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Libyan Civil Aircraft Hijacked Zionism Caught in the Act of Terrorism





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

- conveying the political line of the PFLP and other 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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The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is a Marxist-Leninist organization and an integral component of the Palestine Liberation Organization. A primary motive for establishing the PFLP was to inject a clear class perspective in the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Experience shows that the most oppressed classes - the workers, peasants, sectors of the petit bourgeoisie, the camp Palestinians - are those most in contradiction with imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. It is they who carve history with determination that can persevere in a protracted war against the enemy alliance.

The PFLP is deeply committed to the unity and independent, national decision-making of the Palestinian people and their sole legitimate representative, the PLO. To this end, we work for strengthening the role of the Palestinian left, thereby accentuating the PLO's anti-imperialist line in common struggle with the Arab national liberation movement.

The process of liberating Palestine relies on radical, national democratic change or development in one or more of the surrounding Arab countries. This will provide the PLO with a strong base for liberating Palestine. Thus the struggle for a democratic Palestine is linked to the creation of a united, democratic and ultimately socialist, Arab society. This will provide the objective basis for eradicating the poverty, exploitation, oppression and the problem of minorities, from which the people of the area suffer.

As a cornerstone in this process, the establishment of a democratic, secular state in Palestine will provide a democratic solution for the Jewish question in this area, while simultaneously restoring the national rights of the Palestinian people. After liberation, Jews in Palestine, like all citizens, will enjoy equal rights and duties. The decision of the PLO to establish an independent Palestinian state on any liberated part of the national soil is a step in this direction. It is the sincere hope of all Palestinian revolutionaries that more and more Israelis will recognize that they, too, have become victims of Zionism's racism, expansionism, exploitation and militarism, and will join us in the struggle for a democratic Palestine.

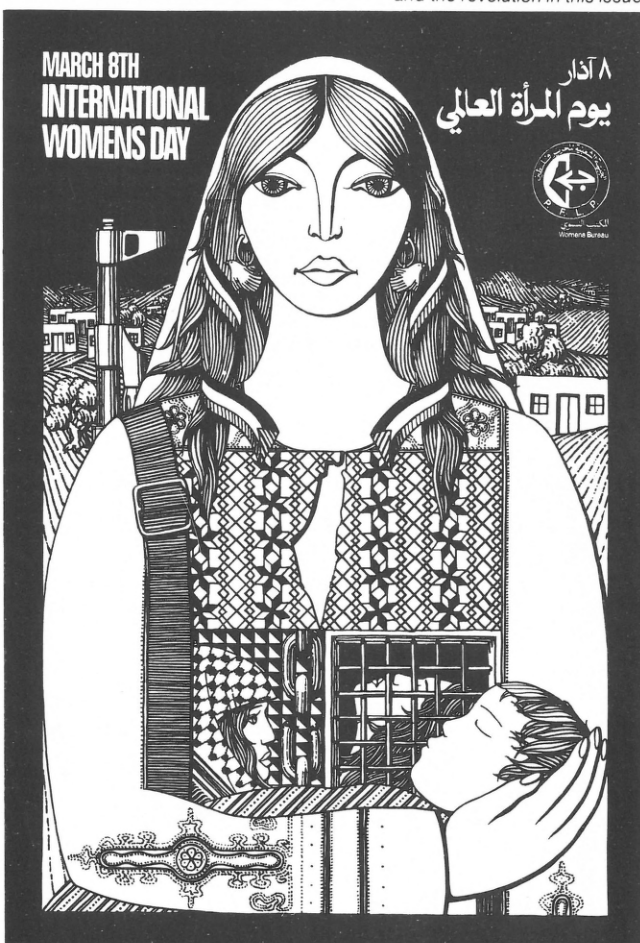
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March 8th is International Women's Day. See interview on Palestinian women and the revolution in this issue.



Editorial

Whenever any progressive or patriotic Arab was asked about the political future of the region, he would have thought of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and its role in shaping that future. Whenever any progressive or patriotic Arab was reminded of the political setbacks suffered by the Arab progressive movement, he would have mentioned that glimpse of light which shines from Aden in the south of the Arab world. He would say, «That candle has enough momentum to illuminate the Arab world.»

All progressives, Arab or not, were deeply hurt by the events that erupted in Aden on January 13th. This is not only because of the loss of human lives, innocent people and dear comrades. Nor is it only because of the heavy destruction. It is most importantly because of the harm done to what Democratic Yemen symbolizes - the example it should give to all progressive factions of the Arab national liberation movement.

Everyone in the world knows how meagre the natural resources of Democratic Yemen are. Everyone knows that what was built in Democratic Yemen was dearly paid for in blood, labor and tears.

We were aware of the difficulties and dangers facing Democratic Yemen. We have thus exerted all possible efforts to help the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) to overcome its difficulties. That is why Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, spent about a month in Aden at the time of the YSP congress in October. And that is why we did not allow ourselves to rest before seeing the congress convened. It is worth mentioning that the congress could not have been held without the cooperation and good will of all the Yemeni leaders and party members. Their good will stemmed from awareness of their responsibilities towards their country and the whole

Arab world. They were moreover aware that there were dangers to the country, emanating both from the inside (counter-revolutionary forces and representatives of the former landlords) and from the outside (the regimes of Saudi Arabia, Oman and North Yemen).

The fighting that began on January 13th presented a golden opportunity for the enemies of Democratic Yemen, to try to implement their counterrevolutionary plans under 'dovish' pretexts, like sending peace troops to enforce a ceasefire or separate the fighting groups.

We therefore declare our position on what happened as follows:

One: We strongly back the YSP and call for preserving its unity.

Two: We strongly back Democratic Yemen and call for preserving its unity, sovereignty and independence.

Three: We condemn the fighting and its initiation.

Four: We warn all external forces not to try to exploit what has happened in order to intervene in Democratic Yemen's internal affairs.

Five: We are ready to place our resources at the service of the YSP in order to rebuild what has been destroyed. We are hopeful that the country will avoid another such experience in the future, for this would harm not only Democratic Yemen but also the great expectations that are built on its struggle, its party and its national democratic achievements. Any repetition of the internal fighting would leave the door wide open for external and internal reactionary forces to sabotage Democratic Yemen's progressive efforts and what it stands for in the Arab world.

●

Who Are the Real Terrorists?

Rambo Reagan vs. President Qaddafi

Why has US imperialism designated President Qaddafi of Libya as the «principle source of terrorism in the world»? One reason is readily apparent: The Reagan Administration seeks to punish Libya for its Arab nationalist position and generous support to the Palestinian revolution and other anti-imperialist forces around the world. The second reason runs deeper: Reagan needs a scapegoat on which to heap the blame for increasing violence in today's world, lest the American people and others discover who the real terrorists are.

Since we wrote this article, new evidence has mounted, showing that US imperialism and the Zionist state are the real terrorists. The last week of January, the US 6th Fleet conducted military maneuvers right off Libya's coast. Intelligence information gathered at such close range was passed on to the Israelis. This enabled the Zionist enemy to hijack a Libyan plane carrying Syrian political leaders, on February 4th, on the pretext that Palestinian «terrorist» leaders were aboard.

The US has never presented any convincing evidence of President Qaddafi's guilt. Instead it relies on demagoguery, claiming that Libya's military

apparatus far outweighs its real defense needs. This claim is totally misleading on two counts: One, Libya's military development has been geared to self-

defense against reactionary threats, especially those coming from Egypt since the time of Sadat - and encouraged by the US administration at the

time. On another level, this claim is part of Reagan's misinformation campaign - the same directed against Nicaragua, Cuba, Vietnam and other countries striving to protect and develop the independence and social progress achieved by their people. The aim of this campaign is to keep all states that do not harmonize with US policies in a state of weakness. In reality, the two countries in the world which have military institutions far outweighing their defense needs are the US and 'Israel'. This superiority is precisely designed and expanded in order to impose their policies on a global and regional basis without meeting serious obstacles, to control and exploit peoples and resources far beyond their own borders.

The US administration's campaign against Libya is an old story. At the start of his first term in 1981, Reagan branded Libya an «outlaw nation». Later the same year, US F-14s downed two Libyan planes over the Gulf of Sidra (part of Libya's territorial waters which the US administration insists is international waters). The next year, the US banned the import of Libyan oil. These measures, however, did not make much of an impact, especially since US allies in western Europe and Japan did not follow suit. Thus, the Reagan Administration seized on the December 27th attacks on the El Al (Israeli airlines) counters at Rome and Vienna airports. It hoped to blame these on Libya and thereby deal a decisive blow to President Qaddafi with full international backing, and preferably by collective action, drawing at least its NATO allies into the game.

Gunboat diplomacy

To this end, the US brought in the new year by amassing its war fleet in the Mediterranean off Libya's coast. On January 3rd, the largest US aircraft carrier, the Coral Sea, and its battle group left Naples port and sailed into the Mediterranean in the direction of Libya. Electronic warfare planes were dispatched to the Mediterranean. Five Navy EA-6B Prowlers were sent to the NATO base on Sicily, to intercept communications and jam the radars used to direct Libya's anti-aircraft system. Another aircraft battle group, stationed in Norfolk, Virginia, was ordered to be ready to deploy in the Mediterranean. The Pentagon drew up a new list of potential targets in Libya. Contingency exercises were conducted by the Pentagon, CIA and at US military facilities, to

test logistics for a planned military attack, for example: how the US could keep two aircraft carriers off the Libyan coast for an extended period. The Joint Chiefs of Staff considered sending B-52 bombers from the US, but rejected this in favor of Navy carrier planes and long-range fighter bombers stationed in Britain (*International Herald Tribune*, January 6, 1986). In mid-January, the aircraft carrier Saratoga was ordered out of the Indian Ocean to join the Coral Sea.

At this writing, the military attack on Libya has not materialized. Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration has imposed a total economic boycott, frozen Libya's assets in the US and ordered all US citizens to leave Libya, while pressuring its European allies to implement similar measures. However, the military option still cannot be ruled out. On January 16th, Secretary of State Shultz confirmed that the US must still consider military action. According to *Newsweek* magazine, January 20th, «The sanctions Ronald Reagan imposed on Libya last week are just the opening of a carefully graduated campaign...to isolate Muammar Kaddafi, strengthen the dictator's opponents within Libya - and clear the way for a US military strike...The plan focuses more sharply than before on exploiting dissension within Libya's military...Reagan strategists believe they must strike within the next six to nine months or else miss the tide...» This appears to be an updated version of the CIA plan to topple President Qaddafi, that was revealed in 1984.

The national security adviser of Israeli Prime Minister Peres, Brigadier General Gideon Machanaimi, gave another idea of the form the US-Israeli attack may actually take. Noting that military retaliation was not advisable, he

pointed to assassination of leaders as «the successful way to combat terrorism.»

Whether or not the Reagan Administration and 'Israel' embark on a new military adventure or not, the war scenario enacted serves a number of purposes besides Reagan's cherished aim of terrorizing Qaddafi. Chief among these is covering up for the Israeli aggression which is an integral component of the US-sponsored 'peace' process. Equally important is furthering the US military network in the Middle East and Mediterranean areas.

The source of terror

The deeper cause of the attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports is the fact that the Middle East conflict, and the Palestinian issue in particular, remain unresolved. Responsible for this situation are the US and 'Israel' to whom solving the conflict means imposing their joint hegemony in the area. This rules out self-determination and statehood for the Palestinian people, and ultimately genuine independence for any Arab country. That is why the many concessions offered by the Palestinian right wing have been met with more violence - the iron fist in occupied Palestine, collective punishment against the citizens of South Lebanon, the Israeli bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis, etc.

Reagan's campaign against 'terrorism' is simply an attempt to shift the blame. The best proof of this is that 'Israel' is the only state in the world to have expressed unqualified support to the US campaign, while at the same time manipulating it to special Israeli purposes. Peres claimed that Abu Nidal's group, held responsible for the Rome and Vienna attacks, is the «offspring of the PLO», attempting to justify Israeli refusal to deal with the PLO.





Unfortunately, Arafat fell into this trap. In his efforts to prove the PLO's innocence, he blamed Libya and Syria for being behind the attacks, falling in line with Reagan's campaign. His statement was particularly glaring when contrasted with the fact that both the Arab League and the Islamic Conference Organization have expressed full support to Libya in the face of imperialist-Zionist threats. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have pledged support to Libya. Even western Europe has refused to implement most of the measures proposed by Reagan, due to their more sophisticated policies and greater economic interests in trade with Libya.

The campaign against Qaddafi is actually an attack on all nationalist and anti-imperialist forces in the area. It paralleled the US-Israeli effort to thwart the Syrian-sponsored peace plan in Lebanon.

In mid-December, the Israeli military command started complaining to the US that the presence of Syrian missile batteries near the Lebanese border seriously impaired the ability of Israeli jets to make reconnaissance flights over Lebanon. The arrogance of this is even more obvious when one knows that: (1) The missile batteries in question were stationed in Syrian territory (2) A month earlier, Israeli jets had shot down two Syrian planes over Syrian airspace near the Lebanese border. 'Israel' has repeated its complaint several times, and on January 7th, Peres threatened. «There is a real danger of war between Israel and Syria unless both countries behave properly.» 'Israel' and the US are looking for every excuse to pressure Syria, in order to isolate it and remove an

obstacle to separate Israeli-Jordanian negotiations. Two days after Peres' statement, the Reagan Administration threatened to extend the economic embargo to Syria.

Expanding the US terrorist network

In the last analysis, Reagan's 'anti-terrorist' campaign is the other side of his efforts to militarize the world and outer space, American-style. By pointing an accusing finger at Libya, Syria, Palestinian 'extremists', etc., and producing trumped-up evidence, the Reagan Administration seeks to (1) convince the American taxpayer of the necessity of financing a gigantic military build-up; (2) convince NATO allies of the necessity of increased military spending and backing up US military initiatives; and (3) convince US allies around the world of the advantages of permitting US military facilities on their territory.

At the height of the anti-Qaddafi campaign, the Pentagon released statements that US special command units (like the Delta 'anti-terrorist' squad) are unfit for action due to lack of equipment (a plea for more funding) and not enough of them being stationed close to 'trouble spots' (a plea for more military facilities). Well before the Rome and Vienna attacks, the US had been planning to base a unit of the Delta forces in Europe to be close to the Mediterranean. On the pretext of being prepared for 'terrorism', hijackings and the like, the US is striving to extend and reinforce its international military network. This is the real terror network, state terrorism at its ultimate, used to threaten and blackmail, or actually attack, any force or country pursuing a truly independent policy which is deemed as a threat to US imperialist interests.

The immediate results of deploying US special units may resemble the joint US-Egyptian 'rescue' operation at Valletta airport in Malta on November 24th. There Egyptian commandos, 'advised' by three US officers, stormed a hijacked plane, firing in all directions. Fifty people were killed, including the vast majority of the passengers to be rescued. Most died from the indiscriminate shooting of their would-be rescuers, rather than from the hijackers' grenades. Schultz tried to justify the catastrophe by referring to the hijackers as follows: «These people are not people.» This was reminiscent of Begin's statements during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, claiming that 'Israel' was fighting «terrorists and two-leg-

ged beasts» in order to cover up the genocide pursued by the Israeli army.

Star Wars - joint terrorist venture

The principal source of terrorism in the world today is none other than US imperialism itself. The US has furnished the massive political, military and financial support needed for 'Israel' to kill and maim thousands upon thousands of Palestinian, Lebanese and other Arab citizens over the years. It is the Reagan Administration that deliberately sabotaged the Contadora peace plan for Central America, and increased funding for the contras' war against the Nicaraguan people. It is the Reagan Administration that renewed support for the UNITA mercenaries' war of attrition on Angola, while failing to take any measures against the racist regime in South Africa which has been terrorizing the Black masses for the better part of a century. It is US imperialism and its CIA that installed dictatorships in a row of Latin American countries, in the Philippines, Indonesia, etc. The list of US terrorist campaigns is endless, from Vietnam to Grenada...

The most massive element of US imperialism's terrorism is its escalation of the nuclear arms race which threatens all mankind with destruction. 'Israel' is also a nuclear power and has recently officially decided to join in the US's Star Wars project for weapons in space. In late December, the Soviet news agency Novosti published information on recent Israeli underground nuclear tests in the Negev, the site of its largest nuclear reactor, Dimona. Novosti added that 'Israel' now possesses forty nuclear warheads.

Also in late December, just as Reagan was pointing the accusing finger at Qaddafi, the US conducted underground nuclear tests in Nevada, to perfect nuclear pumped X-ray lasers, needed for Star Wars, in an obvious attempt to sabotage the unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests earlier declared by the Soviet Union.

The Israeli nuclear arsenal provides the US with added leverage in its attempt to blackmail the people of the strategic Middle East area into submitting to its hegemony. The joint participation of the US and 'Israel' in the Star Wars program adds a dangerous new element to the Middle East crisis, increasing its potential to erupt into a nuclear confrontation that would extend to other areas as well. ●

Stop the Deportations

On February 2nd, the PFLP convened a press conference to publicize the latest deportation orders issued against Palestinians by the Zionist occupation authorities, as part of the iron fist policy. Spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif opened the press conference, reading the following statement:

Palestinians in the occupied territories are being subjected to a serious escalation of repression by the Israeli military authorities, designed to disrupt the various aspects of their daily lives. The recent escalation is a culmination of the reimposition of the iron fist policy some months ago, and its imposition against institutions and scores of citizens. This means officially sponsored acts of terror and intimidation against the Palestinian people, their national institutions, holy places and political rights. Internationally forbidden acts are being committed against civilians and their property under Zionist occupation. This occurs at a time when 'Israel' has embarked on a campaign against «terrorism» in order to divert attention from the aggravated situation in the occupied territories.

We draw your attention to the policy of collective punishment, the destruction of houses, the seizure of privately owned land and the policy of arbitrary arrest and detention, invoking the administrative detention law which dates back to the British Mandate.

All these projects testify to the racist and aggressive character of the Israeli occupation. Over 1500 citizens have been detained in the last six months without being formally charged or tried. Thirty-two deportation orders have been issued during the same period and 29 residents have actually been deported. Recently four more were detained and are awaiting deportation to Jordan. They are:

1. Adnan Mansour Ghanem who had been liberated in May 1985 after having spent 17 years in Israeli jails. Reports indicate that he was jailed without being charged, under administrative detention. Reports also indicate that he is being subjected to severe torture and now has several broken bones.

2. Mahmoud Mohammad Fannoun who had previously been jailed, then released on several occasions. He later enrolled in Bethlehem University where

he was constantly harassed by the authorities because of his agitation against the occupation. He now faces death under torture by the Israeli jailers. The last report was that he had suffered several broken ribs and a severe hemorrhage that necessitated his hospitalization.



3. Hassan Mohammad Al Amoudi who was rearrested after his release in May 1985 after 15 years imprisonment. He too is reported to have been severely tortured despite his poor health and injuries suffered during his previous imprisonment.

4. Halal Hafez Aziza who was rearrested without specific charges following his release in May 1985. He is also being subjected to torture despite the handicaps he has from previous imprisonment.

These persons were liberated from prison in May 1985 under the terms of a prisoner exchange agreement negotiated by the International Red Cross, whereby 'Israel' agreed, in the person of the Defense Minister, not to harass the released prisoners, and to allow over 600 of them to remain in their homes with their families. The recent Israeli actions are therefore in violation of an internationally sponsored agreement. In view of this fact, we call upon the international community, the Red Cross and Switzerland, the country that officially sponsored the agreement, to intervene on behalf of the above-mentioned prisoners. We also call upon all democratic,

civil and human rights organizations to do likewise.

There are also persistent reports that the prisoners have been under severe torture which prompted their attorney Lea Tsemel to file a protest against these acts of torture and demand the prisoners' immediate release. It is noteworthy that the previous group of detainees that were ordered deported were denied, by the military court, the right to appeal to the Supreme Court. They were deported

without being permitted to meet with their families (Azmi al Shuaibi, Hasan Faraga, Ali Abu Hilal).

