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BLOODY PEACE COMES TO LEBANON

Chile: Nine Years After the Coup

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The real terrorists govern in Tel Aviv and Washington

The 15,000 civilian victims of the massacre of the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila are yet another tragic illustration of the criminal nature of the expansionist policies of Israel. It is neither the only nor the first example. The entire history of the Zionist state is founded on the expropriation of

the Palestinians from their land and on the negation of their very right to existence. Moreover, it is quite symbolic that the government of Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon has just decided to raze the cemetery of Deir Yassin, site of the first Zionist massacre of the Palestinian population. (1)

Vincent KERMEL

According to the mad militarist logic of the Israeli government, it was necessary to inflict a bloody defeat on the Palestinian people and their fighters in West Beirut. It is because the resistance of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the growing disapproval even in Israel against the war prevented them from fully accomplishing their objective, that the heads of the Zionist army coldly opted for the wiping out of the refugee camps. The massacre of the civilians was meant to terrorise the Palestinian population still remaining in Lebanon after the departure of the Fedayeen, to make them flee.

For the Israeli aggression launched last June 6 had as its objective the expulsion of as many Palestinians as possible from Lebanon and the installation of a powerful militarist force led by the forces of Christian reaction. This power was to force out the Syrian troops, to bring into line the Lebanese National Movement, traditional allies of the Palestinians, and to permit the signing of a peace treaty with Israel, or at least to accept the Zionist takeover, through Major Haddad, on the buffer zone of Southern Lebanon. It was not only Begin who encountered difficulty in getting his protegee Bashir Gemayel, president-elect of the Lebanese republic to rapidly accept such an agreement. More and more, the Zionist leaders continued to believe, as Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Michael Arens proclaimed, that "the Israeli army is today the only truly stable force in Lebanon." (2)

ZIONIST RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MASSACRE OF SABRA AND SHATILA

Even after the departure of the PLO troops, the population of the refugee camps represented, for the Zionist government, a potential base of possible recomposition of the Palestinian national movement in Lebanon itself. Simply by their presence, these refugees constitute a social and political force in Lebanon, an added obstacle in the path of installing a

strong state dependent on Israel. Thus this population had to be intimidated before international pressure made such an operation impossible. The bulldozers that covered up part of the corpses of the victims of Sabra and Shatila were to prevent the real scale of the crime being known.

Organised by Zionist leaders, using reactionary Lebanese forces (Christian Phalangist militias and mercenaries of Major Saad Haddad), the massacre of Sabra and Shatila is fully within the framework of the policy unleashed by "Operation Peace for Galilee". The American weekly *Time*, October 4 issue, has just provided the irrefutable proof by revealing the methods of organisation of the "mopping up operation" of the Palestinian camps (see box). "Top Israeli officers planned many months ago to enlist the Lebanese Forces, made up of the combined Christian militias then headed by Bashir Gemayel, to enter the Palestinian refugee camps once an Israeli encirclement of West Beirut had been completed.

... On several occasions, Gemayel told Israeli officials he would like to raze the camps and flatten them into tennis courts." Undoubtedly this ties in with Zionist aims. But the Israeli military force feared the cost in human casualties for the *Tsahal* (Zionist army) of such an operation. Taking advantage of the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, the Zionist troops nevertheless went into West Beirut September 14, according to a military communique published in Jerusalem to "assure the maintenance of peace and to prevent any serious incident." (3)

Undoubtedly encouraged by imperialist passivity in the face of the new advance of its armed forces, the Israeli military high command justified the invasion of West Beirut by the claimed presence of 2,000 PLO fighters. In fact it was a question of finishing off the political clean-up of the Lebanese capital to facilitate the future reactionary role of the Lebanese army. Again political prisoners — around 10,000 — were detained on this occasion. Local organisations such as the PLO's were ransacked from top to bottom. The Zionist political files have

been fully used, and networks of collaborators and Israeli spies have been set up.

On September 17, just as the massacre had begun in Sabra and Shatila, the Jerusalem military radio station announced that the Phalangists had come in to "mop up" the Palestinian camps. As *Time* reports: "Using the Christian militias to enter the camps would serve a double purpose: it would minimize Israeli casualties, and it would keep Israeli hands unsoiled.

