

No. 34
August 1989

DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE





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

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

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

The subscription fee for 12 issues is US \$24. If you wish to subscribe or renew your subscription, please write us your address, the number of copies you want of each issue, and

whether you are a new or former subscriber. Send your letter to our correspondence address:

Democratic Palestine
Box 30192
Damascus, Syria

Telephone: 420554 or 331913
Telex: HADAFO 411667 SY

At the same time, please pay your subscription by having a deposit made to the bank account below. Inform us in your letter of the date you have made the deposit.

Pay to: Mohamed Al Masri
account no. 463035-002
Bank of Beirut and the Arab Countries
Shtoura, Lebanon

Table of Contents

- 3 PFLP Press Conference
- 5 The «Peace Initiative» and the Iron Fist
- 7 Call No. 40 of the PLO/UNL
- 10 Elections under the Gun - Shamir's Plan
- 13 Viewpoint: Open Letter from Uri Davis to Shamir
- 15 The Arab Summit - Resolutions
- 20 Lebanon's Dilemma
- 23 US Intervention in Panama
- 25 NGO Meeting on Palestine
- 27 Palestinian Woman at the Core of the Palestinian Struggle

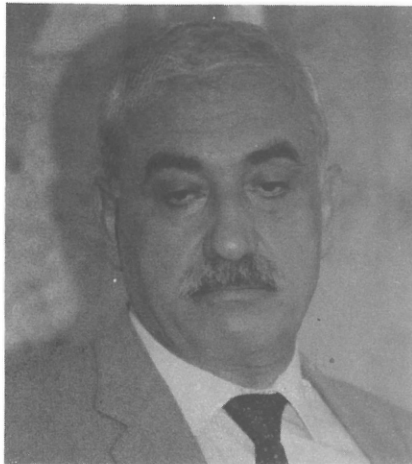


PFLP Press Conference

On June 8th PFLP General Secretary Comrade George Habash held a press conference in Damascus on the occasion of the intifada entering its 19th month. The following are some of the main issues he addressed.

Comrade Habash emphasized in his opening remarks the current Israeli schemes for aborting the uprising. The first scheme being the Shamir plan and the second, the repression and continuous attempts to stop the intifada by all means possible. Comrade Habash reviewed the changes that the intifada has forced upon the Zionist enemy which led to the presentation of the Shamir plan as a political initiative. Nonetheless, Comrade Habash noted that this plan does not mean recognition of the PLO, nor does it mean withdrawal from as much as one inch of the 1967 occupied territories. Clearly the plan has only one goal which is the abortion of the intifada. This plan coincides with the simultaneous escalation of repression on the part of the Israeli army as well as settlers. Comrade Habash said it was unfortunate that the US administration has adopted this same plan in order to achieve the same goal. This was further clarified by the memorandum President Bush sent to King Hassan of Morocco on the occasion of the Arab Summit held in Casablanca wherein he requested from the king to accept the Shamir plan or at least not object to it.

On the other hand, Comrade Habash stressed the necessity of the crystallization of a plan to confront these schemes. In light of this, he noted three tasks which must be done. Firstly, the PLO's total rejection of this plan. Secondly, to call on the Palestinian masses in the 1967 occupied territories to persevere regardless of the escalation of repression and thirdly, the continuation in our plan by organizing all the masses in order to continue and escalate the intifada and galvanize the Palestinian and Arab masses in rallying around the goals of the uprising which are freedom and independence. Comrade Habash quoted a statement made



by Yitzhak Rabin that the struggle is one of wills. He accepted that challenge agreeing that at this point in time the struggle is one of will and that the Palestinians will succeed for a very simple reason which is that they have nothing to lose.

PLO-US DIALOGUE

In regards to the beginning of the third round of talks between the PLO and the US, Comrade Habash discussed his view of the expected results stating that the main agenda item will be the acceptance of the Shamir plan. He also stated that threats will be presented to the effect that if the PLO cannot deal with the Shamir plan then the US will be unable to do anything except sever the dialogue between them. Comrade Habash added that the PLO should totally reject this plan since it does not even present the bare minimum of the demands of the Palestinian people. Comrade Habash said that he was confident that just as the US administration was forced to begin these dialogues with the PLO and forced to begin these negotiations with the PLO, they will be forced to continue these negotiations but on a new basis, based on the recognition of the

legitimate, national rights of the Palestinian people. The US administration will be forced to do this due to the escalation and continuation of the intifada and the base of this dialogue will be the international peace conference.

Although the PFLP welcomed the beginning of dialogue between the two, it knew from the beginning however, that the US administration would utilize these dialogues to detour the PLO leadership from its course.

PLO-SYRIAN RELATIONS

During the press conference more than one question pertained to the Palestinian-Syrian relationship. Comrade Habash expressed hope that discussions would begin as soon as possible. He did note however that hope is one thing and reality is another and added that there are some within the PLO and perhaps within Syria who are not very enthusiastic about the convening of these dialogues. Nonetheless, the PFLP sees very clearly that it is in the natural interest of the Palestinians and in the interest of the continuation of the intifada that the PLO and Syria convene talks soon.

ARMED PRESENCE IN LEBANON

Another important question addressed was that it had been said that President Arafat has called for the formation of a Palestinian army and the disbanding of the military forces of the other Palestinian organizations in Lebanon. Comrade Habash stated that this concept has not been presented to the PFLP but in the case that they are faced with it, the decision would be made in light of the Front's understanding of the aim of the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon which is two-fold. Firstly, the continuation of the armed struggle against the Zionist entity who are presently occupying Southern Lebanon, therefore incurring losses in the ranks of the enemy and uplifting the morale of our people in the 1967 occupied territories. The second aim is the protection of the Palestinian masses in the camps in Lebanon, in addition to the historical

alliance with the Lebanese National Movement and the assistance in their struggle as well. Comrade Habash said if this plan helps in achieving these goals then the PFLP will support it, but the Front will refuse if otherwise.

ARAFAT AND THE NATIONAL CHARTER

The General Secretary also addressed the Front's understanding of Palestinian national unity and how it is tied to

Arafat's proposed changing of the Palestinian National Charter. Comrade Habash said that the law which governs this relationship is one of «unity, struggle, unity.» He said that this unity is erected upon the Palestinian National Charter, the tactical program and the resolutions of the PNC. He added that when there is a detour on the part of the Palestinian leadership from these principles, it is discussed in leadership meetings, within the Central Council, the Executive Committee and the PNC

as well. Comrade Habash said that in these cases the PFLP is usually successful in bringing back the leadership to its correct course. He cited the 18th PNC wherein the Amman Accord was abrogated because it represented a detour from the original Palestinian goals. He concluded that unity is based on struggle and on the common denominator of the various Palestinian groups which will, in the final analysis, bring us to our goal of freedom and independence. ●



The «Peace Initiative» and the Iron Fist

Two Sides of the Same Coin

On April 10 an Israeli carrying an Uzi machine gun approached four Palestinians on a Jerusalem street in the old city, and opened fire at close range without provocation. Mohamad Shawish, 25 years old, was killed instantly when he was hit with seven bullets in the head and chest, and his three companions were seriously wounded.

A newly-formed Israeli Jewish terrorist group calling itself Sicarii claimed responsibility for the attack.

A few days later Nadir Dana, 15 years old, was shot to death by an Israeli settler in Hebron (Al Khalil). The killer, Ben Lulu from the nearby Kiryat Araba settlement, was detained for two days and then released.

A few days after that incident a seven-year-old Palestinian boy was kidnapped by a settler from Neve Yaacov (located in the West Bank town of Beit Hanina) and sexually assaulted. The boy identified the assailant as a man with a beard wearing a Yamaka (a cap worn by religious Jews).

On April 13, a new massacre was carried out by Israel adding to the long list of massacres which began with the formation of the terrorist Jewish groups even before the establishment of the state of Israel.

This time the massacre was committed against the population of Nahalin, a village 13 kilometers west of Bethlehem, which incidently was the site of a previous massacre at the hands of the same perpetrators.

