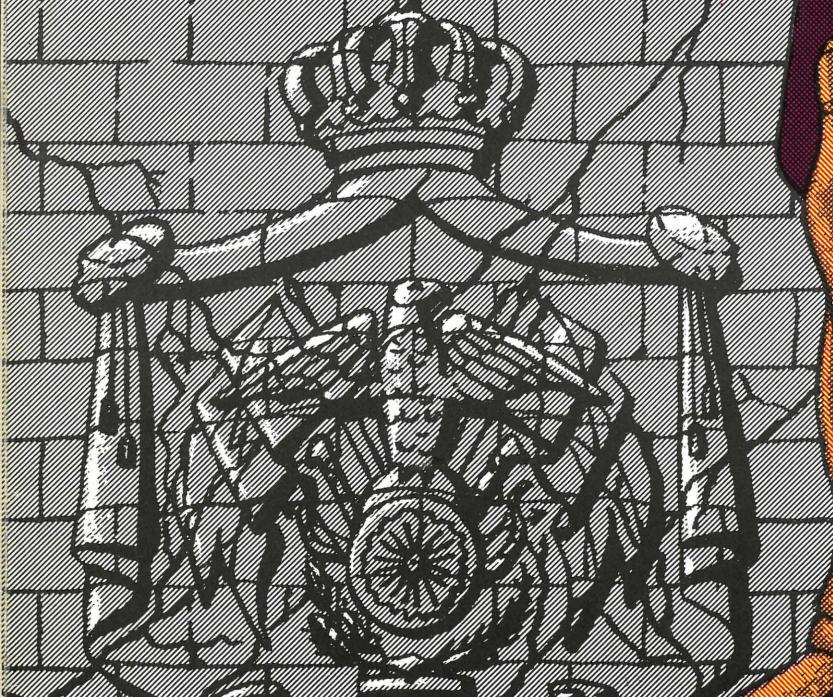


democratic PALESTINE

NO. 17

June 1986



انضماماً من أجل
ال Liberties المدنية
FOR DEMOCRATIC
FREEDOMS



طلقاً سراح
ال庶民 فوراً
المعتقلين
FREE ALL
STUDENT DETAINEES
NOW!

Mass Uprising
Challenges the
Jordanian Regime

Democratic Palestine is an English language magazine published with the following aims:

- Conveying the political line of progressive Palestinian and Arab forces;
- Providing current information and analysis pertinent to the Palestinian liberation struggle, as well as developments on the Arab and international levels;
- Serving as a forum for building relations of mutual solidarity between the Palestinian revolution and progressive organizations, parties, national liberation movements and countries around the world.

You can support these aims by subscribing to *Democratic Palestine*. Furthermore, we hope that you will encourage friends and comrades to read and subscribe to *Democratic Palestine*. We also urge you to send us comments, criticisms and proposals concerning the magazine's contents.

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Soweto Uprising

10 th Anniversary

Decade of Rising Struggle

«The Soweto uprising was like a flash of lightning that showed an entire generation the need for arms, and it heralded a period when mass struggle was once more in the ascendant.»

— Ronnie Kasrils, of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing.

As the people of South Africa prepare to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 1979 Soweto uprising, the racist Pretoria regime clamped a state of emergency on the country. This banned just about everything not already prohibited for the Black majority, right down to indoor gatherings. All news coverage of unrest, even by the foreign press, was banned. Two thousand people were arrested among UDF cadres and other anti-apartheid activists. Despite the muzzle on the press, reports came through showing that the African masses did indeed commemorate Soweto. Just as the regime's fascist measures could not snuff out this day, so they will not stop the struggle of the majority for freedom and democracy. The tide has turned in South Africa. Sooner or later, the people shall govern.

Letters

We received the following letter from an Irish Republican friend living in the US:

Dear friends,

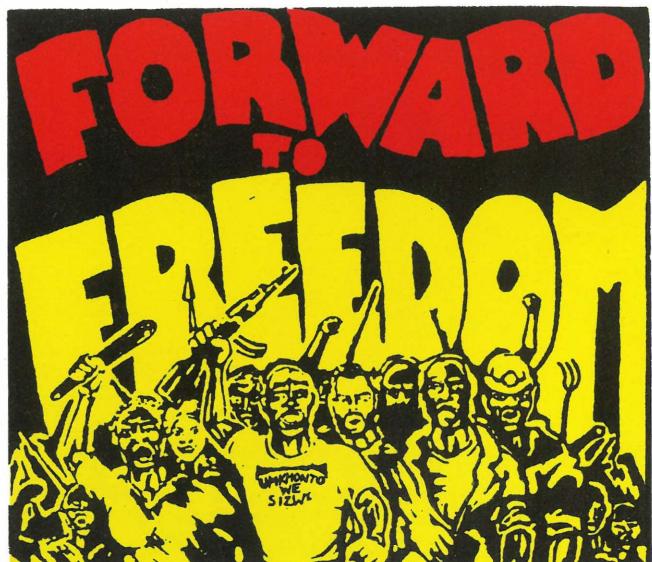
Sent payment for DP to address in Shtoura, Lebanon. We always look forward to receiving your excellent publication. Particularly enjoyed your interview in the Dec. '84 issue with Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein. It is seldom that our revolutionaries receive such an opportunity to express themselves outside of Irish Republican circles.

We would like to send you a subscription to «The Irish People,» a weekly paper, with a strong revolutionary viewpoint. Shall we send this to the DP address?

We commend you on your excellent work and send wishes for the victory of the Palestinian people. With anti-Zionist greetings...

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Editorial

For a long time, we have been warning that the time might come when the Arab patriotic forces would find themselves unable to influence the course of events in the area in a positive way. Recently, there have been several indications that the time we have warned of is near. One of these indications is related to the uprising in Jordan: Students rebelled against the regime's suppression of their academic rights and nationalist activities. Yet the organized political movement in Jordan is not yet strong enough to protect and sustain their uprising. A second indication is to be found in the war of attrition against the Palestinian masses and revolution, in the camps of Beirut. Despite the persistence of the war of the camps, the nationalist forces - Palestinian, Lebanese and Arab - have yet to find a solution whereby all guns would be pointed against the real enemies. The third indication is Yasir Arafat's consistent refusal to cancel his accord with King Hussein of Jordan, and the repercussions this has in the Palestinian arena.

JORDAN

The monarch of Jordan and his police forces were surprised by the broad scope of the uprising at Yarmouk University. They cracked down on the masses in the most violent manner, killing 18 people and injuring hundreds of others. (See following story.) This uprising occurred at a time when King Hussein is trying to facilitate the imposition of US imperialist plans in the area. The Jordanian monarch is doing his best to convene an Arab summit which he hopes would rescind the Rabat Summit's resolution recognizing the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Changing this resolution would help King Hussein to enter into a unilateral deal with the Zionist state, similar to Camp David. Encouraged by his imperialist masters, especially in Washington and London, King Hussein is doing his best to create a puppet leadership for the Palestinian people, as an alternative to the PLO. However, the broad uprising in Jordan showed that the monarch and his regime represent nothing other than the interests of imperialism and Zionism in Jordan - and Arab world.

BEIRUT

Also in Beirut, the masses are subject to attack, as the Amal movement continues its most recent war against the Palestinian people and revolution, and the Lebanese nationalist forces. To justify its war, Amal is taking advantage of Arafat's declarations about returning to Beirut, and the persistent reports that he has made a deal with Amin Gemayel to this end.

The Amal movement and its leadership know very well that the Palestinian fighters and masses have always been in the patriotic camp and will remain there in the future. Yet Amal insists on referring to Arafat and his declarations as a phoney excuse for continuing the deadly war against our camps. In this, Amal forgets that the Zionist army with all its US-made jets, tanks and bombs, failed to discourage the Palestinian fighters and people from continuing their revolution. Despite all the attacks against them, the Palestinian masses have continued their struggle against imperialism and Zionism, to achieve their legitimate aim of establishing an independent Palestinian state. Yet Amal, determined to subdue the Palestinian masses in Lebanon, has refused all the proposals of the Palestine National

Salvation Front for: (1) an immediate ceasefire in and around the camps; (2) allowing the Red Cross to evacuate the dead, treat the injured, and bring in food and water; (3) withdrawal of Amal's fighters from around the camps; and (4) a stop to Amal's harassment of Palestinian civilians in Lebanon.

We have made our position on the war of the camps clear in the past, and today we are making it even clearer: What Amal is doing against the Palestinian revolution in Lebanon serves only the enemies of the Lebanese masses and patriotic forces. What Amal is doing against the Palestinian camps strengthens Arafat and makes him more popular, rather than weakening him as Amal claims. What Amal is doing in Beirut tilts the balance of forces in Lebanon to the benefit of the fascist, sectarian forces.

For this reason, we call upon all Arab patriotic forces to join their efforts with those of the Palestine National Salvation Front, to stop this unholy war against the Lebanese and Palestinian patriotic forces in Beirut. We also remind all Palestinian patriotic forces that the attacks are directed against all of us, from different parties and trends. Moreover, these attacks will continue unless all Palestinian patriotic forces join ranks in the PLO, to restore its national line of struggle against imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction.

PLO

It has become clear that the Palestinian right wing, led by Yasir Arafat, continues to insist on deviating from the PLO's national program. The right wing persists in clinging to the Amman accord with King Hussein. The right wing is, furthermore, taking advantage of the differences among the Palestinian patriotic and leftist organizations, hoping to restore a semblance of unity to the PLO, based on its deviationist program and line. This is why Yasir Arafat and his group refuse to cancel the Amman accord, to pave the way for Palestinian national dialogue aimed at reunifying the PLO on a strong, patriotic, political and organizational basis. Their refusal disrupted the honest initiative made by President Shadli Ben Jadid of Algeria, for reunifying the PLO and restoring its national line.

The rightist trend pursued by Arafat and his followers serves to keep the Palestinian arena divided. It also helps pave the way for the imperialist, Zionist and reactionary plots, antagonistic to our people and revolution. That is why we call on all progressive and patriotic forces in the PLO to unite their efforts to impose the cancellation of Yasir Arafat's accord with King Hussein. This is the prerequisite for a serious, responsible dialogue aimed at reactivating the role of the PLO in the struggle against the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary plots against the Arab masses and progressive forces.

The US strike on Libya, the Zionists' iron fist and the Jordanian regime's brutal repression show that the enemy alliance will stop at nothing to impose its plans on the area. Repelling this violent onslaught requires that the Arab national liberation movement regain the initiative. The Palestinian revolution has vital interests in contributing to this process, by regaining its place at the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle in the area.



Diary of the Camp War

The Zionist invasion of Lebanon four years ago failed to achieve its stated aims. One of the signs of this failure is that the Palestinians in the camps have been able to rearm themselves, for self-defense and for contributing to the revolution. Reactionary sections of the Amal movement, however, have taken up where the Zionists failed, provoking recurrent battles aimed at eliminating the Palestinian armed presence in Beirut. Below we present a chronology of the latest round of fighting around the Sabra-Shatila and Bourj Al Barajneh refugee camps, based on daily reports *Democratic Palestine* has received from Beirut.

On May 18th, the area around the Palestinian camps was calm. Life went on as normal, although reactionary forces in Amal had been continuously trying to create friction. Then, at 7 p.m., Hani Al Harakeh, one of these reactionary elements, tried to murder a Palestinian in Bourj Al Barajneh. Tension mounted and there was gunfire, but the incident was contained.

The next day in the afternoon, Hani Al Harakeh again proceeded to cause friction around Bourj Al Barajneh. Sniper fire was directed towards the camp, and two Palestinians were injured. In the evening, Amal concentrated a large number of forces on the east side of Shatila and put up heavy fortifications on the south side. There was an attempt to reduce tension by the follow-up committee which is composed of Lebanese nationalists, representatives of the Palestine National Salvation Front, Amal and Syrian officers, charged with observing the situation around the camps. At 8 p.m. a hand grenade was thrown into Shatila, injuring two comrades of the PFLP. These war preparations were coordinated with an increase of tension around Bourj Al Barajneh. At 7:30 p.m. clashes broke out; light and medium weapons were used, including mortars. A ceasefire was reached but sniping continued from Amal's side, injuring six Palestinians.

On May 20th, the situation was relatively calm despite ceasefire violations by Amal forces around the camps. However, Amal escalated tension in West Beirut. Clashes occurred between Amal and the Progressive Socialist Party after the former murdered a local PSP leader.

On May 21st, life returned to normal around Bourj Al Barajneh, but several grenades were thrown at Shatila. The Palestine National Salvation Front issued a communique, rejecting any fighting within the nationalist ranks in Lebanon, declaring that such side-battles serve Amin Gemayel and the Zionist-imperialist-fascist project. The reactionary sections of Amal responded to this communique the next day, by shelling Shatila and reigniting the battle. The security committee intervened to stop the clashes.

On May 23rd, Amal continued fortification of its positions around Shatila, using reinforced concrete. Amal then

ignited a battle around Bourj Al Barajneh, using all types of weapons. In the afternoon, clashes began around Shatila, the ceasefire having been shattered by Amal's repeated violations.

Amal continued its fortifications work around Shatila on May 24th, bringing in truckloads of sand. At 4 p.m. Amal gunfire murdered a Palestinian child, Ali Yahya Zamzam, nine years old. Tension mounted; clashes erupted and continued the next day. On the 26th of May, there was heavy fighting around Bourj Al Barajneh, and the Palestinian forces gained some positions. In West Beirut, Amal continued its harassment of the non-Shiite population. In a press communique, the popular committee of Bourj Al Barajneh declared that the ongoing tension was the result of Amal's shelling the camp, and that Amal had not honored the ceasefire. The popular committee charged that Amal had prepared a plot against the camps.

Fighting continued on May 27th. Amal escalated the battle, using tanks, 82mm mortars and 23mm machine guns. The Palestinian fighters continued to defend the camps, united in their determination to confront all aggression. Amal continued heavy shelling the next day, rupturing all ceasefire agreements. Bourj Al Barajneh was shelled in the late afternoon with heavy mortars (60, 82, 120mm), 106mm artillery and RPG's, from Amal tank positions on the northeast side of the camp. Amal also escalated tension in West Beirut, especially with the February 6th Movement. The popular committee of Sabra-Shatila issued a communique stressing that the Palestinians in the camps are part of the nationalist ranks, and the Palestinian armed presence in Beirut is only a threat to the Zionist-imperialist-fascist project. The popular committee also stressed the Palestinians' right to defend themselves, and called on Amal to honor the ceasefire. They called on the nationalist forces to work to put an end to the war.

Amal's aggression continued on May 29-30th. Amal moreover tightened the siege around the camps, preventing medical personnel from evacuating the dead and wounded. Nonetheless, reports from the camps described the Palestinians' morale as high. On May 30th, there were clashes between Amal

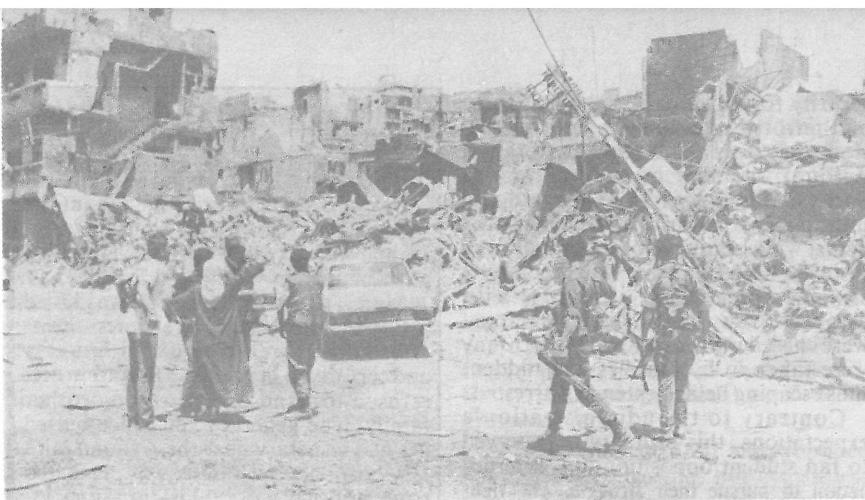
and Hezbollah, as Amal attempted to assert its hegemony in West Beirut.

March 31st began with heavy shelling of the camps, as Amal prepared to advance. At 6 a.m., after two hours of intense shelling, the reactionary forces of Amal tried to advance in a coordinated attack on all fronts. The heroic Palestinian forces not only repelled Amal's attack, but also improved their own positions. Amal's fighters retreated, having suffered casualties. Losses were heavy on both sides. There were six Palestinians martyred and 67 injured.

The camp war continued on June 1st. The buffer force was unable to take its positions because of Amal's continued aggression. Palestinian losses were one martyr and 23 injured. A new element was injected when clashes broke out in West Beirut, between the February 6th Movement and Amal, showing Amal's intention to put down any force not willing to submit to its hegemony.

Amal continued its aggression on June 2nd. Mortar fire and sniping around Shatila grew into intense fighting as the day wore on. Palestinian losses were four martyrs and 27 injured. The clashes in West Beirut intensified as Amal attacked the February 6th Movement and the PSP. The Palestine National Salvation Front distributed the third issue of its new daily entitled *Steadfastness of the Camps*.

On June 3rd, there was a relative decline in the fighting around the camps, while the battle in West Beirut made the headlines. Fighting broke out between the parties of the Lebanese national movement on the one hand and Amal on the other, using all weapons. By the next day, Amal had taken control of the disputed areas of West Beirut, for it has superior fire power due to the support it has received from regional forces and its alliance with the Lebanese Army 6th Brigade which is stationed in West Beirut. In the aftermath, Amal militiamen swept through the areas where the battle had raged, looting and kidnapping innocent citizens. The homes of Palestinians living outside the camps were stormed. Fighting intensified around the camps again; three Palestinians were martyred and eight injured. Heavy fighting continued around the camps June 5-6th. The Palestinian forces continued to exhibit



Destruction in Sabra

great steadfastness. Four Palestinians were martyred and 18 injured. The situation calmed down on June 7th, although Amal continued sniping at the camps. The next day, Amal unleashed a heavy barrage of shelling, without notice, against Bourj Al Barajneh and Shatila, causing the death of seven and the injury of 17, mostly civilians.

As we go to press, the camp war remains unresolved. Yet whatever the outcome, the cause of this war and the reasons for its continuation are already clear. As stated by Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, at a press conference on June 5th: Amal «aims to eliminate or subdue the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon. Their fighters continue to violate the ceasefire. Amal's position applies not only to the Palestinian

armed presence but to all nationalist organizations that fought the Israeli occupation.» Comrade Habash stressed that the Palestinian revolution was only engaging in self-defense in the battles around the camps. He specified the correct basis for ending the fighting as follows: «an immediate, honest and strict ceasefire, the withdrawal of Amal's forces from the areas around the camps, increasing the presence of the Lebanese nationalist forces to act as a buffer between the camps and Amal's positions, and consolidating the Palestine National Salvation Front's presence in the camps to maintain security and deal with any Palestinian violations.»

The casualty figures mentioned above are not necessarily comprehensive.

Jordan

Iron Fist in Steel Glove

On May 14th, the Jordanian regime's forces viciously suppressed student demonstrations at Yarmouk University in Irbid. It is estimated that 18 students were murdered in cold blood.

The Jordanian and Palestinian masses of the Hashemite kingdom are not unfamiliar with the viciousness of a regime which has long since used practices similar to those of its Zionist neighbor. Any spontaneous expression of the people's solidarity with any national cause has been crushed by Hussein's forces, using the most brutal methods. No age group has been spared—old people and school children have fallen prey.

The recent massacre at Yarmouk University is, however, unprecedented in terms of the intensity and length of the clashes between the authorities and students, and in terms of the bloodiness and number of victims. The iron fist royalists have not only struck at Irbid.

Arrests, house searches and interrogations have been going on in the capital, as well as in other areas and villages of the country. In mid-May, the Secretary General of the Jordanian Communist Party, as well as 16 cadres, including six politbureau members, were arrested.