We appeal to you in the name of international solidarity with human and civil rights, to act expediently to save the four detainees and to prevent their deportation and forced separation from their homes and families. We call upon you to send fact-finding delegations, and to send cables to the Israeli Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Minister of

Defense, protesting their actions. We also call upon you to make these facts known by calling conferences to describe the conditions of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, and to express your solidarity in all possible ways.

Our people shall not forget those who stand by them in their just struggle against repression, and for ending the occupation and gaining their right to self-determination. We thank you for your cooperation and support. ●

Khaled Tantash Deported...

Who's Next?

Khaled Tantash, a 38 year old Palestinian released from Israeli prisons in the May 1985 prisoner exchange, was deported on December 25th. He had served 15 years on charges of resisting the occupation forces. From May until December, he found himself at home, surrounded by family and friends - something that he had only been able to dream of during the long years of his imprisonment.

On December 24th, Khaled reported to the Moskobia jail (the Russian Compound) in Jerusalem, to check in with the Zionist authorities as he was required to do twice daily after his release. Little did he know that on this day he would be wrenched from the security of home and family, and once again plunged into the nightmare of Zionist inhumanity. Only two days later did his

family and lawyer learn of his rearrest and deportation.

Outside Palestine, Khaled recounts the story: «As usual I went to Moskobia at 9 a.m. to check in as I do everyday. I was surprised by the order for my arrest. I was asked if I knew of a way to contact my family and bid them farewell. I was shocked into silence for a few minutes. Then I said, 'How can I contact them when you are holding me prisoner?' They didn't answer... After about an hour they took me to the military governor's building in Khalil (Hebron). I met with the military governor who began to ask my opinion about political matters like the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. Then they put me in a solitary cell. When I tried to ask the reason, I felt I was speaking to stones.

«I asked for blankets. They agreed

but brought me none. The next day, a military officer came with two others from the military police. They blindfolded me and led me away. When I asked where they were taking me, they didn't answer. Suddenly I felt that a group of people were carrying me forcibly. I was thrown into a car which went at a fantastic speed for three hours before stopping.

«I was let down at a point near the borders, which I later learned to be Wadi Araba. A number of Zionist military men approached and told me a military doctor would examine me. After the examination, a Zionist colonel came up to me, saying he had a paper from the Israeli Security Minister that I should sign. He asked if I read Hebrew and I answered affirmatively. He tried to give me the paper, but I refused and told him to read it to me. He read: 'I, Yitzhak Rabin, Minister of Israeli Security, take personal responsibility for executing the deportation of Khaled Tantash of Jerusalem for political and security reasons.' I was ordered to sign the paper, but refused. They threatened me and tried to force me to sign it, but this only made me more determined to refuse. I told them, 'I reject your deportation policy and my case is still in court.' »

Khaled Tantash was forced to cross the bridge to Jordan, leaving behind all he held dear. His deportation is not the first and last reminder that the iron fist of the Israeli 'doves' is no less vicious than that of the 'hawks'. ●

Al Aqsa

Symbol of Palestinian Steadfastness

The visits made by Zionist parliamentarians and fanatics to Al Aqsa mosque are not only transgressions, but flagrant provocations against the Palestinian people's religious and nationalist feelings. The MKs (members of the Knesset) declared that their intent was to investigate reports of illegal construction on the Temple Mount, site of Al Aqsa mosque. Yet the truth of Zionist intentions is apparent: The enemy will continue attempts to Judaize Jerusalem, camouflaging its plans to destroy Al Aqsa with appeals for «allowing Jews to pray» there.

Al Aqsa mosque is the third holiest Moslem shrine in the world after Mecca and Medina. From here, the prophet Mohammad is believed to have ascend-

ed to heaven. Today there are only Moslem buildings on the Mount which is mainly controlled by the Waqf, the Supreme Moslem Council.

On January 8th, ten MKs, accompanied by an official photographer, went to Al Aqsa on the pretext of investigating reports that Moslems had «erected illegal structures, including a monument to Palestinian refugees killed in Beirut's Sabra and Shatila» massacres. They insulted religious feelings by smoking and taking photographs in the mosque. One MK pushed aside a Moslem guard who asked them to stop smoking.

Palestinians, Moslems and Christians alike, were alert to the far-reaching implications of the Zionists' visit. Thousands thronged to the streets to

protest, in response to the call of the prayer leader over the mosque's loudspeaker. The Israeli army and border police set up check points on all roads, especially those leading to Jerusalem, to prevent the surge of Palestinians from reaching Al Aqsa for the following Friday prayers. The enemy forces also surrounded educational institutions in the West Bank in anticipation of popular uprisings. The demonstrators at the mosque were teargassed as the occupation forces escorted the MKs out. According to a Zionist spokesman on January 9th: «The eastern sector of Jerusalem is still surrounded by (occupation) forces and we are ready to confront any angry reactions.»

The Zionist authorities were well aware that no illegal construction was going on in Al Aqsa's premises. A spokesman for the Jerusalem city government had refuted the reports to this effect. The Zionists were moreover aware of the inflammatory effects of their transgressions. Still, MKs made further 'visits' to the Temple Mount. Groups from the ultra-right Zionist party, Tehiya, and others tried on several occasions to hoist the Israeli flag on the Mount. The head of the Knesset's Interior Committee insisted that the 'visits' must continue, despite the turmoil caused, for «All Arabs should know who the head of the household is.»

Voices were raised in a Knesset session demanding that Jews take control of Al Aqsa and begin construction of the so-called third temple. One Zionist group put up posters on the outer wall of Jerusalem's old city, that read: «It's time we threw out these foreigners.» On January 19th, the terrorist Kach group stormed Al Aqsa, raising placards saying, «The Temple Mount is ours» and «Kick the Arabs out!» Even more outrageous, MK Haim Druckman, leader of Morasha religious party, demanded that the prayer leader at Al Aqsa be arrested and tried by a military court, because «he was inciting people to kill the parliamentarians»!

The real issue

Zionist and western media try to project the issue of Al Aqsa as intermittent incidents of violence where fanatic Moslem Palestinians overreact to the normal desire of the Jews to pray at this holy shrine. Yet after the 1967 occupation, Shlomo Ghoren, the rabbi of the

Israeli occupying army, promptly declared that the Israelis intended to demolish Al Aqsa. From that day, the Zionist military authorities began a campaign against the mosque, as part of their more comprehensive plan for Judaizing Jerusalem and all the occupied Palestinian land.

Fanatic religious groups and Zionist terror gangs were nurtured by the authorities and unleashed against Palestinian citizens. Among them is the Temple Mount Faithful whose leader submitted a proposal on how to speed up the process of destroying Al Aqsa and building the «third temple». One day a week, he gives 'religious' lectures near Al Aqsa under heavy police protection.

On June 12, 1967, the Zionist authorities issued a number of military decrees stipulating that the Israeli government has the right to implement Israeli law on any area under the jurisdiction of its occupation army. As a result, Israeli law is implemented in Jerusalem and its suburbs. Included is regulation number 10 which gives the right to the followers of any religion to pray in the holy places in Jerusalem. The main object is to impose a situation which allows the Zionists freedom of movement, especially on the premises of Al Aqsa, so as to eventually destroy it and construct the 'third temple'.

The campaign of destruction and provocation has been launched against Christian and Moslem holy places alike, in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and 1948 occupied Palestine. For example, the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron has been attacked repeatedly by Zionist settlers. Shamaa mosque in Gaza was stormed by settlers, and the pulpit from which the

sheikh leads prayers was destroyed and thrown outside. Zionists have also taken to desecrating cemeteries, as in Gaza where they entered Sheikh Shaaban cemetery and broke several tombstones. Recently a church in Jerusalem was converted into a night club.

Al Aqsa itself has been subjected to fifteen separate attacks. The most criminal of these were: (1) The attempt to burn it down on August 21, 1969. (2) On May 11, 1980, large quantities of explosives were discovered hidden near the mosque, which the Kach terrorists were intending to use to blow it up. (3) On April 11, 1982, a Zionist entered the mosque, spraying those gathered for prayer with machine gun fire.

In addition to the obvious attacks, the Department of Archaeology, which is part of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has been carrying out an even more destructive plan. Under the pretext of searching for the first and second temples, excavations are being carried out around the Temple Mount. At points these diggings extend 14 meters below Al Aqsa mosque. Such excavations have been going on since 1967, and so far the Zionists have found no evidence that the temples ever existed. The excavations do, however, endanger the ancient walls and foundations of the mosque. They could eventually crumble because the excavations loosen the earth on which the structures stand. This only emphasizes that the main goal is destruction.

Moreover, plans for constructing the 'third temple' have already been drawn up and building material provided. For years, a Zionist settler in Jerusalem has been operating a factory which specializes in weaving silk robes and other items to be worn by Jewish rabbis who will pray in the 'third temple'. Only Israelis are allowed to work in this factory. Many fund-raising campaigns have been launched in the US to help the Zionists finance the building of the 'third temple'.

All Arab, Islamic and friendly countries should take a more serious stand and put a halt to Zionist transgressions and plans for Judaizing the occupied territories. It is no longer sufficient to make indignant gestures at meetings of the Jerusalem Committee, or appealing to 'Israel' to abide by UN resolutions. Our Palestinian masses have taken the initiative to protect Al Aqsa. The Arab reactionary regimes should do something less humiliating than issuing sterile communiques of professed concern. ●



Military Operations

The Zionist authorities are expressing growing concern at the increasing incidents of armed resistance in occupied Palestine. Our Palestinian masses are proving their unswerving determination to resist an occupation that has been compared to South African apartheid. (See box).

Israeli radio broadcasts, giving instructions and precautions to be taken, are common. They caution Israelis against walking unarmed, leaving their weapons in parked cars or giving hitchhikers lifts. An unprecedented number of Zionists are being stabbed in the occupied territories. The Zionist daily *Yediot Aharonot* reported 17 cases of such stabbings in the second half of 1985. Reports mention the new generation of Palestinians that grew up under occupation, as being the main ones carrying out these daring operations of shooting Zionists at close range or stabbings. On December 3rd, a Zionist committee, named «The Message of Jerusalem,» called for the formation of a 'civilian' police force to protect Israelis from the increasing attacks.

Millions of dollars are being spent on renovation of shelters and building new ones in the Galilee. The Zionist authorities are constantly brandishing threats of retaliation for resistance operations, but there are indications that the Israeli population is not satisfied. There are continuous signs of their weariness at the war of attrition. After a shelling of Kiryat Shmoneh settlement, near the Lebanese border, one settler said, «We don't want the IDF to return to Lebanon, but we appeal to the government to find a way to solve the problem, so we can live like the rest without the nightmare of missiles.» Israeli army commander Amnon Shahak admits, however, «We don't have magic solutions.»

A report from Reuters news agency stated, «These operations are not publicized internationally. However, they have definitely upset Israelis and caused them to stay away from Arab markets.» Joel Marcos, a commentator for the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, reports, «... (the resistance of Palestinians) has succeeded in hitting the Israeli nervous system.»

The Tourism Ministry admits a 20% drop in tourists. Many are cancelling reservations from abroad. Merchants in Bethlehem report a steep decline in

trade in 1985. A reporter from the Associated Press noted tens of tourists in comparison to hundreds the year before.

Following are some of the military operations carried out by Palestinian freedom fighters in occupied Palestine in late December and January:

On Dec. 23, the group of the martyr Fahd Qawasmeh blew up a chemical warehouse in Tel Aviv, causing extensive material damage.

On Dec. 25, four operations were carried out, in Afoula, Hadera (Al Khudaira - on the coast near Lydda and Ramleh), Jerusalem and Haifa. A time bomb exploded near a border police checkpoint in the center of Afoula, which was set up especially for searching Palestinians. Several persons were wounded at the checkpoint. Eyewitnesses reported ambulances rushing to the scene, but the Zionist police mentioned no casualties although they reported the incident.

In Al Khudaira, explosives went off in the main electricity generator. A military spokesman on Israeli radio acknowledged the operation as well as the death of an Israeli employee and the injury of three others. Nearby hospitals were put on alert, and ambulances rushed to the site. This is one of the most important generators in the Zionist entity. It runs on coal imported from South Africa.

Israeli radio reported that three Israelis were shot by unknowns; two were seriously wounded, the third slightly wounded. They were in a car on their way to Atsour Shalom settlement near Haifa, when they were attacked by machine gun fire.

In Jerusalem, a military patrol car was stoned. Two soldiers were wounded, one seriously enough to be hospitalized.

On Dec. 26, a mine exploded under an armed personnel carrier near Beit Hanoun settlement, west of Ramallah. The vehicle was completely destroyed and 15 Zionist border police killed or

wounded. The enemy radio acknowledged the incident and that 15 were wounded, but said that the vehicle overturned.

On the same day, a time bomb exploded in Tel Aviv's main square, near several first-class cafes and department stores. The Zionist police reported the explosion, and ambulances rushed to the scene. It was later admitted that the cause was a bomb, but only one woman settler was reported wounded. Arie Bibi, head of the Tel Aviv police, spoke on the radio, calling for alertness and that everyone should report suspicious packages. He said that most of the operations carried out were a result of homemade bombs.

On Dec. 27, an Egged bus was burnt near Yata in the Galilee. According to the Israeli radio, Katyusha rockets, launched from Lebanon, hit Zionist settlements twice, in the second day of such attacks.

On Dec. 28, a freedom fighter attacked a Zionist patrol car north of Gaza, with fire bombs, and escaped the area despite its being besieged by the Zionist forces. A curfew was imposed for two days on Shatti camp near Gaza. The Zionists stormed homes in an extensive search for guerrillas. There were a number of arrests.

On Dec. 29, a Zionist soldier was shot in the leg near Fawwar camp near Hebron (Al Khalil). The next day, the homes of four families were demolished; four persons were arrested and accused of belonging to the Palestinian revolution.

January 1986

On Jan. 1, a Zionist driver was stabbed and seriously wounded near Ramleh. He said that a passenger got into the car and tried to shoot him, but the gun would not fire, so he stabbed him in the back and chest.

On Jan. 2, Palestinian revolutionaries planted a bomb in a trash bin near Ramat Gan bus station, east of Tel Aviv. One Zionist was wounded and hospitalized, and there was extensive material damage. The same day a Mossad agent, Yacoub Baba Shafili, was shot dead at close range by a Palestinian freedom fighter, as he was driving his car near Lydda.

On Jan. 6, an Israeli military patrol car was attacked with fire bombs on the road between Bethlehem and Hebron.

On Jan. 8, a molotov cocktail was thrown at a border patrol car near Beit Sahour in the occupied West Bank. ▶

On Jan. 9, in a Tel Aviv suburb, ex-chief of the Mossad, Yitzhaq Huvi, was critically wounded after being shot in the neck and hip with a machine gun.

On Jan. 11, two Zionist soldiers were attacked by Palestinian militants in the center of Nablus. While one of them was in a store, the other was hit by machine gun fire in the car. The first was shot when he rushed out at the sound of fire. Zionist police opened fire indiscriminately at Palestinian civilians, injuring two women and three men, one of them seriously. The wounded Zionist soldiers were taken to hospital by helicopter, and one of them died. A curfew was clamped on the city. Visitors arriving from Jordan were sent back over the bridge. Students were not allowed to sit for their examinations. Members of the ultra-Zionist Tehiya Party demanded that families living near the site of the operation be evicted from their homes. Many Palestinian citizens were gathered in the city square and abused and humiliated. True to form, the newly appointed pro-Jordanian 'mayor' of Nablus, Thafer al Masri, played stooge to the occupiers. Anxious to prove his loyalty, he apologized for the shooting of the enemy soldiers.

Missiles hit Kiryat Shmoneh settlement, destroying three cars.

On Jan. 12, an Israeli taxi driver was stabbed several times near Ramleh. In Jerusalem, a 13 year old girl was arrested for throwing a rock at an Egged bus.

On Jan. 13, explosives went off in a terminal for Israeli army trucks in Ramat Gan, east of Tel Aviv. A Mossad

informer was shot through the head near Lydda.

On Jan. 15, a bomb exploded in Kiryat Taboun settlement, east of Haifa.

On Jan. 17, Zionist army camps in the Upper Galilee were hit by Katyusha rockets. Many casualties and extensive damage were reported.

On Jan. 21, timed explosives set by Palestinian guerrillas went off at a cafeteria visited by Israeli army officers in Afoula. This is the eighth explosion in Afoula in the last three months. After the explosion, the Zionist police enacted a broad arrest campaign against Palestinians in the city. According to Israeli radio, the explosion caused the death of one Israeli and material damage to the nearby Egged bus station.

On Jan. 22, a bomb exploded at a military base in Afoula. A border patrol car was attacked with hand grenades on the road between Absan and Beni Suheila in the Gaza Strip.

On Jan. 27, in Paris Square of Haifa, a bomb exploded. In Jerusalem, a bomb exploded in a restaurant frequented by Zionist officers.

On Jan. 30, a Zionist intelligence officer, Avraham Bayazi, 30 years old, was shot dead while driving near Bab Al Khalil in Jerusalem. Two other Israelis were injured by the fire that came from a passing car.

On Jan. 31, a bomb was thrown at an Israeli car carrying employees of the Israeli 'civil' administration in the occupied Gaza Strip. The Zionist authorities imposed a curfew on the city and arrested a number of Palestinians.

World War II deportation of Jews from all over Europe to death camps in Poland and Germany.

«I find the parallels between the Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories and South Africa's treatment of Black people to be absolutely frightening», Joseph said. «For example, West Bank Palestinians must carry passbooks which limit their freedom of movement just as Black people must in South Africa.»

«A Palestinian from the West Bank may sweep the streets of Tel Aviv by day, but he must be back on the West Bank by midnight», Joseph said. «Collective punishment, house and town arrest and the dynamiting and bulldozing of Arab homes is routine practice. Administrative detention is common. Incidences of torture were related to us on our trip by a number of Palestinians.»

Joseph and Smith emphasized their concern about the impending Israeli deportation of four Palestinians - Dr. Azmi Shuaibi, elected member of the former city council of Al Bireh, which was dissolved by the Israelis; Ali Abu Hillal, founder of the Workers' Unity Bloc, a federation of 52 legal trade unions; Hassan Abdul Jawad Faraga, journalist, owner of the Bethlehem Press Service and leader in the Dhesieh refugee camp, and Zaki Abu Statieh, Palestinian political prisoner released in May.

Smith told the gathered reporters, «While in Israel, we met with US Ambassador Thomas Pickering on the deportations and asked for US government intervention both on legal and humanitarian grounds. He reiterated the US position that the deportations violate the 4th Geneva Convention and indicated it was likely he would be able to bring this issue up with the Israelis.

«Renato Jarach, the government prosecutor, said the charge against the four is that they have been active in setting up what he called 'a pre-state formation.' This is an Israeli pre-emptive move. If these men can be deported simply for their associations, many others could be deported as well.»

Joseph pointed out that the Israelis are using the slightest excuse to arrest people they suspect of having Palestinian national feelings.

«Zaki Abu Statieh was married just after his recent release from prison. He was arrested for singing Palestinian songs at his wedding», Joseph said, and now he and three others face deportation from their homeland.

Zionism Parallels Apartheid

The following article appeared in «Daily World», the newspaper of the Communist Party - USA, on December 20th, 1985.

Representatives of a group of US lawyers this week condemned Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories as violations of international law. They compared them to South African apartheid.

The lawyers, just returned from a fact-finding mission to Israel and the occupied territories, met at UN headquarters in New York with a representative of Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and with General Assembly President Jaime de Pinies (Spain). They expressed their deep concern about the impending Israeli deportation from the

West Bank of four prominent Palestinians.

At a news conference, Wilhelm Joseph, co-chairman of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and Michael Smith, editor of the national newsletter of the National Lawyers' Guild, said that deportations from occupied territories are expressly prohibited in Article 49 of the 1949 Geneva Convention.

They drew attention to the fact that this article was included in the Geneva Convention largely because of world revulsion and horror at Nazi Germany's

Iron Fist in Zionist Jails

In mid-December, Palestinian prisoners staged partial hunger strikes, protesting the grossly deteriorating conditions in the Zionist jails. The strikes spread to jails throughout occupied Palestine, involving over 1500 political prisoners.