One of the victims was a 17-year-old paraplegic boy in a wheelchair. Three days after the Nahalin massacre, the formation of the «rapid intervention force» was announced by settlers in the occupied territories. Uri Ariel, chairman of the council of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, said that many units of the force are already in existence and more are being formed. He added that the Israeli army «had no problem with them.»¹

According to Knesset member Yossi Sarid, other terrorist vigilante groups

such as «Kulanu» (all of us) are being formed.

The Israeli army which is itself a conglomeration of similar terrorist organizations which converged in 1948 to form what has become known as the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), cannot but sanction the activities of these vigilante groups, otherwise they would deny their own heritage.

Palestinian children have not escaped from the new wave of Israeli repression. An eight-year-old boy was shot to death in Jabalya Camp in Gaza. During the funeral procession, Israeli soldiers opened fire on the mourners killing a five-year-old boy and wounding scores of others.

The escalation of Israeli brutality during the month of May resulted in the deaths of 35 Palestinians, the highest toll in 1989.

On May 6, the first day of a three-day Moslem holiday signifying the end of the holy month of Ramadan, a total of 266 people were injured in Gaza alone, most of them upon their return from the cemetery where it is customary to give respect to the martyrs and dead on this holiday.

According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) figures, the number of Palestinians injured for the month of May in Gaza alone is 2,743.

On the backdrop of this Israeli hysteria, Yitzhak Rabin was given yet more powers within the «legal system» whereby he can now detain any Palestinian for whatever reason and without trial for one year instead of six months. The process of deportation has also been shortened and expedited.

As if this is not enough, the notorious Yitzhak Mordachai who was formerly the military commander of the Southern region was appointed as the new military commander of the West Bank.

PALESTINIAN RESPONSE

The Palestinians have held their ground in the face of this frenzy with

even more determination to continue the confrontation of the occupiers in defense of their land and their own existence.

The United National Leadership (UNL) of the intifada has finally united with HAMAS (Islamic resistance movement) on a program coordinating the confrontation of the occupation, this move led to the consolidation of the intifada.

On May 5 Milad Antoine Shahin, a 12-year-old boy, was ordered by the Israeli troops to get off the streets or else they will shoot him. Milad opened his shirt and challenged the soldiers refusing to obey their command. He was shot three times in the chest and died on the way to the hospital.

These acts of daily resistance and sacrifice are not extraordinary. They constitute a normal reaction by any people under the yoke of colonization or occupation and with the escalation of Israeli repression and terrorism, the Palestinian people are left with no choice but to confront these measures.

In this context, Palestinians have heeded the calls of the United National Leadership of the intifada by escalating their resistance throughout the occupied territories, which included the destruction of Israeli military vehicles, attacking soldiers and executing collaborators.

The new phase of increased Israeli brutality began simultaneously with the declaration of the Shamir plan, and is part and parcel of the new «Israeli peace initiative.»

In the words of Shamir, «We must prove to the people of the intifada that it is not an alternative, that we can suppress it, we can break it.»²

The Shamir plan is in fact no more than a camouflage of the stepped-up brutality, it's designed to absorb the international criticism and condemnation of its practices, and to deflect attention from the ruthlessness of the army.

The intifada has stripped Israel of its propaganda weapons of accusing the Palestinians of being terrorists and

DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

refusing to make peace with the only «democratic» state in the area.

The intifada has shown the ugly face of Israel which has been hidden for so long, although the world managed to get glimpses of this face during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent massacres in Sabra and Shatila Camps in which Sharon was implicated, but never before has the world been exposed to the atrocities of this «democratic» state such as burying people alive, breaking bones, torturing children, demolishing homes... etc.

The image of Israel has been tarnished even among its most staunchest supporters i.e. the Jewish communities throughout the world and especially in the United States.

The pictures of Israeli soldiers armed to the teeth with the various kinds of bullets, grenades and poison gas pitted against young men, women and children with stones has illuminated the real David and the real Goliath.

In late May, an extraordinary Arab Summit meeting was held in Casablanca, Morocco. In this meeting the Arab League ratified the Palestinian working paper presented by the Palestinian delegation. The paper called on the Arab League to support the Palestinian

peace initiative and the resolutions of the 19th Palestine National Council meeting. The Arab League has reaffirmed its commitment to the intifada by pledging to provide «all forms of support.»

However, the US position has become a lone voice in the international community. In late June the European Parliament passed a resolution during its Madrid meeting calling for the inclusion of the PLO in any negotiations for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The European community also stressed that any initiative for peace must be part of a comprehensive solution, thereby directing a big blow to the Shamir plan.

ISRAELI JINGOISM

Along with the stepped-up repression and killing of Palestinians, waves of anti-Arab racist hysteria have been fanned. Shamir commenting on Palestinians who attack Israeli soldiers and settlers said, «They should not be allowed to escape in one piece.»

The mayors of Ramat Gan, Nahariya, Petah Tiqwa, and other Israeli cities and towns have proposed the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from these cities and towns

The mayor of Ramat Gan said, «Arabs can come and work, but we don't want them to live here.»³ The mayor of Petah Tiqwa went even further and warned, «I don't want them on the streets.»⁴

The most flagrant proposal however came from the settlement of Ariel, where they proposed that Palestinian workers wear tags which identify them as «FOREIGN WORKERS.» This is ironic since the mothers and fathers of these settlers and perhaps some of these settlers themselves were forced to wear similar tags by the Nazis identifying them as Jews.

This fanatic jingoism has spread inside the 1948 territories. In addition to the random killings of Palestinian Arabs who are considered Israeli citizens, 30 Knesset members presented a resolution on June 12 proposing the expulsion of Palestinians from Israel if they participate in stone throwing and the publishing of material which sympathizes with the PLO.

UNL RESPONDS

In its call no. 40 the UNL described the escalation of Israeli brutality as part of «the government's official policy in a desperate attempt to terrify our people and create the proper atmosphere in order to market the Shamir plan.»

The UNL called on Palestinians for «violent confrontations in all localities against the occupation army, settlers and agents.»

While a new era of understanding, of resolving regional conflicts, and detente is being ushered in and welcomed by people the world over, Israeli leaders are bent on maintaining their illegal occupation and fanning the flames of national chauvinism.

The continuation of this dangerous trend will lead to armageddon. Peace is the only choice, «peace under occupation» is not real peace. The prerequisites for a genuine peace is the recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the right of return and the establishment of an independent state. ●

Nahalin residents as they remove stones placed at the village's entrance by the occupation authorities.



1. *Jerusalem Post*, April 17
2. *Jerusalem Post*, May 9
3. *Davar*, May 18
4. *Jerusalem Post*, May 23

The Call of Steadfastness and Heroism

Text of Call no.40 issued by the PLO/United National Leadership of the Intifada

In these days while heroic struggle is being waged, we commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the Arab armies' defeat which took place on June 5, 1967. At that time, the Palestinian armed resistance was consolidated and constituted a revolutionary alternative and hope, instead of the gloom which prevailed after the defeat. Additionally, this month we commemorate the 7th anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the anniversary of the legendary steadfastness which our revolutionaries in Beirut proved. We are now witnessing official Arab silence towards the intifada. They have remained only as observers who are betting on the termination of the revolution and the PLO, but our people persevered as exemplified in the defeat of Brezhnev's plan and Reagan's plan through their sacrifices and steadfastness. History repeats itself once again. The struggle of our people, their sacrifices and the uprising are defeating the Zionist repressive machine and have received solidarity from the entire world with the exception of the Arab countries which have not even held a demonstration or a solidarity march with the uprising.

The Arab masses should overcome the barriers of silence and express their real solidarity with our unarmed people who are waging their war of independence.