"By Sharon's own admission, the Israelis planned two weeks ago to have the Lebanese Forces enter the camps."

This scenario was perfectly respected and the Israeli Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon told the Knesset (Israeli parliament) on September 22: "We wanted to avoid losses of our troops and have accepted the proposition of the Phalangists to purge the Palestinian camps." (4) After that, only Menachem Begin could have the blind harshness to dare to say, in order to avoid the setting up of an inquest into the massacre: "Goyim (non-Jews) have killed goyim, and we're being accused..." (5)

Upon the announcement of the massacres, American imperialism, through the voice of Ronald Reagan, declared itself "horrified" by this news, stressing its "violent disgust" and expressing its "deepest regret" to the families of the victims. Indirectly implicating Israel, he remembered that in the course of negotiations for the retreat of the PLO, he had received assurance that Israeli forces would not enter West Beirut. (6)

THE HYPOCRISY OF IMPERIALIST DENUNCIATIONS

However, such massacres, like most Zionist acts, could not take place without the unconditional support from imperial-

1. The village of Deir Yassin was in 1948 the scene of a massacre of 250 Palestinians by the *Irgun* (Zionist terrorist organisation led since December 1943 by Menachem Begin himself). Thus the present Israeli Prime Minister bears a direct responsibility on the historic massacre at Deir Yassin.
2. *Le Monde*, September 16, 1982.
3. *Le Monde*, September 16, 1982.
4. *Le Monde*, September 24, 1982.
5. *Le Monde*, September 23, 1982.
6. *Le Monde*, September 21, 1982.

ism that Israel enjoys. Can we forget that the tens of thousands of victims of "Operation Peace for Galilee" were caused by US weapons sold to Israel? (7) Without the passivity of the soldiers of the UN force (UNIFIL) in South Lebanon, who stepped aside for the Israeli intervention on June 6, without the multiform imperialist support to prevent Israel from too great a diplomatic isolation, without American endorsement for "Operation Peace for Galilee", without the support of chief of fascist commandos Bashir Gemayel's candidacy for president of the Lebanese republic, without the feeble American reaction to the entry of Zionist troops into West Beirut after the president-elect, without the opportune retreat of the American-French-Italian Multinational Intervention Force only a few hours before the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, ... could Israel really have persevered in its policy with impunity?

The differences that are appearing today on the diplomatic solution to the Palestinian question between US imperialism and Israel, spearhead of the counter-revolution in the Middle East, are only tactical. The Israeli aggression in Lebanon, supported by Washington, is part of the imperialist counter-offensive in the region that is benefiting from Soviet passivity. Washington shares most of the objectives of the Israeli government. The differences are only on the best way for imperialism to capitalise in the long term on the new relationship of forces created by the Israeli war in Lebanon. In opposition to the strict militarist logic of the Israeli "final solution", Washington put forward the Reagan plan and the creation of a Palestinian rump state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip completely dependent on Israel and Jordan. Imperialist logic is to take advantage of the military defeat of the PLO to make it accept such a compromise under pressure of the reactionary Arab states. (8)

Similarly in Lebanon, through sending a new multinational intervention force, the Lebanese army is being made to take over the policing tasks necessary for installing a militarised Lebanese state. Ronald Reagan specified this by defining the role of the intervention force. "Its objective", he said, "is not to act as a police force, but to permit the legal authorities in Lebanon to fulfill this task." (9) US imperialism is conscious of the danger of too overt repressive use of this imperialist force. What is proposed is that it help put back on its feet as rapidly as possible the Lebanese army, which has never recovered from its disintegration following the civil war of 1975-76, while obtaining through the diplomatic path the departure of the Syrians, to top off the imperialist victory. By contrast, the Zionist leaders still think that only their direct military engagement in Lebanon could get such results. Moreover, they still have not given up hope of pushing further forward their military position to achieve the expulsion of the Palestinian refugees in Beirut, the Pales-



tinian fighters in North Lebanon, and even the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERVENTION FORCE

With the desertion of the Arab states and the pathetic response of Soviet diplomacy, one of the paradoxes of this conflict is that the Mitterrand government in France appears to be one of the most critical of certain military actions of the Israeli army. Nevertheless, beyond divergent secondary estimations, its policy has not for a single moment gone outside the framework of the global imperialist project of the stabilisation of the situation in this region.