For the past several months, Irbid has been the scene of mass arrests, interrogations and harassment of intellectuals, unionists and nationalists. The regime's frenzied brutality shows the extent to which it is prepared to go to smother any form of democratic expression of discontent, regarding anything from students' academic demands to political freedoms. It is also a reflection of undercurrents of discontent born of an acute economic crisis. Moreover, with a

population majority of approximately 70% Palestinians, Hussein is finding it increasingly difficult to speed along with his plans to wrench Palestinian representation from the PLO. Even the bloody extremes to which Hussein has already resorted are not enough to cower the people into accepting him as their representative.

UNIVERSITY OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED

The majority of Yarmouk's 3000 students come from the underprivileged sectors of society, who have been unable to obtain acceptance at the more prestigious Jordanian University of Amman. This is due to their inability to pay fees designed to allow only the more privileged to filter through, plus a rigid wall of regulations engineered with loopholes which allow acceptance only for some.

The acute differences of the past two years, between students and the university administration, revolve around passing grade averages, fees and a number of other academic issues. Because of their continuous struggle to implement their academic rights, student activists have been labeled as «destructive elements». The university administration, backed by the intelligence, has taken this as a convenient pretext for launching any number of arbitrary measures, the latest of which has been murder.

NATIONALIST CRESCENDO

The student uprising at Yarmouk University was the culmination of a series of events which began when a sit-in hunger strike was organized in solidarity with the Palestinian masses commemorating Land Day on March 30th. University administration employees, collaborating with the general intelligence, supplied lists of the names of student activists suspected of leading activities. Not only were students prohibited from organizing the yearly Palestinian exhibition, but an Islamic book fair was also stopped. Ironically, the university brought in a US pop band to play on Yarmouk Day (the day of the university's establishment) instead of allowing the students to organize their activities. In past years, the administration has used this method, hiring pop groups or television celebrities to perform, instead of allowing students to organize activities, for fear of the dimensions which independent student organization might take. The new regulation giving the dean of student affairs the right to dissolve any student society without prior warning, further portrays the administration's determination to exert dictatorial control.

Tension began to climb again with the spontaneous mass response to the US attack on Libya. Demonstrations were organized in Amman as well as Irbid, but were not allowed to get very far before the police clamped down and

dispersed the crowds that were gathering. In Amman alone, 80 persons were wounded among those who gathered in front of the US embassy to protest. Students at Yarmouk University burnt the US flag on campus to express solidarity with Libya. Later, the US ambassador sent a 'secret' memorandum to Hussein, chiding him for allowing such a thing to happen.

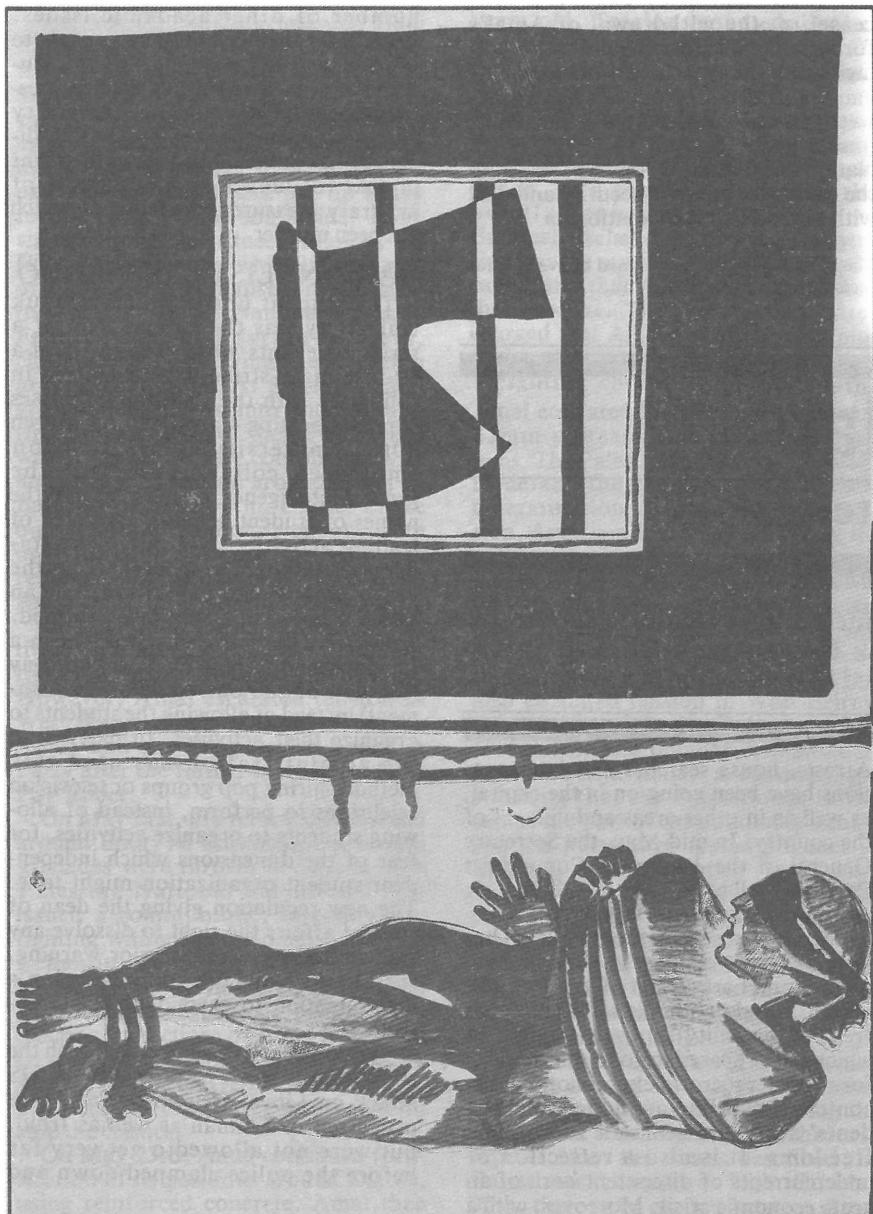
By May, the heat of nationalist feelings has not subsided. With the approach of the 38th anniversary of the Zionist occupation of Palestine, May 15th, the university administration began to dole out arbitrary measures against students. University employees, recruited by the central intelligence, were on the watch for the least activity. Hundreds of final warnings of expulsion were passed out to students without the usual preliminary notices.

By May 12th, tension ran so high that the university head called in the central

security forces to make a show of force and terrorize the students into submission. One Jordanian student, Ibrahim Ajlouni, member of the Economics Society, was dragged by his beard and handcuffed to intimidate other students, while security police, brandishing pistols, chased students into the university mosque. Other students, who escaped from the university campus, were chased into downtown Irbid. Many were taken in by families and hidden, thus escaping being beaten and arrested.

Contrary to the administration's expectations, this brutality only served to fan student opposition and determination to pursue their struggle. The fight was not just one of students against the administration, but of people against the regime. The direct involvement of the security police, units of the central intelligence and Hussein's special bedouin forces, clearly portrays the nature of the conflict, as does the popu-

Poster made by the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan on the events at Yarmouk University



STUDENT MARTYRS MURDERED BY THE JORDANIAN REGIME...

Below is some information about the three students whom the Jordanian regime was forced to admit were killed at Yarmouk University on May 14th:

Martyr Maha Qassim: She was killed inside the dormitory. Eyewitnesses disclosed that there were signs of brutality and torture on her body. The authorities refused to hand over her body to her family. The general intelligence buried her at a cemetery near the Aydoun military hospital. Her family was prevented from printing an obituary in the newspaper.

Martyr Marwa Taher Al Sheikh Ahmed Murad: She was a Circassian from Sweileh, and the cousin of Samih Bino, a well-placed official in the general intelligence. Her body was given to her family and she was buried in Sweileh.

Martyr Ibrahim Hamdan: He was from Qalandia, near Jerusalem. The Zionist authorities refused to allow his body to enter occupied Palestine, so he was buried under heavy guard in a cemetery near a military hospital in Jordan. His family was not notified until much later.

All other families of those martyred were prohibited from placing obituaries in the papers, to prevent general public outrage and cover up the number actually killed.

lation of Irbid giving refuge and support to the students. This shows that it was a conflict between the regime and the people.

The day before the anniversary of the establishment of the Zionist state, with the occupation of 70% of Palestine, was the day chosen by Hussein to demonstrate his loyalty as an imperialist patsy. On May 14th, which was supposed to be the first day of exams, there was a peaceful demonstration of about 2000 students (76% of the student body). Heavy rainfall did not hinder the marchers who headed towards the area of the girls' dormitories. Dormitory mothers wrapped chains around the entrances to prevent the girls from joining the protestors. Nevertheless, the girls threw blankets, sheets and umbrellas from the top windows to protect their fellow students. The mayor of Irbid, Dr. Abed Al Rassaq Dubeshat, and an Irbid member of parliament, Dr. Ahmed Al Kufani, were called in by demonstrators to witness the brutality of the administration-regime collaboration. (Dr. Kufani was to be injured during the ensuing clashes.)

At 10 p.m. the same night, the girls broke out of the dorms, while many professors and teachers joined the strike. At midnight, a student delegation was formed and met with the head of the university who promised to meet all the students' academic demands. The

administration could not, however, make any promises concerning the students under detention. (Present with the administration during the negotiations was Irbid's chief of police, Abd Al Rahman Al Adwan.) The ugliness of the whole situation was accentuated when it was later known that two days before the massacre, Hussein had made arrangements to replace the university president, and given the central intelligence carte blanche to quell the student uprising at any cost.

THE MASSACRE

Thus it was at 1:30 a.m., when the student delegation had finished negotiating with the administration, that the campus was stormed by central security forces, the special bedouin units and general intelligence forces, armed with machine guns and truncheons. They practiced no restraint-machine gun fire was heard all the way to downtown Irbid; students were teargassed out of dormitories; deadly blows were leveled with clubs at students' heads and backbones; female students were dragged by their hair and physically abused; some students were tied to police cars and dragged around the campus.

The besieged students found that onions were being tossed to them by citizens of Irbid, who had come to join them against the security forces. The students fought back with everything they could lay their hands on. It soon became clear from the ferocity of their attackers, that it was a life or death battle. Two security officers were killed and about 20 were wounded. However, the students, being neither armed nor trained for such an onslaught, began to lose ground. They started to flee the university premises. Some climbed up the minaret of the mosque and used the loudspeakers to rally support and appeal to the families of Irbid for help. Calls of «Save your children from death!» mixed with screaming and machine gun fire.

By dawn, the campus was literally strewn with the bodies of dead or unconscious students, while the security

forces danced «the debkeh of victory» on campus and in the streets of Irbid. By morning, news of the massacre had spread. Students once again closed ranks and demonstrated. Irbid's population flowed into the streets to protest the horrible acts of repression. Again the security forces rushed to disperse demonstrators. The Irbid area was isolated from other cities, while police cars patrolled the streets. The Yarmouk University campus was declared off-limits, and surrounded by scores of armoured cars.

A final count of dead and wounded has not been possible, but eyewitness reports from nationalist forces put the number much higher than the regime's official statement of three dead. The nationalist forces in Jordan estimate that about 18 students were killed and over 50 seriously injured. However, it is hard to get conclusive information, because newspapers were instructed not to publish obituaries for the dead students. Moreover, many of the critically wounded who then died were buried secretly under heavy guard. Their families were not notified until later. Others still missing have been beaten to death or shot off campus. Eight hundred students were held for questioning, while 400 were arrested. Other cities were combed, houses searched and arrests made; 16 members of the Jordanian Communist Party and its general secretary were arrested. (Due to political pressure, the latter was released on grounds of ill health.)

Details of the massacre and letters of condemnation were distributed to associations, institutions and prominent persons. The Yarmouk student council distributed 1000 copies of a statement of denunciation, while 1200 flyers were dispersed throughout Amman, Irbid and Zarqa, Jordan's three largest cities. Foreign press agencies were notified, while scores of Jordanian political, social and youth organizations issued denunciations. The embassies of all the socialist countries and others were

informed of the atrocities. The Soviet ambassador left for Moscow, carrying details of the student uprising, the subsequent massacre and the arrest of Jordanian Communist Party members. On May 29th, the Soviet Union issued a strongly worded condemnation of the Jordanian regime's repressive measures. UNESCO warned that it would no longer recognize Yarmouk as an accredited university if such repressive measures continued.

«DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENTS» OR ECONOMIC CRISIS

The tragic events at Irbid's university are not unrelated to the acute economic crisis in Jordan. This crisis is due to a decrease in revenues from expatriates being laid off in oil-rich countries, inflation and rising unemployment, especially among new university graduates. The 50,000 unemployed, most of whom are university graduates, constitute about 10% of the labor force, according to official sources. On February 5th, while visiting London, Crown Prince Hassan made a speech wherein he described unemployment as one of the most «dangerous problems» facing Jordan at present. He also mentioned that the increase in the GNP, which was 12% between 1975-1980, fell to 6% during 1981-86, because of decreasing revenues from expatriates working in the Gulf, and the drop in aid to the Jordanian treasury due to decreasing oil prices. No less indicative of the crisis is the recent suicide of the Jordanian millionaire, Saliba Rizk, because of bankruptcy. The Jordanian press has also hinted at other cases of bankrupt millionaires. The new five-year plan is an attempt to deal with unemployment, especially in the light of the fact that half a million expatriates are expected to return to Jordan in the next five years.

The regime's threats to deal without mercy, with anyone who tampers with national security, obviously fall short of addressing the essence of the crisis. This crisis will continue despite claims that Hussein's forces have everything under control. Feeble attempts have been made to absorb popular anger, by decreasing the prices of electricity and water, while the regime has been generous with promises to release arrested students.

Obviously, the tragic events at Yarmouk University are an indication of internal turmoil which is not to be underestimated. Hussein's ever increasing ties with the Camp David regime in Egypt, his collaboration with the US-Zionist enemy and his obvious eagerness to usurp the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people, have not earned him the popularity he so craves. This is true despite elaborate, fabricated shows of 'popular support'. Hussein has obviously come up against more opposition than he bargained for.

MORE REPRESSION

In the aftermath of the massacre at Yarmouk University, the Jordanian regime took more repressive measures, aimed especially at journalists, professors and even members of the armed forces.

Tariq Masarweh and Maryoud Al Tell, both members of the administrative council of the Jordanian daily *Saut Al Shaab*, were dismissed because of their refusal to write editorials justifying the regime's storming the university and killing students. Eight professors and other university employees were dismissed from their posts at Yarmouk University, because they had declared support to the students' cause.

Hussein's special forces - «The

Bedouin Army» - set up camp around the university grounds. This indicates that the authorities anticipate a new round of clashes with the students in reaction to the preceding bloody incidents. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior issued orders to alter the way that graduation ceremonies are usually held in schools, colleges and universities. Instead of one ceremony for the whole student body of each institution, each class or department is instructed to hold separate graduations. The reason given was: «security considerations».

Moreover, there was a broad campaign of arrests and interrogations among lower officers and soldiers in the Jordanian armed forces, many of whom had defied orders to storm the university and shoot at unarmed students.

US—Israeli War on Syria?

Besides intending to topple Libya's patriotic leadership, the April 15th US aggression was a threat to all Arab nationalist and progressive forces and regimes. Thus, it is no surprise that the follow-up was an intensified imperialist-Zionist campaign against Syria, whose steadfast position is a main obstacle to imposing Camp David throughout the Arab world.

On May 13th, Israeli Prime Minister Peres stated that the chances of a peace agreement with Syria were "non-existent" as long as President Assad remained in power. Coming after the US air strike on Libya, this could only be meant as an outright threat. Rumors spread about an impending Israeli-Syrian military confrontation in the Golan Heights or Lebanon. Earlier in the month, Israeli War Minister Rabin, visiting Washington, had claimed that Syria organized the attempt to bomb El Al in London's Heathrow airport. At the same time, US President Reagan and Vice-president Bush named Syria as a possible candidate for unilateral US military action (*Guardian*, May 8th).

Clearly emboldened by the apparent "anti-terrorist" consensus achieved at the Tokyo Summit of the seven strongest imperialist powers, the US and Israeli leaderships once again escalated their campaign against Syria, attempting to place this in the framework of "combating terrorism". However, the real reasons are related to the current stalemate of the so-called peace process in the Middle East, and Syria's prominent role in opposing this drive for consolidating imperialist and Zionist hegemony.

OLD—NEW ANTAGONISM

The special animosity of US imperialism and Zionism towards Syria has both an old and recent history. Syria's rejection of imperialist plans and its alliance with the Soviet Union, have been anathema to the imperialist-Zionist plans for divide and rule. The Egyptian regime's definitive move into the enemy camp in 1977 reduced the US's need to contemplate a comprehensive approach to the Middle East conflict. It turned all efforts to marginalizing the Syrians and reducing Soviet influence. This line was further cemented with the advent of the Reagan Administration which views all regional conflicts in the context of its global crusade against the Soviets.

Concurrently, the return of the Golan Heights to Syria has never merited more than diplomatic lip-service from imperialist circles, even when 'Israel' blatantly annexed this territory in 1981 in violation of all international agreements, including UN resolution 242 which the US claims as a basis for its policy whenever this is convenient for excluding the PLO and legitimate Palestinian demands. The concept of "land for peace" is never raised in relation to Syria because the Zionist leadership, whether Likud or Labor, considers the Golan Heights vital for their military plans and interests. When Reagan presented his initiative in the fall of 1982, to capitalize on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, he did not deem the Golan Heights or Syria worthy of mention.

Nonetheless, the Israeli-Syria disengagement has held on the Golan Heights since it was arranged in 1974, following the October War. By the late seventies, Israeli-Syrian differences were focused on Lebanon. The presence of Syrian troops in the northern and central parts of Lebanon stood in the way of Zionism's expansionist designs. In the spring of 1981, the Israeli military openly intervened to support the Phalangists' drive to expand their influence into the Beqaa Valley, shooting down Syrian helicopters in the process. For the first time, Syria moved SAM-6 missiles into Lebanon, which 'Israel' projected as a crisis for its security. With Philip Habib's shuttle diplomacy of 1981 and early 82, the Israelis seemed to back down on their demand for the missiles' removal, but they settled the issue in their own violent way by bombing them in the initial phase of invading Lebanon. Ensuing events showed, however, that even massive Israeli violence could not subdue Lebanon or Syrian steadfastness. Syrian support to the Lebanese national forces

was pivotal in foiling the May 17th treaty between 'Israel' and the renegade Lebanese government, and in rolling back Israeli occupation in Lebanon. "A segment of Israel's leadership community regards the defeat of Syria and the driving of Syrian forces from Lebanese soil as the great unfinished business of that campaign" (*Christian Science Monitor*, January 8th).

In view of this historical pattern, it cannot be ruled out that aggression will again be directed against Syria. The current campaign dates back to late 1985, when Syria again moved missiles into Lebanon, after Israeli warplanes downed two Syrian aircraft over Syrian territory on November 19th. The similarities of the scenario to the 1981 "missile crisis" make US-Zionist aggression an ever present danger.

ISRAELI ARROGANCE

Throughout December, Israeli officials took turns raising a fuss about Syrian missile deployment in the Beqaa Valley, and inside Syria's own territory. "Israel requires freedom of flight over Lebanon," demanded Chief of Staff Moshe Levy arrogantly on Israeli television. Rabin threatened "massive response" if Israeli population centers were hit by missiles. Certainly the Zionist leadership was irritated by the necessity of rerouting its reconnaissance flights over Lebanon, which afforded them surveillance of Syrian territory as well. Another Zionist concern is that the long-range SAM-2s, which are stationed in Syria close to the Lebanese border, rule out a cost-free Israeli first strike should it decide to wage war on Syria. The Zionists are concerned by any Arab military strength, but the actual background for the Israeli threats was the prevailing political situation. On the one hand, it seemed in December that Syria had succeeded in sponsoring an agreement between the opposing Lebanese militias, that would have drastically curtailed possibilities for Zionist meddling in Lebanon. On the other hand, Hussein of Jordan was visiting Damascus, which the Zionists feared might block the king's path to direct negotiations with them.

The Israeli perception was reflected in Peres' comment on dealing with the Syrian missile deployment: "How we do so is a political decision, not a military one" (*Jerusalem Post*, December 29, 1985). The same article quoted a senior Israeli government source who acknowledged that the Syrians don't want war, but rather to prevent an Israeli-Jordanian "peace": "We have to see Assad's decision to deploy these missiles in that context... Assad had called all the moves until this point. It is clear around the cabinet table here, that the time has come for Israel to take the initiative."

