class collaboration inherent in a colonial society, and the need to present a high standard of living to attract new immigrants and hold on to settlers, makes it difficult to impose such measures as are regularly dictated to 'third world' countries by the IMF.

As it is, the measures currently contemplated include massive lay-offs of state employees. This will swell unemployment which is already on the rise. The number of Israelis applying for unemployment benefits rose by one-third in August alone. Greater unemployment runs counter to the other Zionist concern: reversing the immigration-emigration imbalance. Since 1981, more settlers have left 'Israel' than have arrived. In 1984, 17,000 left the country and 30,000 are expected to do so this year. An Immigration Ministry official has reported that 50% of new immigrants from western countries leave again. The government has deemed this serious enough to initiate the «Come Back» project in conjunction with 20 Israeli companies, to lure back the estimated 35,000 professionals now residing in the US. In this context, escalated aggression and racism against Palestinians serves to make clearer than ever the nature of 'Israel' as a fortress state. ●

gunfire near Alfa Menashi settlement.

An Israeli settler was killed in Nablus on August 8th, and a petrol bomb targeted an Israeli car near Tulkarm. The next day a petrol bomb was thrown at the house of a policeman in Balata refugee camp near Nablus. On August 10th, a Kiryat Arba settler from the US was stabbed in Hebron, requiring hospitalization.

On August 11, there were two separate bomb attacks against Israeli military vehicles in the Gaza Strip, and a third against a car. The next day, a molotov aimed at an Israeli truck injured the driver, also in the Strip. In Qalqilia in the West Bank, a petrol bomb was thrown at an Israeli vehicle.

On August 14, stones were thrown at an Israeli Egged bus in Jerusalem, and at an Israeli military vehicle in the Galilee. The next day, machinegun fire was opened on an Israeli bus near Qalqilia; an Israeli car on the way to Kiryat Arba encountered a mine; and an Israeli patrol was attacked by hand grenades near Khan Younis, Gaza Strip.

On August 16, there was a roadside bomb against an Israeli vehicle near Beit Haga settlement, near Hebron; a grenade targeted an Israeli military car in Ramallah. On August 17 and 19, fire bombs were thrown at Israeli military vehicles in the Gaza Strip. On August 18, an Israeli car was stoned on the Tulkarm-Bata road, and one passenger injured.

On August 20, a booby-trapped car was detonated only minutes before it would have exploded in the center of Netanya, on the coast. This followed a bomb explosion in the town two days earlier.

On August 24, an Israeli from Netanya was shot and killed in Tulkarm. Another, from Tiberius, was wounded by gunfire near Jenin.

On August 31, two firebombs were thrown against settlers outside Jerusalem. On September 2, a bomb exploded at a Jerusalem bus stop; Israeli radio reported that 6 Israelis were treated for shock. On September 3, two Israeli soldiers were stabbed in Hebron; one later died of his wounds.

On September 4, Katyusha rockets landed in the northern Galilee for the second time in a week.

An Israeli truck driver was stabbed in the Gaza Strip on September 5; a fire bomb targeted an Israeli bus near Nablus. On September 9, an Israeli soldier was injured by stones in a village outside Hebron. ●

Military Operations

On August 4th, a Palestinian military spokesman announced that within the last two months, Palestinian freedom fighters had carried out 59 military operations against the Zionist occupiers in Palestine. Eleven of these were against military targets and 31 involved explosives. Thirty-eight were carried out in the Gaza Strip, 15 in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948, and 6 in the West Bank. There were moreover 6 attempted operations which were unsuccessful. Following is an account of some of the most recent operations.

August began with a series of attacks on Israeli vehicles in the occupied West Bank. On July 31, stones were thrown at an Israeli bus passing Al Amari refugee camp near Ramallah; one settler was injured. On August 2, a petrol bomb was thrown at an Israeli bus as it drove through Azzariya village near Jerusalem. The next day an Israeli car traveling between two settlements was fired on by a machinegun. On August 4,

a fire bomb was thrown at a border police patrol, injuring two of the police, near Ain Alma refugee camp, near Nablus. On August 5, stones were thrown at an Israeli bus carrying settlers, near Jalazone refugee camp; the bus was damaged, and the driver fired on youth outside the camp. In the following days, grenades were thrown on an Israeli vehicle passing to a settlement south of Hebron; an Israeli bus was targeted by