After more than a week, the strikes halted. The Israeli prison authorities had meanwhile promised to address some of the prisoners' grievances, but all indications are that the Zionist authorities are hardening their repression against the prisoners in line with the application of the iron fist policy in the occupied territories generally. The prisoners may again find it necessary to repeat their protest.

Need for solidarity

In the light of this situation, the Committee for the Defense of Palesti-

nian Political Prisoners in Israeli Jails addressed an appeal to human rights organizations on January 5th:

«The Israeli campaign of torture and siege continues against the steadfast Palestinian detainees in the Zionist occupation's prisons. These detainees are experiencing very difficult and harsh conditions, being continuously confronted by the prison administration and interrogation officers. The latter have reactivated the most violent, inhumane methods of torturing political prisoners...including the following:

1. continuing a single interrogation ses-

sion for 15-20 hours to exhaust the detainee, mentally and physically;

2. preventing the detainee from eating for several days;

3. confining the detainee in the toilet for several days;

4. threatening the detainee with the Tamir law and a harsh sentence if he does not cooperate...

5. Insulting and spitting on the detainee...

6. Bringing the detainee's wife or mother and threatening to rape her; arresting the detainee's father;

7. confining the detainee in the place called «the closet» with room for one person to stand only;

8. forcing the detainee to sit on a chair with a back at a 45 degree angle to pressure the stomach and the backbone.

«In addition, the Palestinians live in very difficult conditions that do not meet the minimum needs of their existence. A look at the list of the detainees' complaints and demands shows that the occupation forces are determined to ▶

Palestinian mothers protest their sons' detention conditions.



break their will, transform them into empty shells and destroy their steadfast national and organizational identity in confronting the continued attacks...

«The occupation forces' announcement that they would meet some of the demands of the striking prisoners in this prison or that, is only a superficial answer aimed at absorbing local and international reaction. These promises will soon be cancelled, and the conditions of imprisonment will return to the zero level. This requires all democratic institutions, all people of conscience and human rights committees to immediately raise their voices. They should investigate what is occurring in the prisons and take steps in solidarity with the detainees' demands...»

The letter called special attention to the severe conditions in Jenin, Jnaid, Khalil (Hebron), Gaza, Damon, Ramallah and Asqalan prisons. The committee also inclosed letters from the political prisoners in Jenin, Jnaid and Asqalan, to give a first-hand impression of the prison conditions and the detainees' demands.

Letter from Asqalan

On September 10, 1985, the political prisoners in Asqalan were ordered to stand during morning roll call. This had earlier been general practice. All prisoners were forced to stand throughout roll call in the entire prison, which often lasted several hours, giving the guards

ample time for humiliating and harassing the prisoners. Thus, the Asqalan prisoners decided to refuse reimposition of this practice which had been abandoned in the mid-seventies as the result of their struggle.

On September 11th, when they refused to stand, 100 Zionist soldiers, gas-masked and wielding truncheons, stormed the cells, one by one, teargassing and beating the inmates, and confiscating their meagre personal belongings. Many prisoners were injured, three of them so seriously that they were moved to the prison hospital at Ramla. For the next three days, all the prisoners were deprived of food and water; family visits were cancelled. Two attempts by the ICRC to see the prisoners were blocked by the Zionist prison administration on September 19-20th. On September 29th, the Asqalan prisoners staged a hunger strike, protesting maltreatment, parallel to a similar strike waged by political prisoners in Jenin.

A letter sent out of Asqalan in November, conveys the prisoners' impression of these events:

«From the beginning of September, we have been sensing the horrible smell of hatred from the detention officers. Their eyes and behavior foretold that a new-old policy would be enacted...aiming to uproot our organized, national existence in the Zionist prisons. This oppressive policy does not stop at roll

call. It aims at revoking all the concessions we have attained through our struggle. The horrible events in our prison since September 11th are only the beginning of the application of a plan that has humiliation as its headline. There has been horrible oppression, volumes of tear gas, and the army and police dogs are constantly present, turning the prison into a military barracks. Yet we have not feared these measures, and they have not killed our spirit of struggle...

«In the light of this attempted liquidation, we decided the following in order to confront these measures and prove our Palestinian identity, after having used all other methods: to refuse morning roll call and begin an open, partial, hunger strike, eating only bread. We therefore call on you to stand by us, letting the whole world hear our voice and using all efforts for our just struggle...»

The Asqalan prisoners also conveyed their demands, including not to stand in roll call, extending the exercise break to 2 1/2 hours as it was before, a stop to the daily search before the break, permission to move between the different sections of the prison, allowing hot water, the return of confiscated books and notebooks, and an end to the acts of intimidation by the administration and personnel.

Jnaid: deliberate neglect

Prisoners in Jnaid have been facing a similar Zionist campaign of harassment and deliberate neglect. For long-term prisoners, a major problem is the administration's policy of frequent transfers in order to make problems for the prisoners and their family visits. The death of a Jnaid prisoner underscored that the Zionist policy of neglecting health conditions is deliberate. Ghassan Issa, a 25 year old Bethlehem citizen, died on October 2, 1985. He had contracted cancer earlier in the year, but went without treatment for eight months despite appeals for his being treated or released. At the last minute, he was moved to Ramla prison hospital to die. His family was forbidden to visit him. A letter sent by the Jnaid prisoners in November describes the overall situation:

«The oppressive, fascist administration is continuing its policy of attack and delay (in addressing our demands). This policy became more pronounced after the prisoner exchange. The administration has escalated this policy...resorting to the old-new methods of

Sit-in in Damascus



isolation and transferring prisoners to other prisons and threatening to continue this if we continue our strike threats. The administration varies its treatment of the different sections, tightening pressures and applying special restrictions on the section for receiving new detainees. The amount and quality of food is deteriorating to the bottom level.

«We are accustomed to this policy and we will not give in. We will not waste our energy by reacting spontaneously. Rather we will follow a careful plan in order to respond with the best tactics...»

The letter chronicles how the prisoners' attempts to have their conditions improved have been met by obstinacy on the part of the prison administration. For example, the administration refused the demand for the prisoners to move between different sections. The administrator insisted that anyone wishing to do so must meet with him personally. The detainees pointed to the danger involved in this condition. The administrator also refused to make changes in the transferal policy, or to lift the cultural blockade imposed on the prisoners.

Administrative detainees strike

A new aspect was added to the struggle in Jnaid this autumn with the presence of 44 of those administratively detained under the Zionist iron fist policy. Another 35 were put in Bir Sheba prison. According to the statement of the detainees' lawyer in October, the 35 are all held in one room with only 20 beds and no space for moving. Medical care is non-existent and many of the detainees had contracted illnesses. The detainees charge that food is deliberately ill-prepared.

In mid-October, the administrative detainees in Jnaid went on hunger strike against their illegal detention. The Zionist policy of transferring some of the strikers backfired, because the strike thus spread to Bir Sheba as well. On October 16th, all the political prisoners staged a one-day hunger strike in solidarity with the administratively detained. The Jnaid and Bir Sheba strikes were eventually suspended due to the deteriorating health of some of the prisoners who had been ill before the strike.

Jenin

The prisoners in Jenin are facing grossly deteriorating conditions. The list of their demands gives a comprehensive

picture of how the prison administration has been manipulating living conditions in the campaign to break the prisoners' humanity and will to struggle. For reasons of space, we include only a portion of their demands below:

- To solve the water problem which started six months ago, and has many negative effects on the prisoners' health. Skin and stomach diseases are spreading and dozens of prisoners are in quarantine. In the words of the prisoners, «The shortage of hot, cold and bath water is part of the policy of suppression and slow death being practiced by the Israeli authorities.

- To open the cell doors to allow movement - «We spend 12 consecutive hours locked in our cells. We are prohibited from walks as a collective punishment...»

- To allow the opening of windows for fresh air and sunlight, and removing asbestos from the windows as it causes cancer.

- To repair sinks and install adequate sinks for washing.

- To improve the food - «Our ration of food is being stolen by the administration and mixed with the police rations...»

- To allow visits among the sections which are now prohibited for 'security reasons' or decided according to the whim of the officers.

- To open the outer court as an exercise yard because the existing one is not adequate for movement or sports -

- «Each prisoner has only 50 cm. in which to walk. In a space of 80 meters square, 125 militants must walk.»

- To remove the screen during family visits; extend the visiting time to one

hour and a half monthly; provide places of rest, drinking water and bathrooms for visiting relatives.

- To allow newspapers, cultural magazines, copy books and drawing materials.

- To provide one table and two chairs for every room.

- To allow the prisoners to buy additional items in the canteen or through their families.

- To stop the policy of individual and collective punishment such as prohibiting exercise and family visits.

- To stop the brutality of the officers in the prison and during transfers.

- To end overcrowding.

- To provide medical care.

Gaza

Conditions in the jail at the military government's headquarters in Gaza are so scandalous as to have been admitted by the authorities. In October, Police Minister Haim Bar Lev visited this prison and considered the early release of «criminals» to ease the overcrowding and allow for the detention of the recently arrested. «The density in this prison is 1.8 square meters per prisoner, as compared to between 2.8 and 3.5 square meters in Israeli jails. Israeli jails are regarded as overcrowded...(In one instance) 60 to 80 detainees were arrested in one night, and kept in a cell so small there was only standing room...Some cells lack showers and toilets and, because regulations say that wardens may not open cell doors at night, the inmates use pails in their rooms...» (*Jerusalem Post*, October 22, 1985).

Occupied Palestine 1985

The Kuwaiti newspaper «Al Qabas» printed the following chronology of events in occupied Palestine in 1985.

The Israeli authorities have continued their policy in the occupied Arab land, working to advance their land confiscation and settlement program and executing a campaign of terror and deportation. The Palestinians have confronted these measures, resisting and rising up. The following are the most significant events of 1985 in this respect:

Resisting occupation

Jan. 1: Mass demonstrations throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the 20th anniversary of the start of the Palestinian revolution.

Jan. 3: Hunger strike by women detainees in Ramallah prison.

Jan. 11: Duheisha camp confronts the occupation forces and village league.

Feb. 15: Strikes and demonstrations in most Palestinian towns; 'Israel' threatens to deport «the children of the stones» (stonethrowers) and imposes a curfew in four towns.

Feb. 26: Demonstrations in the Gaza Strip; arrests in Jabalia camp.

March 24-27: Demonstrations and rallies on the anniversary of the battle of Al Karama and in solidarity with the detainees in Asqalan prison.

March 30-31: Two million Palestinians demonstrate against occupation on the anniversary of the Day of the Land, including a 6 km march in the Galilee. One of the slogans was: «From Beirut to Sakhnin, we are one people.» The enemy forces besiege the refugee camps and erect roadblocks, having put 25,000 soldiers on alert.

April 11-16: Large demonstrations on the anniversary of the Deir Yassin massacre (1948) and in commemoration of the Day of the Palestinian Prisoners. The uprising continues in Gaza for the fourth day.

Oct. 10: General strike throughout the Gaza Strip and West Bank in response to the call of the trade unions, national institutions and committees in protest of Zionist repression - the iron fist.

Oct. 13: Forty-five municipalities in 1948 occupied Palestine begin a one-day warning strike in protest of Israeli racist discrimination in funding, which has caused great financial hardships for the Palestinian Arab municipalities.

Zionist terror

Jan. 8-17: The terrorist activities of Kahane and his KACH party continue. In a speech, Kahane says: «It is impossible for any non-Jew to feel he is in his country.» He tells the Palestinian citizens of the occupied homeland to «fill out emigration applications, or death is your destiny.»

Jan. 21: The number of Palestinian political detainees in Israeli jails reaches 3400 men and 80 women who are suffering from atrocious conditions.

Feb. 2-8: Kiryat Arba settlement donates \$ 5000 to the terrorist Rabbi Levinger for the continuation of the activities of Gush Emunim settler movement. Kahane leads a demonstration in Ramallah to terrorize the citizens, threatening them with death or deportation.

Feb. 15: The Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights issued a report about house arrests imposed by the occupation authorities on Palestinian citizens. According to this report, this measure has been imposed on 1000 in the occupied land.

March 13: 300 university and high school students are arrested at Al Najah and Bir Zeit universities which were raided.

April 20: The Israeli occupation forces raided Bethlehem University and closed it, alleging that they found publications hostile to the occupation. Later they declared the university a military area.

May 8: Israeli Uri Avneri says that the Rabbi of Sephardic Jews, Ovadia Huzen, gave his approval to the terror networks to continue their actions of burning Islamic sacred places.

June 4: Foreign Minister Shamir declares his sympathy with the Israeli terrorists, saying that they are «misguided, honest people.»

June 14: The International Commission of Jurists in Geneva accused the Israeli forces of torturing juvenile detainees in Al Faraa prison near Nablus.

July 7: The Zionist administration in the occupied land orders the Palestinian newspapers published in Jerusalem to publish Israeli government notices as a



condition for their continued distribution.

Aug. 11: Bir Zeit University closed for the second time; curfew is imposed on the city of Nablus.

Aug. 15: Three members of Knesset from the Tehiya Party, later joined by other MKs, occupy a house in Hebron (Al Khalil) in an attempt to pressure the government to allow increased settlement in the city.

Aug. 25: Seven Palestinian children, under 12 years of age, are sentenced to prison in Gaza, accused of resisting occupation and membership in resistance organizations.

Oct. 10: Kahane declares that he sees no injustice in killing Palestinians loyal to the PLO, and that «Israel thinks that its main problem with the Arabs is not bombs but newborns.»

Oct. 14: Two hundred Israelis, by force of arms, take over a number of houses in Jerusalem, and kick out the inhabitants.

Dec. 17: The Israeli authorities close Al Najah University, after numerous raids.

Settlement, land confiscation and deportation

Jan. 29: A report from the occupied land reveals that 'Israel' has confiscated 44% of the West Bank, and annexed 84% of Jerusalem.

Feb. 4: Rabbi Litani announced to *Haaretz* newspaper that the occupation forces are planning to abolish Duheisha camp in the West Bank, and build a settlement on the same land. He added, «There has been coordination between the government and both Meir Kahane and Rabbi Levinger to abolish the camps.»

Feb. 9: A study published by the West Bank Data Project, headed by former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, Meron Benvenisti, says that the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is now 42,500. Three Palestinians from Duheisha camp are deported. Abdel Aziz Shaheen is deported to Jordan after 15 years in prison. Prime Minister Peres announces that he supports the deportation of Palestinians.

April 2: A report from the occupied land revealed an Israeli decision to build a settlement north of Ramallah, and name it after a terrorist leader of the settler movement, who was killed by the citizens of Ramallah in defense of their land.

Aug. 25: The occupation forces confiscate new land in Al Munzar area of Gaza, and begin building cement houses as the nucleus of a new settlement.

Oct. 15: The Zionist occupation authorities confiscate 2060 dunums of land from Al Zahria village near Hebron, and from the land of Bitonia village.

Oct. 27: Zionist extremists make a new attempt to enter Al Aqsa mosque, and Palestinians confront them and stop their entrance.

Oct. 28: The occupation forces confiscate 8000 dunums of land in different areas of Hebron and Jericho (Ariha) districts.

Oct. 25 - Nov. 14: More than 30 Palestinians were deported to Jordan, charged with threatening 'security'.

Nov. 3: Rafael Eitan, former Israeli Chief of Staff, declared, «The Israeli army will not obey government orders and will not abandon a single settlement, even if all the Arab leaders come to Jerusalem.»

Nov. 15: Settlers call on Israelis to take up arms against the return of any occupied land to the Arabs. The occupation forces request settlers to arm themselves while travelling in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, to protect themselves. ●

Women in the Palestinian Revolution

In anticipation of International Women's Day, we interviewed Samira Salah, Central Committee member of the PFLP and head of its women's organization. A mother of three children, she participates actively in women's activities on the Arab and international level. We asked Samira about the situation of Palestinian women in general, the General Union of Palestinian Women and the Palestinian Womens Organization of the PFLP. The following is based on our interview with her.



Samira Salah at WIDF conference

The reality of the women's situation in the Palestinian liberation struggle

The struggle of the Palestinian women, especially in the occupied territories, cannot be separated from the political struggle and the struggle in unions. Palestinian women suffer a compound form of oppression: economic and social as well as national. This is especially so in the occupied territories. Meanwhile, they participate in institutions whose role is to liberate them economically, socially and politically.

When discussing Palestinian women as distinct from Arab women, we should also keep in mind the following: Ever since 1948, Palestinian women have suffered the consequences of war, massacres, migration and occupation. This forced many to shoulder total responsibility for preserving the family. Circumstances demanded that the woman become the provider, a role historically assumed by the male, in addition to the burdens of domestic duties and motherhood. This added responsibility had the positive aspect of developing the character of the Palestinian woman as contrasted with Arab women as a whole. Secondly, participation in daily struggle through the Palestinian revolution gave her a distinct militant character. Thirdly, the ideologies that were introduced via the Palestinian revolution made her more aware of her rights as a woman and hastened the process of her becoming politically conscious.

If we look at women's participation in the struggle as such, it is relatively small. Yet compared to women in other Arab countries, we find it is very advanced. Palestinian women have participated in all fields of struggle, even the highest form, armed struggle. They have carried arms, planted mines, gotten arrested, etc. They have reached the same level as men, though on a smaller scale, because of the circumstances women live under.

Naturally we are constantly striving to upgrade women's struggle, because in the end it all goes towards advancement of the Palestinian revolution. The more women are liberated socially and economically, the more they are able to adhere to our people's cause and play an active role. Women's con-

sciousness and economic independence are a help to the revolution's advance. The slogan «Man and woman, side by side in the battle of liberation» has been applied in practice, but it has its ups and downs. The more the revolution advances, the more women's participation is boosted. The reverse is also true. Women being the weakest link, are the most affected by any slowdown in the revolution. In a phase of retreat, the progress of women is most affected. In phases of advance, their progress is not as quick as that of men, because of the backward social situation.

Obstacles to women's liberation

The family is the main obstacle. Backward social customs hinder women from expressing themselves freely. Anyone who oversteps the social boundaries is considered to be deviating from tradition and norms which we inherited from our grandfathers. The woman's movement is restricted, because she always remains under the guardianship of her father, brother and husband. Her liberation is therefore necessarily linked with theirs.

A second factor is the woman herself. She is not convinced of her importance and ability to play an active role. She has been brought up to view herself as the society does, as the weaker sex. She is used to remaining at home. Her thoughts are limited to bringing up children, cooking, etc. She has been brought up to believe that men are responsible for making decisions, even over her own life. She lacks confidence in her ability to contribute, despite the fact that she is always giving. She bears the children that become heroes and martyrs for Palestine. That is basically her role in the society - to give. When women become conscious of the importance of their status as the giver, they will become aware that they are important. There are many subjective factors which affect women and limit their self-confidence.

In this context we can appreciate the role of the woman vanguard whose task is to mobilize the potentials of women by bolstering their confidence. Looking farther ahead, to after liberation, we will be faced with the task of building a new society. This will not be just the men's task. Women must be up to this task, and preparation must start now.

Another factor affecting women is the infiltration of western culture into the Arab world. This affects the process of women's liberation negatively, because it emphasizes things like fashion and make-up, projecting the woman as a commodity. We reject the television commercials projecting women as commodities or promoting other commodities. It is not only backwardness which is an obstacle to women's liberation. The invasion of western culture diverts from women's basic national and social cause. The reaction to imperialist ideas is either to be completely carried away and blinded by western

glitter, or to reject them totally, retreating further into backwardness as a refuge. These two reactions are equally harmful in our society. The Palestinian woman is not immune to this for she is part of the Arab society, especially in view of our dispersion throughout the Arab world.