Itamar Rabinovich, director of the Dayan Center for Middle Easter Studies at Tel Aviv University, hinted at a further consideration which may govern the Israeli leadership's decisions concerning Syria: "Yet the crisis could also be turned to account - could provide an opportunity to restore the tacit understanding that once governed the Israeli-Syrian competition in Lebanon... Naturally, we would prefer to reverse roles and keep the Syrians guessing about whether and when Israel will attack." Yet ultimately Rabinovich cautions against a military response, noting that if 'Israel' were to strike the Syrian missiles, the Soviet Union might provide a new, eventually better system, (*New York Times*, January 14th).

While the Israelis are concerned about Syrian military power, they assess that they are still able to contain any projected attack, unless Syria is joined by another country which is unlikely. Clearly, the Zionists' real worry is Syria's political weight in Lebanon and the region. This has not, however, prevented a



Syrians gather to shout across the occupation lines to relatives in the occupied Golan Heights.

concerted propaganda war all this year, where imperialist and Zionist media have accused Syria of plans to attack the Israelis in the Golan, Lebanon and occupied Palestine. A massive Syrian arms and troop build-up has been repeatedly "reported" to an extent never confirmed by independent sources or even by leading Israeli officials when they are speaking soberly. The intent of this propaganda war is to elicit further imperialist backing for 'Israel' and for whatever way it chooses to resolve its dilemmas.

Moreover, in the light of Israeli expansionism and past behavior, it cannot be ruled out that the Zionist leadership will seize on the military option for resolving what is basically a political problem. In early April, Syrian air defense downed an unmanned Israeli reconnaissance drone over Jebel Qassioun in Damascus, which houses military radar. "There is open discussion in Israel about the possibility of knocking out the Syrian missile sites with pre-emptive strikes. To do so, they need to monitor the radar frequencies that guide the missiles" (*The Observer*, April 10th).

US DUPPLICITY

While the US posed as mediator during the December "missiles crisis", the Reagan Administration turned its wrath directly on Syria at the turn of the year. At a January 9th press conference, Robert Oakley, head of the State Department's "counterterrorist" office, threatened to extend the US economic embargo of Libya to Syria, unless the latter "changes its pattern of support" for Abu Nidal (*New York Times*, January 10th). Such threatening statements have continued throughout the spring from various US officials. In the course of this barrage, two things have become clear: First, by naming Abu Nidal, the Reagan Administration is actually targeting all Palestinian and Lebanese anti-imperialist groups which pose problems to US-Israeli policy. Second, almost every single threat against Syria has been followed immediately by a more conciliatory statement. This does not reflect disagreement in the Reagan Administration, for one sees the same official alternating between threats and compliments to Syria.

There is also an obvious attempt to distinguish between Syria and Libya. CIA Director William Casey's briefing to a congress committee on February 4th was typical. Speaking of the

"radical Arab states of Syria, Libya and Iran (who) oppose nearly all aspects of US policy in the region... want to destroy or weaken the moderate Arab leadership... are in active opposition to the US peace process and... practice and sponsor terrorism," Casey said: "Syria is the most effective of the three. While its goals are more limited than the other two, its leadership is tactically brilliant and generally successful..." (*Mideast Observer*, February 15th).

Besides attempting to divide the nationalist ranks, Casey's remarks illustrate two things: First, after basically ignoring Syria for over five years, the US began about two years ago to gradually and implicitly acknowledge its role, especially in Lebanon. Second, there are formidable, objective obstacles to the US or 'Israel' directly striking Syria.

After its own fiasco in trying to induce reactionary stability in Lebanon, the Reagan Administration has been forced to see that Syria has greater potential than any other single force for stabilizing Lebanon. The US hopes for Syrian help in controlling certain Palestinian and Lebanese forces, and in obtaining the release of hostages. These hopes could be ruled out if the US were to strike Syria directly. President Assad has clearly stated that the Syrian efforts to have some hostages released were progressing, only to be dashed by the US air strike on Libya.

Moreover, any Israeli or US strike on Syria could involve the Soviet Union, in view of the 1980 Friendship and Cooperation Treaty between the two countries. 'Israel' for its part is unwilling to engage in any war it cannot win quickly. This speaks against striking Syria directly. If there is a US-Israeli decision to hit Syria militarily, this would most likely occur via Lebanon. Even then, 'Israel' will consider its past experience in Lebanon, and the massive domestic dissent this evoked, before enacting a large, new intervention. Still, the Phalangists' sabotage of the Syrian-sponsored tripartite agreement keeps the door open to this possibility. Encouraged by the imperialist-Zionist campaign against Syria, the Lebanese fascists assembled an entourage of right-wing "Christian leaders" in early May. They agreed on a "Christian project" directly opposed to the tripartite agreement. Vague phrases, such as "securing Lebanon's military neutrality" are designed to quell the resistance to Zionist occupation and allow for collaboration with it. Other phrases are not so vague, such as "cancelling the Cairo agreement". This is designed to end the Palestinians' political

and social rights in Lebanon, as well as their right to fight the Zionist enemy from Lebanese soil.

As a result of these obstacles to a "surgical strike" on Syria, the US and Zionist leaderships have adopted a stick and carrot approach. The stick predominates, and the substance of the carrot being offered to Syria has yet to be specified. Today, however, it is more than ever characteristic of both US and Israeli policy to try to enforce their own plans, verbally inviting others to join, but without offering any concessions to the other side.

SPECIAL ISRAELI CONSIDERATIONS

Israeli domestic politics have a bearing on any decision to strike Syria. This is especially true in view of the situation in the national unity government whereby Likud leader Shamir will take over the premiership from Prime Minister Peres of Labor in the autumn. It is common knowledge that Peres is anxious to make a separate "peace" with King Hussein of Jordan, and might call new elections to get a Knesset majority to pursue this path and retain Labor's leadership.

According to *Middle East Policy Survey* of January 10th, sources close to Peres consider a breakthrough in the "peace" process as his best hope of retaining the premiership. For this reason, he interpreted the first Assad-Hussein meeting optimistically (from the Israeli viewpoint), emphasizing that no communique has been issued. This optimism was not, however, widely shared by other Israeli officials. "Last week in London, Prime Minister Peres... said American go-betweens had assured him that King Hussein of Jordan was ready to proceed with negotiations, even if Syria and Mr. Arafat withhold their approval" (*New York Times*, January 26th). "Israeli sources say Shimon Peres, in a secret meeting in London some weeks ago, pleaded with the king to meet him openly..." If talks with Jordan do not materialize, Peres will have no issue for calling elections. Shamir's becoming prime minister would stop the "land for peace" efforts begun by Labor. "Some Arab diplomats suggest Syrian President Assad could step into the void with a drastic plan" (*Boston Globe*, February 28th).

Peres is working hard to stave off this possibility. For this reason, he dispatched minister without portfolio Weizman to Washington in mid-May to encourage Schultz to make a Middle East tour that would push forward the imperialist-Zionist settlement plans. Schultz, however, would not commit himself. The US is not ready to put its prestige on the line at this point, having concentrated on its terrorist campaign to hit Libya, Syria, etc. In view of uncertainty for his political plans, Peres has surely considered a quick strike on Syria to remove it as an obstacle to a separate deal with Jordan, now that chances were enhanced for easily excluding the PLO by the king's freeze on cooperation with Arafat. In addition, if it were possible, Peres would use a military victory as a plus in the anticipated election campaign. Likud, for different reasons, would support such a military adventure, in hopes that it would create a whole new situation, reducing any pressure on 'Israel' to give territorial concessions. Other factors play a role as well. For example, if the austerity measures of the current government begin to hit military expenditures, sectors of the Israeli armed forces would pressure for a pre-emptive strike to restore their own prestige and funding. Thus, the bellicosity of statements against Syria increased markedly in March. Shamir accused Assad of striving for superiority "under the guise of talk about strategic balance" (*Israeli Radio*, March 2nd). Peres called Assad "the most extreme and most serious of Israel's enemies" (*Jerusalem Post*, March 12th). Rabin accused Syria of "encouraging and aiding terrorism in general" and said 'Israel' would have to change its tactics to confront the rise of "terrorist activity" in South Lebanon (*Jerusalem Post*, March 11th).

THE COVERT WAR

In view of the many obstacles to a direct military strike on Syria, a covert war of attrition is probable, especially with the Reagan Doctrine for encouraging counter-revolutionaries against 'third world' governments that do not do imperialist bidding.

In line with this, the CIA has been beefed up considerably, having gained 3,000 additional personnel in the recent period

(*Washington Post*, March 31st). Director William Casey has become a major policy-maker, behind-the-scenes and publicly, whereas in the past CIA directors rarely made public speeches. In early April, Casey addressed the main component of the US Zionist lobby, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, emphasizing Soviet military support to Libya and Syria as a danger which is squeezing 'Israel' and moderate Arab states. He also spoke openly about CIA-Mossad cooperation in the "war on terror"

The US and 'Israel' have utilized the "counterterrorist" campaign to strengthen their own intelligence cooperation and make it more overt. "The other day, Pentagon officials were quoted as saying 'military intelligence support' had been offered to Israel for retaliation for Middle East terror" (*New York Times*, January 7th). During his May visit to 'Israel', US Attorney General Edwin Meese, said that "there was readiness for full cooperation in the fields of prevention, in the fields of current activity and in the field of determining policy" (*International Herald Tribune*, May 13th). During his visit to Washington, Rabin made it clear that 'Israel' expects international action against Syria (*Guardian*, May 10th). Imperialist measures against Syria have, in fact, been more closely coordinated since the Tokyo Summit, especially between the US, Britain and West Germany. Britain, for example, expelled three Syrian diplomats in May, although they had agreed to waive diplomatic immunity to be questioned about the Heathrow bomb. The Syrian embassy in London specified that the interview be conducted in the embassy, but the British government rejected this and instead expelled the diplomats.

THE LONG-TERM STAKES

The so-called war on terror is in reality the current phase of the imperialist-Zionist attempts to impose their joint hegemony on the entire region. As the 1982 invasion of Lebanon marked the first phase of the military campaign to impose Camp David, so the aggression on Libya and the threats to Syria headline the current phase. The ultimate aim of this military and political crusade stems from economic and strategic interests - control over Arab resources, manpower and markets. It is therefore that Peres proposed a massive aid program for the Middle East, patterned on the Marshall Plan whereby the US rebuilt capitalism in western Europe after World War II.

During his spring visit to Washington, Peres argued that such a plan would avert impending bankruptcy in "moderate" Arab countries (Egypt and Jordan in particular) and thus avoid the instability that might be expected to follow in the region. "Israel wants to see the formation of a peace front composed of all states in the Middle East that, by abjuring force, embrace negotiations as the sole means to resolve their conflicts... Egypt, Israel and Jordan are the natural initial associates in such a peace coalition..." (*Los Angeles Times*, April 3rd).

Reagan picked up on the idea for presentation at the Tokyo Summit, not wanting the US to foot the whole \$20-30 billion cost of such an endeavor. A senior US official explained the US motivation: "We are looking for an economic framework because the political framework is broken up..." (*Wall Street Journal*, April 22nd). "Schultz is strongly committed to the idea of using economic incentives to regain the initiative in the Middle East and to convince moderate Arabs that the US still has broad interests in the region that go beyond fighting terrorism".

In reality, "counterterrorism" and economic incentives are two sides of the same plan to enforce the imperialist settlement. This presupposes undermining the nationalist regimes, especially Libya and Syria, that possess significant economic or military power-either toppling them or luring them, under duress, into accepting the imperialist plans. (One US official advertised for the "Marshall Plan" as a way of offering aid to Syria!) Thus, the recent attack on Libya and the threats against Syria are not passing phenomena, but part of the US's long-term war to ensure its exploitation and control of the strategic Middle East region. Success of the "Marshall Plan" in the Middle East would increase the exploitation of the Arab masses and rule out restoration of the Palestinian people's rights. Countering the imperialist-Zionist plans is thus a major task for the Arab national liberation movement, as well as the Palestinian revolution, in the current phase and the future.

Occupied Palestine

Military Operations

While the Israelis escalate the iron fist policy-repressive measures, deportations, and political arrests-against our masses in occupied Palestine, the Palestinian militants continue to escalate military operations. In spite of the fact that the Zionist radio daily announces the discovery of revolutionary cells, the Israeli leaders admit they are unable to counter Palestinian acts of resistance. In the past weeks, there have been scores of military operations.

ACROSS THE JORDAN VALLEY

On the night of April 12th, the PFLP unit named after the martyr, Al Khawaja, moved across the Jordan Valley towards Arghman settlement in occupied Palestine. As the group reached the settlement, four kilometers west of the Jordan River, it clashed with an Israeli patrol. The freedom fighters used machine guns and grenades, and many Zionist soldiers were killed or injured. As usual, the Zionist enemy did not acknowledge the casualties, but was forced to admit that there had been a clash. One Palestinian was martyred and another captured and imprisoned. With the two militants, the Zionists found three klashnikov machine guns, 15 magazines and a pistol.

This operation has a number of significant implications due to its details, timing and outcome in terms of the casualties and confusion caused in the enemy's ranks. First and foremost, it confirms that armed struggle proves to be the most effective method for confronting the Zionist enemy. The experience of the Palestinian revolution in South Lebanon and across the Jordanian border, shows that armed struggle remains the best method for mobilizing the Palestinian and Arab masses in the battle with the enemy. This heroic operation by PFLP militants stands in sharp contrast to the ineffectiveness of the rightist Palestinian leadership's bets on the US and Arab reactionary settlement plans. The failure of these plans in being proven daily.

Secondly, this heroic operation attests to the significance of the Jordan Valley as a strategic base for launching military operations. It is common knowledge that, of all Arab borders with occupied Palestine, the Jordanian is the longest (600 kilometers). This makes it impossible for the Zionist enemy to control it completely. In addition, the Jordanian border is closest to the Zionist settlements and thus to the Zionist entity. It is also known that the Jordanian regime protects the borders and the Zionist settlements on this front. Thus, this heroic operation points to an urgent task for the Palestinian revolution, i.e., continuous struggle to return the revolution to its strongest supportive operational

base - Jordan. This cannot be achieved through relations with the regime, but by consolidating the Jordanian national movement and mobilizing the masses in Jordan to struggle for democratic change. This would facilitate the return of the Palestinian movement to Jordan, the importance of which was proven by the experience of armed struggle across the Jordan Valley in 1967-70.

The third significant thing about this operation is the character of one of its heroes: Comrade Hamdan Al Rajbee, father of ten, was martyred at the age of 60. He had been a fighter with the PFLP since 1968. Comrade Hamdan lived through the Palestinian people's struggle and setbacks for more than half a century. Despite his family responsibilities and advanced age, Comrade Hamdan continued to carry the gun. The lesson we learn from the story of this martyr is the determination of our people to continue the struggle, despite the Zionists' attempts to demoralize them.

ZIONIST VEHICLES ATTACKED

Two bombs were thrown at a military vehicle on April 27th, near Qalandia camp outside Jerusalem. The Zionist forces swept through the camp and made many arrests in a feeble attempt to find the attackers. On April 29th, there were two separate attacks on Zionist military vehicles in the Gaza Strip, one by fire bomb and the other by remote control explosion. Again, on May 1st, guerrillas detonated remote-control explosives against a vehicle of Zionist settlers as it passed Jabalia camp in the Gaza Strip. The Zionist forces imposed a curfew on the camp for days, and made extensive searches and arrests. On May 3rd, Palestinians of Duheisha camp in the

West Bank stoned a Zionist military vehicle, injuring two soldiers. On the same day, freedom fighters in Gaza threw a hand grenade at a Zionist patrol. On May 4th, there were three bomb attacks on Zionist targets in the Jerusalem area. In one, an explosive charge was placed in a bakery in Kiryat Moshe, to explode at a time when it is full of Israeli soldiers. There were heavy casualties, but the Zionist radio only acknowledged the loss of two vehicles. Many Palestinians were arrested for interrogation. On May 5th, a night club frequented by Zionist soldiers was set on fire. There was a complete media blackout on the incident.

Acts of resistance against collaborators rose, especially in the Gaza Strip. A collaborator from Jabalia camp was killed on May 3rd. There were three other attempts to liquidate collaborators in the Strip. A collaborator from Abu Ghosh village near Jerusalem was stabbed to death on May 4th.

On May 7th, the Zionist authorities arrested twenty Palestinians, alleging that they were members of the biggest guerrilla cell in the occupied West Bank. The leader of the cell is 30 year old Alaa Al Deen Abu Al Zain, who was imprisoned in 1981 for killing a German tourist. He lost his sight in an explosion when he was trying to plant a bomb in a collaborator's car. A recently published Israeli report said that forty other Palestinians, who had been freed in the May 1985 prisoner exchange, were rearrested. They are subject to constant interrogation and torture.

In the second week of May, there were at least five separate attacks on Zionist military vehicles and posts in the Gaza Strip alone. On May 12th, the fields of Netzirim settlement, south of Gaza, were set afire by burning tires. In the



ROBOTS FOR 'ISRAEL'

In November 1985, an article in *International Defense Review* dropped a hint as to how the Zionists may try to limit the human casualties they are now suffering from anti-occupation operations in Palestine: «Servolex, an Israeli firm, has joined forces with the California-based company Odetics in an attempt to capture a slice of the estimated \$5,000 million US market for robot security guards.» The two are cooperating on the production of «robo-guard» to be on the market in early 1987. «Robo-guards» incorporate sophisticated sensors to detect «intruders or abnormal situations» as well as devices to counter «intruders». They will have limited decision-making capacities, and be used for patrolling and reporting back to human supervisors. Besides another Israeli company making money in the military-electronics industry, this project will surely be used as another device for defending the Zionist occupation and its installations in Palestine.

West Bank, two Israeli soldiers disappeared. A bus station in Jerusalem was set afire.

The same week, there was an attack against a Shin Bet agent in Tel Aviv. Guerrillas placed a booby-trapped car in the ground-level parking lot of an eight-story building. An Israeli military spokesman said that the car belonged to a colonel who is in charge of the «serious crimes» section of the interrogation department, run by Shin Bet. The explosion of the car caused a fire which burned seven other cars and two storeys of the building before fire engines arrived. The building was evacuated and surrounded. Seven Israelis were injured, one of them a general who was burned all over his body.

On May 10th, Israeli radio reported that nine soldiers had been killed in the past week and 67 injured in 60 incidents. Zionist sources described the military operations as «dynamic» and «organized». Zeev Schiff, military commentator for the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, wrote that operations average 1.5 daily and have disoriented the Israeli security forces.

In the last half of May, there was a series of attacks in occupied Jerusalem. On May 19th, Palestinian militants set fire to a bus station. Freedom fighters opened fire on a number of Zionists, killing one and injuring five. A remote-control bomb was set off against a Zionist military patrol north of the city on May 21st, and there were several fire bomb attacks. On May 25th, a bomb exploded in Weisman street; the Zionists acknowledged that two settlers were injured. There was a remote-control explosion against the car of a Zionist officer, driving north of the city.

In the same period, there were two bomb attacks in Asqalan in southern

Palestine. Another two bombs exploded in Kufr Saba, east of Tel Aviv, one near a transport station and another near the house of a Zionist intelligence agent. The Zionists acknowledged one injury in the latter attack.

On May 21st, an Israeli soldier was injured by a fire bomb thrown at a military vehicle in Jabalia camp. On May 27th, a remote-control explosion destroyed the car of a Zionist officer who works at Gaza prison, as he was driving past Jabalia; the officer was critically injured.

In the first week of June, an Israeli bus was hit by a molotov near Jenin in the northern West Bank, while a fire bomb caused extensive damage in a Zionist settlement. In Hebron, a Kiryat Arba settler was stabbed to death, while another Zionist was shot in Nablus. There were explosions near an industrial area of Jerusalem, causing extensive casualties and damage. An Israeli soldier was wounded in Jerusalem when Palestinians threw stones at a military patrol.