Beyond the saluting of Israeli "democracy" by Lionel Jospin, first secretary of the French Socialist Party, particularly distasteful of a state engaged in the elimination of the Palestinian people, the Mitterrand government also assumes total responsibility in its role in the Multinational Intervention Force. In fact it appears that while rapidly dismantling the Palestinian defence lines — and notably the clearing out of mines in the streets of West Beirut — the French troops facilitated the entrance of Zionist troops, then withdrawing before the massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps. This raises doubts about the proclamations of the French government that it is "ready to send troops to Lebanon again, this time to protect the civilian population." (10)

From the beginning, the Mitterrand government situated its diplomatic

actions within the framework of the American plan of Philip Habib, of the disarming of the Palestinians. The French Minister for External Affairs, Claude Cheysson, has recently reaffirmed the unity in views with American imperialism by declaring: "France and the United States uphold any Lebanese effort to affirm the unity of the country, to establish a government capable of asserting itself and of avoiding trouble between Lebanese." And this "necessitates complete respect of the Habib plan", he stated. The objective is to facilitate the placing in power of Amin Gemayel, new Lebanese president, also from the reactionary Phalangist troops, and to aid in stopping the disintegration of the state and especially the Lebanese military apparatus.

Here and now the function of this army, future reinforcement of a Lebanese military power, is revealing itself in many

7. The request for regular economic and military aid by Israel to the US, presented in Washington by the Israeli Finance Minister, last September 13, is going up this year to 2.2 billion dollars. As the October 3 and 4 *Le Monde* notes, "this aid is by far the most important in the US budget, for it constitutes half of the expenditure of this nature."

8. On this point, the Israel government vehemently refused the slightest concession concerning the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. In an interview published by the weekly *Le nouvel Observateur*, Ariel Sharon confirmed this: "Judea and Samaria belong to us. For millions and millions of years. For always. Judea and Samaria is Israel. And Gaza also ... We will never permit a second Palestine to be created on this spot. Never."

9. *Le Monde*, September 22, 1982.
10. *Le Monde*, September 23, 1982.

ways. Its forces, who are not opposed to the Israeli invasion, are combing Beirut, searching for foreigners whose papers are not in order, for Palestinians or militants of the Lebanese National Movement, finishing the job undertaken by the Israelis to disarm all local progressive forces. But the Phalangist troops, 26,000-strong, remain armed. The Communist Party journal *Al Nida* was even searched and its editors held for a short time by the Lebanese army. (11) All the makeshift shelters, the little businesses and others, that allowed refugees to survive under the Israeli bombardment in West Beirut are being mercilessly razed to the ground. Tomorrow, might not the Lebanese Army, in the name of national reconstruction expel the Palestinian refugees from Beirut? It is most certainly a reactionary power and army that the imperialist American-French-Italian forces are in the process of reconstructing.

In this new phase of reconstruction of the Lebanese bourgeois state, the expulsion of the Palestinians remains an objective of the reactionary forces, and other massacres are still possible. For the one at Sabra and Shatila also demonstrates a horrible truth: the indifference of the bourgeois Arab regimes. Almost all those states supported the election of Bashir Gemayel and the Fahd plan at the Fez summit (12), which fits into imperialism's strategy. None of them tolerated the slightest expression of solidarity and anger of their own masses against these crimes. In Tunisia, the opposition's demonstration on this theme was banned. In Algeria, the very official National Union of Algerian Women (UNFA) had its demonstration denouncing the massacre repressed by the police. The passivity of Arab states during the war in Lebanon opened up, without a doubt, a new stage in the crisis of Arab nationalism. The Palestinian masses have once again paid dearly for the PLO leadership's undertaking of the principle of "non-interference" into the internal affairs of Arab states. After the Palestinian defeat and the scattering of the armed forces of resistance across a number of Arab countries, after the diplomatic turn of the leadership of the PLO which accepts the imperialist plan of the creation of a Palestinian mini-state, the national struggle of the Palestinian people has not been definitively crushed. but, maybe tomorrow, the terrain of the struggle will be principally the Arab territories occupied by Israel, thus giving it a new impetus and a new social content.