Women in confrontation

The exception to this is women living under Zionist occupation which does not leave much room for anything other than resistance. In Palestine, women play a more advanced role than women in exile. They are totally absorbed in the everyday resistance to the Zionist occupation, if not directly, then indirectly. They may have sons in prison or outside the country, either to work for a better salary or unable to return due to Israeli repression. This situation minimizes the negative influence of the West on women. Their daily life is devoted to ending the occupation through the channels open to them: seminars, social and medical work, nurseries, bazaars and exhibitions, production workshops, etc. The activity of women in occupied Palestine is in direct proportion to the number involved in the struggle. There the woman has only to see what havoc and destruction Zionism is wreaking to be motivated to resist. Every day renews her determination to challenge the occupation, and her effectiveness increases.

Another example is in Lebanon where the confrontation has caused women to be more active and tied to the struggle than Palestinian women in the Gulf countries or even in Syria. With the occupation of Lebanon in 1982, the women's confrontation developed even more, because an entirely new situation developed. All of a sudden, everyone was involved. Every Palestinian was a target, even those who had not been involved in the struggle due to their class status. A face to face confrontation with the enemy evolved. Thus every Palestinian woman, regardless of class status, was targeted. Her son could be arrested and harassed simply for being Palestinian. Every Palestinian family in Lebanon was motivated to rid themselves of this oppression, especially when the Lebanese Army started treating them the same way the Israeli occupiers did. Lebanon became the second hot spot after occupied Palestine.

Although some Palestinian women in exile may on the surface lead a normal life, they are still affected by the fact that part of their family remains under occupation. This can motivate women for struggle. The level of activity is much lower, but there are other ways of raising women's consciousness such as showing patriotic films, political seminars, etc. This keeps alive their adherence to our cause and country. However, this task is very difficult due to the dispersion of Palestinian women all over the world.

Social effects of backwardness

Women are not the only victims of social backwardness. Both men and women still contain the seeds of this. The degree of backwardness varies from one person to another in proportion to his/her consciousness. Men are more enlightened, even if not educated, because the society permits them to leave home to get an education, earn a living, etc. This gave men a chance to develop that women were not given. The result was a gap between the consciousness of the two sexes.

Yet the man too remains tied to his family and the society. Overstepping the boundaries of social traditions means risking being branded as different or a social outcast. This would naturally affect the rest of the family as well. While the family and society gave the men certain privileges, they expect them

to follow in their path, and not make waves due to acquired knowledge or worldliness. If the man is not ideologically aware, he cannot be liberated. No matter how many progressive ideas he may convey, he remains a prisoner of the society he lives in. He can only apply his ideological convictions with great difficulty because this goes against the majority.

Women and the revolution

In any case, what takes priority on our agenda is the liberation of our country. We, men and women, are so engrossed in our cause, and the rapidly changing developments, that not enough attention is focused on the question of women's liberation. There is, of course, some progress, but it is not up to the standard to which we aspire. However, it is a step forward in women's liberation and men's as well. However, the men's consciousness must be reflected in the smallest unit of the society - the family. If not, our revolution will not succeed.

It is my evaluation that the PFLP represents an advanced model on the women's question. The fourth congress in 1981 posed the question of women. This means that despite all our problems as a revolution, we can attend to the women's question and evaluate it highly enough to be a subject considered at our congress. There was a decision to draw up an internal personal statute (behavior code) to be adopted at the fifth congress. I believe that we will succeed in this, and set an example to be emulated by others. We consider ourselves to be the first building block. We have not reached the point where we have the authority to impose our ideas on the Palestinian revolution as a whole.

Previously, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was to propose such a personal code to be implemented by the PLO. This was before the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. However, as always, events which we do not control were ahead of us, and the plan was put aside.

Organized women's work

In the occupied territories, there are the Union of Palestinian Womens Committees, the Womens Work Committees, the Working Womens Committees and the Womens Social Work Committees. The last is very broad, encompassing many sectors of women, but is not as organized as the first three which have adopted progressive ideology.

The Working Womens Committees initiated activities among women, and the Palestinian Womens Committees and Womens Work Committees followed soon after. These three have already convened congresses and held elections. They are very active and have programs which are close to being comprehensive. The first congress of the Union of Palestinian Womens Committees was held in 1983, the second in 1984. There is coordination between all four of these organizations. In addition there are numerous societies of a social nature, formed by women patriots, such as the Society for the Preservation of the Family, the Society for Orphans, the Society of Al Bireh, etc.

The framework that *should* interlink all these committees and societies is the GUPW. However, their work is being conducted more or less independently. We in the PFLP formerly suggested that all these committees and societies be represented in the GUPW, and that all of them should meet and form a representative body in order to complement each other. It goes without saying that organized efforts give better results for women, especially in the occupied territories, because our cause is one and the situation in which women live is one.

Outside occupied Palestine, there are a number of

frameworks. The most prominent is the GUPW. Moreover, every resistance organization has a women's bureau or organization. The PFLP had a women's bureau from 1972 until 1983, especially to organize women's work within the Front. However, with time, our work developed and expanded, attracting women from outside the membership of the PFLP. In order to continue this broader process, the Palestinian Womens Organization (PWO) was formed as a popular democratic framework with its own organizational structure, program and activities. The PWO will be having conferences in Lebanon, Syria and other places where there are branches (Europe, USA, the Gulf and North Africa).

Aside from the PWO, there are the Democratic Womens Organization of the DFLP, which has held three annual congresses; the Palestinian Progressive Womens Organization of the PFLP-General Command, which has held its congress; the Women's Bureau of the Popular Struggle Front, etc. Of course, the ideal situation would be to have a framework for coordination between these organizations, i.e., the role the GUPW should play. The more organized the women's activities, the more progress we make. Yet now that there are congresses and elections, the women's organizations have shed their more restricted role and become popular democratic women's organizations. This is a development of the women's work. It gives the opportunity to all women to be in a women's organization. They need not be members of a resistance organization or party as a prerequisite for engaging in organized women's work. These democratic organizations are ultimately to the interest of the party as well.

Of course, there are discrepancies from one women's organization to another in terms of their internal structure, the nature of their activities and which sector of women they focus on. This is where the difficulty lies. It is beneficial that these organizations exist because it means more women's work, but it is negative that there is a lack of conviction in the GUPW as the representative of all Palestinian women.

Another way to look at this issue is related to the shortcomings of the GUPW, which prompted women to organize popular organizations or institutions particular to their organization, instead of organizing centrally under GUPW auspices. This should have happened long ago so that the various frameworks together would constitute the union. Unfortunately, things took another course. The GUPW has not functioned as the union of all the active women's organizations. Rather women were hastily collected in membership drives just prior to congresses in order to maintain the dominance of a single faction through undemocratic elections. Proportional representation of the active forces and other basics of union work were absent. Rather there was factional domination - I'm the biggest, so I should lead, whether qualified or not. There are many women who are qualified to be leaders in the union, but were put aside for political reasons. This is the problem. The union should be for all Palestinian women regardless of their political affiliation. Otherwise it cannot be called a union, but the women's organization of Fatah or PFLP or DFLP. As a union it should represent all lines in the Palestinian arena. There should be collective leadership, not individualistic decision-making.

Palestinian Womens Organization

The Palestinian Womens Organization is a national democratic, social organization which encompasses in its ranks women from all classes of the Palestinian people, on the basis of free choice. It also includes Arab and non-Arab women

married to Palestinians. The PWO is an inseparable part of the Palestinian women's movement. It is the popular women's framework of the PFLP. It is not a substitute for the GUPW which we consider to represent the Palestinian women's movement. This is the basic definition of the PWO.

The PWO's program is very broad and aims mainly at raising the consciousness of Palestinian women. It is the PWO's duty to provide women with opportunities to learn and be acquainted with all political matters relevant to the Palestinian people's struggle. This can be through workshops, literacy programs, showing political films and exhibitions of Palestinian heritage. We will work to preserve traditional Palestinian embroidery which is based on the cross stitch.

The PWO program takes into consideration the objective conditions of each arena when defining its activities. For example, in the occupied territories, there are 40 committees in the cities, villages and camps of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including hundreds of women. The women there set their work program, and have been issuing a publication *Women's Voice* for over a year. On August 17, 1985, they held a congress with the slogans: «Cancel the Amman accord» and «For a united women's movement.» The most prominent activities in the occupied territories are production workshops and social projects, including literacy programs, moveable medical clinics, booster lessons for students and community centers for seminars, rallies and courses.

Also of importance is a complete program of activities for children to develop their patriotic awareness. This is essential in order to counter Zionist propaganda and interference in the school curriculum. There are also bazaars and exhibitions where items produced by women are displayed on occasion or on a regular basis, and sold at low prices so that all can afford to buy. Moreover, women organize hunger strikes, demonstrations and sit-ins. They have been particularly active in solidarity with the prisoners in the Zionist jails. March 8th is considered a special occasion and is celebrated in the occupied territories.

Concerning the PWO outside Palestine, we have formed a preparatory committee for our congress. It includes representatives of Palestinian women from all Arab countries and the socialist countries. Elections will be held in the branches in Syria and Lebanon and the external department. This will culminate in the general congress in June. In most PWO centers, we now have a wall newspaper. We will be issuing a bulletin on the occasion of the preparatory committee meeting at the end of January, explaining the purpose of the PWO and the bulletin. We will also have an issue for March 8th, and a third issue will cover the congress in June.

WIDF conference in Prague

We do not envision the PWO as an alternative to the GUPW. However, we will develop relations between the PWO and other women's organizations internationally, especially in the socialist countries. We were invited to the Womens International Democratic Federation's Conference in Prague in November, and benefited greatly from our attendance. There were 111 countries and 136 organizations represented by 260 women. It was very important to discuss with them. We also had the opportunity to discuss with women from the occupied territories, who gave us first-hand descriptions of the problems they are currently encountering.

Unfortunately, Isam Abdel Hadi, who spoke on behalf of the GUPW, objected to the addition of a clause denouncing the Amman accord, in the final resolution of the conference. The

participating delegations were indignant at this objection, whereas our proposal to make such an addition was greeted with applause. We were disappointed with Isam's position because she has a long history of struggle. She justified her position by saying that the Amman accord is an internal Palestinian affair. However, we feel that it is as dangerous as Camp David. It is our national duty to take a position side by side with the progressive forces of the world, and to project the correct political line. Among the 11 resolutions issued in Prague, there was a special one about the Middle East, where we were able to add denouncement of the Amman accord.

Current situation in the GUPW

Despite the problems that I mentioned earlier, the GUPW, until 1983, was the most democratic of all the Palestinian unions. It included all political views while at the same time maintaining a patriotic line supportive of the progressive line in the Palestinian revolution. The second and third congresses issued progressive political statements, although the Palestinian arena was experiencing a crisis. The second congress occurred at the time that the line of political settlement was being propounded, but the GUPW statement rejected the political settlement. Progressive Fatah women participated enthusiastically with other progressive organizations, especially the PFLP, to have this statement adopted, rejecting anything that would harm the Palestinian National Charter and cause.

After 1982, all Palestinian institutions were affected. The exodus to Syria and other Arab countries dispersed things. The GUPW general secretariat decided to place its headquarters in Damascus. In the beginning of 1983, things were running smoothly. Then, towards the end of 1983, differences began to emerge once more in the Palestinian arena, affecting all Palestinian institutions. Arafat's visit to Cairo and his subsequent capitulationist policy brought division to the GUPW. Eight members of the GUPW secretariat were in Damascus, five in other Arab countries. There were conflicting decisions because those outside Syria were with Arafat's trend. Those in Damascus were against his policy and with the progressive liberation cause of the Palestinian revolution.

We never wished or called for a split in the GUPW, but tried always to overcome its crisis. However, Arafat's followers were adamant. They made the organizational mistake of trying to collect signatures for holding a meeting of the administrative council, to expel those present in Damascus. They did not succeed, and the PFLP played a prominent role in foiling this attempt. Palestinian women and our cause generally will be the only losers from a split in the GUPW. We would lose international credibility, because the international unions and the socialist countries would find it awkward to deal with two separate unions. The more we preserve the cohesiveness of the GUPW, the better will be our image in world public opinion, especially in terms of our membership in the WIDF.

The Aden-Algiers agreement, signed in the summer of 1984, between the Democratic Alliance and Fatah's Central Committee, eased the differences in the GUPW. An administrative council meeting was held in Algiers. We played an important role in rallying the participation of all forces in this meeting. A good political communique was issued. However, the Palestinian right began taking more steps. They held the Amman PNC which affected not only the situation for women's work, but the whole Palestinian situation. The members of the secretariat outside Damascus convened a meeting and crossed out the names of nine GUPW members of the PNC. They

substituted other names to fill the quorum for the PNC, disregarding all political and organizational rules.

After the PNC, we still participated in the general secretariat where we expressed our opinion against the suspension of the nine. We told the other members of the secretariat that they themselves were free to attend the PNC, but they had no right to suspend the membership of others, based on their political opinions. Still we as the PFLP tried to act as mediators between the two sides (women affiliated to Fatah's Central Committee and those affiliated to the National Alliance). We did so due to the importance of all forces participating in the union. However, the rightists were adamant and wanted the women of the PFLP and the DFLP to serve as a cover for their divisive policy in the GUPW. Our main purpose was not to lose the progressives in the union, for example, the general secretary and the responsible for foreign relations who had been suspended, and women from Popular Struggle Front and General Command, etc. PFLP members were accepted, but this is not the point. The point is the presence of all. Now, left organizations (DFLP and Palestinian Communist Party) are represented in the general secretariat, but they will not be able to take positive decisions when the majority (two-thirds) are with the right-wing policy. In this case, the participation of left organizations in the leadership of the union will only provide a progressive image for the right wing's policies.

We have first-hand experience with the right wing. When we were six organizations, it was only with extreme difficulty that reasonable decisions could be made. When such decisions were made, they were most often countered by the rightists. So how will it be now when the general secretariat is dispersed among several countries? There is one meeting a month, and then all of a sudden we find that those affiliated to the right wing in Tunis have made and implemented their decisions. Of course, we have a flexible policy for working in unions, and we are ready to participate even when the union is not led by the progressives. However, the political line is the primary consideration. We have to look at what political line is

Palestinian mother commemorates Sabra-Shatila martyrs.



Woman in tr



being served by the union activity. We must judge if the activity of the union is supporting or halting the development of the Palestinian revolution.

Based on these considerations, the women of the PFLP boycotted the GUPW congress held in Tunis in the spring of 1985, because we could see what the intentions of this congress were. We asked the general secretariat in Tunis to postpone the congress until a time when there were better conditions for resolving the internal crisis in the PLO. However, they refused. They had instructions from the rightist leadership to convene the congress even if that meant finding substitutes for those women who boycotted the congress. Their justification was that the congress had not been held for a long time (4 years). Looking back, however, the first congress was held in 1965, and the second in 1974. This gap was due to the difficult situation for the Palestinian revolution at that time. There was the Jordanian regime's attack on the resistance in 1970, and its aftermath, which made it difficult to hold the congress.

Today, there are problems more serious than any encountered before; they are more important than when the congress is held, especially considering the turmoil this creates in the ranks of the union. We need to convene something that will bring all forces together on solid common ground.

However, the right wing wanted a congress with leaders that would approve the rightist trend. For this reason, we worked for postponement of the congress, meanwhile continuing to work together, but they refused. Then we suggested that it be held in Democratic Yemen which was ready to receive all delegates to the congress. Of course, as a progressive country, Democratic Yemen would have wanted assurance that the congress would make progressive decisions, denouncing the Amman accord, and that all forces would participate, to avoid a split. This was also refused, for those in Tunis wanted the congress held there, close to the rightist leadership which could dominate the proceedings. We sent a memorandum explaining our boycott of the congress, because we considered that a political fault had been committed. This does not

additional embroidered dress, Jalazon camp near Ramallah, occupied West Bank



mean that we boycott the GUPW as such. We deal with all the union branches and take part in elections on the basis of denouncing the Amman accord and the Cairo statement (on restricting armed struggle).

Anyway, they held the congress in Tunis. DFLP and PCP participated, allowing the Tunis leadership to claim support from the left. However, no representative from the socialist countries or the WIDF participated. They had asked beforehand who was participating and who was not. The suspended general secretary of the union sent a letter of explanation, and on that basis, they boycotted the congress. Until now, there have been no relations between the GUPW and the international unions. The WIDF invited the GUPW to attend its conference in Prague in November, but a full delegation was not sent. GUPW vice-president Isam Abdel Hadi attended. We do not know how relations will develop in the future. Actually, we do not expect the socialist countries to be bound by our position. That is their affair. Their view will determine how they deal with this issue.

Although we did not attend the congress in Tunis, the new GUPW general secretariat informed us that they would continue to invite us to their activities in our capacity as progressive Palestinian women, not a group that has split off. We are not represented in the general secretariat and administrative council formed at Tunis, but we consider ourselves members of the union because we were greatly involved in its establishment. We will participate in elections in any branch even if we lose. We will try to counter the right's policy of only bringing in those it can count on to support its line, for this is not a union.

We are optimistic about the elections in some branches. Especially in Lebanon and Syria, there will be democratic elections giving everyone an opportunity to participate. We will not repeat the mistakes of the right. There are fifteen legitimate branches in which elections will be held; some makeshift branches were set up by the rightists for election purposes only, but they did not maintain the required membership of 50. This is a real difficulty when the right wing uses people simply to have a show of hands supporting their policy.

To be frank we do not blame only the right for this situation. This has been their policy in the union work since it began, and parallels their policy in the PNC. We also blame the progressive forces who have not presented a united alternative to counter the right and prevent it from continuing like this. We consider the DFLP, the PCP and Isam Abdel Hadi, who are all still working in the union, to be progressive. They should put a halt to these things and not be restricted by the union's ceiling. Their role is to bring in the progressive forces to tip the balance against the right.

I will give a concrete example of the problems facing the left in this respect. Recently, there were elections in the GUPW's branch in Qatar. The PFLP women wanted to run on the basis of denouncing the Amman accord and the Cairo statement. However, the DFLP had a different position. The DFLP's policy is to remain in the framework of the union no matter what the political cost. Under no conditions will they leave any form of the union work. To us, the political aspect determines our union participation. In my opinion, if the DFLP, PCP and Isam Abdel Hadi would declare a united position of withdrawing from the leadership bodies, they would be able to impose a whole new situation to the advantage of the progressive forces. I am not talking about a split, but a new situation. As it is, the right holds two-thirds of the leading posts. As a minority, the left forces can at most register opposition.

Repression for 'Peace'

In our last issue, we printed the statement of the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan, about the arrest campaign which had pushed the number of political prisoners in King Hussein's jails to 300 by the end of November. Those arrested are still detained and arrests have continued. From mid-November 1985 to mid-January 1986, over 60 progressive nationalists were detained.

Repression is nothing new in Jordan where a virtual state of martial law reigns. All political parties are banned; union organizing is severely restricted; and an archaic military law allows for arrest and detention without stated charges. What distinguishes this particular campaign of repression is that most of those targeted are leaders either of trade or professional unions, or of Jordanian nationalist or Palestinian resistance organizations. It is the first time the Jordanian intelligence service has arrested so many leading figures at one time. As an example, the entire leadership of the Jordanian Writers Association in Irbid (northern Jordan) was rounded up in November (see box).

Attacking trade unionists

There are several reasons why the Jordanian intelligence service struck at this particular time. One is related to the internal scene. In the months preceding the arrest campaign, trade union activities had increased markedly. Many unions had elections which were won by progressive nationalist candidates. In the absence of political parties, unions are one of the few vehicles for popular expression. Obviously, King Hussein does not look kindly upon the development of an independent, progressive trade union movement, for this would expose that his domestic and regional policies do not represent the people's opinions.

Hussein walks the tightrope

The second reason for the repressive campaign is the regime's wish to have the internal situation in order, while the king tries to walk the political tightrope towards negotiations with 'Israel'.

On the one hand, the regime is toying with the idea of holding parliamentary elections some time this year. The



new parliament would represent both the East Bank (Jordan) and the West Bank (Palestinian land). The intention is to create a 'legitimate' facade to promote the monarchy's claim to the West Bank. The regime must calculate that this parliament might preside over the signing of 'peace' with the Zionist state. Thus, a prerequisite for holding such elections is silencing the progressive nationalist forces, to prevent them from taking any seats or using the election campaign to voice opposition to the regime's policy.