Mass Resistance

On April 14th, seven Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were wounded in a clash between the students of Polytechnic Institute and the Zionist occupation forces in Hebron (Al Khalil). Zionist soldiers broke into the institute after the students had stoned Israeli military vehicles and thrown iron bars and empty bottles. The students had blocked the roads with burning tires and raised the Palestinian flag. They were protesting the convening of the extremist Zionist Tehiyah Party's conference in Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron. There were fist fights between the students and soldiers, and seventy students were arrested. Yuval Neeman, leader of the Tehiyah party, in his opening speech, called for the expulsion of Palestinian refugees from the West Bank and Gaza «as a part of an Arab-Israeli settlement.»

Observing May 15th, the day the Zionist state was proclaimed, many strikes and demonstrations occurred in occupied Palestine. There were fierce confrontations with the Zionist forces in most cities and camps in the occupied

West Bank and Gaza Strip. Angry demonstrators in Nablus raised Palestinian flags and signs condemning Zionist repression. Demonstrators confronted the Zionist Gush Emunim gangs that opened fire on the demonstrators. Najah University students stoned Zionist forces during a demonstration. They were protesting the blocking of the entrance of the university to stop students from planning their annual rally on May 15th. The students also threw bottles at the Zionist forces, injuring three soldiers. The Zionist forces opened fire on the students and injured two of them. The residents of nearby Balata camp burned tires in the streets, and stoned the Israeli settlers' parade, held in commemoration of the establishment of the state of 'Israel'. Strict curfews were imposed on all of Nablus, especially the Qasba quarter, Najah University and Balata.

In Jerusalem, and in Duheisha camp near Bethlehem, similar demonstrations took place. A curfew was imposed on Duheisha.



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.)

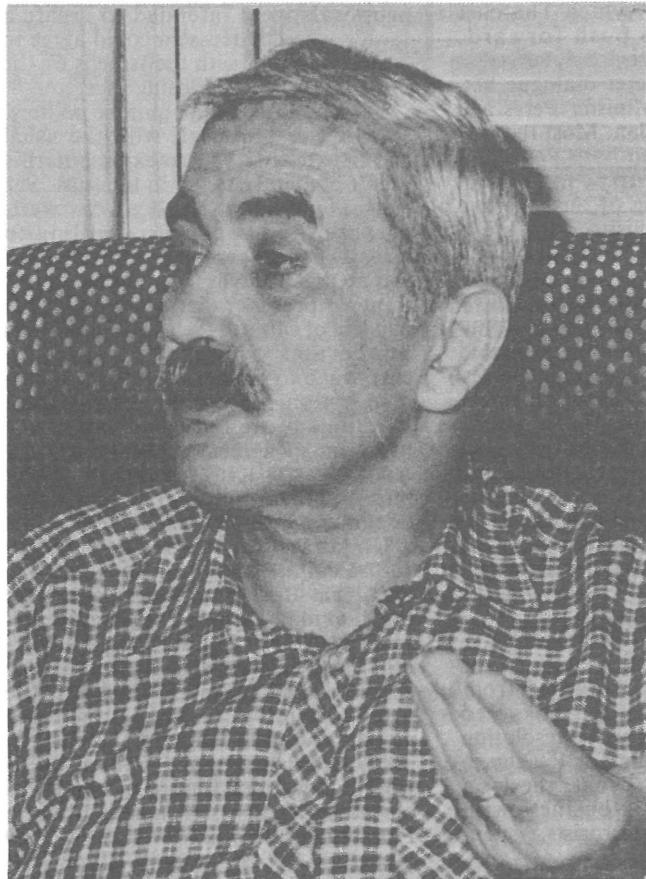
Undaunted, Thatcher declared in Jerusalem at the end of her three day visit, that Britain no longer considers the PLO to be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians, but that other alternatives must be found. The Zionists -and Reagan- can indeed rejoice over the results of the visit. Britain 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.



Interview with Comrade Habash

Palestine: 1948 Disaster and Today's Struggle

The following is excerpts from an interview conducted by the British journalist David Smith with Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP:



Could you tell us first of all about your own experience of the West Bank in the period after the '48 war? What was the plight of the people, refugees living there then? What sort of identity did their situation on the West Bank create?

I still remember that period very well and in details that cannot be erased from the mind. The experience of the usurpation of part of the Palestinian land in 1948, was very bitter. I still remember how we were kicked out of our homes, villages, farms and shops, leaving all our belongings behind. I still remember how the Hagana gangs rounded the men up in the mosque of Lydda, where I was born, and forced them to leave the town on foot, without any of their personal belongings. It is still imprinted on my mind how the Zionists prevented me and others from treating the civilians who had been injured by the bullets of the Hagana gangs. Can I forget how my eldest sister was dying before my eyes without our even being able to move her to a place to be treated?

I leave it to the imagination of any person to picture the situation of a people suddenly forced to leave their land and wander in search of shelter. I leave it to the imagination of any person to picture the horrifying circumstances that would cause a mother to flee, forgetting her child asleep in bed. I leave it to the imagination of any person to picture the tragedy that will burden the

conscience of a human being forced to leave his mother, sister or one of his children to die on the road without even being able to bury them, for fear of the Zionist terror gangs pursuing him.

There is much more involved in the agony which resulted from the 1948 occupation. Its consequences have accumulated and continue to do so up to today. A large portion of our people were transformed into refugees living in camps. Many infectious diseases spread among them as a result of the conditions they suffered, living in crowded tents, malnutrition, etc. This was accompanied by severe suffering, psychologically and socially. The banishment of this large number of the Palestinian people, who became refugees, brought with it the problem of unemployment which reached 60% among able-bodied men.

Of course, all of this also affected those Palestinians whose land did not come under Zionist occupation in 1948. All Palestinians at that time - refugees or not - experienced a deep, horrible shock, and a sense of injury and anger. All wondered: How could this have happened? By what law can a people be uprooted from their land? How can any human being commit massacres such as those committed by the invading Zionist forces? How can any state representing «civilization» - the US for example - support this massive crime committed against our people? We were wondering: What about international law? What about the principles of the United Nations?

The shock that hit the Palestinian people expanded, involving the people of the seven Arab countries of that time. They wondered: How can it be that our countries were defeated by the Hagana gangs and the state of 'Israel' which they declared? With such questions began the formulation of an answer as to how to regain our rights, and what methods of struggle will achieve what we are convinced is right and just.

In addition to the conditions of the Palestinians, as a result of their banishment, there were our people's feelings of vengeance towards the Jordanian regime in particular and towards all the Arab rulers of the time. Instinctively and consciously, our people could see the special role of the Arab regimes, the Jordanian regime in particular, in what had happened. Our people knew that the Arab governments had intended to negate the role of the Palestinian masses in the struggle to defend themselves and their rights. Instead, the regimes replaced the masses' role with that of the official Arab armies, some of which were led by British colonialists such as Glub Pasha.

After our people were banished in 1948, feelings of resentment grew towards the Palestinian leadership who had trusted the Arab governments. Our people accused the leadership of failures and shortcomings, but did not denounce them for treason.

In view of these factors, our people began thinking of how to respond. Young men began penetrating the Zionist lines, singly and in groups, to carry out military operations against the Israeli forces. They began clashing with the Jordanian army. The struggle of our people was two-pronged: It was directed against 'Israel' and its occupation army, and against the Jordanian regime and its policy of dissolving the Palestinian identity through absorbing our people and land. Palestinian struggle grew after 1948, due to the victory of Nasser's revolution in Egypt and the Algerian revolution. These two revolutions became symbols and moral examples for the Palestinian struggle. The armed struggle continued. This assumed a Palestinian national dimension before 1967, and grew to become a great revolution after 1967.

No words can completely describe what occurred at that time and what was growing in the minds of the people, but this is the least of what can be said of the period following 1948, regarding the Palestinian people.

How much of a factor was that personal experience on the West Bank in your decision to take up armed struggle?

As I mentioned in answering the preceding question, among the most important issues we thought of at that time was responding to the armed Zionist terror with armed Palestinian national struggle. I remember the extent of popular enthusiasm when I would contact Palestinian villages on the frontlines and ask people to join the Arab Nationalist Movement and participate in armed struggle against the occupation. Armed struggle was number one on the agenda of methods, but there were two main obstacles that kept it from expanding to the degree that it reached after 1967. These two obstacles were:

1. The continuous clashes with the Jordanian regime's patrols. The regime acted like a security guard for the Zionist enemy. It pursued and harassed our men politically, psychologically and security-wise. The Jordanian regime prevented any national political action directed against 'Israel'. It prevented the patriotic parties and forces from engaging in democratic work among the masses. Moreover, the regime arrested or executed anyone suspected of acting against the occupation. It was to the extent that anyone caught with a sharp knife outside his house, or with an empty bullet cartridge, was sentenced to as much as six months in jail and banished to the desert.

2. The lack of means for obtaining or buying weapons. The people's bad economic situation made them unable to donate money for buying arms. The intense surveillance of the Jordanian intelligence service made it difficult to get weapons.

These difficulties, and other less important factors, hindered the development of armed struggle. Yet they did not prevent the Palestinian people, or we in the Arab Nationalist Movement, from adopting armed struggle and continuing to consider it a primary option for responding to the Zionist invasion of Palestine and the resultant banishment of our people.

More than ever before, we are seeing the state of 'Israel' as an advanced aggressive base for imperialism. This is what the Zionist movement's leaders expressed and put into practice when they established their state on our land. How else could we view the participation of the state of 'Israel' alongside Britain and France, in the 1956 aggression against Egypt when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal? Our understanding of the state of 'Israel' and its role gave our armed struggle its pan-Arab and international dimension, in addition to its Palestinian dimension. Palestinian armed struggle has become an integral part of the struggle of the Arab and international liberation movement against colonialism, imperialism and all forms of racism.

How do you judge Israeli policy in the occupied territories since 1967? To what extent have the Israelis been able to subjugate the people who live there?

The least that can be said about this policy is that it is an occupation policy. Every person must imagine how a state behaves towards a people when it is occupying their land and attempting to subordinate them by force and violence. Moreover, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land has no match in recent human history... Successive Israeli governments have applied specific plans to uproot the Palestinian people from their land, bringing new Zionist immigrants to replace them, whereas the Palestinian people are the ones with the natural and historic right to the land of Palestine.

Before the founding of the state of 'Israel', Jews owned only 6% of the land of Palestine, despite all the methods employed by the Zionist movement to attain land... But what is the current reality and how did it come about? The March 2, 1986 edition of the *Jerusalem Post* published a detailed article on a report by the Hagana's military intelligence department, dated June 30, 1948, that was discovered in the private papers of the historian Aharon Cohen, a leading member of Mapam. The report confirmed that the Zionist organizations - Hagana, Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etzel) and Lohamei Herut Yisrael (Lehi) had staged military operations against the Palestinian Arabs that resulted

in forcing the inhabitants of more than 250 cities and villages to flee from their homes and land, from April 21, 1948, until the end of the same year. This means that one million Palestinians were forced to leave their land.

We are always hearing voices from inside the Israeli government and Knesset, calling for expelling the Palestinians... but 'Israel' will not implement the goal of uprooting the Palestinian people from their land in one phase, for several reasons, mainly: (1) 'Israel' needs to use the Palestinian Arab citizens as cheap labor, to fill a significant portion of jobs in industry, agriculture and the service sector, that are considered degrading in the Zionist society. This gives 'Israel' the opportunity to send the Jewish working force - that is freed from this labor by Palestinian workers - to the war front against neighboring Arab countries, in order to achieve the Israeli rulers' aims of expansion and occupying new Arab land. (2) The gradual expulsion of the Palestinians enables 'Israel' to avoid the political problems and negative publicity that could be raised by public opinion if it were to expel them all at once. (3) The gradual expulsion of the Palestinians lessens the intensity of the Arab response to this criminal action. This enables the Israeli government to absorb the results, as they think.

There is consensus among the Zionists on the policy of gradually expelling the Palestinians from their homeland, but there are differences among the Zionist groups in 'Israel' as to the method that should be used. On this particular issue the Zionists are divided into two main categories: (1) One section that calls for massive expulsion all at once, regardless of the consequences. One of those who expresses this view most clearly is the extreme racist Rabbi Meir Kahane, who enjoys support from 11% of the Jewish electorate according to Israeli opinion polls. Another is Ariel Sharon, former defense minister, war criminal and architect of the Sabra-Shatila massacre. (2) The other section calls for gradual expulsion in order to avoid the negative consequences of immediate mass expulsion. This group argues that the goal of a pure Jewish state can wait for some time before being fully achieved. Most known for expressing this opinion clearly is the Labor Alignment, led by the Labor Party.

Nevertheless, the Zionist leadership did not refrain from using the most repulsive methods for pressuring Palestinian citizens to leave their homes. Most prominent among the methods used by the Zionists to achieve this goal are the following:

1. The policy of land confiscation and settlement: The Zionist enemy has confiscated over 40% of the Palestinian land occupied in 1967. This is according to the most optimistic figures; some reports indicate that 50% of this land has been confiscated. The Zionist enemy has established approximately 200 settlements on this land under various military and non-military pretexts.

2. The use of oppressive and terrorist methods: From the day the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied, the occupation authorities have acted in flagrant disregard of all international and humanitarian laws. They have practiced the harshest mass oppression and terror against our people. From the first day of the occupation, they initiated arrest campaigns whereby, to date, approximately 30% of the population under occupation has been detained at least once. This figure includes 1200 women and girls. In addition, the occupation authorities practice collective punishment, assembling citizens, including women, children and elderly, and holding them in one spot for long hours, under the worst conditions.

I would like to give an example of the way the Zionists treat our people under occupation, as was reported on January 10, 1986, by *Hadashot* newspaper. The judge of Peta Tikvah was looking into the case of one Palestinian Arab citizen who refused to sell his land to an Israeli. The judge said: «We can kill this Arab, and then there will be no one to oppose.» This is how the Zionists think, and these are the Zionist men of «law and justice»...

But did 'Israel' succeed? The answer to this question can be found immediately by anyone who is interested in knowing. The brave resistance of our people against the Zionist hangmen has gained the respect and recognition of the world. Our masses have confronted all the schemes and policies of the Zionist enemy. In many struggles, our masses were able to achieve tangible victories, despite the occupation's arrogance and brutality. In confronting the policy of land confiscation and

settlement-building, the Committees for the Defense of the Land were formed, as a broad framework for all social groups ready to struggle against the enemy and its policies in this field. Through their broad uprisings, our masses were able to force the Zionist enemy to refrain from establishing the Elon Moreh settlement on the chosen site near Nablus, although the enemy did not cancel the idea of building it.

Another case is the defense of the Jerusalem District Electric Company, the largest Palestinian national institution in the occupied land, when the Zionist authorities attempted to take over some of its concessions. Our masses, first and foremost the workers of the company, achieved a political and moral victory in this battle which is still going on.

Our masses in the occupied land have shown heroic resistance, confronting the Zionist authorities' deportations of Palestinian national leaders and activists, despite the enemy's forceful continuation of this policy in flagrant disregard for international law. Our masses have been able to reverse some of the deportation orders, foiling for example the decision to deport Bassam Shakaa, the legitimate elected mayor of Nablus.

In line with confronting the occupation, our militants in the Zionist prisons are continuously struggling against the enemy's measures to liquidate them physically and kill their spirit. There are many examples of the prisoners' steadfastness and confrontation of the occupation. The most significant was the hunger strike in Nafha prison which lasted over five weeks.

I have mentioned some examples to indicate that the enemy will not succeed in subordinating a people who are determined to free themselves from occupation and exercise their national identity by establishing an independent state where they rule themselves. The leaders of 'Israel' themselves have begun openly admitting that their methods did not succeed in subordinating the Palestinian people under occupation. Zionist figures indicate that there were 1224 operations against Israeli military targets in 1985. These are constantly on the rise, in addition to other forms of ongoing resistance.

What is your position on armed struggle within the territories? Is it the right of all Palestinians to resist the occupation by whatever means? In your view, should the armed struggle be waged outside the territories any longer?

Our position on armed struggle is the natural position of a people whose land is subject to invasion and occupation. Our position on armed struggle against the Zionist invasion and occupation, is the same as that of the European peoples during the Nazi occupation of their countries. It is the same position as that of the Vietnamese people vis-a-vis the US invasion of Vietnam. It accords with the position of the United Nations which gave the right to those peoples who are subject to invasion and occupation, to struggle by all means, including armed struggle.

We are a peace-loving people. We love freedom; and we know that the price for peace and freedom is very high, especially as we are facing an invader like Zionism which is supported by the strongest imperialist power in history. We distinguish clearly between Israeli civilian targets and military targets, in contrast to what the enemy forces are doing against our people inside and outside occupied Palestine. Didn't the Zionist occupiers commit a mass poisoning against our people in 1983, in occupied Palestine? Didn't the Zionist enemy commit a horrible massacre against unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps, after we left Beirut in 1982? Don't the Zionist settlers attack our people daily in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, using all methods of terror? It is the Zionist enemy that does not distinguish between civilian and military targets. The Zionist enemy is the one committing massacres and breaking international law.

Having said this, I confirm that our right to confront Israeli occupation does not differ from the right of any people to confront any foreign occupation. The methods which we use do not differ from the methods used by the different peoples of the world confronting occupation.

As for armed struggle from outside the occupied territories, I can compare it with the resistance of the Algerian people against the French occupation, from areas outside French control in

Tunisia and Morocco. We can compare it with the Vietnamese resistance against the US intervention, from outside what was called South Vietnam.

If that was the case, then our people have the right, just like other people of the world, to struggle against occupation from within and beyond the occupation lines. This is especially so in view of the feeling of the Palestinians living in the Arab countries surrounding Palestine, that Palestine is their usurped homeland, that the people under occupation are their people whom they have the duty to support in confronting the occupation and freeing them from its control. This is the role of the armed struggle from outside Palestine. It is one of supporting our people under occupation to help them get rid of the occupation. It is the right of any people's liberation struggle seeking the restoration of national rights, as stated in UN resolutions and international law. It is the right of the Palestinian people until our occupied land is liberated and an independent Palestinian state established there.

How should the people of the occupied territories view the disunity and conflict of the past years within the ranks of the Palestinian leadership? What would you say to those in the occupied territories who despair of their leaders coming together, who feel that their cause is weakened by infighting?

The Palestinian people rallied around the Palestinian revolution and the PLO with its national platform and the programs of the legitimate Palestinian National Council sessions, which represent a consensus among the different resistance organizations. On this basis, the revolution and the PLO received popular and official support on the Palestinian, Arab and international levels.

In the light of this, the departure of Yasir Arafat and his followers in Fatah's Central Committee from the national platform and the consensus resolutions adopted by the PNC, prior to the 17th session, damaged the Palestinian cause and the PLO's unity. This departure, and its organizational consequences had the worst effect on the morale of our people. It also damaged the political, diplomatic and militant gains of our people.

Look, for example, at the recent calls of King Hussein for the Palestinian people to choose a substitute leadership for the PLO. He is constantly calling into question the legitimacy of the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people. King Hussein would not have dared to do so, were it not for the agreement he signed with Yasir Arafat on February 11, 1985. That sinister agreement included a concession by Arafat, that compromised the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state, instead posing a confederate state with Jordan. That agreement also compromises the PLO's right to be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at any international conference or forum that would discuss the Palestinian cause.

King Hussein, the Zionist leadership and the US administration are trying to exploit the current weakness of the PLO, which resulted from the policy pursued by Arafat beginning in 1982, and especially after the signing of the February 11th agreement. The enemy forces began a carefully planned and organized campaign, aiming to plant despair in the minds of our people, to get them to question the national struggle and its usefulness. This reached such an extreme that King Hussein equated the Palestinian struggle with the Zionist terror, and asked Arafat to condemn armed struggle. Arafat responded to this and announced, in Cairo, that he condemns armed actions outside the occupied territories.

In order to prevent our people's enemies from benefitting from the PLO's current weakness, we in the PFLP have constantly called for adherence to the national platform and the resolutions of the legitimate PNC sessions, the last of which was the 16th session held in Algiers. We consider that this possibility is conditional on cancellation of the February 11th agreement by Fatah's Central Committee. We have also said that safeguarding the PLO from the present dangers and the conspiracies planned for it, requires a serious review of the previous course of the PLO. It requires reinstating a political and organizational

foundation that guarantees against any deviation in the future, that guarantees that there would be responsible, serious examination of anyone who has departed from legitimate decisions or provided a cover for this departure.