MORAL AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN ISRAEL

The reaction in Israel to the announcement of the Palestinian refugees unquestionably deepened the crisis of Zionism. Numerous demonstrations and protests since the war in Lebanon show this. It remained nevertheless a militant minority grouped around the Committee Against the War in Lebanon or the *Peace Now* movement.

The massacre of Sabra and Shatila and the initial refusal of the Begin government to accept the setting up of an inquest qualitatively augmented the reaction against the Israeli military actions in Lebanon. Moreover, this brought to a head the differences between the Likud (coalition in power) and the opposition Labour Party of Shimon Peres, accentuating considerably the latent political crisis in the country. The distancing of the United States from the Begin government, the recall of the Egyptian Ambassa-

carried new proof of Israeli responsibility in the massacre.

In the occupied territories, in West Bank and Gaza Strip, there was a general strike for three days. The last day of this strike, September 22, the Arabs in Israel took part. This mobilisation of Arabs in Israel is the most important since 1976, which was against governmental restrictions on the acquisition of land by Arabs. *Le Monde*, moreover, reported on September 29 that "for the first time, Arabs in Israel publicly expressed their

Israel and the massacres

"The crucial Christian-Israeli planning session, reports *Time* correspondent David Halevy, took place at noon Thursday, Sept. 16, at the Israeli command post in Beirut Port. Present was Israeli Major General Amir Drori, head of the Northern Command, and at least three other top Israeli officers. Also present was Fady Frem, the Lebanese Forces Chief of Staff. Frem was accompanied by Elias Hobeika, the Forces' intelligence chief, who had attended the Staff and Command College in Israel. He was to be the main leader of the groups that went into the camps.

"A man who always carries a pistol, a knife and a hand grenade on his belt. Hobeika was the most feared Phalangist in Lebanon. He had taken part in the Tell el-Zataar massacre and in attacks on the rivals of Bashir Gemayel. The Israelis know Hobeika and his followers as ruthless, brutal security men, and knew they did not constitute a disciplined military force. (...)

"At the meeting with the Israelis on Sept. 16, Fady Frem said Hobeika would take his men into the Shatila camp, and both men said there would be a *kasach* (in Arabic, a chopping or slicing operation). General

Drori ignored the evident implications of this remark, and the go-ahead was given. Later Drori telephoned Sharon in Tel Aviv: 'Our friends are moving into the camps. I coordinated their entrance with their top men.' Replied Sharon: 'Congratulations ... The friends' operation is authorized.' (...)

"At about 5pm Thursday, Hobeika's force assembled at the Beirut International Airport and moved into the Shatila camp soon afterward. Israeli artillery assisted them with flares and later with tank and mortar fire. (...)"

The next day "the murderous operation continued. On Friday, Israeli Chief of Staff Lieut. General Rafael Eitan arrived and was told by his officers that whatever was going on inside the camps was not a military action but a *kasach*. (...)"

Not far from the Shatila camp, the Israeli observation posts atop several seven-story buildings were, according to the *Times* correspondent: "an unobstructed and panoramic view of the area in the Shatila camp where most of the killings had taken place."

From the October 4, 1982 *Time*

dor to Israel, as well as the popular reactions in Israel itself, effectively spurred the Labour Party, who until then had more or less supported the Zionist military aggression in Lebanon, to raise their voice to call for the resignation of Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin. Disagreements have now appeared in the government coalition and between figures of the regime. The Commander of Higher Military Studies, Amram Mitzna, handed in his resignation, as did the civil administrator of the West Bank, Menachem Milson. A movement of soldiers against the war, *Yesh Gvul* ("there is a limit"), got around a thousand signatures on a petition against the war. Among the signatories are 150 officers, some high ranking. From September 19, demonstrations of some hundreds of people took place in Israel, with cries of "Begin, resign! Begin, assassinate!" Day after day, the Israeli press

'solidarity' with their Palestinian brothers in the occupied territories."