On the other hand, the regime is hard pressed by the intransigent Israeli

conditions for negotiations, and deeply disappointed by the US administration's failure to pressure 'Israel' to be more accommodating. Jordan received an added slap in the face when the US congress postponed a \$ 1.9 billion arms deal until at least March, unless Hussein starts direct negotiations with 'Israel'. On top of this is the regime's impatience with Arafat for failing to put all his cards on the table to US-Israeli satisfaction.

Caught in this dilemma, the regime can tolerate no internal dissent. It thus cracked down on the Jordanian national movement and cadres and leaders of the Palestinian resistance organizations, who reside in Jordan. Specially targeted by the arrests was DFLP and also the PFLP and Palestinian Communist Party. Clearly the regime sought to cut down the progressive forces whose rejection of the Amman accord is shared by broad sectors of the masses.

While the revolutionary Palestinian forces are facing severe repression, even the Arafat leadership is relatively restricted, for the regime's peace plans envision the Palestinian role as symbolic rather than material. Arafat's men are prevented from visiting the refugee camps and opening new facilities. This only serves to emphasize that Arafat's relations with Jordan do not in any way serve the Palestinian people or cause. The king wants Arafat as a figurehead, and is prepared to dump him if this becomes politically opportune. As a close adviser to the king said, «Before, we thought the peace process wouldn't work without Arafat. Now we know it won't work with him.» (*Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1985)

Repression to Stop Student Elections

Choking democratic freedom, the Jordanian regime took new steps to prevent the students at the Jordan and Yarmouk universities from exercising their right to elect student societies*. November 1985 was set as the date for elections at the two universities. After the deadline for students' filing their candidacy, the intelligence service took the lists of nominees and called in more than fifty of those nominated at the Jordan University on the eve of elections. The intelligence officers demanded that the student candidates choose between withdrawing from the elections or being arrested. Most of the candidates did not respond to these threats. Then the security forces deployed throughout the uni-

versity in a show of force, aiming to terrorize the students into refraining from voting. This led the candidates to withdraw from the elections, protesting interference and demanding the cancellation of the repressive measures. However, the security forces and the intelligence persisted. They stormed homes and arrested a number of student leaders. Prior to the elections, four student leaders had been arrested from the Jordan University and four from Yarmouk University.

* In 1975, the student union was closed down at the Jordan University after a two-week strike organized because 300 students were forced by the administration to drop courses in mid-semester. 1500 students took part in the strike which was resolved in their favor. Then the administration dissolved the union and replaced it with student societies, hoping to disperse student efforts.

Attack on the Jordanian Writers Association

The Jordanian Writers Association sent the following memorandum to the office of the prime minister, demanding a halt to the illegal measures against the union and its members in Irbid:

1. Some of our union members have been arrested; others beaten and humiliated:

a. Nimr Hijab, president of the Irbid branch of the union, writer and researcher in popular heritage, was called in to the intelligence on six days, kept until midnight, beaten and humiliated.

b. Mahmoud Issa Mousa, member of the union, writer, artist, critic and member of the Pharmacists Union, was treated as above.

c. Dr. Ahmed Zubi, member of the union and short story writer, was called in to the intelligence twice.

d. Dr. Ibrahim Khatib, member of the union and medical specialist, was threatened with having his right to practice withdrawn. He had to be hospitalized due to the violence of the interrogation.

2. The head of the intelligence in Irbid demanded of the above persons that they close down the association, stop going there and stop holding meetings or seminars, etc. If not, they would be arrested and lose their jobs.

3. These measures are illegal and a clear violation of Jordanian writers' constitutional rights. We therefore find it necessary to submit this memorandum in protest of the measures being carried out by the intelligence in Irbid against our members.

trends within the regime itself. One trend represents the liberal commercial bourgeoisie which wants the public sector restricted in favor of the open door policy. This trend opposes the Moslem Brotherhood's influence. The liberal bourgeoisie has been expanding economically since 1970, and now wants political power equal to its economic interests.

The other trend, which has been close to the Brotherhood, is the reactionary bureaucratic bourgeoisie, tied to the intelligence service and the state apparatus generally. While the contradictions between the two trends are secondary and unlikely to explode into an open conflict, the regime's policy must take both into account. They represent the two aspects of the regime: relations with the world market and capitalism, and repression of the masses. Both trends are necessary for the regime's survival and for its chosen course of 'peace' with the Zionist enemy. While the liberal bourgeoisie is the candidate to profit from future joint ventures with 'Israel', the state bureaucracy and intelligence service are needed to keep the masses in line.

Hussein and the Brotherhood

While the official Jordanian media has been silent about the campaign of repression against the progressive nationalist forces, it has played up the measures taken against the Muslim Brotherhood, which in reality have been much milder. In actual fact 20-30 'brothers' have been arrested although press reports have put the number much higher. From the Jordanian airline Alia, 260 were dismissed. A number have been dismissed from public posts, particularly in the Education Ministry which the Brotherhood had virtually controlled, determining school curriculum and having thousands of teachers at schools and universities. Only on the backdrop of the Brotherhood's extensive power can the present restrictive measures be evaluated. The regime itself facilitated the Brotherhood's establishing its influence, as a convenient means of fighting the progressive forces, splitting student and trade union organizations, etc. However, «the realization that fundamentalists 'have infiltrated certain institutions and government departments that weren't easy to infiltrate before,' such as the police and intelligence departments, caused greater high-level consternation, the government official said» (*Washington Post*, December 27, 1985).

The regime also fears that a section of the Brotherhood would launch a campaign against moves to enter negotiations with 'Israel'. In short, the regime seeks not to end the Brotherhood, but to control it in line with the requirements of the current political situation. The other

obvious reason for curtailing the Brotherhood was to meet Syria's conditions for restoring relations with Jordan. King Hussein badly needs relations with Syria to fall back on, if his attempts to negotiate with the Zionist state fail. It is a



«I wrote about repression... Now I'm writing my will.» Drawing by Naji Ali.

timeworn trick of the Jordanian regime to cultivate a 'nationalist' image on the outside, while cracking down on domestic opposition.

Two sides of the regime

There is another factor involved in the monarchy's efforts to set its house in order, and that is friction between two

These are the components of the regime's dilemma. As of now, the main response has been repression to avert a situation where it becomes obvious that King Hussein's intended reconciliation with the Zionist enemy is opposed by the broad masses in Jordan, both Jordanian and Palestinian.

The Israeli Concept of 'Peace'

The daily news is filled with the ongoing efforts of the US and Israeli governments to find a settlement to the Middle East conflict, which would cement imperialist-Zionist hegemony. More dangerous, the Palestinian and Arab right are showing willingness to entertain such solutions. We therefore find it highly relevant to focus on what the Zionist leadership means when it speaks of peace. To this end, we print a translation of a study published in «Al Ard» magazine, vol. 13, no. 5, Nov. 21, 1985.

The Israeli coalition government's idea of the settlement

Before going into the subject of the present Israeli government's conditions for negotiations, a few matters must be clarified in order to avoid oversimplification. At no time has 'Israel' specified clear, direct conditions for negotiations or peace with any party involved in the Middle East conflict. Nor has it defined or substantiated its position, or declared what it is ready to agree upon before sitting down at the negotiation table. Instead 'Israel' makes unspecified statements aimed at drawing other parties to the negotiating table, and then accuses them of rejecting peace if they do not accept negotiations under such ambiguous terms.

The established yet undeclared Zionist conditions are: (a) refusal to withdraw from any part of the occupied Arab land before beginning direct negotiations; (b) bilateral (separate) negotiations; and (c) negotiations with the Israelis enjoying unmatched military superiority. These three points are the fundamentals of the Israeli stand on negotiations, in harmony with how 'Israel' understands peace. This particular kind of 'peace' is partial and interim. Comprehensive peace remains a promise on the horizon brandished verbally, but never fulfilled. Moreover, withdrawal will not precede normalization of relations. This means that 'Israel' demands special privileges as compared to the other parties concerned in any settlement. It reserves the right to veto any measure it considers harmful to its particular idea of peace.

Any negotiations must be based on prior recognition of «Israel's right to exist within secure borders.» This basically means that 'Israel' claims the right to cultural and material invasion of the Arab country concerned, so as to guarantee both the normalization process and secure borders. The Israeli idea of peace, and the meaning of these undefined conditions, emerged clearly during the Camp David negotiations and later during the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations which resulted in the abrogated May 17th agreement. The Israeli idea of peace and negotiations stems from the nature of the Zionist state which was established as a colonial project struggling for land, disregarding the native inhabitants and using force to impose itself in the region. These three aspects determine the direction and activities which proceed from the Israeli understanding of peace.

The Israeli understanding of peace also stems from (a) the nature of 'Israel' as an instrument of war and aggression for imperialism, in line with the latter's needs for steering the region according to its interests and strategy; (b) the fact that a just, comprehensive peace basically contradicts Zionist ideology which is based on discrimination and looking down on others, and expansion at the expense of others in order to achieve «greater Israel» supposedly based on «the Jews' historical rights.»

'Israel' brandishes its well-known *no's* in the face of anyone who makes the mistake of heading towards negotiations:

(1) no return to the borders of 1967; (2) no redivision of Jerusalem or relinquishing it as the «eternal capital of the state of Israel»; (3) no to a Palestinian state, the PLO or any form which stresses the Palestinian identity; (4) no to comprehensive negotiations where all parties concerned are represented; (5) no to negotiating within an international framework with each party directly represented on its own; ('Israel', however, welcomes verbal support from any international institutions, and US participation as an observer or assistant in the negotiations); and (6) no to Soviet participation in negotiations.

These conditions are not exclusive to the present coalition government. They have been the stand of all Israeli governments since June 1967. Some of these conditions, such as direct, separate negotiations with each party, have been the demand of Israeli governments before 1967. 'Israel' has refused a Palestinian state since its founding.

Negotiations with Jordan

The policy of the present Israeli coalition government aims at dragging Jordan into direct negotiations 'without preconditions'. Despite all their own preconditions, the Israelis demand that the other party sets none. The Israeli government, however, claims that it is ready to negotiate with King Hussein or any other Jordanian official at any time and place.

Still, the Israeli conditions always come to the fore when Israeli leaders speak of negotiations. This will become clear when the position of this government on negotiating with Jordan is elaborated. The tenth clause of the basic document, which outlines the policy to be followed by the coalition government, states the following: «Israel calls on Jordan to carry out peace discussions. The Israeli government will make proposals during these talks and discuss the Jordanian proposals.»¹ This clause implies no preconditions, but the preceding clause states: «The government will continue to pursue the peace process in accordance with the framework for peace in the Middle East as agreed upon in Camp David. It will also resume negotiations towards establishing autonomy». This means that the Camp David framework is the basic condition for any negotiations, and that these will result in nothing more than «autonomy for the residents.» Thus, any negotiations with Jordan are based on the Israeli government's commitment to the Camp David accords.

The 12th clause of the government document states: «Israel objects to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza and the region between Jordan and Israel...» This means that any discussion of a Palestinian state is out of the question. The 6th clause states: «The whole of Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel. It is one city under Israeli sovereignty and it is impossible to divide it.» This means that the question of Jerusalem is not up for discussion. The 13th clause states: «Israel will not negotiate with the PLO» and «Arabs from Judea

and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Gaza Strip will participate in defining their future in accordance with the Camp David agreement.» These two points reaffirm that Palestinians who participate in the Jordanian delegation will not be from the PLO. The 14th clause gives a clear idea of what the present Israeli government might agree to as a result of negotiations: «No implementation of any sovereignty other than Israeli in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.» There is also a clause stating that 28 new settlements are to be established in these areas.

The national unity government, due to its composition, is unable to agree to change the present status of the occupied territories; each of the two main parties, Labor and Likud, have the right to veto any such change. If things reach this point, the government will be dismantled and new elections will be held, according to the government document.

In general, it can be said that the present government cannot take any decision on the question of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The most probable result of any controversial political development would be to destroy the present government. Thus, the government is not in a position to make any allowances to Jordan during the present period, but only to agree on «autonomy for the residents within the boundaries of the Camp David agreement» which according to the Likud (which has the right of veto) means «autonomy within the boundaries of Israeli sovereignty».

Peres maneuvers

Peres' initiative presented at the UN (autumn 1985) was merely political maneuvering aimed at appearing flexible towards Hussein's overtures. During the Knesset sessions where this initiative was discussed, he said: «It is important to be in control of the dynamic situation emerging.»

The initiative itself relies on ambiguous statements. «It is possible that what results from negotiations are interim agreements which become permanent settlements, as is possible that they be related to defining borders, provided that Camp David be the basis for solving these questions.»² (One is reminded of Sadat's statements about Camp David being an interim settlement.)

Peres did not make any progress with what was proposed in Camp David and did not clarify the content of the 'interim settlement'. Nor did he define the borders - the Jordan River? the middle of the West Bank? somewhere else? The intention is to draw Jordan into negotiations so as to impose conditions after cancelling all Jordan's other alternatives. Peres' statement, before forming the present coalition government, is well known: «The Labor Alignment will be generous with words and appear to be flexible and willing to negotiate. We will expose our firmness at the negotiating table where we will be generous with words not territory.»³

This is the Labor position on which those calling for a settlement pin their hopes. Regarding the Likud, one gets a clear idea of their position from the statement of Moshe Arens in Afoula on November 3, 1985: «Those who believe that we will be content with peace in exchange for land are mistaken. The Likud will never agree to withdraw from Judea and Samaria in exchange for peace as some may think. *The problem of the Palestinians should be solved in Jordan which is a part of the land of Israel*, and where the Palestinians are the majority, not in Judea and Samaria.»⁴ (our italics)

In the light of the present situation and the government's general guidelines, this government will have been dissolved before 'Israel' is ready to enter negotiations. It is possible that

new elections will be held before that time comes. This would naturally result in a new government with a somewhat different composition. Thus, it is not easy to predict the results of negotiations between Jordan and the present government in the existing situation, because they are not probable. What is more probable is that negotiations will take place, but with a different Israeli government. Either Labor will form a minority government which would also have difficulties in making clear-cut decisions, or a whole new situation will emerge.

In any case, the establishment of the principle of negotiations will remain an Israeli goal in the context of the Zionist entity's efforts to establish its own legitimacy on the local and international level. It is impossible to predict what will result from negotiations, but it is certain that they will take a long time and probably result in interim settlements which do not touch on the basis of the conflict, and do not collide with imperialist-Zionist plans for the region.

On this topic, *Al Hamishmar* newspaper of October 29, 1985, stated: «Those who think that the peace settlement between us and the Palestinians will be clear-cut and simple, like the Camp David agreements, are mistaken. Peace on our eastern borders will be a complicated matter, full of fog. Many political forces from near and far will participate, as will peoples and committees of conflicting interests. It will not be possible to compromise until the very end, or to find a solution to please all.»

For the Israelis, the matter of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip differs completely from that of the Sinai, because of (a) Zionist ideology and the claim of historical rights on which this ideology is based; (b) the Israeli security strategy; and (c) the Israelis' excessive sensitivity regarding any form of Palestinian entity. Concerning the West Bank and Gaza Strip, what the present Israeli government agrees on is, in short, «autonomy for the residents on the basis of Camp David.» The Likud has its own definition of this, as does Labor. The essence of the Labor's definition is that 'autonomy' in densely populated areas should be tied with Jordan. 'Israel' keeps under its authority the Ghour (Jordan Valley), the area of Jerusalem and Gush Etzion, the south of the Gaza Strip, and large areas of the West Bank adjacent to the 'green line'. Thus 'Israel' would rid itself of responsibility for the Palestinians as Peres made clear in the following statement: «Those who express readiness to forego the densely populated Arab areas do so not so much out of desire to forego these areas as to preserve the Jewish identity of the state of Israel.»

Conditions for negotiating with the PLO?

It is difficult to say that there are Israeli conditions for negotiating with the PLO because of the consistent Israeli stand of not dealing with the PLO at all. Instead we will elaborate on the main indications of this position in this government's term. The 13th clause of the government document states: «Israel will not negotiate with the PLO.» It limits negotiations to Jordan and «Arabs in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip» within a Jordanian delegation or a Jordanian-Palestinian one. This position was seen in the Israeli government's rejection of any person affiliated with the PLO participating in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation which was supposed to meet with US envoy Richard Murphy in Amman in the summer of 1985. The government approved only two of those proposed to participate in the delegation: Hanna Siniora from the West Bank and Fayez Abu Rahmeh from Gaza, both non-PLO. A campaign was launched against the US to prevent any meeting with a delegation that includes persons affiliated

to the PLO (keeping in mind that the US itself rejects meeting with such persons).

In the recent period, when Peres made his UN speech putting forward the «Israeli peace initiative», a violent campaign was launched against the PLO. Peres claimed that «no one has inflicted greater tragedy on the Palestinian people than has the terrorism of the PLO.» Israeli officials repeatedly called on Hussein to cancel his alliance with Arafat if he seriously wants to negotiate. On October 28, 1985, Peres declared in the Knesset that he rejects any PLO role, adding that «it is a terrorist organization which uses violent methods instead of the political alternative.» In brief, the Zionist entity rejects negotiations with the PLO in any form, no matter who may be at its head.

Neither this Israeli government, nor any previous one, nor any official, has ever expressed the possibility of negotiating with the PLO under any conditions. However, conditions have been made by former officials and are documented in Labor's 1984 election platform. These conditions can be summarized as follows: The PLO must forego the Palestinian National Charter and the armed struggle, and must clearly recognize the right of 'Israel' to exist within secure borders as stipulated in Security Council resolution 242.

As stated in Labor's election platform: «The basic position of Labor stipulates that neither the PLO, or any other organization which is committed to the Palestinian National Charter and rejects the right of Israel to exist and the national status of the Jewish people, or which adopts terrorist methods, will be a participant in the negotiations...It is possible to give the opportunity of negotiations to Palestinian figures who recognize Israel and reject terror.»⁶

These conditions mean no less than that the PLO should abolish itself and stop being a liberation organization, instead becoming an instrument for facilitating the liquidation of the Palestinian people's rights. Neither this Israeli government or previous ones mention what role the PLO or its representatives might play if it were to do so. Nor is there any mention of the results to be gained. All that is declared is: «A solution to the Palestinian problem should be brought about within a Palestinian-Jordanian state on Jordanian land with a Palestinian majority, and within limited areas of Judea and Samaria and Gaza which are densely populated with Arabs, and from which the Israeli army will withdraw.»⁷

The Likud's position is well known: (a) rejection of any withdrawal; (b) accepting only Israeli sovereignty; (c) supporting annexation; and (d) rejection of the PLO.

The Zionist position rejects any form of Palestinian entity whether a state or purely Palestinian autonomy. The solution

of the Palestinian problem is always connected to Jordan, concealing the Palestinian identity. This means that the Israeli government will not agree to anything for the PLO, no matter how many concessions it makes. It is hypothetical to speak of negotiations with the PLO during the present Israeli government's term.