In his speech of February 19, 1986, King Hussein announced the suspension of coordination with Arafat and Fatah's Central Committee. We thought that this would have created an opportunity for this leadership to review its calculations and retreat from its position, thus announcing the cancellation of the February 11th agreement. However, they did not do so, thus wasting an opportunity for the Palestinian people and the PLO, to pave the way for dialogue about the means for reestablishing national unity.

Our Palestinian people have a long experience in struggle. They know how to get rid of the occupation. They are determined to defeat the occupation and build an independent Palestinian state and return to their cities and villages. Our people will not be deterred from achieving this goal, regardless of the size of the obstacles. The uprising now going on against the occupation is one of the signs of this.

How much contact, Dr. Habash, is it possible for you to have with the people of the occupied territories? How much of an organization does the PFLP have there? Has the way the PFLP has developed under occupation surprised you?

We consider communication with our people in the occupied territories as one of our most important duties. In this way we learn what they are thinking, what they are suffering and what struggle methods they are able to use-for this changes in accordance with the prevailing situation. We have therefore established our own methods for constant communication with our people in the different areas under occupation. I think you will understand if I don't talk about these methods due to the security considerations involved, but I assure you that there is daily contact.

One of the factors that enables us to make daily contact is the broad range of the Popular Front's organization which is distributed in all parts of the occupied land. It is present in most if not all of the fields of our people's life under occupation. The Popular Front's organization in the occupied land is one of the most important in the battle against the occupation on the political, mass and military levels. We depend on our masses who are fighting against the occupation from within their trade unions, on the land, in cooperatives, factories, schools, universities and via other forms of daily struggle, including the ongoing struggle inside the Zionist prisons.

Due to security conditions for the Popular Front's organization in the occupied land, I cannot reveal its strength in num-

bers, but I assure you that it is a main, leading force - as the enemy knows and has admitted. We were able to overcome all the enemy's attempts to deal a final blow to our organization, and it has remained strong and active. Of course, the development of our organization did not surprise me, because I watched this growth daily. This raises my admiration and pride and makes me more confident of victory.

Do you ever see a solution, in your own lifetime, for example? Knowing them as you do, how do you expect the people of the West Bank, Gaza etc. to react to the prospect of an indefinite stalemate? Will they be able to preserve that identity?

The nature of the enemy that occupies our land and uproots our people makes me say that our battle is not an easy, short one as has been proven by the events. This is especially true since we face an enemy which receives massive aid from the strongest imperialist force in the world, US imperialism and from other imperialist countries. This support is subject to no conditions, no matter how inhuman and immoral the practices of this state of 'Israel' are, no matter how much it violates the basic laws of reason and justice in its aggression against our people and revolution.

Our people know that our battle is not an easy one or short, and they are determined to continue the struggle. The complexity of the battle we are fighting to win our independence and build our national state, will not make us lose hope in the possibility of victory. The people of Algeria sacrificed a million martyrs to win their independence, and they succeeded. The people of Vietnam resisted the French, the US and their allies - and won. So did other peoples of the world, despite the length of their period of suffering under occupation and oppression.

Our people fought against the Ottomans who stayed in our countries for over 400 years. Our people fought the British Mandate for over 30 years. Our people have resisted the Zionist invasion of Palestine since the end of the last century. They are continuing the struggle without despair. They have no doubt that victory is coming. This is the meaning of the fact that we find our children, no more than seven years old, confronting the occupation troops with stones and sticks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is the meaning of the fact that the children of Rashidiyah camp confronted the Israeli invaders with simple weapons and bravery, although the latter were armed with the newest tools of destruction - tanks, planes, cluster, splinter and vacuum bombs. The world named the children of the camps in South Lebanon «the RPG children.»

Our people adhere to their struggle and national identity more than ever. Every day, they invent a new method for asserting their national identity. Those who wager on the despair of our people should look at the celebration of the March 30th Day of the Land every year. Those who think that our people will be struck by despair should look at how our people in the occupied land have begun celebrating weddings. These have become national occasions with national songs and the chanting of slogans that challenge the occupation. Those who think our people will become frustrated must look at the fruit harvests which have been turned into occasions where our people demonstrate their mutual solidarity in facing the occupation. The volunteer work committees of young men and women offer their services to help the peasants pick their fruit, thus taking advantage of the opportunity to educate one another about the occupation plans. They raise their children on the necessity of confronting the occupation to the end.

Is it necessary to name all the forms which prove that our people are determined to continue the struggle until victory over the occupation? Let us look, for example, at school students who volunteer to help carry out the projects of their national municipalities in the 1967 and 1948 occupied territories. Such efforts have even increased after the Israeli government impeded payment of the deficit to these municipalities. How are a people of this caliber going to be frustrated? How can their national identity vanish?

In closing, I can confirm that victory is coming, but I cannot give a time for this. I can anticipate things, but I cannot predict the future.



The Palestinian Working Class Under Occupation

This is the conclusion of the article begun in *Democratic Palestine* No. 16, which gave an overview of the Palestinian working class and unionization, then focused on Zionism's institutionalized discrimination against Palestinian workers who are considered Israeli citizens. Below we address the situation of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, working in the Zionist state, who are hardest hit by the economic crisis.

As many as 100,000 workers from the 1967 occupied territories today commute to unskilled or semiskilled jobs in 'Israel'. Of those who are registered with the Israeli employment office, the greatest numbers work in industry and construction, followed by services and then agriculture. «Israel is dependent to a considerable degree on Palestinian workers in the construction and agricultural sectors. By 1982, a third of the legally hired workers in each of these sectors were Palestinians from the territories. Workers without a permit increase the proportion of Palestinians still further - to as much as 60% of the total labor force for the construction sector» Joost R. Hiltermann, «The Emerging Trade Union Movement in the West Bank», *Merip Reports*, Nos. 136/137, October-December 1985.

The dominant fact about the formation of the working class in the 1967 occupied territories, is that its growth was paralleled by a decline in local industry and economy in general. This situation is a direct result of the Zionist occupation and its intertwined political and economic motives. The Zionists worked systematically to destroy the Palestinian national economy in order to deprive the population under occupation of any material base for independence. At the same time, this boosted the Israeli economy enormously by turning West Bank and Gaza Palestinians into a captive market for Israeli products and a cheap labor reserve for Israeli industry. Palestinian industry declined due to restrictions imposed by the occupation authorities, and inability to compete with the products of heavily subsidised Israeli industry. Before the occupation, industry accounted for 8.7% of gross national product in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. By 1983, this had dropped to 6.7% (*Al Fajr*, May 20, 1983).

In the West Bank, land confiscation and depriving Palestinian farmers of water resources played a main

role in pushing people to work in 'Israel'. Right after the occupation, 45% of the active West Bank labor force was employed in agriculture. By 1980, only 26% were, while only 15% were employed in local industry. Forty per cent were employed in 'Israel' and 10% in Israeli projects in the West Bank. (Sarah Graham Brown, «Report from the Occupied Territories» *Merip Reports* No. 115, June 1983). The majority of those working in Zionist enterprises are from the refugee camps or rural areas. They are those most dramatically dispossessed of land and other means of livelihood.

Gaza industry can only absorb about 20% of the Strip's current labor force (*Al Fajr*, October 4, 1985). As of 1983, the Israeli Labor Ministry estimated that 34,000 Gaza Strip residents (43% of the work force) had jobs in 'Israel'; 12,000 had work permits, while 22,000 worked illegally but received their wages through Israeli labor exchanges. At least 800 were day laborers - men, women and children who line up in the slave markets to try for a day's work (*Al Fajr*, May 20, 1983).

Most residents of the 1967 occupied territories who commute to work in 'Israel' are forbidden to stay overnight. Yet many do so anyway, to avoid the erosion of their wages by transportation costs. Those who commute daily must leave their homes well before dawn and may not return much before midnight. Even those who work without a permit must pay Israeli taxes and fees for social security and health insurance - benefits which they cannot cash in on, though they may take 40% of their wages (Joost, op. cit.). For those who are registered, «the Employment Service... deducts both income taxes (at higher effective rates than Israelis pay) and worker and employer contributions to the standard state and private social security schemes» (*Jerusalem Post*, January 7, 1986). The same article points out that minimum wage standards are not honored in overtime for

Arab workers, terming this «legal employment for illegal wages.»

Another less visible form of superexploitation is found in the Israeli use of Palestinian labor, especially that of women, through subcontracting and cottage industries. Many large Israeli companies have opened branches in the towns and villages of the 1967 occupied territories, and in the Galilee. Here women do sewing, handwork or other manual labor at way below standard wages. The Palestinian women who work in 'Israel' itself are confined to sewing, tinning, conversion and packaging industries, which are lowest on the pay scale. Even there, they earn half that of Jewish women doing the same work. In addition, the Jewish women workers work shorter hours and are eligible for bonuses.

UNDISGUISED EXPLOITATION

The Israelis often boast that Palestinians earn higher wages in 'Israel' than they would in the territories. At face value, this is true since the occupation's strangulation of local industry prevents Palestinian employers from giving sufficient wages, even if they might want to. However, a few facts about how the Israeli economic crisis hits workers from the territories gives a clearer picture of the Israeli exploitation of Palestinian labor.

The Israeli economic crisis has been pushed most violently onto the backs of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. Workers from the 1967 occupied territories are seldom classified according to standard job descriptions by Israeli enterprises. Besides depressing their wages, this excludes them from being considered permanent employees. They receive no sick, vacation or unemployment payments. These factors combined mean that they are the first to be fired, without the Israeli economy paying a cent to cushion the blow. They can also be shuffled around into different jobs as best suits Israeli efforts to overcome the economic crisis, by further depressing wages, etc.

Israeli Employment Minister Moshe Katzav confirmed in January 1985, that Palestinians from the occupied territories do not receive unemployment benefits despite wage deductions for unemployment insurance. In fact, these taxes are passed on to the occupied territories «development fund», i.e., reserved for Jewish settlers. The Minister was also forthright in saying that these workers

will only enjoy full rights when the territories are annexed (*Al Hamishmar*, January 24, 1985).

A few statistics give a picture of the effects of the Israeli economic crisis on the West Bank in terms of the labor force. A study by the ILO in the spring of 1985 indicated a 30-40% unemployment rate. A survey by the Progressive Workers Bloc in early 1985 showed that wages had declined by 30% since October 1984. The Zionist claims about higher pay in 'Israel' fail to take into account a series of other variables which affect the standard of living. For example, in periods when the Israeli government attempts to doctor the economic crisis by constant devaluation of the shekel, the West Bank worker must still pay rent and other expenses in Jordanian dinars - a very stable currency. In the period from 1983 until April 1985, this meant roughly halving the wages of many workers in the occupied territories (*Al Fajr*, May 24, 1985).

In an article entitled «Palestinian Women Workers in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip», *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 1985, Susan Rockwell comments on the crisis's effects on Gaza workers: «While wage labor in Israel has both reduced unemployment in Gaza to about one percent and raised living standards, these short-term gains have been eroded by the importation of Israeli inflation and the consistent devaluation of the Israeli shekel. Living standards in the occupied territories, for example, have not risen as fast as they have done in Jordan. Israel's soaring inflation affects the Arab population of the occupied territories much more than it does Israelis due to the lack of an equivalent system of compensation to low-income families through national insurance.»

FURTHER MARGINALIZATION

One might think that less Palestinians from the occupied territories find work in 'Israel' now, due to the Israeli need to cut unemployment among Jewish citizens. This is not the case however, because Palestinians perform low-level jobs now distained by Jewish workers. Instead there has been a rise in illegal workers from the territories, i.e., further marginalization of their status. Referring to the early eighties, the *Jerusalem Post*, January 7, 1986, noted: «... while the number at work under the Employment Service's auspices has indeed fallen by more than 10,000, the total number of residents of the territories employed in Israel has grown by 15,000. Market forces have thus been free to drive up 'illegal' employment, which according to official statistics stands at more than half the total.»

In January 1985, a new regulation went into effect whereby Palestinian

workers from the 1947 occupied territories need a special permit to work in 'Israel', on the order of the Employment and Defense Ministries. (Previously this permit was only needed for those who stayed overnight.) Clearly this was intended to discipline Palestinian workers who can now be arrested for lacking a permit, rather than to stop illegal employment. Six months later, the Knesset Interior Committee was presented with estimates that 40-50,000

Palestinians from the occupied territories sleep in Tel Aviv nightly without work permits and in unsanitary conditions. (The latter is to put it mildly - employers often lock 'illegal' workers in sheds for the night). Rather than reducing the employment of slave labor from the territories, in order to limit unemployment among Jews, the tendency is to further marginalize the Palestinian workers.

Zionist Occupation Policy



Palestinian home demolished by the Israeli occupation forces

Since the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in June of 1967, the Israeli forces have destroyed 15,365 homes, arrested 300,000 Palestinians and imprisoned 4,950.

The Jordanian Ministry of Occupied Territories Affairs has done a statistical study that was published on May 29th in the Jordanian daily *Saut Al Shaab*. The study said that the biggest number of expulsions of Palestinians since 1972 occurred last year. At the same time there were more and more repressive measures, such as town arrests, etc. The study also pointed out that deportees consisted of individuals and groups, such as the whole Nuseirat clan (250 people) that was expelled to Jordan.

Concerning Arab prisoners in 'Israel', the study showed that 4,950 of them were sentenced for legal reasons and 3,500 for security reasons. Last year seven prisoners were killed, three died of illness, and one hundred and forty are in solitary confinement and under strict supervision.

The study also noted that 300,000 Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were arrested and imprisoned last year. 1,000 out of 3,500 prisoners are sentenced to twenty years or more. The study also mentioned that the administrative detentions practiced by the Israelis are a violation of the legal prin-

ciple that requires a fair trial before punishment.

It was also mentioned in the study that the Zionist authorities have blown up a total of 1,420 homes since 1967 in the West Bank, and 13,945 homes in the Gaza Strip in the early seventies, as part of their plan to eliminate the refugee camps.

IRON FIST

The Kuwaiti paper *Al Qabas* published that in a period of six months, the Zionist authorities had expelled 50 Palestinians. Three hundred others were put under administrative detention for six months without any reason other than the authorities' fear that they might conduct violent acts in the future. The same source recently published a special report from the West Bank. The report said that during the same period, the Zionist authorities had demolished over 10,000 Palestinian homes in the Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron (Al Khalil) and Gaza districts. In addition, the authorities sealed over 50 homes in different camps. Over a hundred homes were evacuated and confiscated for the benefit of settlers. 20,000 dunums of land were confiscated in the districts of Bethlehem, Nablus, Jericho and Khan Younis.

Unquestionable Alliance

The article below begins a study on the US-Israeli relationship and the role of the Zionist state in the Middle East, which we plan to continue in subsequent issues of *Democratic Palestine*. This first installment concentrates on the US's intervention in the Israeli economy and how this will affect the role of 'Israel' in the future.

Political Zionism and the international Zionist organization emerged as a «direct result of the struggle of the Jewish bourgeoisie to expand its influence in the capitalist countries internationally.»¹ This occurred around the turn of the century with the development of capitalism into imperialism. It is, therefore, not surprising that Zionism and imperialism should find common grounds to serve and expand their individual aspirations, throughout the various stages of history. Zionism has always been an active participant in various imperialist activities. «The history of Zionism from the moment of its emergence up till this day is inseparable from the history of imperialism, from major imperialist policies, from the changes experienced by imperialism as a whole, as a political, economic and social system.»² Thus, the continued assertions of US politicians on the strategic importance of 'Israel' - coated with statements about 'moral obligations' to Jews - are nothing earthshakingly new.

When the US replaced Europe as the leading imperialist power after World War II, it was not surprising that Zionism shifted its main allegiance to the US as well, in order to survive. The US itself was only too aware of the significance of having a base in a region which contained half the oil reserves of the world. It also realized the Zionist state's significance as a doorway to markets which could accommodate the expansion of imperialist producers. No less important is the US need of a reliable base from which to strike at progressive movements in the region, whose rising influence poses a threat to imperialist dominance.

NO. 1 ALLY, BUT...

US aid and involvement with the Zionist entity grew as a result of the expansion of imperialist interests in the Middle East as the years passed. The US left no room for doubt that 'Israel' was its number one ally. This fact has been seen not only in the astronomical amounts of aid, but in the more significant fact that, most recently, all aid is to be in the form of grants. The Zionists now receive one-third of all US foreign aid. On an annual per capita basis, this amounts to \$1000 per Israeli. The closest country after that was Oman with \$61 per - capita, then Egypt with \$55 and Lebanon with \$7. In contrast, US 'aid' for Palestinians of the West Bank (\$7 per capita) was not only minuscule, but also subject to a maze of restrictions set up by the Zionist legal network which retains the right to withhold this aid.

Although the US has many stooges to promote and protect its interests in the region, none of these regimes are as dependent on the US for their very existence as is the Zionist entity. This should not, however, be interpreted that 'Israel' is in a «your wish is my command» position. Zionist leaders wield a relatively heavy club, for they know full well the significance of the role they play with respect to US imperialist interests. «The US is dealing with us with a weak hand because we both know that if we are in trouble they will help us,» said an Israeli official. «We know it. They know it. And they make no bones about it.»³ True the US is willing to allow the Zionist entity a margin of freedom considerably broader than any other ally. However, in the light of the acute Israeli economic crisis, which the US views as endangering its own national and international interests, the US make no bones about showing the Zionists where to toe the line.

A massive campaign of US intervention in the Israeli economy took place between 1983 and 1986, and is still going on. US quarters are questioning whether the influx of dollars to 'Israel' could do anything more than simply put off economic reckoning, making remedies more complex if not impossible. Thus, for the «first time (the US administration) has found it

necessary to place economic conditions on its aid--- despite the special relationship» with the Zionist entity. The US administration and media underscored over and over that US aid is seen as «necessary to meet growing security threats in key areas such as the Middle East,» that «it is not unusual for the Israeli aid figure to be increased some annually by the administration and nudged up by the Congress.» However, the leap being discussed for FY 1986 is 86%. (For 1985, aid was \$2.6 billion; for 1986, it is \$4.56). Thus, the «Israeli increase will receive considerable scrutiny». ⁴

Pushing along these lines are statements made by well-placed officials like Samuel Lewis, former ambassador to 'Israel': «I do not take pride or pleasure in the fact that we will undoubtedly be giving more (aid to 'Israel') next year.» In other words, although there is no threat that aid will be denied the Zionists, the same aid is now to assume a definite role reversal which is perceived by both partners as 'buying Israel' and not 'selling it'. This new role of aid is reflected in phrases like «aid is aid and business is business» or «we would rather give (Israel) business assistance than economic aid.» The stress is on working towards long-term economic gains which would have a more lasting and effective influence, rather than pumping in aid with fleeting political and economic effects.

Even foreign banking circles have expressed increasing doubts as to the future of 'Israel' and how effective doling out aid is in keeping this state alive. One senior banker said that foreign bankers were treating 'Israel' cautiously and were likely to do so even if extra aid came from the US. «What we are concerned with,» he said, «is where the economy here is headed, not whether it can survive,» i.e., more aid in itself will not guarantee 'Israel' better access to foreign bank loans. Some top US banks are thinking of opening branches in 'Israel' to reestablish its shaky credibility in the world financial market, according to 'Voice of Israel' radio, July 1985.

AID FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE

In the past, economic and monetary problems were solved between the US and 'Israel' by one or more of the following methods: rescheduling debt payments; cancelling or waiving payments for certain years; postponing payments, cancelling all or part of the debt, or simply providing the Zionist entity with cash to make payments.

The 1983-4 Israeli economic crisis showed the adverse effects of these solutions and how they have caught up with the US-Zionist partners. This pressed upon them the necessity of taking more drastic measures than in the past - measures that would result in doubling unemployment and reducing wages to the 1982 level. Although the US went out of its way to stress that 'Israel' would have to pull itself out of its own mess, well-placed administration officials did not rule out the possibility of extending help when needed. This help was the code name for the millions in aid being allotted to achieve structural reforms without «massive unemployment (which) would weaken Israel's strained social fabric.»⁵

Thus, \$3 billion in military and economic aid for 1986 was approved, although US government loans extended for other purposes were halted until 'Israel' could register progress in some or all of the following areas: (a) elimination of all government subsidies, including export subsidies; (b) unification of effective protection rates; (c) elimination of all anti-competitive government regulation; (d) denationalization of the Israeli capital market and particularly the elimination of 'directed' and 'earmarked' government credit; (e) reform of labor legislation allowing increased labor mobility; (f) selling



off state-owned industries; (g) elimination of the Ministry of Trade and Economics; (h) ending the endless funneling of public funds into insolvent enterprises; and (i) reducing the size of the public service labor force.