To the heroes of the intifada:

Your sacrifices and confrontations bring the day of salvation closer, the day of freedom and independence, and shorten the age of the occupation. Your struggle is bringing about the defeat of the occupation's projects of liquidation. The Shamir plan, which has become the official conspiracy of the enemy's government will be defeated through our masses' heroic confrontations just as the case with the Camp David autonomy plan and Jordan's Condominium plan, although the enemy will refuse to admit their defeat. Nevertheless, the occupation's army and authorities are losing their nerves and are deceiving themselves by thinking that through escalating the daily repression and massacres, they will be able to revive the military option which has been defeated by the masses of the uprising. The Israeli ministers are calling for the isolation of the occupied territories from the world in order to liquidate the uprising, in addition to calls by Sharon and others for increasing expulsions and administrative detentions, as well as racist calls from Zionist officials to dispense with Arab laborers. In fact, all these calls coupled with the fascist repressive measures of shooting at our masses to cause thousands of injured and hundreds of martyrs from the waves of confrontation which are determined to continue the struggle until the termination of the occupation. These calls have also been coupled with imposing curfews on more than one million Palestinians and attacking villages and camps, as well as demolishing tens of houses. In fact all of these measures, which constitute the government's official policies, are a desperate attempt to terrify our people and create the proper atmosphere in order to



implement the Shamir plan. This plan aims at liquidating the Palestinian cause and aborting the uprising, and is supported by the US administration which supports the occupation's aims and ignores the will of the international community. This is instead of recognizing the national and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The US administration has adopted Shamir's plan which is based on the Camp David agreements which were categorically rejected by our people. It has tried through its envoys' visits to the area including Dennis Ross, to offer its support to this conspiracy thereby exposing our people to more suffering and terrorism.

The UNL along with the Palestinian masses confirms its decisive rejection of Shamir's conspiracy for holding elections in the occupied territories while under occupation. Elections will never occur until the occupation ends, and only under international supervision as a first step towards convening an international peace conference. This is considered the only way to establish peace in the area and the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO. The UNL also reaffirms the determination of our people to accept the challenge and confrontation in order to bring about the final defeat of all these conspiracies.

To our heroic masses:

Due to the occupation authorities' failure in confronting the will and steadfastness of the PLO's army, the army of the na- ►



tional independence war, they are desperately trying to put a wedge within the unified national ranks and to harm the national unity of our people. This unity has been paved daily with sacrifices and deepened by the confrontations which are stronger than the occupation's bogus statements aimed at shaking this unity by spreading rumors and lies through the enemy's propaganda to create doubts about the nationalistic intentions of some of our people. They are attempting to plant confusion within the nationalist forces to divert their attention from the struggle against the occupation. However, our masses in the Gaza Strip and in the camps and all other areas of confrontation are sustaining national unity just as they are protecting the revolution and the uprising. Our masses are able to refrain from sectarian problems and are devoted to cooperation and comradeship in order to put the national interest above all other considerations. Our people are able to expose these cheap means of the occupation authorities which aim at harming the unity of the nationalist forces.

To the heroes of stones and molotovs:

The UNL is determined that there will be neither retreat nor weakness and stresses that the Zionist terrorism and its fascist measures will only increase our determination to continue the struggle, and confirms the following:

- Appealing to the Arab Summit to support the Palestinian initiative announced at the last PNC, and to work at foiling the plans of liquidation, first and foremost the Shamir plan. The UNL declares its rejection of all separate solutions and the US step-by-step policy and confirms its adherence to the international peace conference as the only means to establish a just peace in the area. The UNL also appeals to the Arab Summit to abide by its obligations to the commitments which were adopted in the Algiers Summit in support of the uprising.
- Condemning the US position due to its on-going policy of procrastination and disregarding our suffering. This US position, which also continues its support in propagating the Shamir plan, opposes the membership of the Palestinian state in international organizations.
- We salute our masses in the Gaza Strip for their heroism and sacrifices, those in the camps of revolution particularly Nuseirat camp. We also salute our people in Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem and in all other areas of confrontation.
- In self-defence, and in order to make the enemy pay a high price for its crimes, the UNL calls upon the strike forces to take one settler's or Zionist soldier's life for each martyr.
- We salute those who responded to the UNL call to resign from the civil administration. We salute those who have

No one is spared from Israeli brutality.





withstood harassment by the occupation authorities for refusing to pay taxes.

- The UNL calls upon our people to support them. We call for the continued boycott of Israeli agricultural products and the punishment of those who propagandize them. We must deepen and develop this boycott in Jerusalem, the capital of our independent state. At the same time, national factories should respond to workers' demands and reduce prices while improving the quality of production.

- We denounce the aggressive raids on our people's properties which have been carried out by hired agents of the occupation. In this light, we reaffirm the necessity of activating the Guarding Committees to protect these properties, nationalist institutions and production plants.

- We must continue to pursue the occupation authorities' agents (traitors) so as to be examples for those who deviate from his people and cause. In this light, the UNL will pursue them, not as if they are political opponents with a different point-of-view, but because they are tools of the occupation authorities who are provided with weapons which are used by the occupation soldiers to kill and terrify our masses.

- We alert our masses to the propaganda which the Israeli TV and media is spreading in Arabic. We call upon our masses not to conduct any interviews with the Israeli media.

- The UNL positively evaluates the steps which have taken place in unifying the two sides of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF). We call for the further consolidation of unity within the PLO.

- We appreciate the French position in receiving the president of the state of Palestine.

- We emphasize the importance of reducing medical fees. Physicians should take into account the difficult conditions which our people are suffering under.

- The UNL sees the necessity of unifying the union framework so as to be one united union and reinforcing the United Trade Committee in economic districts so that it can participate in developing the national economy.

- The UNL highly evaluates all efforts which were made in order to help the Jerusalem Electricity Company overcome its latest problem. At the same time, the UNL calls upon all those who signed the agreement between the administration and the employees to abide by it.

- The UNL calls upon our masses to work towards resolving family problems for the national benefit and in order to protect the unity within the national ranks so as to be able to confront the occupation.

- The UNL calls upon the owners of bakeries to abide by only selling bread and pastries and not to turn bakeries into liquor stores which sell alcohol and foodstuffs.

- The UNL calls upon our masses to burn the plans of the Zionist industries and to incur economic losses to the enemy. This is in reply to the settlers' practices concerning the construction of our national economy.

To the heroes of the strike forces and popular committees:

We salute you who are forming heroic images in confronting the invading troops. We salute your sacred stones and burning bottles which are burning Shamir's conspiracy and all attempts which aim at aborting the uprising. We salute you while you are consolidating the popular authority as an alternative to the occupation's authority. We salute you who are embodying our people's will. Salutations to you who are crowning the UNL decisions, the militant and struggling arm of the PLO in the state of Palestine. We salute you who are foiling the occupation authorities' attempts to isolate the West Bank and Gaza Strip and through this you have put forth the borders of our state. While you are struggling to break this isolation in order to reach the capital of your independent state, you will be carrying out the following program:

1. May 23rd, on the occasion of the convening of the Arab Summit, we declare a general strike and protest against US support for the Shamir plan.

2. May 27th should be a distinguished day of struggle protesting the occupation authorities' measures against our masses in the Gaza strip and the imposition of curfews on that area.

3. May 28th, on the occasion of the convening of the first PNC session in Jerusalem (the capital of our independent state), we salute our masses with nationalist celebrations, raised flags, marches and the singing of nationalist songs.

4. May 30th, this will be a solidarity day with the detainees of the intifada, especially those in Ansar III, who have been suffering from the most severe types of repression and oppression. They are denied the simplest human rights and threatened with murder whenever any disobedience or sit-ins at the Red Cross occur.

5. June 1st, on the occasion of International Child's Day, children's marches and sit-ins should be organized as an expression of our children's rejection of the occupation and their determination to attain freedom and independence.

6. June 4th, on the anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, a total strike should be declared as an expression of our masses total rejection of the Shamir plan which the enemy's government is trying to impose upon our people.

7. June 5th is a total strike day on the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of the Arab regimes' defeat and the subsequent occupation of the remaining parts of Palestine, the Sinai and the Golan Heights.

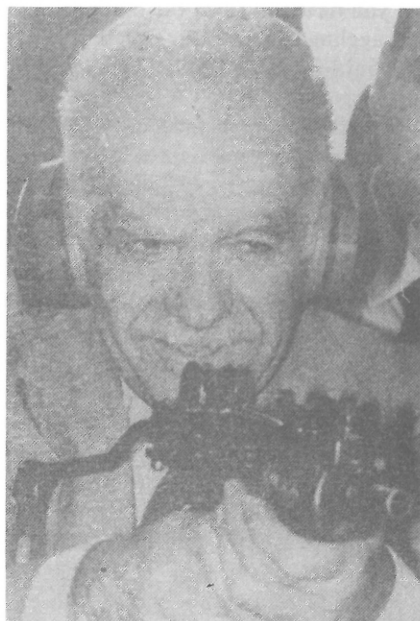
8. June 9th is a total strike day on the occasion of the uprising entering its 19th month.