Negotiating with Syria

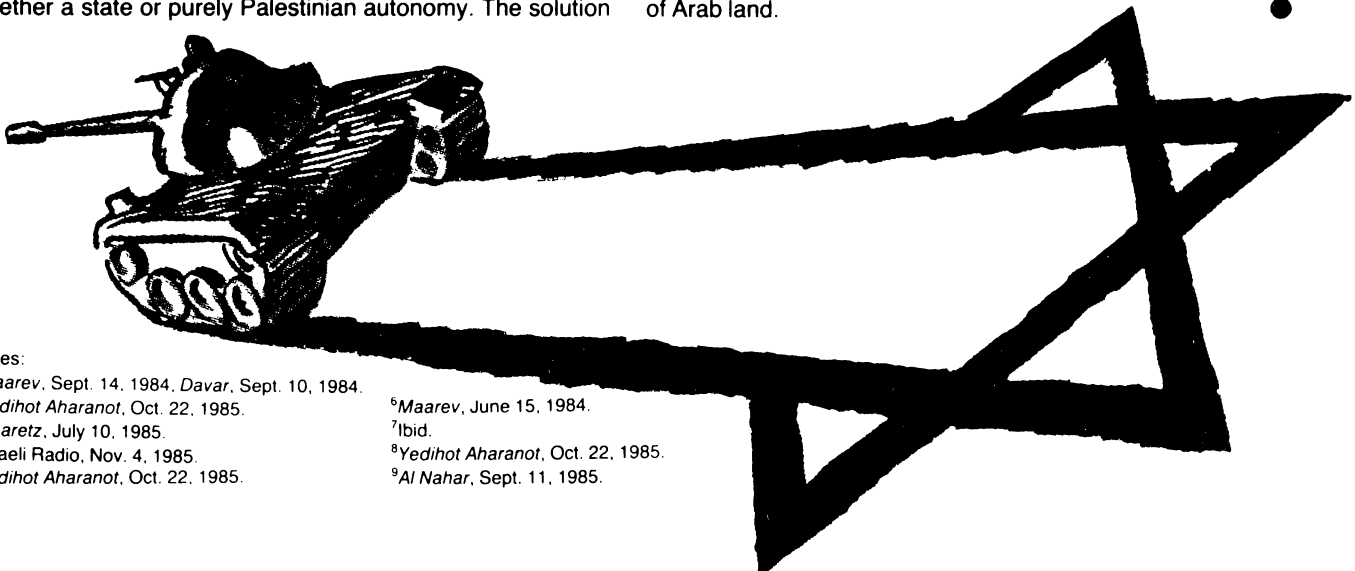
The present Israeli government has not directed a call for negotiations with Syria under any particular conditions. It has completely neglected this matter in all documents and initiatives. In the government's basic document, there is no mention of Syria or the Golan Heights. Nor did Peres' UN initiative mention Syria, although it explicitly spoke of Jordan and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Peres said: «The aim of negotiations is to reach a peace agreement between Israel and the Arab states, as well as solving the Palestinian problem.»⁸

Presently 'Israel' concentrates on Syria's 'extremism' and 'aggressive tendencies' and calls for alertness to Syria's growing military strength. Foreign Minister Shamir's statement is indicative: «The Syrian government is extremist to the last degree, and there is no possibility of negotiating with her and reaching fruitful results.»⁹ This was in answer to Japan's suggestion for 'Israel' to negotiate with Syria, proposed during Shamir's visit to Japan.

The Labor Party's election platform states: «The Labor government will have peace negotiations with Syria without preconditions...The Israeli government should be on the alert and prepared in the face of the growth of the Syrian army and the threats of war issued by Syria...Israel will strive for dialogue with Syria even before peace discussions, to prevent an escalation between the two countries.»

It is clear that the main Israeli concern is preventing confrontation with Syria at a time which is unsuitable for 'Israel'. This is the reason for the constant references to Syrian military growth. The question of negotiating with Syria (mentioned in the Labor program but not in that of the government) is clearly of secondary importance. The present government has no desire to negotiate with Syria. Like its predecessors, this government declares readiness to negotiate with any Arab government without preconditions.

With regard to Syria's occupied Golan Heights, the Zionist government is not prepared to rescind the 1981 decision to annex this land. It is important to note that Labor and Likud agree on this point. Given these facts, it can be said that the Israeli government will agree to hypothetical negotiations with Syria, provided the latter recognizes 'Israel' and its occupation of Arab land.



Notes:

¹Maarev, Sept. 14, 1984, *Davar*, Sept. 10, 1984.

²*Yediot Aharanot*, Oct. 22, 1985.

³*Haaretz*, July 10, 1985.

⁴Israeli Radio, Nov. 4, 1985.

⁵*Yediot Aharanot*, Oct. 22, 1985.

⁶Maarev, June 15, 1984.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Yediot Aharanot*, Oct. 22, 1985.

⁹*Al Nahar*, Sept. 11, 1985.

'Israel'—Torah Myth or Imperialist Phenomenon?

On the 12th and 13th of September, a conference was held in Havana, the second of its kind, entitled «Zionism and World Societies». Over one hundred delegates participated in this conference, from Algeria, Kuwait, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, Libya, the PLO, Cuba and others. Representing the PFLP was the Palestinian scholar, Hussein Abu Namil, who presented a study which is printed below.

It is most significant to hold a conference on Zionism and world societies in Havana which lies on the other side of the globe. In the light of the exact name of the conference, most people will speak of the actions and practices of Zionism and 'Israel'. I will cover the phenomenon behind this role, 'Israel' itself, since it is the material reality of Zionism and its most active instrument. The nature of Zionism's role is inseparable from the nature of 'Israel'. In order to clarify the nature of Zionism's activities, I will deal with the nature of 'Israel'. In view of this, we can explain Zionism's growing interests in world societies. At first glance, it may seem irrelevant for 'Israel' to be involved in distant countries, but what is distant from 'Israel' is in fact a main part of the broader strategy through which 'Israel' and the Zionist movement are mobilized: the strategy of world imperialism. What is most noticeable is the rapid rise in the role and influence of the Zionist movement and 'Israel' in the supreme strategy of imperialism. This reflects the ability of 'Israel' to increase its role.

The increase in the international role of the Zionist movement and 'Israel' went hand-in-hand with a corresponding increase in the popularity of the most racist and rightist forces in Israeli domestic politics. This came about amidst deep social and economic transformation, after which 'Israel' was no longer just a tool in the hands of imperialism, or a satellite. It became a full-fledged partner with direct interests, just like any other traditional imperialist power. One should not overlook the previous stages of the Zionist project. 'Israel' of 1985 is different from 'Israel' of 1967 or 1957 or 1947. What is true about the Zionist project before it established its state is not necessarily the case afterwards. In addition, how others viewed this project changed at successive stages, as did Zionism's view of itself and the roles of which it is capable. Its role has changed in accordance with the development of its capacities.

These changes, however, did not change the nature of the Zionist project. From the beginning, the Zionist movement was governed by its own narrow mentality, transforming within the bounds of the imperialist project and based on the latter's platform and interests. The Zionist project was harnessed, nourished and guided by world imperialism from the first decade of this century. It grew to the degree that it was capable of performing an important role in protecting and serving the original imperialist program. Moreover, it became a partner in its own right, with its own recognized role within the imperialist project. Once accomplished, the Zionist project was supposed to play a major role in the Middle East, guarding imperialism's interests, but this accomplishment was much bigger than originally planned. In reality, 'Israel' and the Zionist movement today play a much broader role which extends far beyond the Middle East. Wherever there is a role for imperialism, we find Zionism at its side, involved in one way or another. It claims to

be «protecting the Jews», but reality indicates that the possibility of establishing a Zionist empire is not mere imagination.

In the light of this, the aim of my speech is to give a picture of the entity behind this role. I will speak about the structural transformation that has occurred in 'Israel', forming the base for ensuing internal and external transformation. This transformation indicates that the global role of Zionism and 'Israel' is not only due to their relationship with imperialism, but is also dictated by their own internal structure. 'Israel' and the Zionist movement serve not only imperialism, but themselves as well. The time when we spoke of 'Israel' as a mere tool in the hands of imperialism is past. Despite its small size, 'Israel' has become one of the pillars of imperialism, with the same rights and duties as the other imperialist countries. 'Israel' has established a highly developed industrial economy with the same qualities as that of any other advanced bourgeois state, in terms of the degree and rate of growth, and the nature of the recurring crises. One such crisis stems from surplus production which was ultimately dealt with in the traditional imperialist manner, through expansion and involvement in the world market, facilitated by imperialism.

Imperialism in the service of Zionism

The history of Zionist activities dates back to before the first Zionist congress in Basle in 1897. In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was issued. In 1947, there was the UN decision to partition Palestine, which paved the way for announcing the state of 'Israel'. According to official Israeli surveys, there were 56,800 Jews living in Palestine in 1917. By 1948, an estimated 600,000 Jews lived in Palestine. Comparing these two figures, we find that the number of Jews living in Palestine increased more than tenfold during the period of the British Mandate in Palestine.

The book of official Israeli accounts of the 1947-8 war in Palestine indicates that «local Jewish factories had been manufacturing the Sishin submachine gun, the mortar cannon and shells since 1939.» It also notes that «on the eve of the partition of Palestine, in October 1947, Ben Gurion issued an order to these factories to begin immediate production of 20,000 rifles, 10,000 machine guns, 5,000 pistols, 5,000 submachine guns and 4.5 million bullets.» These quotes give several facts, not least of which is that Britain not only nurtured Jewish immigration to Palestine; it also nurtured the process of establishing the Zionist state, with its economic, political, social, military and police institutions. In other words, Britain participated in building up a state within a state. The question arises: Is it just a coincidence that Britain's 1917 decision to adopt the Zionist project came at the same time as the Arab area came under the control of imperialist Britain and its allies? In fact, the Zionist project did not materialize until it became a need for ►

imperialist Britain with its strategy of direct interest and involvement in the area.

After the establishment of the Zionist state, imperialism continued to support this project. In 1953, a treaty was signed between West Germany and 'Israel' whereby the former would finance a program of total industrialization of 'Israel'. This program was completed in 1966, the year in which 'Israel' experienced its first surplus production problem. This indicates the intensity of the program. It is not an exaggeration when we say that this treaty had the same importance on the economic level, as the Balfour Declaration had politically.

In 1975, a treaty was signed between 'Israel' and the European Common Market, whereby 'Israel' was granted special status membership. Israeli products would not be subject to customs duties in Europe before 1989, without 'Israel' having to grant the same privilege to European products. This enabled 'Israel' to increase the value of its annual export to the Common Market by 700 million dollars. 'Israel' was thereby able to find a solution for its surplus production. The initial solution to this problem that began in 1966, was found in the markets of Gaza and the West Bank after the 1967 occupation. When the problem arose again in 1975, a solution was found in the Common Market. In March of this year, 'Israel' and the United States signed a free trade zone agreement between the two countries. This treaty exempts Israeli products from US customs duties.

In line with these economic facilities, world imperialism entered into deals to help 'Israel' build its own war industry. In the fifties, such deals were mainly with France and were limited to conventional weapons. Then, in 1957, France supported the Israeli decision to develop nuclear capacity, with help from the USA. Later, 'Israel' accomplished two important projects in the field of conventional weaponry: The first was producing a heavy tank with help from France; the second was manufacturing its own war planes with US help in technique and supplies. This imperialist help boosted the structure of 'Israel', as did other material and moral support. Economic support was fixed annually in the early stages of the state, added to unlimited political support on all levels; the US veto in the UN Security Council has been almost entirely devoted to serving 'Israel'. In the light of all this, it was no surprise when the US and 'Israel' signed a strategic alliance agreement in 1981.

Internal transformation

The aid and facilities granted to 'Israel', in addition to its policy for overall growth, enabled it to achieve a high degree of economic development, focusing on industrialization. Initially, industrialization was promoted in all fields. Later evaluations pinpointed which industries were most profitable and strategically valuable. Israeli industry was concentrated accordingly, on electronics and weapons. In the last decade, it has become evident that Israeli industry is geared to high technology, as seen in the following facts:

- Between 1952 and 1982, the electrical power supply increased 25 times for consumers and 27 times for industry.
- Of total Israeli exports in 1982, 87% were industrial products, including electrical and electronics equipment, chemicals and minerals. Raw materials and capital goods accounted for only 10% of all exports.
- Israeli industry underwent an extensive concentration process. Large corporations employing over 300 workers accounted for only 11.8% of the work force in 1955. This figure rose to 19.3% in 1965, and to 43.3% in 1982. These large corporations are only 1.4% of all companies and establishments.

What is the meaning of such a high degree of industrialization that the state suffers from production surplus? When industry has led to such massive concentration, doesn't it mean we are facing a country led by large monopolies? The private, military and civil sectors are highly interlinked and integrated with the government and public sector, thus creating state monopoly capitalism.

The previously mentioned economic changes directly and increasingly influenced large sectors of Israeli citizens in an imperialist direction. The number of people benefitting from the exploitation exercised by the state of 'Israel' has grown, especially with the increased use of Arab labor. This has led to the *de facto* formation of two working classes: an Arab one at the bottom of the production ladder with the lowest wages, and a Jewish one at the top.

The best evidence of this is the improvement in living conditions of Jewish families, which explains many phenomena. In 1982, 34% of Jewish families lived in a house with an average of less than one person per room. This percentage was 12.7% in 1966 and 6.1% in 1957. On the other hand, in 1957, approximately 25% of all families lived in a place with an average of over three per room. By 1966, this had declined to 13%; by 1982, it was only 1.3% of all families. As for car ownership, 4.1% of Jewish families owned a car in 1962; this number had increased to 15.4% by 1970, and to 50.5% in 1982, i.e., the percentage increased from 4.1% to 50.5% in twenty years.

What does it mean when the standard of living improves to such a degree in this small state? What is the implication of the transformation to heavily concentrated industry, the expanded use of energy and the growth of capitalism into state monopoly capitalism? It simply means broadening the social base of the right wing in 'Israel'. Since the sixties, the right has continuously increased its popularity to the point that it was able to head the government in 1977. The growth of the right does not apply to the Likud alone, but to the entire political life and image of 'Israel'.

In 1965, the Israeli communist party suffered division and a mostly Jewish wing split away, becoming Zionist and aligning with the Zionist labor parties where it fell into the hands of the most rightist trends. As for the traditional right, represented by the Likud, it now appears moderate in comparison with the trends that have emerged from it and are now independently represented in the Knesset. Rabbi Kahane is not an odd phenomenon; he has become a popular figure as shown in the latest Israeli polls.

On the ideological level, the economic transformation further consolidated the philosophy of force, dictating a relationship based on racial superiority and *fait accompli* vis-a-vis the Arabs. Racial superiority, as called for in the Torah, draws its material content from military victories, scientific advancement and better living conditions for Jews as compared to Arabs. On the political level, there has been a rapid retreat from slogans of peace, to demanding total, unconditional surrender on the part of the Arabs.

These internal transformations were accompanied by external ones, involving imperialism's supreme global strategy. Since the sixties, imperialism has become more and more convinced of giving its local allies the major role in achieving its own aims. The Israeli victory in 1967 was a successful translation of this philosophy known as the Nixon Doctrine or Vietnamization of the war. The spread of this philosophy, Nixon's and Kissinger's taking office, and the Israeli victory in 1967, paved the way for restructuring the US-Israeli relationship on a new platform. As Nixon said to Rabin:

«The relationship between Israel and its neighbors must be like that between America and the Soviets. Balance between the two sides is not enough; there must be superiority.» This became the thesis that governed ensuing US administrations. This policy was implemented in the form of practical programs, not least of which was the Israeli move from importing weapons to importing the technology needed to manufacture these weapons, and then becoming a major arms producer. It was during this period that 'Israel' made two major achievements in this field: production of the Merkava tank and of the Lavie warplane which will fly in 1986.

It is no coincidence that the qualitative transformations in the political life of 'Israel' were manifested in the rise of the most aggressive, expansionist and chauvinist trends. These trends paralleled the escalation of a similar political trend in the USA in particular and in the capitalist world in general. Reagan is not an individual representing himself. He is the apex of the deep transformations in the philosophy governing the course

of the American administration, initiated by Nixon and engineered by Kissinger. Later Brzezinski developed this philosophy and paved the way for Reagan.

The parallelism in the transformation in 'Israel' and the US points to the similarity in origin of this transformation which led to a redistribution of roles between the two, in a way to serve their interests optimally. The platform for the role redistribution was common commitment to imperialism's global strategy. Organization of the roles of 'Israel' and the other centers of imperialism, in light of the above, points to the fact that when 'Israel' acts in the service of imperialism, it is simultaneously serving itself. It is a part and a full partner of the imperialist camp. If the enemy camp knows its interests and distributes roles accordingly, it is only natural that we should act on the same basis. If our allies in the international progressive forces act on the basis that Zionism is their direct enemy, then it is our prerogative, as Palestinians and Arabs, to respect this political logic and act on the basis that imperialism is our direct enemy.

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Suleiman Khater

Hero of the Sinai — Martyred by Mubarak

Suleiman Khater is better known to his countrymen as the hero of the Sinai. His being sentenced to life imprisonment and subsequently murdered by Mubarak's thugs, sparked mass protests not only against this vile act, but against all that the Egyptian regime represents.

The authorities feared that they had an Egyptian 'Mandela' on their hands, whose continued imprisonment would be a continuous thorn in their side. However, they miscalculated the magnitude of what Suleiman Khater represented. Kuwaiti newspapers reported: «Diplomats were astounded at the extent of the reaction triggered by the case of this simple policeman.» Other sources reported general surprise at the intensity of feelings expressed by the masses. Defense Minister Abdel Halim Abu Ghazaleh had the audacity to say, «A soldier killed seven innocent tourists. He felt remorse and killed himself. What's so strange about that?»! What is strange, however, is the belittling and underestimation of the nationalist sentiment that prevailed only four days after the Zionists had bombarded the PLO headquarters in Tunis, killing over 70 Palestinians and Tunisians.

Who was Suleiman Khater?

Suleiman Khater was 25 years old, a third-year law student. He was born in Akyad, and grew up in the farming village of Beit Rifi. He was the fifth child in a household of 12, and shouldered responsibility for the family after the death of his father in 1979. Three years later, he had to leave home to do his military service. Inherently patriotic and religious, the family unquestioningly accepted their son's absence as his duty. They trusted in God to support them in their need.

Suleiman was due to end his period of service in October 1985. Little did he realize that fate had appointed him, who had never been affiliated to any political group, to spell out with fire the message of the Arab masses to every enemy and traitor, only one day before he was to be discharged from service. On October 5th, Suleiman Khater shot seven Zionists who had trespassed into the Egyptian security zone in the Sinai, disregarding calls to halt and spitting at the Egyptian flag in blatant scorn.

How it happened

During his last three months of service, Suleiman was posted as a guard at Ras Birka on Egypt's eastern borders, overlooking the Gulf of Aqaba, a sensitive and strategic site. Three other policemen were posted with him. (They were later prevented from testifying at Suleiman's trial so that the fabricated story of his «temporary insanity» would hold water.) The four had strict orders to fire on anyone trying to ascend the hill to their outpost, if the cry to halt went unheeded. According to Suleiman, «I saw a group of people ascending to our

Suleiman Khater



outpost. I called on them to halt. They didn't. Then I opened fire as I had orders to do.» Later in court, he said, «I did my duty and am at peace with myself.»

Suleiman was a member of the police force, a civilian institution. According to the Egyptian constitution, he should have been tried by a civilian court. Instead, the authorities submitted the case to a military court.

Despite the tempestuous mass protest at Suleiman's trial and sentencing, the Egyptian regime continued to demonstrate its humiliating subservience to the Zionist state. The regime made repeated public apologies for the killing of the Israelis, promised compensation and made follow-up reports on the case to the Zionist authorities. A petition demanding Suleiman Khater's release, signed by 100,000 was ignored by the regime.

Needless to say, the trial was a comic tragedy, dramatized by the ludicrous and reactionary legal procedure. The victim was Suleiman Khater whom the court sentenced to life «for premeditated murder» in total defiance of all logic. In the court, Suleiman challenged: «Is it a crime to shoot our enemy? Should I have left our borders undefended?» and finally, «Kill me to please the US and the Israelis - I killed them to defend Egypt and the Arabs!»

Mubarak's henchmen were only too willing to comply in their own way. At 10 a.m. on January 7th, Suleiman's family had come to visit him, but were told that he was «undergoing medical treatment.» At the same moment, the hero of the Sinai was being viciously murdered in his cell at the military prison's hospital.

Yet Another Khater

Two Israeli soldiers killed in the Jordan Valley

On January 29th, Israeli war planes raided Ain al Hilweh refugee camp in South Lebanon, unloading their cargo of bombs, killing and terrorizing the Palestinian residents of the camp...But that night, a blow was dealt to Israeli terror and occupation. A heroic soldier in the Jordanian Army, Nasser Abdel Aziz, ambushed an Israeli patrol near Metola settlement in the Jordan Valley. Two enemy soldiers were killed and two others wounded, before Nasser was martyred by the gunfire of another Israeli patrol. Nasser, a 20 year old from Irbid, said no to Israeli occupation and terror.