This was, of course, accompanied by profuse assurances that the US «did not want to intervene in the internal affairs of Israel.»

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

Although the Zionist entity has never really enjoyed economic clear sailing in its 37 year history, the economic deterioration of the past three years is viewed not only as a threat to social stability, but also as a strategic danger. Crumbling economics would limit the size of the military establishment which constitutes the main fabric of the Zionist entity, from which imperialism projects its dominance in the region. Thus, it is not surprising that no opposition was raised to injecting further military aid, but there was much controversy involved in the US and Zionist efforts to push for an austerity program designed to restructure and integrate the Israeli economic system further into the international imperialist market.

Probably at no other time in history have such intense economic efforts been exerted to bail out the US's strategic asset. Delegations flitted back and forth. In one month alone, a record number of 37 US members of Congress visited the Zionist state to get first-hand information about the economy. There were closed door meetings, economic austerity package deals, and studies submitted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the US Agency for International Development (AID) and US economic experts, well-known for their pro-Zionist stances.

They all came up with the same solution: «The hope of Israel then is to be among the high-tech nations. Israel must drastically increase its exports or go under economically. It is a national emergency.»⁶ In other words, the US deems it of vital national interest at this stage that 'Israel' rehabilitate its economy by becoming more integrated in the world imperialist market, but escorted under US auspices, not going independently. This is reflected in the stress on «the era of high technical revolution», private sector investments, switching relations from ones of financial aid to ones of business», etc. This is emphasized not only in US imperialist circles, but in Zionist quarters as well, despite opposition from within the Israeli state sector. Peres calls this stage «the third stage of Zionism», meaning a society based on the conquest of science and all-out development of higher technology. (He considers the first stage to have been the conquest of labor, the second, the conquest of land.)

Ten years ago, high-tech products accounted for 1% of all Israeli exports. Today that figure is 34%. In the light of the new

economic high-tech base being created via the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between 'Israel' and the US, and the stress on high-tech exports, this figure is expected to exceed 60% by 1992. In order that Israeli companies stand on their own feet, foreign investment and marketing help are essential. Within the past two years, 150 US firms have invested in 'Israel' and the number is growing.

The switch to high-tech also necessitates relinquishing state-controlled corporations, selling them off to private investors to convert them to new export-oriented, high-tech industries. More than a hundred of these corporations, owned either by the state, the Histadrut or the Jewish Agency, are up for sale. Israeli enterprises which are considered sellable include insurance, real-estate companies, chemical and metal works plants.

In conjunction with the Zionist economic crisis, there is the US's dilemma of its own \$200 billion deficit. In addition, it is becoming increasingly difficult to assuage US domestic discontent triggered by budget cuts in vital social service areas (Medicare, Amtrack, social security, etc.), while doling out grants in the billion dollar range to sustain 'Israel' as an artificial state-base. One administration official said: «To lavish funds like this is counterproductive. It helps maintain Israel as a US junkie. What about the domestic debt? What about the farmers who are going bankrupt?» Even in 1985, when the aid package was 86% less than it is for 1986, according to the Office of Management and Budget, the \$2.6 billion allotted to 'Israel' was equal to:

- six times the amount Reagan proposed to spend on US energy conservation.
- twice the amount slated for consumer and occupational health and safety programs.
- the combined worldwide spending of the State Department, Peace Corps and US contributions to the UN and its agencies.

«OPERATION INDEPENDENCE»

In the light of the seriousness of the situation, and the studies and proposals made, one fact was impressed on both partners: Something must be done and fast. According to Herbert Stein, an economics professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and staunch Zionist supporter, «Steps for assuring execution of the program should be taken and milestones designed for measuring performance.» Thus began a many-pronged campaign to attack the economic problems of the Zionist entity. This campaign was basically initiated, designed and monitored by the US, despite public assurances that the US role was to help, not intervene.

One manifestation of the US suggestions were the plans for Package Deals I and II, also known as the Economic Stabilization Programs. These were conceived in US chambers in the strictest secrecy and made known only to a select few, including Peres, two or three of his senior aides, Finance Minister Modai and two Treasury officials. When details of these deals began to spread, the general attitude in official Zionist circles was obstinacy. The programs would result in widespread business closures and mass unemployment, estimated as high as half a million, particularly in the public sector.

Although considered severe, the measures were to be carried out cushioned by a massive \$1.5 billion grant. Despite indignation about «knuckling under to US dictates,» the Israeli government got a free hand in implementing these package deals from two of the most important economic determinants in the Zionist entity: the Histadrut and the Coordinating Committee of the Economic Organizations, the most influential member of which is the Manufacturers' Association. More significant still was the complete halt of Zionist lobbying on Capitol Hill for three months. These factors gave the Zionist government a breathing space to tackle vital economic matters.

Another important initiative introduced to pull 'Israel' out of its economic quagmire is Operation Independence (OI). OI is an important adjunct of the emergency policy now taking effect in the Zionist entity. Also known as Task Force, it is a private organization of Zionist and international business leaders formed to promote new investment in 'Israel' and channel other economic measures towards high technology. Task Force is divided into eight working groups, each dealing with a specific field of business activity: export of consumer goods to the US,

export of industrial goods to the US, capital investment, trade with Africa and Europe, sale of government-owned companies, special projects, legislation and tourism.

The difference between IO and previous campaigns to boost investment in 'Israel' is the influence in the business world enjoyed by the 85 members of the IO's North American and international task forces. According to US economics expert Stanley Fischer, «This is a high-powered group that can get things done.» Special attention is now being focused on tourism because it is the only sector which can achieve high returns in a relatively short period, not to mention its being one of the world's fastest growing industries, second only to petroleum. It is hoped that tourism will add \$1 billion a year to the income side of the Israeli balance of payments, and that the recent 30% drop in tourism will be made up.

No less active were the teams from the IMF, AID and the US-Israeli Joint Economic Development Group. The general guideline for these teams was summarized by US Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Richard W. Murphy: «The US and Israel accept the principle that additional extraordinary US economic assistance would only serve a useful purpose in the context of a comprehensive Israeli economic reform program.»⁷

Besides the ventures mentioned above, there are other joint ventures that herald a much higher and more significant degree of integration between the US and Israeli economic systems. Chief among these are the FTA and the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), better known as Star Wars. Suffice it to say that an overhaul of the Israeli economic system is required to lay the groundwork for a high-tech base if such ambitious programs are to be implemented. «Science and technology are not merely one aspect of our economic life. Rather the whole country must be based on them,» asserted the *Jerusalem Post* on April 24, 1985.

PACKAGE DEALS IN ACTION

The past few years, Zionist economic policy has vacillated from attacking inflation to stimulating exports. However, up till now no policy has been found for successfully reducing inflation and improving the balance of payments simultaneously. The 1973 war was followed by 8 years of increase in economic growth, averaging 9-10%. However, by 1984, the growth rate was zero. Without economic reforms, inflation would stay at 900-1000% levels. Realizing they had a national emergency on their hands, the Zionist leadership was left with no choice but to implement reforms, prompted by the barrage of economic initiatives, plans and new historic agreements, and cushioned by the \$1.5 billion injection of emergency aid. By mid-1985, the wheels of the austerity program has begun to turn. Kicking up a fuss once in a while but eventually buckling under, the Zionist authorities began their eight-month austerity program. This program was characterized by devaluation of the shekel and «dismantling Israel's pervasive indexation system,» according to an AID report. Subsidies for basic foodstuffs and transport were reduced; subsidies on gasoline and other petroleum products were eliminated; taxes were raised and new ones levied; higher charges for government services, including electricity, post, medical care and higher education, were imposed. These measures were expected to save \$200 million in foreign currency, and yield about \$300 million in new taxes and levies.

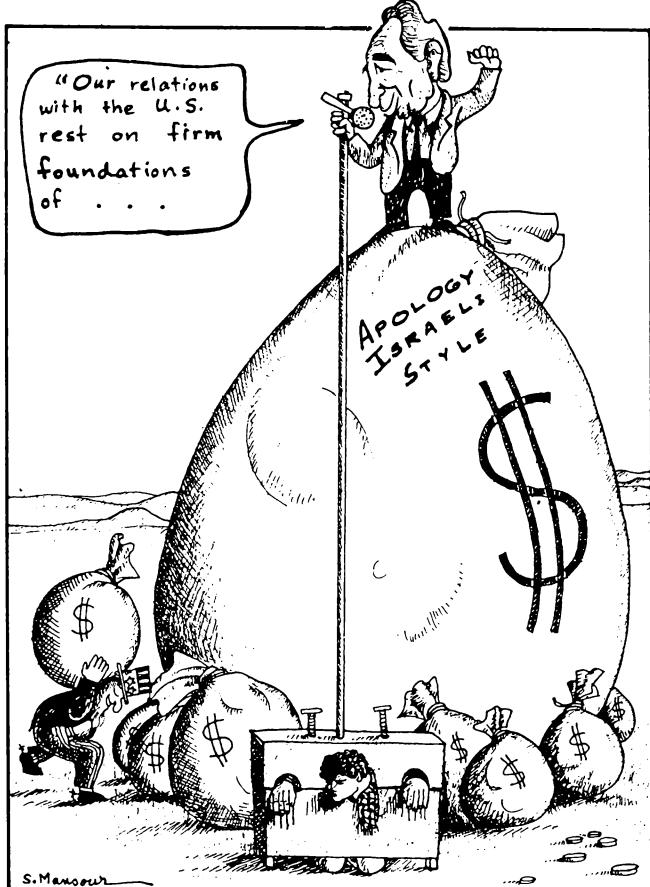
Moreover, a new law is going through the Israeli parliament that will make it an offense punishable by loss of job or pension, for public employees, including ministers, to exceed budget allotments. In April 1986, an official report called for the resignation of the heads of the Israeli Central Bank and four big commercial banks, because of their part in the 1983 stock market collapse - a calamity which contributed significantly to the 1983-4 economic slump, escalating the prevailing 500% inflation rate. A second law is to give independence to the Central Bank in establishing the overall monetary policy. This will allow the bank to refuse government requests to print money to cover government deficits.

The shekel was devaluated. This caused the cost of imports to rise, but lowered the price of Israeli exports abroad. There was a 33% reduction in the monthly cost-of-living increment paid to workers to compensate for inflation, according to indexation which links wages to prices. These payments now cover only about half the rise in the cost of living. Government hiring has been frozen. Some 15,000 government jobs are being eliminated, and new purchases of goods and services were frozen for six months. These reforms are aimed at achieving a growth rate of 6-7%, stimulated by a 10% annual increase in exports, especially of high-tech goods, via the unique FTA.

By April 1985, the unemployment rate had jumped to 7.4%, i.e., 92,000 jobless. Although assurances poured forth in the press that this situation was temporary, this did not eliminate fears of social unrest or mass emigration from the country, as happened in 1980, the last time unemployment rose. Implementation of the measures designed to save the Zionist entity from an economic disaster was beginning to have side effects.

According to provisional figures released on March 17th by the Central Statistics Office, 19,000 Israelis emigrated from the country in 1985 - 12% more than in 1984 (17,000). According to the *New York Times*, January 7th, «Immigration to Israel last year fell to its lowest point since the country was founded in 1948... Only 11,298 immigrants arrived in Israel in 1985, a 41% drop from 1948, when 19,230 immigrants arrived...» These figures include the approximately 10,000 Ethiopian Jews brought in the secret airlift from Sudan.

This was the reason for Peres' objection to devaluating the shekel in May 1985 and to further reducing indexation prior to cancelling it: «Who says that curing the economic situation justifies worsening the social situation?» This not only signalled an adverse social situation, but was meant to push for a more gradualist approach to implementing economic reforms. The US adopted a benevolent attitude, but was not really reassured of the effectiveness of such an approach. «Adoption of the gradual program was a fact of life the US administration had to accept,» said a State Department official. The US came through with aid and gave the Zionist leadership a free hand to imple-



ment a more gradual method in a new wage-price package deal with labor and management. Yet by June, the US administration was beginning to show impatience.

The US-Israeli Joint Economic Development Group held serious deliberations. The group was headed by Undersecretary of State Allan Wallis and included Professor H. Stein and Stanley Fischer. Statistics showed the failure of Peres' gradualist approach: Inflation targets had been set at 12% for April, 5% for May, and 5% for June, but figures released by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics showed inflation at 19.4% in April, 10% in May and 25% in June, which projects an annual rate of about 400%. On this backdrop, the US pressed harder for a 10-15% devaluation of the shekel, and the removal of import restrictions and export subsidies.

The US administration was "determined to create maximum pressure in Israel for economic reforms," according to the *Washington Post*, June 9, 1985. Such pressure is viewed as necessary because of Israeli incapability and at times abdurance to implementing the needed measures. "The US... is far from assured that Israel... will take the strong measures the American and Israeli experts believe are needed to deal with Israel's underlying economic problems," according to Secretary of State Schultz.

REAGANOMICS IN 'ISRAEL'

For the US and 'Israel', vital strategic interests are at stake in the Middle East. "That stake rests to a decisive extent on Israel," wrote the *Chicago Tribune* on May 13, 1986. "A strong Israel, in defending its own existence, plays a key role" in striking nationalist and progressive forces "that seek to undermine US and Western presence in the Middle East." In short, the overall economic and industrial structure must be changed qualitatively to enable this imperialist base to better serve US interests in the region. Steering industry towards this new course can only be to the benefit of the multinational corporations and the Zionist bourgeoisie.

Those Jews who have been painstakingly collected from the four corners of the earth are now being hard hit by austerity measures. Lower income strata are hardest hit by unemployment and de-indexation. Studies reveal that income distribution is even more unequal than in 1979-80, when unemployment last triggered an emigration wave. A study made by the Center for Social Policy Studies states: "36% of all reported income (net, after taxes) are accrued to the top-earning 10% of all families... The 30% at the bottom of the income scale has less than 4% of all net income."

On the other hand, a new breed of highly skilled labor is emerging. Probably most significant is that high-tech employees are hired on a contract basis. There are therefore no unions or workers committees. Science-based, non-unionized company employees "form a class of their own" according to *Midstream*, January 1985. The companies where they work are basically unaffected by economic turmoil. Their products are manufactured for foreign markets and paid for in dollars, insulating them from inflation and other problems. These companies are either joint Israeli-US ventures or subsidiaries of US companies.

"This is how American companies can make money despite the government policy," said the chairman of Ampal-American Israeli Corporation. Though these high-tech workers and employees are generally highly skilled, and receive benefits and enviable paychecks, they are not indispensable, or wholly protected from being replaced in the course of advances in technological development. The high-tech drive "... in short disrupts the social system which at present gives workers and salaried people some security in the fact of the economic crisis," in the words of Matti Peled.

"This is the shape of things to come," wrote one economic commentator. The high-tech era, projected simplistically as the 'silicon saviour' of the Israeli economy, has far-reaching economic and political implications. Obviously, it means further militarization of the Israeli economy, as the bulk of high-tech

industries have military, espionage or security applications. The imposition of Reaganomics in the Zionist state means not only its closer integration into the world imperialist market, but its becoming a subsidiary of the US military-industrial complex. Politically speaking, the margin of freedom enjoyed by 'Israel' vis-a-vis the US will be narrowed. Economic integration could provide the base for the emergence of a new type of Israeli leadership, less concerned about 'special' Zionist interests that have caused friction with US administrations in the past. We will see an even higher degree of cooperation on specific policy.

Concretely, this means a more obvious Israeli role in the Reagan Administration's anti-Soviet campaign, as already seen in Star Wars cooperation. There will be even more Israeli arms exports to reactionary forces around the world - from the apartheid regime of South Africa to Latin American military dictatorships and contra-type rebels. 'Israel' will be equipped with even more sophisticated means for infiltrating Africa and the Arab world. Besides aiming to further consolidate the Zionist occupation of Palestine, this new trend posits 'Israel' as an even more obvious danger to progressive forces and liberation movements around the world.



1 *International Zionism: Its History and Politics*, Academy of Sciences in the Soviet Union, Arabic edition published by Dar Ibn Rushd and Farabi, 1979, Page 11.

2 *Ibid*, page 11.

3 *Wall Street Journal*, March 22, 1985.

4 *Mideast Observer Legislative Update*, January 1, 1985.

5 *Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 1985.

6 *Midstream*, January 1985.

7 Statement before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, January 30, 1985.

8 *Washington Post*, June 9, 1985.

9 «Israel's Deadly Bargain,» *Guardian*, April 19, 1985.



Palestinian Youth Organization

First Congress

The first general congress of the Palestinian Youth Organization was held from April 25th to 28th. The congress was the culmination of the congresses of all the PYO units, commissariats and branches. Delegates from the branches in Syria and Lebanon, as well as branches abroad, participated.

The PYO invited several Palestinian, Arab and international youth organizations to the opening session. Doctor George Habash, General Secretary, and several other leaders of the PFLP, were present. The following delivered speeches during the opening session: The Central Preparatory Committee of the PYO; The General Secretary of the Egyptian Democratic Youth Union; a Central Committee member of the Palestinian Communist Youth Union; PFLP Politbureau member, Abdul Raheem Mallouh. In addition, telegrams were received from different Palestinian, Arab and international youth organizations.

FINAL STATEMENT OF THE FIRST GENERAL PYO CONGRESS

The first general congress of the Palestinian Youth Organization (PYO) was held, under the slogan: «Consolidating the struggle of the PYO in order to:

- preserve the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people;
- achieve the national rights of our people, first and foremost their rights to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state; and
- unite Palestinian youth in a democratic youth union.»

The convening of the first congress of the PYO constitutes an important, qualitative step towards recruiting the Palestinian youth and uniting their national militant efforts. It is also the culmination of the various congresses of the PYO branches.

The congress discussed and approved the central preparatory committee's various reports, and their evaluation of the past period. The congress also discussed, amended and then approved the internal rules of the PYO. In addition, a number of research papers and studies were approved for publication. The studies dealt with the development of the Palestinian youth movement, the situation of our youth in the occupied territories, and the ideological brain-washing and distortion of nationalism,

which is enacted against our youth by imperialism and reactionary forces.

The congress highly evaluated the role of our youth in the occupied territories in the struggle against the Zionist and reactionary plans. It called for giving all forms of support to consolidate their struggle. The congress studied the reality of the dispersion of our Palestinian youth and their various organizations. It concluded the discussion by reaffirming the significance of uniting the Palestinian youth in one democratic youth union. One of the main tasks for the PYO's newly elected general secretariat is to launch a broad campaign to activate dialogue among the different Palestinian youth organizations in order to facilitate the process of mobilizing all the Palestinian youth and uniting their organization. This process is the youth's active contribution to the struggle to restore the unity of the PLO on a national basis, with firm struggle against imperialism, Zionism and all capitulationists. It is also the PYO's duty to motivate the PLO leadership to continue support to our people's struggle for achieving their national rights to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on their land.

One of the congress sessions reviewed the situation of the Arab youth movement, its common interests and concerns. The role of Arab youth was highly evaluated. Various recommendations and resolutions were considered for improving relations with the Arab Youth Union, to enable our youth organization to participate in defending the just cause of the Arab people.

A great deal of emphasis was put on the significance of improving relations with all democratic Arab youth unions and organizations.

The congress also reviewed the role of the democratic youth movement on the international democratic youth movement on the international level. The role of the international democratic youth organizations was highly evaluated in terms of solidarity with all the peoples struggling for liberation. The congress also emphasized the importance of establishing broad bilateral relations with the communist youth unions in the socialist community.

On the political level, the congress discussed the difficult situation of the Arab world in general and the Palestinian cause in particular. On the Palestinian level, it was concluded that it is important at this stage to mitigate the severe splits from which the Palestinian

cause is suffering, in order to protect the significant achievements of the past twenty years of struggle, and to maintain the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The congress viewed the official PLO leadership's collaboration with the imperialist, Zionist and reactionary plans as the main threat to the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, the Arafat-Hussein agreement signed on February 11, 1985, was the first step towards complete involvement in the liquidationist settlement. This agreement entails a series of dangerous concessions which aim at the total liquidation of the Palestinian cause.