9. June 10-12 are days of violent confrontations in all localities against the occupation army, settlers and agents in order to foil the Shamir plan.

Elections Under the Gun

On May 14 the Israeli government overwhelmingly passed the Shamir plan, making it the first time the coalition government has united around a political program.

Perhaps this facade of «unity» explains the gimmickry of this plan in light of the differences which exist between Likud and Labor around a settlement. Labor's real position on the Shamir plan surfaced during an interview conducted by the Israeli radio with Shimon Peres on April 13 in which he described the plan as an «illusion» and that «it does not present a solution to the Palestinian problem.»



Peres and the rest of Labor members of the cabinet with the exception of Ezer Weitzman voted in favor of the plan however with the realization that it is designed first and foremost to buy time for the Israeli government in order to allow for more room to maneuver, and not to be implemented.

The twenty point plan is predicated on three Israeli No's: no to negotiations with the representative of the Palestinian people (PLO), no to withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, and no to a Palestinian state. The plan includes four main points: elec-

tions in the West Bank and Gaza, resolution of the refugee problem, normalizing relations with the Arab states, and the reaffirmation of the Camp David agreements.

According to the Shamir plan, the elections in the West Bank and Gaza, are designed to produce Palestinian representatives from these territories who would be ready to negotiate with Israel on an interim period of three years of «self-rule,» to be followed by a second stage in which a final settlement would be negotiated.

The second point of the plan is a resolution of the refugee problem whereby Shamir calls on the international community to extend help, claiming that «Israel has done its share.» Indeed Israel has done more than its share towards the Palestinian refugee problem when they forcefully evicted hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their country.

If Shamir and Rabin are genuinely interested in solving the refugee problem, they should allow those refugees whom they uprooted and displaced to return to their homes instead of asking for charity in their name, they can also help by stopping the demolition of homes in the refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, in addition to allowing international humanitarian organizations to conduct their work without the usual obstacles.

The third point is normalizing relations between Israel and the Arab countries. This issue is of utmost importance to Israel, normalization of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors could relieve the chokehold on the Israeli economy, whereby Israel would be able to sell its products to Arab markets without the strain of the high cost of transportation incurred in exporting goods outside of the Middle East.

And the fourth point is the reaffirmation of the Camp David agreements. Although this last point is considered a very important point of the plan, the plan as a whole is in reality a reaffirmation of the ten-year-old Camp David

agreements, which dealt with Egypt and Jordan and did not deal with the Palestinians.

The election plan calls for conducting «free and democratic elections, free from violence, terrorism and threats.» «If Palestinians are not prepared to seize the golden opportunity offered by elections, they will face a tougher security crackdown.» This direct threat by Rabin underscores the dilemma of the Israel government and particularly the military in light of their failure to quell the intifada, and it unveils the true nature of their sham «democracy.»

The idea of conducting elections in the occupied territories was originally Rabin's. He declared his plan on January 20 which aims at «putting a wedge between the PLO in Tunis and the PLO in the [occupied] territories.»¹ Hence the Shamir plan has been often referred to as the Shamir/Rabin plan.

These so-called free elections are not without conditions. The two main conditions are ending the intifada, and forbidding Palestinians in East Jerusalem which has been occupied and officially annexed since 1967 from taking part in the elections.

Moreover, Rabin threatens once again that he «will send to prison any elected Palestinian who declares loyalty or affiliation to the PLO.»² This threat by Rabin which was also reiterated by Shamir is to be taken seriously in light of Israel's record vis-a-vis elected Palestinian officials.

Since 1968, five elected mayors from the West Bank have been deported: Rawhi Al Khatib from Jerusalem, Nadim Al Zarro from Ramallah, Abdel Jawad Saleh from El Bireh, Mohamad Milhem from Halhoul, and Fahd Kawasmeh from Hebron (Al Khalil).

This is not to mention the deportation of union leaders, journalists, scholars, and clergymen like Archbishop Hilarion Capucci and President of the Islamic Council Sheikh Abdel Hamid Al Sayeh.

After the deportation of the mayors of Ramallah and Al Bireh, the new elected mayors Kareem Khalaf and

Ibrahim Tawil as well as the elected mayor of Nablus, Bassam Shakaa were targeted for assassination. Although the mayors escaped death, they suffered grave physical injury. Bassam Shakaa lost both his legs when his booby-trapped car exploded, eventually the elected city councils were dissolved.

THE US POSITION

On the eve of Shamir's visit to the US and amidst growing international condemnation of Israeli violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories, the Bush administration was anxiously awaiting an «Israeli peace initiative» in order to justify its continued support to Israel, and its veto of UN Security Council resolutions critical of Israeli practices, and particularly after Sheverdnadze's visit to the region and the declaration of the Soviet peace initiative which is viewed by the US as a threat to its longstanding monopoly on Middle East politics.

The Bush-Shamir meeting on April 6 resulted in agreement on the following principles: that the present situation should not continue, the intifada must be halted, negotiations must begin as soon as possible, these negotiations could include Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians, and that the Palestinians who will participate in these negotiations can be either appointed or elected from the West Bank and Gaza.

In reply to President Bush's statement in support of «Land for Peace», Shamir chided the idea claiming that the territories occupied since 1967 are essential to Israel's security.

James Baker who according to the *International Herald Tribune* has used «the bluntest language ever used by a senior US official» before over 1,000 members of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), called on Israel «to lay aside once and for all the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel.»³

Baker went on to say that Israel should not annex the West Bank and Gaza, stop the settlement activity, and allow schools to reopen.

These statements and other statements by the Secretary of State to the effect that Israel must be prepared to some day negotiate with the PLO in addition to the US-PLO dialogue and the meeting between the US am-

bassador in Tunis and Abu Iyad, the second man in Fateh after Arafat, do not indicate an intrinsic change in US Middle East policy.

Hours before the Bush-Shamir meeting was convened, ABC network announced the results of a nation-wide survey in which eight out of ten Americans favored the inclusion of the PLO in the negotiations for a settlement.

Nevertheless the US administration remains adamantly opposed to the participation of the PLO in the international peace conference, and against the national rights of the Palestinian people.

Despite the superficial difference between Israel and the US administration, the bottom line is that they are both against the recognition of the PLO, and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

THE PALESTINIAN REACTION

The official Palestinian response came from the Executive Committee of the PLO on May 15 in a statement which described the Shamir plan as a «means to deceive world public opinion and consolidate the occupation.»

The statement added that there is international consensus that a just and lasting peace necessitates a realistic solution based on the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, and national independence within the framework of an international peace conference, and that any interim proposals should be part of a comprehensive plan which would lead to the achievement of a just peace. The PLO's representation of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent state are not negotiable.

Subsequent statements by PLO officials did not rule out elections, but stressed the need for withdrawal of occupation troops, international supervision and that elections be part of a comprehensive plan which would lead to the realization of Palestinian national rights, before such elections could be held, for there is a contradiction in holding free elections under occupation.

The United National Leadership of

the intifada (UNL) has also rejected the Shamir plan, declaring in its calls that «the Shamir plan is rejected by the Palestinian people and their united leadership... the plan is designed to bypass the international peace conference.»⁴ A statement was signed by 83 Palestinian leading personalities rejecting the Shamir plan, they include union leaders, political leaders, clergy, educators and elected officials.

A group of prominent Palestinians including Dr. Sari Nusaibeh and Ziyad Abu Ziyad were invited to meet with Dennis Ross in Jerusalem after his meeting with Shamir, they chose instead to send a letter to the US Council General criticizing the plan. The letter noted that the Shamir plan is aimed at deceiving and misguiding the Israeli and world public opinion, it ignores the central issue of the Middle East conflict: the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, a state, and the right to choose their representative which is the PLO.

The Shamir plan is a vain attempt at reincarnating the defunct Camp David agreements which were categorically rejected by the PLO and the Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories, therefore the plan was dead from the moment it was born.