His statement was delivered with the most precious possession he had - his life.

Nasser, like Suleiman Khater in Egypt, refused the chains of imperialism that are imposed on our Arab people through Israeli occupation and US puppets in the region. With his rifle, Nasser delivered the message of all the oppressed Arab people: that we will live a free life or die an honorable death. The Lebanese woman freedom fighter, Sana Mhedali, Suleiman Khater and now Nasser are only the start of what is to come. The struggle of the Arab masses will continue until Zionism is destroyed and a popular democratic Palestinian state is established.



Egyptians protest Khater's murder

Murderous 'suicide'

Blind to the hundreds of thousands who demonstrated and petitioned for Suleiman's release, deaf to the calls of Arab and international democratic and progressive forces, Mubarak's henchmen carried out their vile act. In blatant defiance of all logic, the official coroner's report declared that Suleiman had committed suicide, despite all the facts pointing to murder. The idea of suicide to cover up the crime is totally ludicrous. Not only was Suleiman's emotional state indisposed to suicide, but it was physically impossible that he hanged himself as the authorities described, in view of the following facts:

1. The window he was supposed to have hung himself from was three meters from the floor. The bars of the window protruded outwards, while from the inside, the window was covered with a metal screen.

2. Eleven guards were assigned to keep watch on Suleiman on a 24-hour basis.

3. A doctor present at the pre-funeral washing of the body noted blood clots around the eyes, indicating that he had been strangled, lying down, with a wire approximately 3 mm thick. (The regime prevented an independent autopsy as was requested by family and friends.) The same doctor noted cuts and bruises on the body and the skin under his fingernails, indicating that he had resisted.

4. The day before the murder, he had requested his university textbooks in order to start studying for exams. He was moreover optimistic about being

pardoned and having his sentence reduced.

Mass protest

Popular sentiments erupted at the news of Suleiman's life sentence and subsequent hanging. Mass demonstrations, sit-ins and protests broke out. Feelings ran high during the demonstrations which assumed a new, political dimension as the masses let loose their pent-up rancor against Mubarak and his unholy allies: Zionism and the US. Slogans resounded like «Cancel Camp David, We want a free government and a free life, Stop the 1981 emergency laws, All Egyptians are Khater, Mubarak - Suleiman cleansed your sins!» - reflecting exactly what Suleiman Khater had come to signify. He was not, as the defense minister would have all believe, a «crazy policeman who in a fit of remorse committed suicide.»



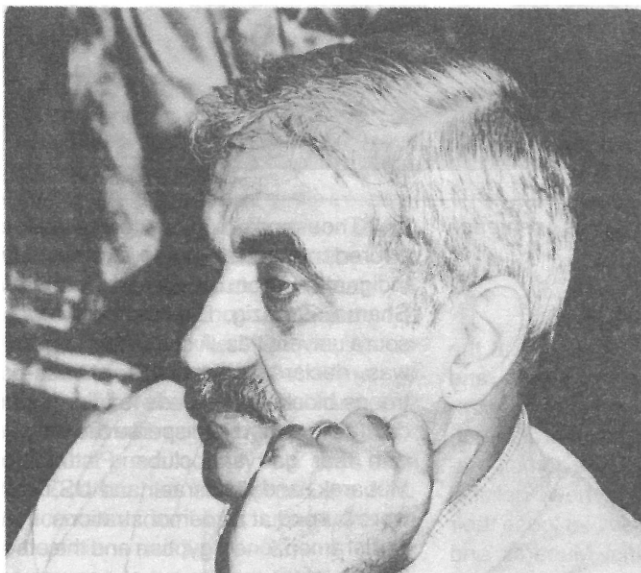
Thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets to express their indignation, from Al Azhar, Cairo, Ain Shams, Zaqazig, Banha and Al Mansoura universities. A state of emergency was declared. Hundreds of anti-riot troops blocked the roads leading to the capital, and tried to disperse the crowds with tear gas and clubs. Pictures of Mubarak, and the Israeli and US flags, were burned at all demonstrations. Two cameramen, one Egyptian and the other French, were thrown out of one university with shouts of «Get out, you Zionists!»

In Akyad, Suleiman's birthplace, approximately 100 km. northeast of Cairo, his funeral developed into a mass demonstration. Eyewitnesses reported the participation of thousands from Akyad and surrounding villages and towns. The police set up roadblocks to prevent more people from entering Akyad. Telephone lines were cut, and reporters were banned from the village. The mourners raised black placards of protest. The US and Israeli flags were burnt and slogans shouted against the Egyptian defense ministry. The village police station was burnt and government buildings attacked. His family refused to receive condolences - a traditional sign that they had sworn revenge for the death.

If Mubarak and his henchmen think that they have dispensed with Suleiman's case by murdering him, they would do well to remember that «We are Suleiman Khater and Suleiman Khater is us.»

Comrade Habash and the Yemeni Revolution

While Comrade George Habash was in Democratic Yemen for the YSP congress in October 1985, he was interviewed by the country's leading newspaper «October 14th» (named for the date of the revolution). Irregardless of the ensuing events in Yemen, we find it important to print this interview for two reasons. One: It is the first interview in which Comrade Habash has spoken about his own life and his entry into the national struggle. Two: It presents the background of the Yemeni revolution's beginning in the context of the Arab National Movement, and thereby for the historical relations between the YSP and PFLP. (The paragraphs in italics are the introduction and conclusion written by the interviewer.)



Doctor George Habash is an extraordinary person, not because he is a leader in the Palestinian revolution, or because he is General Secretary of the PFLP, or even because he has been active and steadfast in the Arab and Palestinian national struggle for four decades of his 60 year life. He is extraordinary because of his simple personality and modesty that make you feel he is a close friend you have known for many years. He opens his heart with no hesitation, arrogance or insecurity. Because he is not an ordinary person, he has a big heart with room for everything and a rich mind that is always giving. When he speaks, he uses all his feelings with deep concentration and calm, on even the hottest issue. He gives you confidence to speak with him and search his mind.

What do you remember about the beginning of your work in the Arab and Palestinian national field, and the start of your academic life, how you chose to study medicine?

In fact, I started my work in the Palestinian and Arab national field at the same time - in 1948 - the year of the disaster, the year that part of Palestine was occupied. Before that, I was just an ordinary citizen, experiencing Palestinian and Arab events, reacting like any other Palestinian or Arab citizen. Before 1948, I had not started a continuous, organized struggle, but the loss of Palestine affected me very deeply. It

affected the Arab and Palestinian youth. For me, it was the way my family and I were thrown out of Lydda by force, and the horrible crimes I witnessed being committed by the Zionist occupying forces: the degrading way in which we were kicked out of our home, the enormous difficulties that faced us when we walked to Ramallah, and the indescribable human suffering that I witnessed during this event. All this changed me completely. I didn't find any reason to live or any taste for life, except through struggle against this enemy and the horrible things it stands for.

I remember thinking seriously of leaving school. I was in my second year, studying medicine at the American University of Beirut. I thought of leaving school without knowing what to do. All I wanted was to struggle for regaining my right to live on my land. Only I didn't know how. I didn't want to continue studying in Beirut, because I wanted to stay in Palestine, my homeland, in Ramallah, near Lydda. Only my mother's constant pleading for me to continue my studies made me go back. I consider myself an emotional person; I didn't want to upset my mother. I had to continue my school, and so I went back to Beirut.

There I found what a great influence the disaster had not only on the Palestinians, but on Arab youth in general; those from Syria, Iraq, the Gulf and elsewhere were greatly affected. In 1948, we started a student struggle that expressed our frustration with the Arab leaders of the time. It also expressed our wish to find out what was to be done. As we expressed it then: What is to be done to avenge what has happened? What can we do in struggle to win Palestine back? Since that time, I have been on that path.

You say you are an emotional person, finishing school due to your mother's pleading, yet the cause of your people and land is what led you to embark on another journey - that of struggle. How were you able to coordinate between becoming a doctor and a militant? How were your mother's feelings? Did she want George the doctor or George the militant?

In fact, when I went back to school in Beirut, my studying was superficial. It is true that I passed with good grades, but I didn't have in mind getting my degree in medicine in order to practice. I had one thing in mind: working to liberate Palestine. When I finished my study, I felt I had fulfilled my mother's wishes. I could have taken the degree and said: Congratulations mother, your son is now a doctor; so that she would let me

do what I wanted. This is almost exactly what happened. It is true that after graduation in 1951, I went to Jordan and practiced medicine until 1957. I only did that because it was the passageway and means to get in touch with the masses. Being a doctor was a necessary cover, for social and security reasons, at that time. In 1957, after the coup against Nabulsi's nationalist government in Jordan, I had to go underground. The question of devoting my life completely to the national struggle was no longer subject to discussion, neither for me or for my mother. In this way, I was able to successfully coordinate between my mother's wishes and the decision I had made in 1948, to devote my life to national struggle.

The people of Yemen know you as one of the militants who has stood with the Yemeni revolution from the beginning. Exactly when did this link start?

This relationship started in 1959, when the Arab National Liberation Movement (ANM) initiated its branch in Yemen. In the summer of 1959, we received a letter from the leaders of the ANM branch in Cairo. In this letter they said that they had several comrades graduating and leaving Cairo that year - from Libya, Sudan, Bahrain and Yemen. The Cairo branch requested our advice. What should we say to them since the movement didn't have branches in these four countries? The leaders of the ANM felt that this was a rare chance to establish branches in these countries. Therefore our answer to these comrades was: Send them to Damascus for a special training session enabling them to initiate work for the movement in these countries. I remember that special session very well: the subjects raised by the ANM leaders and myself. I remember the warm, comradely atmosphere that prevailed. I also remember delivering the closing speech, assigning these comrades responsibility for establishing branches in these countries. That was the beginning.

As for the October 14th Revolution, what I remember very well is that some comrades from the command of the branch in southern Yemen asserted that conditions were ripe for armed struggle against British colonialism, especially after the September revolution in northern Yemen (1962). They had thus formed a political front, called the National Front, and arranged many things like the platform for the front and the political communications needed in the country as a base to support the revolution. They wanted the ANM, that was based in Beirut at the time, to get in touch with Abdel Nasser to obtain support for the revolution. The ANM arranged the link. Since that time, we have had a close, warm relationship with the Yemeni revolution. We have been proud of this relationship, previously in the ANM, and since in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

This relationship is the most precious thing we have had to offer to the glorious October 14th Revolution that produced the first peasants and workers state in the Arab world. This may sound like any other statement, but to me it has a very deep, emotional significance: Democratic Yemen is the first Arab country to reflect the political line of the struggling Arab workers and peasants, that will help the working class to achieve all of the national goals.

When the great October Revolution was established as the first peasants and workers state in Russia, its value was not only for the vanguards, or that it founded a state for workers and peasants in Russia. Its value was that the working class of the world now has a base to rely on in its struggle. Now as

Arabs and Palestinians, we rely on the great October Revolution of the Soviet Union, and on the first workers and peasants state in the Arab world. My words may sound emotional or like wishful thinking, but in fact it is more of a symbol: As the October Revolution in South Yemen rose to fight Great Britain in order to achieve the people's aims, in the same way, with serious, protracted struggle, the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab working class will achieve their goals, relying on the great October Revolution and on the October 14th Revolution in the Arab world.

In the light of your close relationship with the October 14th Revolution, how do you evaluate the experience of the past years, from the beginning of your relationship to the birth of the Yemeni Socialist Party, as a vanguard experience in the Arab world?

It is, in fact, a vanguard experience; we all know the situation of the people of South Yemen before gaining independence on November 30, 1967. We all know about the attempts to limit the victory you accomplished with the departure of the British forces, to a superficial form of independence leading to a state with a flag, a national anthem and a seat at the UN, like the 21 other independent states in the Arab world.

The struggle that went on before independence, between the National Front and the front of Makawi and Assnaj, was about the contents of independence: Would the bourgeoisie reap the benefits and things stop at that point, or would the liberation battle be transformed into a national democratic revolution? The comrades that led the battle against Makawi and Assnaj, either instinctively or consciously, had this perception in mind, and they won. Now we know the meaning of winning such a battle. Maybe at that time, the masses in Yemen said that they didn't want any disturbances or internal fighting, because the main enemy was Britain and its colonial forces. That is true, but we realize the difference between a liberation movement led by the bourgeoisie and its representatives, and one led by the toiling classes and their representatives.

Before independence, you won the first round: the battle to transform the liberation struggle to a national democratic revolution. After that, the revolution went through a stage from 1967 to July 1969, with vacillation between transforming to a real national democratic revolution, or reverting to a revolution in favor of the bourgeoisie. The event (Corrective Movement) of 1969 terminated this vacillation. The October 14th Revolution, which had registered victory over the British and the front of Assnaj, now transformed into a national democratic revolution.

At this stage, the external enemy, Arab reaction and imperialism, sensed the danger of this revolution. When the British forces departed on November 30, 1967, imperialist Britain and America may have been hoping that after independence, there would be a regime that was totally immersed in its own interests, and that the revolution would stop there, with a national regime, but no future outlook. Then, after 1969, the enemy camp felt the danger of the situation, and the revolution started facing very serious external attacks which lasted almost seven years. These attacks aimed to crush the revolution and its experience. This reminds me of the external attacks on the great October Revolution, that lasted until 1929. You, in this country, faced external attacks until the mid-seventies, aiming to destroy this regime, its crystallizing outlooks and future development.

I think that, in the mid-seventies, the enemy forces reached the conclusion that it was difficult, if not impossible, to crush this revolution from outside. Then they opted to wait for internal problems to arise, and you know the internal problems you inherited from the British colonial rule. The enemy forces said that this revolution promises progress, comfort and happiness to the masses; let us see what they can do, let them fall victim to the development process they speak of.

We ourselves know that the progress and development process is as difficult a task as the armed struggle, if not more so. The revolution underwent internal problems in 1978, involving how to understand and apply the development process, and what kind of international alliances would help in this. At this point, the revolution faced the events of 1978*, and at the same time, the Yemeni Socialist Party was formed. It clearly defined the theoretical, strategic guidelines for the development of the revolutionary process in the economic, social and cultural fields, and for Arab and international alliances. The documents of the founding congress of the Yemeni Socialist Party were a comprehensive study. They were evidence that the revolution had precisely defined its theoretical guidelines and path. The first congress defined the main choices of the revolution. It settled many issues ranging from economic, social and political development; to how to apply the slogan of proletarian internationalism; and how to define the historical, enduring alliance between the Yemeni October Revolution and the great October Revolution of the Soviet Union. After this, the revolution will not stop. As (the famous Egyptian singer) Um Kalthoum says: «You are rebels, rebels, rebels, forever rebels.»

You have spoken of the Yemeni revolution until the birth of the party. Would you continue up to the present, with the party's 3rd general congress?

After formulating the main documents of the first congress in 1978, you were faced by the task of applying these. We all know that documents, no matter how important, will only be complete through application. This is natural. In fact, I disagree with any pessimistic view concerning the obstacles that your revolution has faced. All scientific revolutionaries know that, despite the importance of theoretical guidelines, these await the correct application. When we find the correct way theoretically, we have come half the way. This is great, but what about the second half? This depends on whether practice is in accordance with the documents...The correlation between theory and practice is not automatic or instantaneous. Revolutionaries must be scientific in order not to lose patience. The problem has confronted the Yemeni revolution and every revolution; after outlining the theoretical guideline, application must be in accordance with this guide whether in the internal platform or the political documents.

I personally think that all the predicaments the revolution confronts are natural. If you say there are no predicaments, I would conclude that the revolution has ended. Life is always progressing; this progress occurs through contradictions and solving problems. One who doesn't expect or want problems, doesn't want to progress. I think that comradely dialogue, the principle of criticism and self-criticism, and collective leadership are the best means for solving the predicaments that arise. We can be confident that the achievements of the revolution will continue. We, as Arabs and Palestinians, can feel sure that Democratic Yemen will always be a fortress for the Arab working class and its protracted struggle. The aims of this

struggle are the liberation of all Palestine, uniting the Arabs from the Gulf to the (Atlantic) Ocean, then the Arab national democratic revolution, then the united Arab socialist society.

How do the factions of the Arab liberation movement, specially the Palestinian revolution, view the Yemeni Socialist Party's 3rd congress?

It is indeed a significant event, and you in this country should view it as such. All the Arab liberation movement, especially the progressive factions, are looking forward to its results. Holding this congress on time is a victory and source of glory for all the Arab liberation movement's factions, and for all national and democratic Palestinian forces. At the same time, it will be a blow to the enemy camp that was anxiously waiting for news of its being postponed or disrupted, so that they could indulge in their dreams and say that this fortress is crumbling.

The congress gives you a chance to lay down the theoretical guideline and the economic construction program for the next five years. It will give the masses and the party cadres a chance to absorb and understand these documents. That will lead to a responsible leadership, committed to working on the basis of these documents.

Holding the congress proves the slogan that General Secretary, comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad has spoken of: Preserving the unity of the party. I read the work program proposed by the General Secretary. I noted in particular the points about the unity of the party and its leadership. The principled unity of the party and leadership on holding the congress is the best evidence of success in applying this slogan, but the struggle cannot and will not stop. After the congress, you will face many tasks, but I am confident that the revolutionary leadership of your party will be able to accomplish all aspirations.

Allow me to say that after this congress, it will be our right to come to your leadership and ask for its important, leading role concerning the Palestinian question. We will ask for its role vis-a-vis the Steadfastness Front, the Arab popular movement and the progressive nationalist forces who are facing the imperialist attacks. I don't think this will burden your leadership or party with new worries. I believe in the dialectical relationship between your success in tasks of political, economic, social and cultural development, and our success in stopping the imperialist attack, saving the PLO and reactivating the Steadfastness Front and the Arab popular movement.

The doctor took a quick glance at his watch and I looked at mine. The designated hour has, without our knowledge, become an hour and a half. The cold coffee is still in front of us. The talk itself has been spreading warmth in the air-conditioned room. The doctor stood up slowly and walked across the room without using his walking stick to support his right leg. Then he sat facing me and asked for coffee, and we conversed.

The picture of his mother is still in my thoughts. She was absolutely right when she insisted on his becoming a doctor. As if reading my thoughts, he said, «My daughter too chose the medical profession, and she is now in the fifth year of medical college.» His daughter loves him as a father and human being, and chose medicine in order to cure him of his illness. His mother loved him as a son, and chose medicine for him before he became ill. His people love him as an outstanding, militant, courageous leader. Our Yemeni people love him as a long-time comrade of our revolution, party and homeland.

* On June 26th, 1978, the opportunist left attempted a coup d'etat.

Lebanon

No Peace with Fascist Power

Internal fighting among the components of Lebanon's fascist forces has produced a new 'strongman' - Samir Geagea - at least for the moment. More significantly, it has delayed if not scuttled the attempt to find a political solution to the Lebanese crisis.

On December 28th, an accord to end over a decade of civil war was signed in Damascus, by Walid Jumblatt of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), Nabih Berri of the Amal Movement and Lebanese Forces Commander Elie Hobeika. The accord called for liberating all Lebanese territory from Zionist occupation, for peace, security and the establishment of a genuine democratic system by abolishing political sectarianism, restricting presidential powers and drawing up a new constitution and electoral law. The tripartite accord upheld Lebanon's unity and privileged relations with Syria.

Although the signing parties agreed on an extended transition period for abolishing confessionalism, the principles enshrined in the accord were still too much for the majority of the fascist forces. Lebanese Forces chief of staff Samir Geagea linked up with the Phalangists loyal to his former rival, President of Lebanon Amin Gemayel. On January 15th, they staged a bloody coup in the fascist-held areas. At the cost of over 400 lives (Christians whom they claim to protect), the Geagea-Gemayel axis forced Hobeika to resign and leave the country.