In his speech, King Hussein decided that all political coordination with the leadership of the PLO had come to a halt. Yet he emphasized his commitment to the agreement as the basis for any future political moves. The king's speech exposed the real intentions of the imperialist, Zionist and reactionary forces that are pushing for the agreement. The present PLO leadership's adherence to this agreement, on the other hand, only proves its unwillingness to seriously review its policies and withdraw from the agreement.

The congress called upon the Palestinian youth, the various youth organizations and all the Palestinian democratic, progressive and national factions, to struggle to foil the Amman agreement and restore the unity of the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, based on adherence to the national program, a firm political stance against imperialism and Zionism and their plans, and total democratic reform in the structure of the PLO and its institutions. Cancellation of the Amman agreement and restoration of the PLO's unity on the basis of the national program, are two current tasks. Achieving them would contribute to the support and consolidation of the struggle of our people in the occupied territories. It would strengthen their ranks in the face of Zionism's fascist practices, its attempts to create substitutes for the PLO and its plans of 'civil' administration and 'autonomy' in cooperation with the Jordanian regime. The unity of our people and their national forces is the guarantee for the continuation of the revolution and retrieving our people's rights to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state.

It was also noted during the congress that despite the defeat suffered by imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction

when the May 17th agreement was foiled, these forces continue to try and implement their plans to 'Zionize' Lebanon, hinder its democratic development and national independence. The enemy camp stands united against a nationalist Lebanon. This requires that the nationalist Palestinian-Syrian-Lebanese alliance be strengthened in order to be able to defeat the enemy plans.

The congress stresses the necessity of developing this alliance, and preserving the social rights of the Palestinian people and guaranteeing their security. It also stresses the necessity of enabling the Palestinian revolution to play its role in: (1) Fighting the Zionist enemy from Lebanese soil, alongside the Lebanese nationalist; and (2) protecting the masses from all attacks.

On the Arab level, the congress noted the deteriorating conditions in the Arab ranks and that the political initiative has now shifted to Arab reaction. The congress calls for solidifying the ranks of the progressive nationalist Arab forces and uniting their efforts against imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

The congress calls on democratic Arab youth organizations, as well as all progressive youth organizations, to

intensify their mutual cooperation. These organizations should increase their militant efforts in order to enforce democratic freedoms in Arab countries, and multiply the forms of solidarity with the popular movements striving to develop the conditions for a mass resurgence in the Arab region.

On the international level, the congress stressed that imperialism, led by the US, continuously strives to escalate tension, pushing the world to the verge of a destructive nuclear war. US imperialism has taken a negative stance towards all the initiatives proposed by the Soviet Union for easing international tension and limiting nuclear arms deployment, as a first step towards eliminating them. Despite these initiatives, the US has continued nuclear testing and moreover spread the nuclear arms race into space. The PYO totally supports the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union and calls on all international democratic youth organizations and unions to stand against US imperialism's aggressive plans and policies. The PYO congress also notes imperialism's violation of the people's rights and sovereignty, trying to impose its domination. US imperialism has become an international terrorist force as seen in its direct interven-

tion in Nicaragua's internal affairs, its support of counterrevolutionaries in Afghanistan and all fascist regimes and dictatorships, its brutal attacks on Libya, and its threats against Syria and the Palestinian revolution. All this serves to emphasize the fascist aspect of US imperialism in this period.

The first congress of the PYO strongly denounces the brutal US attack on Libya, and calls for a broad campaign of solidarity with the heroic Libyan people. It calls on the Arab youth, and youth around the world, to take a firm stand against US imperialism's aggressive policies which show the new fascist tendency on the international level.

The first general congress of the PYO members will be persistent militants working to restore the PLO's unity, opposed to Zionism and imperialism. They will work as unifying elements in the Palestinian youth movement until a united democratic youth union is established. The congress also pledges to serve as a bridge of friendship between all Arab and international democratic youth organizations.

Damascus, April 28, 1986

Arab Trade Unions Repressed

The International Union for Arab Workers' Trade Unions Exposes the Role of the Regimes in Violating Union Freedom and Harassing Militant Leaders.

The General Secretariat of the International Union for Arab Workers' Trade Unions distributed a document to international, Arab and local trade unions. The document included a briefing on the continuous violations of the rights and freedoms of the trade unions in the Arab countries. These violations have reached the point of direct suppression of the unions' every move, imprisonment of their leaders and confiscation of their possessions. This is an outright violation of all the agreements that the governments of these countries have previously signed. The General Secretariat called upon all trade unions to support its struggle to confront these violations and guarantee the rights of the Arab working class. Following is the text of the document:

The trade unions are going through a difficult stage, characterized by the authorities' increasing interference in union affairs, and setbacks for trade union freedom and rights. During the

past few years of dealing with the Arab Labor Organization, a fall in the level of cooperation was noted. The reactionary governments' agents are continuously trying to eliminate the workers' achievements by controlling the voting power in the Arab Labor Organization and the Administrative Council. They veto any resolutions that would further the achievement of the Arab working class. This regression affects the life of the Arab working class and its trade unions. There are increasing cases of violations of their freedom and rights. There are also many attempts to abort any effort to form genuine trade unions in some of the Arab countries. Increasing numbers of trade union leaders are in prison.

The trade union movement has to face this difficult reality with firmness and courage. The movement has to depend firstly on its own force and potentials, secondly on the support of Arab nationalist and progressive forces, thirdly on the international forces of liberation

and progress and other friendly organizations, and fourthly on the abilities of international and regional organizations whose constitutions enshrine the principle of protecting the working class, its organizations and potentials, and protecting human rights.

The General Secretariat presents this issue to Arab public opinion, emphasizing the following points:

VIOLATION OF FREEDOM

1. The charter of the existing Arab Labor Organization states:

"The organization aims at achieving social justice, raising the level of the Arab working class and standardizing working conditions for all Arab workers." In spite of this fact and the existence of the Arab agreement no. 8, that deals especially with the freedoms and rights of trade unions, the organization's committee on trade union freedoms has been unable to achieve any progress during the past few years. In addition, the committee was unable to stop the continuous violations of the trade union's freedoms and rights. This committee's existence has been reduced to a formality.

In the Arab and International Labor Conference, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman each have delegations of three representatives, whereas trade unions are non-existent in these countries.

The General Secretariat was able to reach agreements with the regimes of both Bahrain and Jordan, for protecting the freedom and rights of trade unions.

Both governments committed themselves to the agreement and attended the Arab Labor Conference. The agreement was officially documented in the Arab Labor Organization. Yet the agreement was only on paper, and the working class in these two countries is suffering from the authorities' repression.

In North Yemen, the controversy continues over the issue of the legitimacy of the trade union. The authorities dissolved the existing union (that is still active outside the country) and formed a new one. The majority of the working class is still not allowed to form its own trade union anywhere in the country.

In Tunisia, the authorities invaded all the centers of the Tunisian trade unions, confiscated all their finances and possessions, and encouraged a number of the ruling party's puppets to form new national committees instead. The general secretary of the union, Ashoor, and a number of union leaders and cadres were imprisoned, or placed under town arrest. The authorities called for a conference outside the framework of the legitimate union, where they elected a new leadership of their own men in an attempt to liquidate the legitimate leadership. The legitimate leadership continues to struggle under very harsh conditions.

In addition, there are all the common cases, that occur in most Arab countries, of restricting demonstrations and strikes and forcibly repressing them, prohibiting meetings and rallies, and government censorship of any organizational work. The Arab Labor Organization and the trade union freedoms committee were unable to take a firm position on these oppressive measures. Their silence is exactly what the authorities want.

THE REGIMES' ROLE

2. Government agents within the Arab Labor Organization collaborate with employers to minimize the workers' role. They cooperate in aborting any project intended to benefit the working class, or raise the workers' technical, organizational or educational level. These government agents outdid themselves to abort the Arab center project for technical training. They forbade the construction of the center, although the project was intended to raise the technical capabilities of the working class. Government agents, in cooperation with the employers, also hindered the work of the Arab Institute for Technical Safety and Health, by minimizing its budget to the point where it became completely paralyzed. This occurred despite the fact that this institute contributes to protecting workers by providing them with specific studies about workers' safety rules for each industry.

These government agents also aborted the project of the Arab Institute for Workers' Studies, that is affiliated to the International Union for Arab Workers' Trade Unions. They did not carry out the resolutions of the Arab Labor Organization's 9th to 13th conferences. They created obstacles to hinder the establishment of the institute that the Arab working class badly needed.

These facts show which way the Arab Labor Organization is going at present. The Saudi government plays a major role in distracting the organization's attention from its main goals, hindering its work and transforming it into a marginal organization with no effect on labor and laborers, and no role in protecting trade union freedoms and rights.

RESOLUTIONS IGNORED

3. The conferences of the Arab Labor Organization have adopted many resolutions concerning the rights and freedoms of workers, technical guidance and training, and paid leave of absence for education.

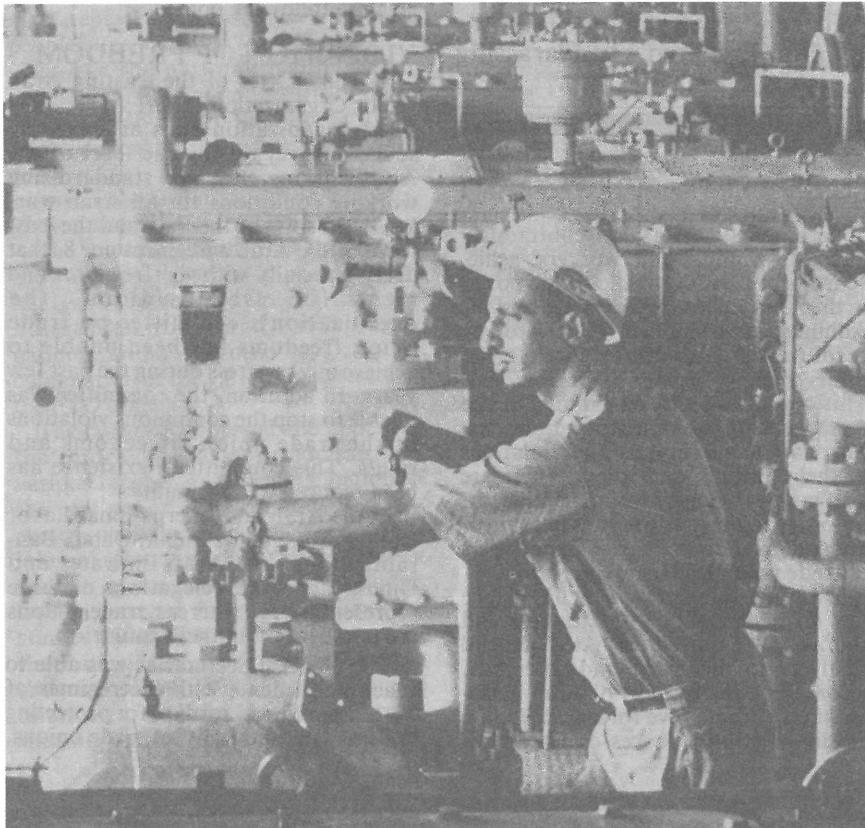
These resolutions were generally adopted to achieve a better life for the Arab working class. Yet up till now, they remain ink on paper. They were not carried out in most Arab countries. The Arab Labor Organization did stress implementation of these resolutions in seminars and lectures. The resolutions were also brought up as points on the agendas of the conferences, to be used to criticize the Arab governments that violate them. What is worse is that the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, do not adhere to any agreements that do not please them. These agreements are not implemented by the government or the administration of the Arab Labor Organization office in these countries. The offices work to freeze these agreements in order to please the government. Thus, over time, the agreements are forgotten.

SLAVE LABOR

4. During the past years, a new phenomenon started in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries: total dependence on Asian labor without any rules to regulate this phenomenon and protect the Arab laborers' rights. This phenomenon grew due to the import offices and companies that wanted to increase their income at the expense of the Asian workers. This trade has become similar to a slave market. Employers started enslaving both Asian and Arab workers who have no human or social rights whatsoever.

The International Union for Arab Trade Unions puts forth these facts, which all aim to defeat the working class, in order to expose the exploitation and inhuman practices against our workers. We will work to confront these practices by all means possible. We will also confront all the authorities' instruments and methods used against workers and their organization. We will work to make the Arab Labor Organization a means for supporting the rights of the Arab working class, for raising their technical and economic level, and for respecting their freedom of organization.

We, in the General Secretariat, request that you use all your potentials to help us in this confrontation to eliminate oppression, free leaders from prison, enforce respect for human rights and carry out the agreements and resolutions of Arab and international labor organizations in all of the Arab countries. We will continue to expose these oppressive practices to Arab and international public opinion, and to the masses of the Arab working class, to consolidate their confrontation, achieve their goals and establish and activate their organizations.



Sudan

Definite Elections — Indefinite Results

In April, the Military Council in Sudan held elections, as it had promised the Sudanese masses when they rose up and toppled Numeiri's reactionary dictatorship in April 1985. For the first time in over two decades, Sudanese went to the polls.

In the 30 years of 'independent' Sudan's history, the people suffered 22 years of military dictatorship, 16 of them under Numeiri. Numeiri's regime developed into one of the most reactionary ones in our time. It can only be compared to the regimes of Duvalier in Haiti, Marcos in the Philippines and Somoza in Nicaragua. The regime destroyed the country economically. Sudan, the largest country in Africa, changed from being the «breadbasket» of the world into a net importer of food and a famine-stricken country.

In terms of foreign policy, Numeiri totally subordinated Sudan to US imperialist control, offering it as a base for the Rapid Deployment Force, supporting the Camp David accords, taking anti-Soviet stands and even playing the major role in the transportation of Ethiopian Jews to the Zionist entity.

Internally, political freedom was violently suppressed. We cannot but remember the massacre against the communists in 1971, when thousands were killed and the top leaders of the Communist Party of Sudan were hung -comrades Abdul Khalil Mahjoub, Al Shafi Ahmed and Hashem Al 'Attah. The regime increased oppression against the people by introducing Islamic law in 1983. In brief, these conditions were the basic reasons for the uprising of April 1985, when the masses and liberal forces in the army toppled the reactionary regime.

THE ELECTIONS AND THE PARTIES

The elections lasted 12 days in the first half of April; 247 of the 301 members of the General Assembly were elected. The elections were postponed indefinitely in 37 of the 68 southern constituencies, because of the war being waged by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The results in 17 of the remaining 31 southern constituencies were not declared.

The election results put the two traditionalist parties in the forefront: the Umma (Nationalist) Party, headed by Sadeq Al Mahdi, won 99 seats, while the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), headed by Zien Al Abideen Al Hindi, won 63 seats. The reactionary Islamic Nationalist Front was third with 51

seats, having benefitted from its abundant finances, its having been allowed to work openly during Numeiri's rule, and the wave of Islamic fundamentalism. The Islamic Nationalist Front is led by Hassan Al Turabi and has its origin in the Muslim Brotherhood. As such, it represents one of the dangers to the newly won democracy, especially in view of its long alliance with Numeiri. Among other acts, Turabi supported Numeiri's proclaiming himself 'Imam' of Sudan.

The Communist Party of Sudan had a weak showing in the elections, gaining three seats, in contrast to its historic role in the Sudanese masses' struggle. This should be understood on the background of the 16 years the party had to function underground, and the severe blows it was dealt by Numeiri's repression. The election results fail to reflect the true extent of the Communist Party's influence, which is especially strong among Sudanese workers and intellectuals.

The other parties that gained seats in the assembly were regionally oriented, mainly from the South and the Kordofan area. In addition, five independents were elected.

THE CABINET

Sadeq Al Mahdi became prime minister and announced a cabinet of 20, including himself. The Umma Party holds nine ministries, most importantly, defense and finance. The DUP holds six ministries, most importantly, foreign and interior. The southern parties hold four ministries. An independent trade unionist was designated Minister of Unity and Peace, assigned the duty of contacting the SPLA leadership to reach a peaceful solution to the civil war. The new government is going to face a number of problems. Most, if not all, can be traced to the catastrophic legacy left by Numeiri's policies:

THE SOUTH

The South represents a historical problem in Sudan. The roots of this problem are related to issues of religion, ethnic origin, language, geography and British colonialism. Most recently, the problem of the South resurfaced when the Numeiri regime decided to redivide

Sudan into eight administrative regions, three of them in the South, after a period when the country was administrated as two regions: North and South. Although this was clearly intended to further weaken the southern population's position, opposition was initially not very clear, because the redivision also weakened the domination of the Dinka tribe, the largest in the South. (Tribal identification is strongest in southern Sudan, but is also strong in parts of the east and west of the country.)

Then, in 1983, Numeiri appointed himself as 'Imam' and enforced Islamic law, banning alcohol and cutting off hands and feet for minor offenses. These laws were enforced regardless of the religion of the person or region involved. (Most southerners are Christians or animists.) This, added to the historical exploitation of the people of the South, caused a revolt. The revolt was led by Colonel John Garang who established the Sudanese Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military wing, the SPLA. It is estimated that the SPLM/SPLA controls 2/3 of the South.

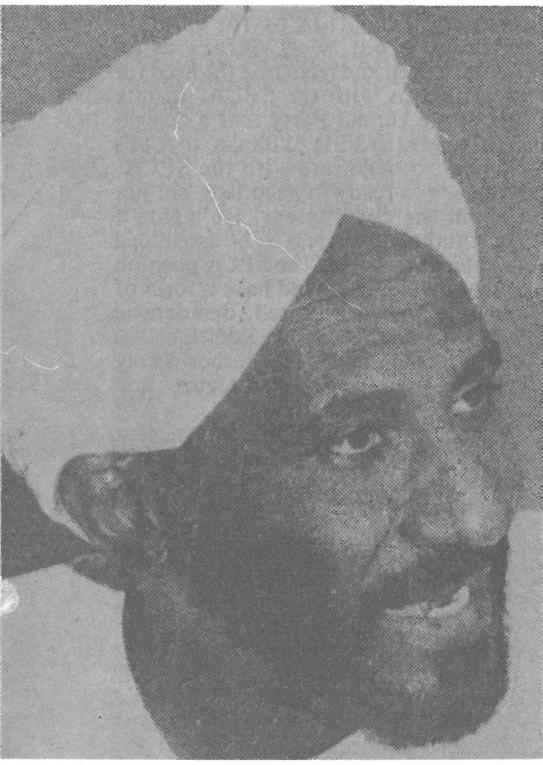
This civil war is costing the state one million Sudanese pounds daily (\$350,000). All parties in Sudan now, with the exception of the Islamic National Front, view Garang as an honest citizen and recognize the need for negotiations with the SPLA. In late April, the Umma Party sent a delegation, headed by Idris Al Banna, to Addis Ababa, to negotiate with the SPLA. Garang was ready to negotiate, but not to join the government. He wants a constitutional congress to be assembled as soon as possible. The SPLA position is that the South should have a form of self-rule within a united, democratic federation of Sudan. In addition, the SPLA sees the necessity of reconsidering relations with the Egyptian regime, and repealing the Islamic laws.

The Umma and DUP see peaceful negotiations as the solution to the problem of the South, but they tend to over-emphasize the role of regional forces, especially Ethiopia, rather than the internal causes of the SPLA's struggle. They also criticize the SPLA for escalating the war. The Islamic Nationalist Front sees Garang as a tool of Ethiopia, with limited popular support. They demand that he come to the capital, Khartoum, to negotiate - "but we shouldn't be quiet about his crimes against the innocent" (sic).

The Communist Party has the most comprehensive position concerning the South. The Communist Party views the SPLM as a serious political force and Garang as "a serious man in politics, economics and the military field. We agree with him on some issues and disagree on others. We call upon him to play a patriotic role," as Comrade Mohammed I. Naqed, General Secretary of the party, says. The communists see the importance of ending the figh-



Mohammed I. Naqed



Sadeq Al Mahdi

ting, but that this should be accompanied by a political solution acceptable to the people of the South. The southerners should have the right to benefit from the oil resources in the South, and Islamic law should be cancelled.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

General Swareddahab, head of the transitional Military Council, has said

that the economic situation threatens Sudan's independence. Numeiri left Sudan literally bankrupt. "The foreign debt is more than \$10 billion; inflation is 100%; and the foreign currency reserves in the Central Bank are only 10,000 Belgian francs" (*Al Safir*, Beirut, May 12th). The IMF stopped loans to Sudan because it hadn't paid the interest due on previous loans - \$218 million.