Shamir is aiming through this plan to achieve the following: to put an end to the intifada, find an alternative to the PLO, ignore the national rights of the Palestinian people, bolster the position of Shamir within Likud, counter the Palestinian peace initiative which has received worldwide support with the exception of the US, silence the criticism of Israel especially from the European community who are pressing Israel to accept the international peace conference as a framework for a comprehensive settlement in the region, cover up for the escalation of repression, and to revive the Jordanian option which King Hussein himself has annulled when he severed Jordan's administrative and legal ties with the West Bank.

Israel's leaders embarked on an intensive campaign to promote the plan which took Shamir, Rabin and Arens to the US, Britain, Spain, Germany, Italy and other countries only to come back ►

ON ISRAEL

empty handed. Moreover, the European Parliament meeting in Madrid put its weight behind the Palestinian peace initiative, by calling on Israel to put forth a comprehensive peace plan.

Inside the US the pro-Israeli lobby group-the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee has been engaged in a desperate attempt to salvage the deteriorating Israeli image in America. Their latest efforts have resulted in recruiting 9 US senators who sent a letter to Secretary of State James Baker calling on the administration to give unequivocal support to the Shamir plan. Subsequently President Bush sent a letter to Shamir expressing his continued support of his plan. It's ironic that the Shamir plan receives more support inside the US Senate than the Israeli Knesset.

On July 7 the Likud Central Committee held its long-awaited meeting to

discuss the Shamir plan amidst threats by Shamir that he will resign if the Likud bloc does not ratify his plan.

The opposition, headed by Ariel Sharon along with Yitshak Modai and David Levy won the battle and changed the plan which was approved by the government by adding new provisions to it.

Shamir did not resign but Labor's leadership bureau adopted a proposal to the party's central committee which recommends the withdrawal from the coalition government. The proposal cites that «there is no room under these circumstances for the continuation of the government.»⁵

The proposal was introduced by the party chairman Shimon Peres and was passed by a vote of 45 to 2. The central committee meeting will take place during the month of August.

Shamir in an attempt to placate the

Labor party, said that as far as the government is concerned there will be no changes in his plan.

On the other hand the US administration is worried that if in fact Labor does withdraw from the government it will lead to the collapse of the Shamir plan, which would strengthen Sharon's position within Likud. Sharon is on the roll, and if the present trend continues, he will try to push Israel into an openly fascist society which will in turn erode any hopes for peace and push the region on a course of destruction. ●

1 Ha'aratz, April 10

2 Ha'aratz, April 21

3 International Herald Tribune, May 23

4 UNL Call No. 39, translated by the PFLP Central Information Department, 1989

Associated Press, July 11



Viewpoint

AN OPEN LETTER TO YITZHAQ SHAMIR ON THE
OCCASION OF HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO LONDON
MAY 1989

FROM URI DAVIS

I was born in Jerusalem in 1943 and I was five years old when the state of Israel was established in 1948. By then, your organization, the LEHI (Stern Group) Zionist armed underground, had attempted to negotiate collaboration with Nazi Germany, and you yourself, as LEHI chief of operations, already had behind you actions which are classified under international law as war crimes, notably the Deir Yasin massacre.

Under UK law you are a wanted person with a reward on your head. A warrant for your arrest is still on file in London.

And yet, instead of being jailed immediately upon arrival, you will be received as official guest of Her Majesty's Prime Minister in Downing Street. You must inwardly chuckle with satisfaction.

As Prime Minister of the state of Israel you take pride in having led the Zionist LEHI organization. Indeed, it is correctly observed that as Prime Minister of the state of Israel you still embody the principles of the LEHI official political programme: the demand to the territorial borders given in the Torah (Bible) from the river of Egypt, the Nile, to the great river, the river of Euphrates; the advocacy of a so-called solution of the problem of those designated as aliens (the Palestinian Arab people) through population exchange; and the proposal to construct a Third Jewish Temple on the Holy Mount in Jerusalem as a symbol of the process of total redemption. (Quoted in Committee for the Publication of the Works of LEHI, *Fighters for the Freedom of Israel* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv, 1959). There is no record of your renouncement of these principles.

It is often asked: how is it possible that the government of the state of Israel, which appropriated massive German reparations (741 million US\$ to be exact) as the claimed inheritor of the mass of the Jewish communities annihilated by the Nazi Holocaust can perpetrate and endorse policies of occupation and war crimes against another people, namely, the Palestinian Arab people.

Your record, Yitzhaq Shamir, as Prime Minister of the state of Israel directly responsible for war crimes against the Palestinian Arab people since the beginning of the intifada in 1987 in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip is staggering: denial of supplies of fuel and electricity; arrests of many thousands; demolition of homes of detainees; illegal deportations; indiscriminate beating directed to maim and mutilate; illegal application of tear gas in confined places resulting at times in miscarriage of pregnant women; the injury of many thousands

and the murder of some 500 unarmed protestors over the past eighteen months against the Israeli occupation, mostly youth, many children under fourteen, at the rate of one person every 24 hours. Adjusted for population size, the equivalent figure in the United Kingdom would be 500 persons per month.

The truthful answer to the question: 'how is it possible...' is represented in the political career of the Prime Minister of the state of Israel Yitzhaq Shamir.

Sections of the Zionist leadership (e.g. your leader Avraham Stern) believed that in order to secure the establishment of the state of Israel it was correct to collaborate with Nazi Germany - not to mobilize with the Allies, first and foremost with the UK, for resistance to the Nazi occupation. Other sections of the Zionist leadership (e.g., Yitzhaq Gruenbaum, head of the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency rescue committee) believed that it was necessary to abandon the mass of European Jewish communities to annihilation rather than divert Zionist funds to finance mass rescue activities in Europe.

In 1941 Abraham Stern, the leader of the LEHI organization, sent to the German Nazi government a proposal concerning the solution of the Jewish question in Europe and participation by the LEHI in the war on the side of Germany. Against the backdrop of the mass annihilation of European Jewry the memorandum by LEHI notes that the organization recognizes that:

Common interests could exist between the establishment of a new order in Europe in conformity with the German concept, and the true national aspirations of the Jewish people... ►



ZIONISM AND ISRAEL

Cooperation between the new Germany and a renewed volkishnational Hebrum would be possible, and the establishment of the historical Jewish state on a national and totalitarian basis bound by a treaty with the German Reich would be in the interest of a maintained and strengthened future German position of power in the Near East. (Quoted in Yizraeli, The Palestine Problem in German Politics 1889 - 1945 (Hebrew), Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, 1974)

Proceeding from these considerations LEHI offered to actively take part in the war on the side of Germany.

In 1943 Yitzhaq Gruenbaum, head of the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency rescue committee made the following statement:

And in this time in Eretz Israel there are comments: 'Do not put Eretz Israel in priority in this difficult time, in time of destruction of European Jewry'. I do not accept such a saying. And when some asked me: 'Can you not give money from keren ha-yesod [the Zionist Foundation Fund designated to fund Jewish settlement in Palestine] to save Jews in the diaspora' I said: 'No'. And again I say: 'No'... I think we have to stand before this wave that is putting Zionist activity into the second row... I think it is necessary to say here: Zionism is over everything. (Gruenbaum, *In the Days of Destruction and Holocaust* (Hebrew), Haverim Publishing House, Tel Aviv, 1946)

Those sections (mainstream or otherwise) of the Zionist political leadership, who were motivated by such ideological perspectives, were willing to compromise and betray their own people in order to promote the totally unworthwhile political programme of the establishment of a Zionist Jewish state in Palestine. They were also the sections of the Zionist leadership (both labour Zionist and revisionist Zionist) that spearheaded the birth of the state of Israel. A leadership that was willing to act in this way against its own people in order to secure unworthy Zionist political aims would not hesitate, and, indeed, did not hesitate to perpetrate war crimes against another people, namely, the Palestinian Arab people, if deemed necessary to secure these aims.