Once again, the Lebanese Forces were reorganized, this time under Geagea's leadership and principle: «There is now going to be only one single command for all Christian forces under the Lebanese Forces flag, and any attempt to create any other command will be dealt with swiftly and severely. (Monday Morning, January 27-February 2, 1986. All following quotes in this article are from the same source.) The new command claims that the coup was an internal matter, and not directed against relations with Syria. Thus they seek to cover up their continued adherence to the US-Zionist plans to keep Lebanon divided and weak, as long as the nationalist forces have the upper hand. As stated by PSP Politbureau member Akram Shehayeb.

«The sabotage of the accord indicates very solid relations between the regime, Geagea and the US-Israeli axis.» On January 22nd, US State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb expressed support for Amin Gemayel after the coup in East Beirut. US Ambassador to Lebanon Bartholomew urged the nationalist forces in the National Unity Front to open negotiations with the new Lebanese Forces leadership. However, the stability of the Geagea-Gemayel axis is itself in question. The car bomb in the East Beirut suburb, Furn al Shebbak, which killed over 30 people, exploded near a Phalangist Party office. Some observers termed it «the beginning of the struggle between the Phalangist Party and Geagea.»

The Lebanese Forces have now adopted an insidious political tactic for sabotaging the accord: They claim to be ready for a 'compromise' whereby political sectarianism would be preserved, but presidential powers restricted. Meanwhile, a 'balance' would be maintained between the armed factions, which in reality would allow the fascists to keep the possibility of sabotaging any future peace efforts not to their liking.

Fascist violence

The events of January 15th should not have been a surprise to anyone who follows Lebanese politics closely. Over ten years of civil war have shown that the fascist forces will not willingly give up either their military power or the privileges they hold by virtue of Maronite dominance of the state. There is moreover a long tradition of infighting among the fascists themselves. Geagea himself, on Beshir Gemayel's orders, attacked Suleiman Franjeh's stronghold in North Lebanon in 1978, killing 30 family members and supporters. At the time, both Geagea and Franjeh were grouped in the Lebanese Front. In 1980, Beshir's Phalangists attacked and subordinated the militia of another Lebanese Front leader, Chamoun. In

March 1985, Geagea led a 'revolt' against Amin Gemayel due to the latter's forced cancellation of the May 17th accord with 'Israel', and his relations with Syria. Now Geagea and Amin Gemayel have forged an uneasy alliance against Hobeika's willingness to enter the Syrian-sponsored peace plan for Lebanon.

Zionist-fascist sabotage

Even before the accord was signed, its opponents had made themselves obvious. Israeli overflights of Lebanon, including mock raids on strategic points (Beirut, the mountains and Saida) were daily fare from late November when it became clear that the tripartite talks in Damascus were serious. With the signing of the accord, there was a dramatic escalation of fighting on the frontline separating the nationalist forces of the Saida area and the fascists based in Jezzine, who have close ties to the Israeli occupiers and maintain links to East Beirut as well.

Tension emerged among the East Beirut fascist elite as well, with recurring internal clashes and an attempt on the life of Hobeika's top adviser, Assad Shaftari. Even putting aside questions about Hobeika's sincerity in view of his past record of collaboration with the Zionist enemy (most notably his leading the Sabra-Shatila massacre), there were influential figures who opposed the accord from the start. Notable among them are Amin Gemayel; former President and Lebanese Front leader, Camille Chamoun; and his son Dany, head of the National Liberal Party and historically one of the most enthusiastic about relations with 'Israel'.

The opposition to the accord from the Gemayel and Chamoun clans is not hard to understand. Both have extensive business interests in addition to their political careers. A democratic, just settlement to the Lebanese crisis would restrict the Maronite bourgeoisie's manipulation of political power to their own economic advantage.

From the start, there were grumblings about the accord within the Lebanese Forces themselves. The day after the accord was signed, Geagea told a parade of new military recruits: «Let no one think that peace is made in assembly halls or in the capitals of foreign countries...If we want real peace, we should seek a real balance of power...(and) an effective military force.» This line proved fatal to Hobeika's attempts to bring the

Lebanese Forces into the accord, despite earlier suppositions that he could contain the internal fascist contradictions.

Boycott Gemayel!

In the aftermath of Hobeika's ouster from East Beirut, the nationalist forces opened fire on the mountain strongholds of Gemayel and Geagea, north and east of Beirut. Fighting broke out on the traditional frontlines: Beirut's green line and the mountains around Souk al Gharb. Jumblatt and Berri declared a boycott of Amin Gemayel's regime, and were joined by other prominent politicians such as Suleiman Franjeh and Education Minister Salim Hoss. Prime Minister Karami drew the obvious conclusion of the whole affair when he said, «If the transition period is to scrap political confessionalism, why don't we shorten it and call for immediate implementation?»

On January 22nd, Hobeika visited Damascus and returned from there to Lebanon. Press reports spoke of a front of all those forces committed to implementing the tripartite accord. According to PSP official Shehayeb, the nationalist forces have two options to get out of the crisis: «implementation of the tripartite accord or the removal of its opponents. There is no third alternative. As long as Gemayel is determined to obstruct the accord, we face an unknown destiny.» As we go to press, it is unknown whether there will be a decision to eliminate the military power of the Gemayel-Geagea axis, or if political means will be employed; or if the hard-line fascists will unleash a new round of violence. In any case, January's events reaffirm the improbability of ending the Lebanese crisis as long as the fascist forces retain their military prowess and their hold on state power.

Shelling and raiding villages is usually presented as reprisal for anti-occupation military operations, or to force the youth of a village to join the SLA. The real intent is population transfer in line with Israeli plans for continued intervention in Lebanon. Those subject to displacement are patriots. Due to their activity in the Lebanese National Resistance, they are perceived as undesirable by the Zionists, to be replaced by a loyal population drawn mainly from among Christians. The Israeli expulsion policy in the 'security zone' is the extension of the process begun in April 1985, when Lebanese Forces commander Samir Geagea withdrew his fascist forces from the Saida (Sidon) area, and thus triggered a Christian exodus to Jezzine. The ultimate aim is to empty the South of its native population.

In this context, one can analyze the changed demography of the villages between Jezzine and Marjeyoun. As mentioned above, Sojod is deserted as is another village, Mlikh (formerly 3000 inhabitants). Residents of Blatt have been expelled. Louizi is almost deserted. Kfar Houna had 10,000 inhabitants: one-third Shiite, two-thirds Christian. Today there are only 130 Shiites left. The Christians who opposed the segregationist policy also had to leave and were replaced by Christian refugees from the Saida area.² Aramta, before a totally Shiite village, is now inhabited by only 50 Shiite families, along with 70 Christian families who were relocated there to occupy the empty houses. Rihane was a small Shiite village; most of its original population has fled. Seventy Christian families have been resettled there.

Israeli 'Security' Zone

Rampant Human Rights Violations

In June 1985, when 'Israel' announced its withdrawal from South Lebanon, attention turned away from the area as if the problem had been solved. The reality was an altogether different story. Up to 1000 Israeli occupation troops, advisers and intelligence agents (Shin Beth) remain in southernmost Lebanon - the Zionists' so-called security zone. Here they preside over a reign of terror where the thugs of Lahd's South Lebanon Army (SLA) do the dirty work - killing, arresting, torturing and otherwise harassing the local population.

«They came to us at midnight and said anyone who does not leave will be slaughtered.»

These are the words of a resident of Kounin, speaking to reporters at a refugee assembly point north of the 'security zone'. They describe how Israeli occupation troops and SLA militiamen stormed into Kounin (located in the 'security zone') on December 31st, and expelled 400 residents. Twenty families of Meiss al Jabal, near Marjeyoun, suffered the same fate in early August, when some of the sons of the village deserted from the SLA.

Sojod, between Jezzine and Marjeyoun, is today a ghost town. Its 2000 inhabitants were violently expelled in July: «The last survivors having had to

escape the bullets of the SLA.»¹ Sojod is today the site of an Israeli-SLA military position. The population of many other villages in this area has been minimized by constant shelling and other forms of pressure enacted by the SLA and the Israeli occupation troops. In June alone, 2000 villagers were displaced from Yater and Kafra. The International Centre for Information on Palestinian and Lebanese Prisoners, Deportees and Missing Persons records over 450 instances of Israeli-SLA violations against the South's population from May through October 1985. These include raids on villages, house searches and arrests, dynamiting homes, firing on civilians, etc. The center notes that this list is far from comprehensive.

The detained and missing

The number of prisoners from South Lebanon was greatly reduced with the emptying of Ansar in April 1985, and the September release of the 1200 detainees who had been transferred to Atlit in occupied Palestine. Yet arrests have continued on a daily basis, and the fate of those detained today is, if anything, even more precarious. Denied not only legal recourse, but also family visits and contact with the Red Cross, their status is actually that of missing persons. When the ICRC approached the SLA about visiting the Khiam detention center, they were told that Israeli permission was required. «When we turn to the Israelis, they say they are not responsible for the prisoners and refer us back to the SLA. We have been playing this kind

of ping-pong for more than a year,» said ICRC chief in Lebanon, Reto Meister.³

In early November, it was estimated that there were 120 persons held in Khiam which is under direct Israeli supervision, and staffed by five Israeli and 20 SLA officers. A month later, new information coming from persons released, as well as new arrests, had pushed the estimate to 180 detainees, including teenagers, women and old men. It is difficult to know exactly how many are detained for several reasons. For one, the detained are held incommunicado, and besides Khiam there are at least ten interrogation centers in the 'security zone' with an untold number of inmates. Second, arrests are ongoing. (For example, in the December 31st expulsion from Kounin, some 32 people were arrested.) Thirdly, there are frequent kidnappings by SLA militiamen and Shin Beth agents, and the fate of the victims is most often unknown, though bodies have been found to indicate that some of them are murdered. At least twenty villagers were kidnapped in October alone, and are thought to be in Khiam, but others are missing altogether. Fourth, it is unknown how many inmates have been tortured to death in Khiam or other centers. At the end of 1985, a Reuters report indicated that 393 people had died during the year in attacks launched by the Israeli occupation forces or their militia allies, but the real number of victims of Zionist terror cannot yet be calculated.

«All testimonies of former Khiam prisoners agree on the description of the detention conditions as worse than in the other interrogation centres in Mar Elias, the Regie or Tyrus: malnutrition, isolation, confinement, beating, physical and sexual harassments, all kinds of humiliations and insults, torture. An important number of testimonies mention torture, particularly with electricity: electro-shocks produced by a machine with handles are given on the sensitive parts of the body (ears, fingers, neck, sexual organs...) The victims are splashed with water to heighten the effects. At the end of September, strong rumors spoke of the death of three detainees from Bent Jbeil as a result of these tortures...»⁴

Blockade

In addition to repeated acts of piracy and sinking of cargo ships, the Israeli occupation forces have imposed collective punishment through blockades. On October 2nd, they established

a no-go zone for civilian boats off South Lebanon. At the beginning of November, the Israeli occupiers declared Lebanon's southern coast a military area; fishing was banned, and Sour (Tyre) harbor was blockaded for two weeks; incoming ships were searched and no cargos could be unloaded. Again from November 20th until the first days of December, this harbor was blockaded; a new naval blockade was imposed in mid-December. Israeli gunboats patrol the entire coast, as far north as Tripoli. Enacted under various 'security' pretexts, these measures are an obvious violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and aim at disrupting the country's economic life.

The population of the 'security zone' is subject to a permanent land blockade. People are only allowed to travel out of the zone on two days a week, and then only after rigorous searches supervised by Israeli occupation troops. This is part of the attempt to cut the zone off from the rest of the country.

Escalating aggression

While the thirteen Israeli air strikes on Lebanon in 1985 were launched from within the Zionist entity, the 'security zone' serves as a launching pad for continuous ground operations and artillery attacks. The villages just north of the zone are subject to constant shelling, and artillery fire is also directed at Saida. This shelling became heavier and more frequent in November as efforts proceeded to find a solution to the Lebanese civil war under Syrian auspices. By mid-December, the area between Jezzine, where fascist militias are based, and Saida, home of the Popular Liberation Forces, had again become a major battlefield.

At the same time, Israeli operations outside the 'security zone' have escalated from raids to major offensives. On November 6th, the SLA and Israeli occupation troops raided villages north of the zone, destroying three houses and rounding up 80 men to try and force them to form a committee for keeping 'strangers' out of the area, i.e., resistance fighters. On November 28th, 150 Israeli troops in armored vehicles and helicopters made a four-hour raid on three villages north of the zone, dynamiting homes and arresting citizens. On December 3rd and 4th, the Israeli occupation troops launched their biggest ground operation in Lebanon since June; 150 troops raided the Wadi Horsh

Kanaaba area, northeast of Hasbaya, attacking Palestinian freedom fighters. The next day, 100 Israeli soldiers attacked a resistance base near Rachaya, in the southern Bekaa Valley.

Annexation

There are many concrete signs that 'Israel' is far from ready to relinquish its positions in South Lebanon. This fall's preparations for the winter were actually an annexation of Lebanese territory. In addition to bringing in prefabricated houses to keep their occupation troops warm, the Israelis installed mines and electronic detection equipment along the Lebanese-Israeli border on land expropriated from Lebanese farmers, in effect, pushing the border northwards. The statements of many Israeli officials, including Defense Minister Rabin, that UNIFIL is no longer needed, are another indication of the Zionists' desire for total control. In line with this, there is frequent harassment of the Norwegian troops in particular, who are the only contingent deployed exclusively in the 'security zone'. According to official Norwegian sources, there have been 40 incidents between the Norwegian soldiers and the SLA or IDF in South Lebanon since April. The US has seemingly given its stamp of approval to Israeli hegemony in southernmost Lebanon, as indicated by the December decision to suspend \$18 million in aid to UNIFIL, and the January veto of a UN resolution calling for Israeli withdrawal.

In early January, Israeli officials threatened an expansion of the 'security zone'. Though Defense Minister Rabin denied this, there are indications of de facto implementation. Daily Israeli-SLA shelling in the new year has caused new mass displacements in the villages north of the zone. Mustafa Saad, Secretary General of Saida's Nasserite Organization, charged that «Israel is trying to enlarge the security belt, in order to protect Galilee, but also to acquire more water and territory.»

¹ Newsletter 21 of the International Centre for Information on Palestinian and Lebanese Prisoners, Deportees and Missing Persons. This newsletter contains extensive documentation about human rights violations in the 'security zone' including first-hand testimonies from released detainees and refugees, maps, etc. The Centre is currently appealing for donations in order to enable it to continue its documentation. Its next newsletter will focus on the repression of children in occupied Palestine. The address of the centre is B.P. 335.16, 75767 Paris Cedex 16, France.

² Ibid.

³ Monday Morning, Nov. 4-10, 1985.

⁴ Newsletter 21.

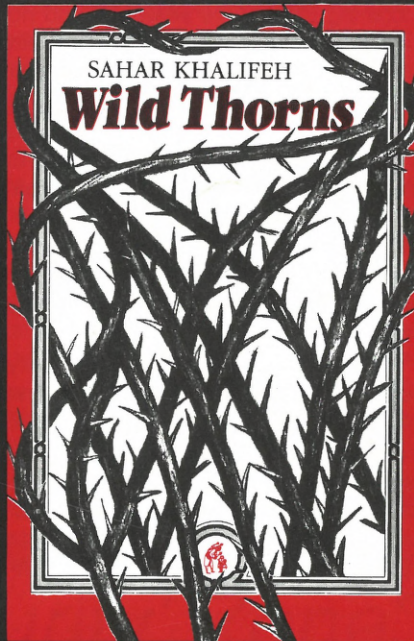
«Wild Thorns»

In her novel *Wild Thorns*, Sahar Khalifeh takes us on a journey into occupied Palestine. At first we enter Nablus (incidentally Sahar Khalifeh's home town) with Usama who is returning after a number of years working outside his homeland. We experience his shock at the changes wrought by the occupation, from the rough treatment meted out by Israeli soldiers at the border, to the fact that some of those nearest him are now working in 'Israel'. As the story unfolds, it is borne along by series of characters of all ages and positions, adding up to a vivid mosaic of life in the occupied West Bank.

We are with the children taunting the occupation troops in the streets during a curfew, with cries of «PLO... Fatah... Popular Front... Democratic Front... Revolution Until Victory.» We are in the jail with the student who has been detained for shouting revolutionary slogans, and with the worker arrested for getting into a fist fight with his 'fellow worker' - an Israeli. We walk the streets of Nablus, smell the smells of its market, visit its coffee houses and the homes of its citizens.

Sahar Khalifeh skillfully chronicles daily life under occupation, employing a simple, direct style. She relies on dialogue, actions and concise impressions, rather than lengthy description. Yet, from the first pages, it is obvious that something more than a general picture is being conveyed. What the author is really getting at is the Palestinian response to occupation. She examines how this varies according to the person's age group, class, sex, educational level and degree of religious feelings.

Among these factors, the one most persistently addressed is class. Sahar Khalifeh does not moralize or speak in dogmas. Rather she lets the 'little people' speak out. One example is when Usama visits the farm of his well-to-do uncle who is now an invalid. He finds that it has fallen into disuse; the younger men have gone to work in 'Israel'. Only Abu Shahada, the peasant who has always worked on the uncle's land, remains. When Usama taunts him about the state of the land, he finally blurts out: «Why are you so angry with me? I'm just a hired hand. I've been here all my life. I don't own any land. I don't own anything.



My son Shahada was a hired hand too. And he still is. The land isn't mine or Shahada's, so why should we care about it? Why should we die for it? Don't give me that! Nobody ever came and asked about us when we were nearly dying of starvation. But now you come!»

The younger generation's growing consciousness of what is going on is also recorded. As one teenager tells his friends: «In high school they force an obsolete curriculum on us and our families begin pressuring us to get the highest grades so we can become doctors and engineers. Once we've actually become doctors and engineers, they demand that we pay them back for the cost of our studies. And our parents don't work their fingers to the bone paying for our education so that we'll return and work for peanuts at home. So the only solution is emigration... Educated people leave the country, and only workers and peasants remain. And that's exactly what Israel wants to happen.»

In another incident, Usama challenges a street vendor for selling Israeli bread. He tells the man it is a disgrace, and gets an ear-full in return: «A disgrace, is it? They called it a disgrace when I took a job 'inside'. So I stayed at home like the women, and they called that a disgrace! And here you are in your fashionable trousers and smart shirt, telling me it's a disgrace. Look, friend,

we're not the first to work with them. While we were still wandering the streets of Nablus looking for bread to eat, your kind were running around Tel Aviv looking for companies to award you franchises so you could sell their products...»

The question of working in 'Israel' is a dominant theme throughout the story. Is it treachery as Usama thinks? Is it a necessity as others are convinced? Is there a chance for solidarity with Israeli workers as a few philosophize over? The book doesn't give direct answers but shows the realities to provoke thought, recording the factors that had driven Palestinians into the Israeli factories and the effects this has on the society under occupation at large. By raising this question, along with the class question, Sahar Khalifeh obviously intended to do more than tell a story. She is first and foremost writing for her own people, raising issues which are highly relevant for the future of the Palestinian national movement, and of special interest to its left-wing forces. The unstated question permeating the novel is: Will the Palestinian society rise to the challenge and formulate the alternative for successfully resisting occupation?

Because *Wild Thorns* is a novel, it would be unfair to demand that the author answer all the questions she raises. However, we do take exception to the book's unrealistic handling of the armed resistance. This stands in stark contrast to the warm, human, down-to-earth approach applied in all other aspects of the book. Most disturbing is that the characters who are somehow connected to the armed resistance are presented in a very stereotyped manner, whereas the other characters are generally multidimensional.

Having stated this one reservation, we highly recommend this book which has already become famous and much discussed in Palestinian and Arab circles, as well as having been translated into French and Hebrew. We thank Al Saqi Books for having made *Wild Thorns* available to English readers.

Wild Thorns was first published in Jerusalem as *Al Subar* in 1976. The English edition was published in 1985, by Al Saqi Books, 26 Westbourne Grove, London W2, England.