Under Numeiri, Sudan imported twice as much as it exported, due to the destruction of productive projects and the transfer of most money loaned to private bank accounts abroad. Numeiri subordinated Sudan totally to the US, economically and politically. In return, the US delayed his downfall by providing short-term loans that were eventually recycled into personal accounts in the US. Financial institutions and banks had paid 60% of their profit to the state in taxes, but with the introduction of Islamic law in 1983, the tax was reduced to a ridiculous 2.5%, increasing bank profits and lowering state revenue, in order to be in line with Islamic doctrine!

The platforms of the Umma Party and the DUP for dealing with the economy are based on generalities: coexistence between the private and public sector; reducing dependency on the IMF; and stamping out corruption in the government. The Islamic Nationalist Front claims that the way to solve Sudan's economic problems is by continuing the Islamic banking system.

The Communist Party has a more detailed plan. It stresses the development of agriculture in general and grain cultivation in particular. That would help relieve famine, reduce Sudan's dependence on US wheat and lessen the IMF's leverage. The Communist Party stresses revitalizing production to full capacity, retraining government personnel and excluding parasitic sectors from government decision-making. The Central Bank should have full control of financial activities, in order to protect the Sudanese pound. In the Communist Party's view, the capitalist orientation of the economy must be altered if the economic crisis is to be resolved.

FOREIGN POLICY

There are many common positions among the Sudanese parties in foreign policy questions. All oppose the Camp David accords, though there are differences in the intensity of their opposition. The Umma and the Communist Party view the accords as treason which serves neither the Egyptian nor Arab people. The DUP and the Islamic Nationalist Front view the accords as "hurting the reputation" of Egypt, but that the accords are "in practical terms, dead".

Concerning overall relations with Egypt, all parties concur on the importance of the historical relations that have always existed between the two countries. The Umma is for continuing the historical relations, but cancelling the security provision in the agreements

with Egypt. The DUP and Islamic Nationalist Front are both for continuing relations with Egypt unconditionally. The Communist Party advocates that the historical relations be transformed into militant relations between the two peoples, and that the joint defense agreement with Egypt be cancelled.

All parties agree on improving relations with Libya. The Communist Party has a distinctive militant position of supporting Libya in its confrontation with imperialism. All parties support the Palestinian people and their armed struggle. All call for an end to the Gulf war, though the DUP and the Islamic Nationalist Front sympathize with Iraq.

All the Sudanese parties advocate a policy of non-alignment. While the Communist Party calls for consolidating relations with the socialist community, and its vanguard the Soviet Union, the others call for "balanced relations" between the US and the Soviet Union. Even the latter position will in the end mean improvement of relations with the Soviet Union in contrast to the total control formerly exercised by the US over Sudan. The Sudanese political parties cannot forget the extent to which US imperialism has interfered in their country. They do not forget how the US stopped aid to Sudan after the uprising and cancellation of Sudan's joint defense agreement with Egypt. The US is now setting conditions for the resumption of aid, including Sudan's not signing a defense agreement with Libya, the expulsion of 120 Palestinians whom the US considers to be "terrorists", and continuing Numeiri's anti-communist policies - which amount to dictating Sudan's policy.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

These are the main problems facing Sudan with which the newly elected government will have to deal. There is another problem that persists, due to the country's long history of dictatorship. Though Numeiri's forces were ousted from top positions, they are still present and exert strong influence under the cover of the Islamic National Front. Nor were they eliminated from the armed forces. The Sudanese people should be aware that these reactionary forces are waiting for the proper moment to regain power. The remnants of the dictatorship must be eliminated in order to consolidate democracy. The Islamic laws must be cancelled, the election law revised, and a democratic solution found for the problem of the South. These tasks should be coupled with a solution to the economic crisis which favors the interests of the impoverished masses, while severing relations with US imperialism and restricting the activities of reactionary forces, as the first step to eliminating their influence. The newly formed government has just begun to address these problems.

Chernobyl and the Imperialist Media

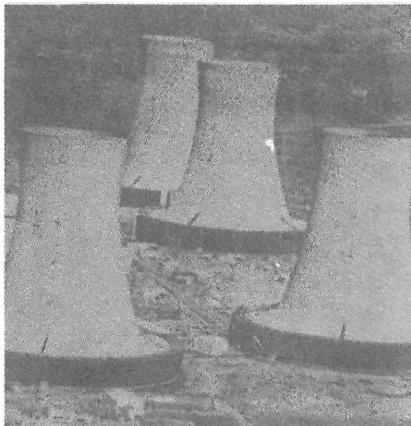
Even before the seriousness of the Chernobyl accident was grasped, there was massive imperialist mobilization to deepen anti-Soviet sentiment internationally.

Since the regrettable mishap, the western media, and especially that of the United States, has waged a broad campaign against the Soviet Union, using the accident to score points. The US papers caused an international uproar against the Soviet Union for its alleged "lax safety measures", "employing old techniques", "concealment of facts", etc. This burning campaign, waged by the American government, aimed at diverting attention from the real issue. The real issue is international peace that is being sabotaged by the US. The US is not only escalating the nuclear arms race, but also further extending it into space with the Star Wars Program.

Nuclear power will continue to make a contribution to society's energy needs, and the Chernobyl disaster is likely to happen again anywhere. Yet international peace could only be achieved through successful negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Soviet Union has, on many occasions, proposed different initiatives to reduce nuclear experiments and the production of nuclear arms. The last initiative was proposed by the Soviet leader himself in his speech during the 12th International Youth Festival in Moscow. Gorbachev announced a freeze on all nuclear experiments, and called upon the US and all western European countries to take the same step. The US, aspiring to achieve military superiority, has rejected all initiatives, inspite of domestic protest and many setbacks for its own programs, most recently the explosion of the Challenger. The human mind cannot imagine the catastrophe that would have been if the Challenger had exploded over a populated area.

The American media launched a wave of hysteria as if Chernobyl was the first accident of its kind in the world. Yet the May 12th issue of the American Time magazine listed seven of the most serious, reported nuclear accidents in the world. Four of these occurred in the US at plants used for both energy and military purposes. This year, other than the Challenger explosion, there was the malfunction at the Kerr-McGee corp. uranium-processing plant in Oklahoma state, which killed one worker and sent one hundred people to hospitals. The biggest US mishap, which occurred in 1979 in Pennsylvania at Three Mile Island, was also caused by equipment malfunctions and human error. Due to a

malfuction in the safety system in Alabama's Brown Ferry reactor, there was another nuclear disaster in 1979. In 1961, there was a fatal explosion of the SL-1 reactor for military experiments near Idaho Falls. There have been many others. In 1952, the meltdown of Canada's Chalk River reactor was the first known major malfunction of a nuclear power plant. In 1957, at least 33 cancer deaths were traced to the effects of England's Liverpool plant malfunction. In Japan, leaks from a major nuclear power plant contaminated water for several hours, which exposed many people to radiation.



The Three Mile Island Plant is still being decontaminated.

Unlike what the American media has tried to establish, the quality and safety of the Soviet-built nuclear reactors are no less than the American-built ones, or any others. None of this is to diminish the seriousness of the Chernobyl incident, but to expose the hypocrisy of the imperialist media that attempts to influence international public opinion against the Soviet Union and poison the political and diplomatic atmosphere.

What are the real reasons behind this hysteria?

Nuclear disarmament is a battle the Soviet Union is winning on the ideological level as a result of its peace initiatives to which some western European countries have been more receptive than has the US. The US government wants to retaliate by attempting to divert attention away from these initiatives and portraying the real threat as coming from the Soviet Union. This would justify the US government's refusal to respond to the Soviet initiatives, and

allow it to enact its own policies. The US used the Chernobyl accident as part of its economic warfare against the socialist countries. It encouraged its allies in Western Europe and the 'third world' to check all food exports coming from the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the Soviets certified that these were not contaminated. (In fact, there has never been any proof that any were contaminated).

In its continued efforts to solve imperialism's crisis to its own advantage, the US seized upon the Chernobyl accident as one more weapon for enforcing its own economic and «anti-terrorist» policies at the Tokyo Summit. In addition, the US government tries to present itself, to the world and its own masses, as technologically superior to the Soviet Union. This is especially true after the Challenger setback. Last, but not least, the US government tries to divert international attention from its aggressive policies, and calm down the outrage as a result of its latest military aggression against Libya. It is clear that the attitude of imperialism to Chernobyl was to employ the incident to serve its ideological, military and economic aims.

After the Chernobyl accident, the Soviet leadership renewed its willingness to unite efforts on the issue of nuclear arms control. They suggested serious cooperation with the US within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to pass an international law that regulates nuclear arms production and nuclear experiments. Comrade Gorbachev himself extended the unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing until August 6th of this year. He suggested to meet with President Reagan in Hiroshima to sign an agreement to cease nuclear experimenting for military purposes.

Whatever else there is to be learned from the incident, there is an urgent need to respond to the Soviets' nuclear disarmament initiatives. Because if the meltdown of a power plant caused so much unrest, we can only imagine the outcome of a nuclear bomb explosion! International cooperation is necessary to reduce this risk.

The Soviet Union has taken yet another step in this direction by agreeing to host US scientists to monitor three Soviet nuclear stations to see if tests occur, if the US approves monitoring of US tests by Soviet scientists. The US government's initial reaction has been skeptical, for it had already determined its main response to the Chernobyl incident, i.e., its announcement that it will no longer abide by the terms of the Salt II treaty for limiting nuclear arms. ●

The Culture of Resistance

The paper below was presented by Salem Jubran, editor of *Al Jadeed* journal published in Haifa, at the International Congress for Support of the Palestinian Culture in the Occupied Lands, held in Athens, March 29-30. Jubran's presentation was entitled: "The Role of the National Culture of Resistance in Confronting National and Cultural Uprooting." It deals with the cultural aspect of the Zionist policy for uprooting/the Palestinians who remained in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948, and with their own efforts to combat this.



The fortress of Dhaher Al Umar Al Zaidani, built during his rebellion against the Ottoman empire in 1770. Today, the citadel is the symbol of Shafa Amr, near the northern coast of Palestine.

After the disaster of 1948, the largest sector of the Palestinian people became refugees - displaced persons. This deeply affected Palestinian culture, yet it is still expected of us to preserve the Palestinian people's cultural unity and national identity. The experience of our Palestinian Arab masses who remained in their cities and villages, and their preservation of the national culture, contributed to foiling the plan to uproot them.

After 1948, the Palestinian Arabs became a minority in 'Israel' - they were no more than 133,000. In the beginning, the Zionists considered us as a "typographical error" or "temporary phenomenon". Rabin Barkat, general secretary of the Mapai party that was in power in 1951, said: «We didn't expect that we would still have minorities in the state of Israel. We wanted a state free of minorities.»

The Kafr Qassem massacre in 1956 was intended to terrorize us and make us leave. Even in the seventies, General

Aharon Yariv, former commander of the Israeli army intelligence, admitted that there were ready-made plans to expell 700-800,000 of the Palestinian Arabs that remained under occupation. Uprooting, expelling and liquidating the Arab presence in Palestine has always been a central, strategic goal of official Israeli policy. From the goal of physical uprooting stems the policy of cultural uprooting - spreading cosmopolitanism* and ignorance, and depriving the people of their culture.

In the first few years after the establishment of the state of 'Israel', the Mapai official in charge of minorities suggested a gradual transition from Arabic to Hebrew as the official language in the Arab schools. This was intended to end our relationship to our language, so that we would undergo the same tragedy as the Algerian masses who were thrown into cultural exile by being forced to use the French colonists' language. However, we preserved our national language. The battle began

for developing our authentic national culture, adhering to our land and history, in order to combat the uprooting policy.

The racist authorities tried to create an artificial, weak Arab culture that would harmonize with and justify their policies. Our people, however, displayed an amazing cultural resistance. This foiled the collaborationist culture and spelled doom for collaborationist journalism as was attempted with newspapers such as *Al Youm*, *Hakikat Al Amr*, *Al Anba*, etc. At the same time, our own militant journalism was maintained through *Al Ittihad* daily, *Al Jadeed* monthly journal, published regularly since 1951, and *Al Ghad* youth magazine.

CHALLENGES TO THE ARAB CULTURE IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE

Until 1967, we were completely cut off geographically from the rest of the Palestinian people and from the rest of the world. Despite our being isolated by the enemy and by some Arab states, it was our duty to protect our link with the Palestinian history and culture, and with Arab history and Islamic civilization. Our children learned nothing about Ibrahim Tuqan, Abu Salma, Abdul Rahim Mahmoud, Mutlaq Abdul Khalq, Asaaf Al Nashashibi, Khalil Ali Sakakin, etc. We had to provide the younger generation with this ideological and cultural national heritage.

The enemy tried to implant feelings of inferiority and frustration in the face of the Israeli 'superman', in the human and national spirit of our people, in order to break down their morale and totally liquidate their national identity. We confronted these attempts by teaching our youth how the whole world respects the Arab and Palestinian culture, thought and civilization.

The enemy tried to prove that the people of Palestine lacked an integral national character, that the Palestinians are a bunch of terrorists, that the PLO is not the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, but only a terrorist organization. We confronted these allegations by presenting the literature, history and struggle of our people. We presented the reality of the Zionists'

crime of expelling and uprooting our people. We presented the reality of the Palestinian people, and their willingness to actively participate in making peace in the framework of justice and international legitimacy.

The 'civilized' racism of the Zionist ideologues reached the point of claiming that the Palestinian people, throughout their thousands of years of living in Palestine, had not created any civilization or cultural values. They thereby aimed to prove their claims that there is no national link between the people and the land.

We confronted these racist lies. Here I would like to mention the late Emil Touma, the great intellectual. He refuted these racist lies by compiling a list of the hundreds of Palestinian Arab scientists, poets, writers, researchers and historians throughout the past centuries. This confirms the Palestinian people's active contribution to the crea-

tion of the Arab and Islamic civilization.

THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY MOVEMENT

On this backdrop of struggle to remain in the homeland, for cultural and national survival, and to foil the conspiracy to uproot us and annihilate our nationalism, the Palestinian Arab cultural and literary movement was established in occupied Palestine after 1948. This movement had national and humanist goals, a popular orientation and revolutionary conduct - this was its ideological character. We wrote about our people and for them.

In the fifties and sixties, the phenomenon of poetry festivals flourished. Poets read their poems to mass assemblies in public squares and under the trees. This period was characterized by

enthusiasm, for the poets were close to the masses and the popular culture. Poems came first, and soon afterwards, stories. The art of story and novel writing was developed, as was literary critique. Efforts began to create an Arab theater, and to advance the plastic arts.

The Zionist critics accused our culture of being extremist and full of hate, but this was a big lie. We don't hate, but we are confronting hate. We are not extremists, but we resist the official extremism directed against us. We don't like to kill, but we defend ourselves.

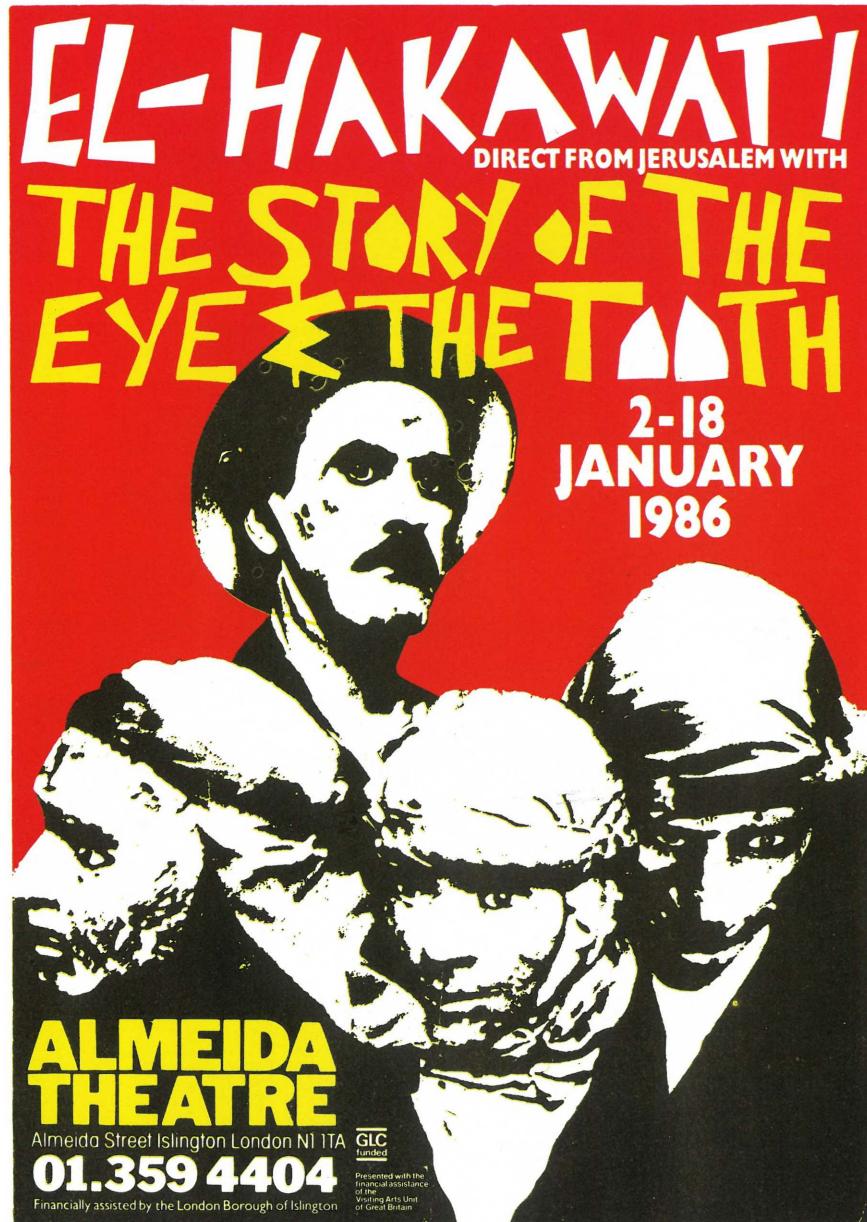
The Palestinian people are not terrorists, but the victims of terrorism, resisting terrorism. It wasn't easy to destroy this distorted picture which tried to portray the victim as the killer, and the rightful owners of the land as terrorists. We in occupied Palestine resisted politically, socially, culturally and ideologically, to present the facts, and to have the conscience of the world face its responsibility vis-a-vis the Palestinian tragedy and the necessity of solving the Palestinian problem.

After 1967, there were those who wrote that the Palestinian Arabs in 'Israel' had created a political and cultural miracle through their steadfastness and developed, revolutionary nationalist culture. We believe that what we did was very normal rather than a miracle. We were steadfast and refused to leave our homeland. It was only natural to refuse having our national identity wiped out, to insist on preserving our genuine national culture. All the aspects of Palestinian culture in occupied Palestine automatically converge with Palestinian culture everywhere.

Our immortal poet, Abu Salma, once said in a conversation with us, his students: «The unity of Palestinian culture, wherever it exists, despite geographical boundaries, is proof of the unity of the Palestinian people as a strong entity.» Between 1948 and 1965, when there was no official Palestinian organization, Palestinian culture served as the institution which preserved the name *Palestine* and foretold the birth of the Palestinian revolution in its modern form. This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Palestinian revolution of 1936-39. If we return to that period, we find that the best of the Palestinian intellectuals, poets, writers, critics and teachers were with the revolution. They were the cultural face of the fighting people.

From this important meeting in solidarity with the Palestinian culture, let us appeal to conscience and mind, to completely restore the unity of the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people--- to reunify our cultural movement and increase international solidarity with our people's just cause and their national culture of resistance.

* Cosmopolitanism: repudiation of patriotic sentiments and national culture and traditions.



10 YEARS OF SOWETO UPRISING