I am an anti-Zionist Israeli Jew. My position vis-a-vis the main body of Israeli Jewish society is analogous to the position of a white citizen of the Republic of South Africa who is a public opponent of apartheid. The Palestinian peace initiative attempts to reach for a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the establishment of an independent state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel, where there will be Arab citizens of the state of Israel and Jewish citizens of the state of Palestine, subject to UN Charter and all UN resolutions. By every standard, moral and political, I regard the Palestine Liberation Organization to be a superior organization to the World Zionist Organization. And I regard Yasir Arafat to be a better President of the Arab and Jewish citizens of the state of Palestine than Haim Herzog as President of the Jewish and Arab citizens of the state of Israel.

The PLO peace initiative will rightly expose you as Prime Minister and your government for what you are: staunch op-

ponents of the rights of the Palestinian people as endorsed internationally since 1947 in all UN resolutions, including the resolutions that give legitimacy to the establishment of the state of Israel alongside the state of Palestine. You and your government refuse to concede to the Palestinian people any of their internationally sanctioned rights to national territory independence and sovereignty. Your visit to the UK aims to make sure that the PLO peace initiative comes to nothing.

It remains for anti-Zionist Israeli and non Israeli Jews like myself to raise their voice and tell the truth loud and clear: Given the continued occupation by Israel of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since 1967, and, given your policies as Prime Minister of the government of the state of Israel, war against your government, like war against the government of the Republic of South Africa, is justified. It may be the only realistic means to force the state of Israel to submit to the norms of justice and universal humanity as embodied in international law and codified in UN Charter and resolutions.

How sad.

Uri Davis (Dr)

1 A Highbury Grove Court
Highbury Grove
London N5 2NG

Dr Uri Davis is Honorary Research Fellow in Palestine Studies at the Department of Politics, University of Exeter; an expatriate Israeli Jewish academic and anti-Zionist activist of dual Israeli and UK citizenship; author and associate author on the question of Palestine (eg *Israel: An Apartheid State* and *The Jewish National Fund*). His forthcoming book *The State of Palestine* will be published by Mansell.



The Arab Summit

The agenda of the extraordinary Arab summit held in Casablanca, Morocco on May 23-26, 1989, centered on three main issues: the Palestinian question, the Lebanese crisis and the Iraq-Iran dispute. The most prominent event in the summit, however, was the official return of Egypt to the Arab league which took place even before the summit assembled when Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismat Abdul Majid joined a foreign ministry meeting one day prior to the opening night. The last time Egypt was present in an Arab foreign ministers' meeting was in February, 1979 in Kuwait which was convened due to the break out of fighting between the two Yemens.

All efforts to agree on who would represent Lebanon in the summit failed. For the first time since the first Arab summit in 1964, Lebanon's seat remained vacant despite the fact that Lebanon's file was being reopened for the first time since 1982.

CASABLANCA: EGYPT'S SUMMIT

In his opening speech, King Hasan II of Morocco particularly welcomed the return of Egypt to the Arab League and neglected any mention of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. After his short speech, King Hasan II called on President Mubarak to address the summit. Although there was much discussion about whether Egypt should even attend the opening session, Mubarak insisted upon delivering a speech. Mubarak commenced his long speech by saying, «... in the past years, Egypt was the present absentee, due to your continuous efforts and sincere nationalist feelings which was clear through the exchange of uninterrupted visits and contacts!» Mubarak also called on the Arab leaders to agree on a joint peace plan based on the Fez plan approved in 1982. He emphasized that all Arab states should be committed to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other. In the major part

of his speech, however, Mubarak concentrated on issues of peace, prosperity, development and scientific technology, in addition to the threats of natural catastrophies. Meanwhile, he ignored addressing the confrontation with the Zionist enemy and Israel's colonialist schemes in the area.

Concerning the Palestinian question, Mubarak confined his speech with reiterating support of the Palestinian people's right to resist the occupation and to choose the suitable path to achieve their goal, without any mention of the Palestinian uprising.

As far as his position vis-a-vis the Lebanese crisis, Mubarak said that he allies with the Lebanese people of all sects and confirmed the necessity of the withdrawal of all «foreign troops» from Lebanon, and to enable the constitutional institutions to fully practice their legal powers.

Egypt's unconditional official comeback to the Arab League was not a surprise and was not even subject to discussion in the summit. Today, the Arab states discovered that the decision they had taken 11 years ago in Baghdad to boycott Egypt was the wrong decision. In 1978, this decision was considered the minimum platform for Arab consensus in confronting the most dangerous turning point in the history of the Arab-Zionist conflict since the 1967 defeat. Yesterday's minimum platform has become extremism today, and Egypt-still entangled with the Camp David Agreements officially comes back to assume its place in the Arab League. We say «officially» because Mubarak made it clear in his speech that the Baghdad summit resolution was never implemented in reality. Needless to say that the best Arab summit resolutions were those that were never implemented. One example is the resolution of the first Arab summit in 1964 concerning the formation of a united Arab front in order to confront Israel's plan to detour the Jordan River. A better example is the decision taken in the last Arab Summit

(Algeria, 1988) that mandates that the Arab states provide all needed financial, political and media support to the Palestinian uprising.

Egypt's official comeback is not astonishing since the 1987 Amman Summit took a decision allowing bilateral relations between any Arab state and Egypt. Sure enough, most Arab states rushed to resume their relations with Egypt after the above-mentioned summit. Of course this is not to say that these relations did not exist before the decision. Many Arab capitals have had covert political and economic relations with Cairo even during Sadat's regime and some became overt after his assassination.

Egypt's comeback was preceded by an earlier one, also in Casablanca, in January 1984 when the Islamic Summit, also headed by King Hasan II, re-awarded Egypt its membership in the Islamic Conference Organization. This is to note the role of King Hasan II-the sponsor of the Camp David regime in the area-in orchestrating the scenario we are witnessing today.

Clearly, Egypt's official return to the Arab League is an indication of many things. Firstly, the level of deterioration in the Arab officialdom in the past decade, compared to the threat of the Camp David Agreements not only to Egypt but to the Palestinian cause, the Arab world as a whole and the future of the Arab-Zionist conflict. Secondly, this return sets a precedent for allowing future violations of invariable principles such as violating Arab consensus, particularly when detrimental issues are involved. As well as, the transformation of a national struggle to a political or a border struggle between Israel and each Arab state and therefore giving the right of each state to seek its own suitable solution. Thirdly, there is no doubt that Egypt's return was a diplomatic victory for the US and Israel. Israel can now cross over the Egyptian bridge to the entire Arab world.

If one is in doubt about how some ►

Arab countries turned a blind eye to Egypt's return, despite their realization of the threats this return will bring along, one can be assured that what ruled the results of the summit was a game of balance which necessitated that each party in the summit give concessions on one issue in return for the summit to adopt their position in another. Therefore, in return for Egypt's comeback to the Arab League, there were positive resolutions concerning the Lebanese crisis.

THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

Almost 90% of the work paper introduced by the Palestinian delegation was approved by the summit. The content of this paper included the urging of the summit to support the resolutions of the last PNC session and the Palestinian peace initiative. The paper called on the summit to support the Palestinian position in rejecting the Shamir plan, and forming a coordinating five-state committee (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) to prepare for the convening of the international conference. The paper urged the Arab states to provide all forms of political, moral and financial support to the uprising, in addition to urging the international community to shoulder its responsibilities towards Israel's crimes in the occupied territories.

The summit adopted the majority of the Palestinian paper and decided the following: the continuation in providing all forms of support to the Palestinian uprising and called on the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities towards Israel's crimes committed in the occupied territories. The summit also confirmed its support to the Palestinian peace plan which is based on the Arab peace plan (approved in Fez in 1982) and on international legitimacy. The summit supported the convening of an international peace conference, and the formation of a higher committee headed by King Hasan II for the purpose of establishing the needed international contacts on behalf of the Arab League in order to activate the peace process and to participate in preparing for the international conference.

Concerning the Shamir plan, US President Bush had sent a message to the Arab summit asking them to respond positively to the plan and if not, at least not to take a position against it. Nonetheless, the summit decided to «... support the Palestinian position in regards to the elections issue which should take place after the Israeli withdrawal, in the presence of international supervision, and within the framework of a comprehensive peace process.»