After these daily mobilisations, the large demonstration of *Peace Now* and the Labour Party, that attracted 300,000 people in Tel Aviv on September 25, showed the scope of the crisis of conscience that has shaken up Israelis. Some 10% of the Israeli population was present that evening. The official slogans such as those calling for an inquest "into the massacre of the Palestinians", "Out of Beirut", "Start negotiations" or even the official slogan of "Begin, resign!" showed the tight control the Labour Party had

11. This did not stop the Secretary General of the Lebanese Communist Party, George Hawi, as the entire Lebanese National Movement, from finding the election of Amin Gemayel as "a good basis for understanding." (*Le Monde*, September 26 and 27 1982).
12. See *International Viewpoint* No 14, October 4, 1982.

over this demonstration. But a contingent of about ten thousand people, Jews and Arabs, grouped around more radical slogans of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon, who demanded the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon and the opening of negotiations with the PLO. Expression of the moral crisis of the Jewish people facing the acts committed in their name, the demonstration of September 25 in a certain sense legitimized the fight of all anti-war militants. This mobilisation, moreover, compelled the Begin government to finally accept the formation of a commission of inquiry into the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, and the Likud cancelled the demonstration that was to take place the following week. If last July 17 the supporters of Menachem Begin succeeded in responding to a demonstration against the intervention in Lebanon that had taken place two weeks previously, this time, they did not feel able to outdo the September 25 demonstration.

Certainly the Labour Party's strategy is to place itself within the new framework defined by the diplomatic proposals of the US government. Since Begin backed off, Shimon Peres declared that demanding the resignation of the government must be put off till later. But the commission of inquiry will not present any conclusions until next January. In the meantime, the political crisis will undoubtedly have had new rebounds. Its roots go to the situation created by the departure of the Fedayeen from Lebanon, and the concurrence of propositions of a negotiated settlement to the



Beirut after bombardment (DR)

Palestinian problem, orchestrated by imperialism. Shimon Peres himself said: "never has the opportunity of what we call the Jordanian option been better than today, notably thanks to the Reagan whose philosophy is close to our programme." (13)

Beyond the political crisis of the Begin team, it is the entire national consensus on which the Zionist state has founded its existence as a confessional, racist and

expansionist state, that is seeing these new cracks. They will be fed by imperialist diplomatic pressures on Israel, the Arab mobilisations in the occupied territories, and the austerity measures that the government will have to take to make the Israelis pay for a war which has already cost 1.2 billion dollars, while inflation is forecast as 130% for the end of the year.

13. *Le Monde*, September 30, 1982.

Deepening impact of Lebanon war in Israel

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Paris on October 8 by A. Mayir, a leader of the section of the Fourth International in the Israeli state.

Question: What happened to the peace movement in Israel during the siege of Beirut?

Answer: It was strengthened, since there was a division between the Labour Party and Likud over the advisability of trying to take the city.

A commander of the Israeli forces resigned rather than lead an attack on Beirut, since he said he did not want to lead his soldiers to their deaths.

Demoralization grew in the army, because the Israeli army is a reserve force. The ranks expect to be called up for no more than a month. Furthermore, there were many more deaths in this war than any of the previous ones. The Israeli Jewish masses expected another easy war. And then, the Israeli army is not prepared for attacking cities, which involves heavy

casualties. It has been built up for rapid engagements in open country. Thus Beirut became a trap.

Q: Was there any decline in the antiwar movement as a result of the Zionist victory in Beirut?

A: There was a rapid decline in the mobilizations after the PLO signed the agreement to withdraw. But they started to grow again during the actual withdrawal, and reached a new height after the refugee camp massacres.

Begin and Sharon have been able to gain nothing politically for their military victories. Many thousands of Israeli soldiers are being kept in Lebanon on occupation duty, doing essentially repressive work. There is considerable demoralization among these soldiers and their continuing absence is putting a lot of pressure on their families.

In fact, two soldiers organizations have grown up. One, the more radical, is called "There Is a Border," or "Enough." The name can be read either way in Hebrew.

The other is called "Soldiers Against Silence." As might be expected, the second is the largest; it has generally the outlook of the more liberal wing of the Labour Party, which predominates in the Peace Now movement. However, both committees are broad and include many officers as well as rank-and-file soldiers.

Q: What is the position of the Fourth Internationalists in the antiwar movement?

A: We are in the leadership of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon, which is the radical wing of the antiwar movement. This is a continuation of the Bir Zeit committee, which was distinguished by its defence of Palestinian rights and Jewish-Palestinian unity.

In the first week of the war, there was considerable confusion in the Peace Now movement, the largest antiwar organization. It tended to follow the pattern of traditional peace movements. That is, it tended to fold up once the war actually started.