What is needed now is the actual implementation of these resolutions in order to avoid the fate of the Algeria summit resolutions.

LEBANESE CRISIS

Although Lebanon's seat remained vacant, the Lebanese crisis was an issue of heated discussions in this summit.

The foreign ministerial meeting that

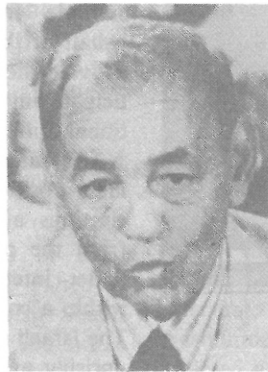
convened a day before the summit however, did not discuss any solutions but merely prepared a report concerning the efforts of the six-state committee in order to be presented to the summit. After the closed session, a decision was taken to «form a committee composed of King Hasan II, King Fahed of Saudi Arabia, and President Shadli Ben Jadid of Algeria. The committee will have full authority to achieve the goals approved by the summit... the committee will make contacts and take the necessary measures in order to create the proper atmosphere for calling MP's to discuss the political reforms document, to hold presidential elections and to form the national reconciliation government. This process should be completed within six months maximum.»

In the final statement the summit stressed the necessity of the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from





Ben Jedit of Algeria



Hassan II of Morocco



Fahd of Saudi Arabia

Lebanon in accordance with UN resolutions. The statement also denounced any attempts to divide Lebanon which in essence contradicts Aoun's slogan of «liberation war,» and confirmed the legitimacy of the parliament and the need for reform before elections.

It was clear on the eve of the summit that Jordan's position was for sending

joint Arab forces to Lebanon, whereas Egypt called for «the withdrawal of all foreign troops». In a heated closed session, Iraq and Syria aired out their historical differences. Iraq, which has been supporting Aoun in Lebanon tried to resolve these differences to its interest in the summit, but failed. Actually the summit resolutions could be viewed as a victory for the Syrian and

Lebanese nationalist forces viewpoint. This viewpoint asserts that the essence of the Lebanese crisis is in the sectarian political system and thus reform is a true necessity. Furthermore, the external factors of the crisis is embodied mainly in the Israeli occupation of parts of Lebanon.

Clearly, these resolutions were positive ones, however, very difficult to implement. The Arab summit does not have control over any of the parties involved, surely not Israel. Both Israel and the US have taken steps that indicate that they by no means welcome the summit's resolutions which ignore their interests. (See Lebanon article).

Once again, the summit resolutions in regards to the Lebanese crisis were generally positive, but what is more important is the ability to implement them. The previous painful experiences do not call for optimism. Solving Lebanon's dilemma is not possible without a comprehensive solution in the Middle East.

The Arab Summit in session.



THE IRAQ-IRAN DISPUTE

The summit discussed the development of the Iraq-Iran conflict since the previous summit (Algeria, 1988). The summit expressed relief over the ceasefire and the beginning of negotiations in order to reach a final comprehensive solution to the conflict based on UN resolution number 598. The resolutions reiterated support to Iraq's sovereignty over its lands and waters and non-interference in its internal affairs. They also addressed the security of the gulf and freedom of navigation for all ships through the Hurmoz Strait. The summit called upon both parties to immediately free all prisoners of war.

This Arab summit is considered another step of the current Arab regimes towards first, more subordination to capitalism in order to assume a better position in the capitalist market. Second, the summit was an indication that the Arab regimes accept the process of normalization with Israel as expressed through their acceptance of the return of Egypt. Strategically, this step is not in the interest of the Arab masses but tactically, the contradictions that still exist between Israel and the Arab regimes should be capitalized upon. ●



Resolutions

The summit saluted the Palestinian people's uprising and expressed pride in the steadfast heroes... the summit also resolved to continue providing all forms of support in order to enable the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO, its sole, legitimate representative, to continue their resistance and escalate their heroic uprising against the Israeli occupation.

The summit condemned the criminal practices of the Israeli occupation authorities against the Arab masses in the occupied Palestinian and Arab lands. The summit called upon the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities towards these criminal practices, including imposing sanctions on Israel. The summit saluted the struggle of the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and the struggle of the Lebanese national resistance in South Lebanon against the Israeli occupation.

The summit confirmed the bases of the Arab peace plan that was approved by the 12th Arab summit in Fez, and were reiterated in the extraordinary Arab summit in Algeria. This plan calls for the liberation of the Palestinian and Arab lands occupied since 1967... and to enable the Palestinian Arab masses to practice their national inalienable rights, including repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative. This plan also aims at mobilizing Arab potentials in all fields in order to achieve the comprehensive strategic balance for confronting the Israeli hostile schemes, and for maintaining Arab rights.

The summit welcomed the resolutions of the 19th PNC session. It confirmed its support of the Palestinian peace initiative that is based on the Arab peace plan and international legitimacy. The summit praised the positive international response to it. The summit blessed the establishment of the independent Palestinian state and expressed its determination to provide all forms of support to it. The summit expressed its appreciation to the friendly countries that officially recognized the state of Palestine, and urged other countries to fully recognize it and to enable it to practice its sovereignty on its national soil.

The summit supported the convening of an international peace conference, with the participation of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The international peace conference aims at reaching a comprehensive and just settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on UN resolutions 242 and 338 and all related UN resolutions, guaranteeing the national inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, guaranteeing security for all states in the area-including the state of Palestine, and resolving the problem of the Palestinian refugees according to UN resolution 194. The summit considered all UN resolutions relating to the Palestinian question as resolutions which provide international legitimacy and this legitimacy gives the Palestinian people the right to establish their independent state.

The summit approved the formation of a higher committee headed by King Hasan II. This committee will make the

suitable international contacts on behalf of the Arab League in order to activate the peace process and to participate in preparing for the international conference.

The summit supported the Palestinian position in regards to holding elections after the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian lands, under international supervision, and within a comprehensive peace process. The Israeli schemes aim at aborting the uprising and ignore the PLO and the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. The summit confirmed the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation and putting the occupied Palestinian land under UN provisional supervision in order to enable the Palestinian people to practice their right to self-determination.

The summit expressed grave concern over what is happening in Lebanon, one of the states that founded the Arab League, and has always participated in consolidating collective Arab work, defending the Arab causes, and contributed to the enrichment of Arab and international culture through its civilization and culture.

The summit discussed the tragic situation in Lebanon and its reflections on Lebanese unity and on the national security of the Arab nation. The summit confirmed the necessity to continue Arab work in order to reach a solution that will return stability and security to Lebanon and maintain its sovereignty and unity. The summit called upon all Lebanese parties to abide by the cease-fire immediately and permanently based on the League's resolution issued on April 27th, 1989.

The summit praised the efforts of the six-state committee and urged all Lebanese parties to cooperate for the sake of their national interests and achieving national reconciliation. National reconciliation will pave the way for a final solution to the Lebanese crisis. The summit expressed its commitment to maintain Lebanon's unity, Arab identity, security, independence and sovereignty, and to reject any attempts to divide Lebanon. The summit reiterated its commitment to provide the needed support for Lebanon's prosperity, and to aid the reconstruction of its national economy. The summit

confirmed the Arab resolutions in regards to Pan-Arab solidarity in order to aid Lebanon to resolve its dilemma, and to end the long suffering, achieve national reconciliation among all parties and support the Lebanese legitimacy based on reconciliation.

The summit confirmed the formation of a committee composed of King Hasan II of Morocco, King Fahed of Saudia Arabia, and President Shadli Ben Jadid of Algeria. This committee has complete authority to achieve the goals approved by the summit for solving the Lebanese problem. The committee will make the necessary contacts and take the suitable steps in order to create the proper atmosphere for calling the MP's to discuss the political reforms document, hold presidential elections, and form a national reconciliation government. This should be completed within six months maximum. The summit expressed willingness to convene after this period if there is a need to review what has been achieved, and put forth further steps. The summit also decided to support the Lebanese efforts on the international level for ending the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon in addition to supporting the Lebanese state's total sovereignty over all Lebanese soil, in order to maintain its security and stability using its own forces.

The summit denounced the Israeli occupation of Lebanese lands and condemned the continuous Israeli aggression in Lebanon against its sovereignty and people. The summit urged the UN Security Council to implement resolutions 425, 508, and 509 that call for an immediate unconditional, total withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from Lebanese lands.

The summit discussed the latest development between Iraq and Iran since the previous summit in Algeria. The summit expressed its deep relief at the halt of fighting, and the beginning of negotiations sponsored by the UN Secretary General for the purpose of reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to this dispute.

Based on the summit's conviction that the cease-fire should be a launching point for establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace bet-

ween Iraq and Iran, and for stabilizing security and peace in the area, the summit wished to accelerate the process of moving from the stage of cease-fire to the stage of establishing peace, security and stability. The summit called for exerting all efforts on the regional, and international levels in order to activate direct negotiations under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, based on Security Council resolution 598. This resolution is considered a peace plan which guarantees Iraq's sovereignty over its land and water, non-interference in the internal affairs [of any country], the security of the Arab Gulf and freedom of navigation in international waters and through Hurmoz Strait for all ships without any hindrances and according to the sea treaty reached in the UN.

The summit confirmed its total support to Iraq's right to maintain the unity and security of its lands. The summit also confirmed its support to Iraq's historical rights to sovereignty over Shat Al Arab. The summit supported delegating responsibility to the UN to purge Shat Al Arab and to maintain the safety of navigation through it.

The summit viewed with concern the tragedy of the prisoners of war that were not released and exchanged despite the end of military operations since August 20th, 1988. This is a violation of the articles contained in UN resolution 598 of 1987, and the third Geneva convention of 1948 pertaining to POW's. The summit called upon the UN and all international organizations and bodies to take all possible measures for releasing POW's and sending them back to their homelands and end their families' suffering immediately.

The summit praised the efforts of the UN Secretary General, and declared their support of these efforts that aim at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the conflict. This settlement will lead to stabilizing peace and security in the Arab Gulf.

The summit paid much attention and care to the issue of relieving Arab tension. It reiterated its conviction of the necessity of solidarity among Arab countries and disarding all differences. The summit confirmed that

collective Arab work is the only means to confront the threats and challenges that face the Arab nation. The summit welcomed the establishment of the Arab Cooperation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union along with the Gulf Cooperation Council. The summit sees these regional front-like gatherings as achieving the dreams of the past generations, and to aid the future generations in the struggle for development and prosperity.

The summit confirmed the member states' adherence to the institutional framework of the Arab League for collective Arab work. The Arab states will always adhere to the charter and goals of the League. The summit expressed confidence that the League and these gatherings will consolidate each other and that any gathering should be a motive for further collective work and for adapting the developments in the Arab world. The summit feels that there is a necessity to develop the administrative and structural components of the League, and to consider amending the charter. The amended charter should open new horizons and include a more comprehensive and enhanced role for the League in collective Arab work. The summit confirmed the necessity for all Arab media to be committed to ethical and national criteria and refrain from revilement and aggravating differences which is in accordance with the Arab Charter of Media Honor.

The summit reiterated its resolution to condemn US aggression against Libya, and to support Libya against the continuous threats to its security.

The summit expressed relief over the Namibian people's victory and the beginning of this march towards achieving national independence.

The summit confirmed its total support with the people of South Africa and condemned apartheid and the alliance between the Zionist entity and the racist Pretoria regime.

The summit reiterated its denunciation of all forms of terrorism, and confirmed the necessity to depend on legal means that were approved by international conventions. The summit confirmed adhering to the principles of justice and international legitimacy, for defending national interests and achieving all noble aims. ●

Lebanon's Dilemma

The political developments in Lebanon have pushed the conflict to a dangerous level. This issue has created a very complicated political situation, forcing the last Arab summit to take steps towards resolving the Lebanese crisis.

Despite intense efforts by the six-man Arab committee, which was entrusted by the Arab foreign ministers who met on January 12th, in Tunis, to bring about an end to the mad war in Lebanon, the political and military escalation has remained in the same cycle of violence and threatening the country with total destruction. Aoun's practices and deliberate military escalation caused the lack of progress in the efforts of the Arab League committee that was working to resolve the Lebanese crisis or at least to halt the bloodletting which has swept Lebanon since March 8, 1989. In an effort to revive a collapsed truce that was called on April 28, the committee arranged a ceasefire on May 11 after more than two months of relentless duels across Beirut. But the truce has been violated constantly, causing great frustration to all those who are looking toward rebuilding Lebanon on a non-sectarian basis.

The 14-year-old Lebanese civil war moved again to the forefront of the Arab attention when fighting broke out on March 8 between Aoun's troops and the nationalist forces. For the first time in the League's history, Lebanon's seat remained vacant after an Arab summit's meeting of foreign ministers failed to agree on who should represent that country in the summit. Arab leaders believe that inviting both Aoun and Hoss would only accentuate the sectarian split in Lebanon. However, a six-man committee headed by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah had agreed to invite them to Casablanca to present their cases at the summit.

Lebanon's crisis was subject of a heated debate which threatened to wreck the extraordinary Arab summit held in Casablanca, Morocco on May

23-26, 1989, and further fragment the Arab world. Underscoring frustration over the lack of progress in the debate, Kuwait resigned from its chairmanship of the six-man committee on Lebanon. A bitter confrontation between Syria and Iraq caused scenes of chaos over two days of the summit.

As a result, the summit continued for four days, longer than any previous summit in the Arab League's 44-year history. After intense efforts by Arab leaders, the summit named Morocco's King Hassan II, Saudi Arabia's King Fahed and Algerian President Chadli Ben Jedid to work out a settlement to the Lebanese crisis. The committee was given six months to work out a solution after the previous committee failed. The summit also expressed its willingness to convene after that to evaluate the situation and, if necessary, decide on the next steps.

THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE

Hassan's three-man committee was charged with taking the measures it sees fit with all concerned parties to invite the members of the Lebanese parliament to meet, if necessary outside Lebanon, in order to prepare a political reform document. This document would form the basis for national reconciliation. To ratify the political reform document, the Lebanese parliament would meet in Beirut as soon as possible. Following this ratification, the parliament would elect a president who would then form a government of national reconciliation. The committee would support the Lebanese national reconciliation government measures it deemed necessary to exercise full sovereignty over all Lebanese territory.

In its first meeting in Rabat, Morocco on June 4, the committee appealed, in a statement released by the Lebanese daily *Al Safir* on June 6, for a halt to «measures which increase inter-Lebanese divisions and make the daily life of Lebanese citizens even more painful.» The statement said that the

three leaders would aim «to help the Lebanese people restore life to all their constitutional institutions and introduce reforms in the Lebanese society... the necessary political reforms that would permit the Lebanese state to rally its people in a free, democratic and just framework.» They would try to «restore Arab Lebanon in its national unity, its independence, its full territorial integrity and to restore its authority over the whole of its national territory by its own forces «added the statement.

The second meeting in Wahran, Algeria on June 27, was devoted to evaluating the first round of contacts and consultations of the three foreign ministers and the Arab League's envoy who had been dispatched in a tour of Syria, Iraq and Lebanon in addition to the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council to solicit support for efforts aimed at solving the Lebanese crisis. In addition to reaffirming the previous points contained in the statement of their first meeting, they expressed their «deep appreciation to the support and high readiness to help» which they «received on the Arab and international levels.» In light of the «second decisive round» of the foreign ministers, «the members of the Lebanese parliament would be invited to meet outside Lebanon and in any place they would choose to discuss and prepare a document of the national reconciliation. ... cease-fire, lifting all blockades and re-opening the crossings linking East and West Beirut would be necessitated «before the meeting of the MP's outside Lebanon which will be an «introduction for the Lebanese parliament to meet in Lebanon,» said Wahran's statement. (Lebanese daily, *Al Nida*, June 29)

OBSTACLES FACING THE ARAB COMMITTEE

Following the political developments since the emergence of the three-man committee the Lebanese crisis has been provided with intense Arab care, more than any other time. It is noticeable

that the first round of contacts and consultations of the committee's representatives attained strong support throughout the world. Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze in a meeting with Morocco's Foreign Minister Abdel Latif Al Filali, pointed out that his country «fully supports the peace efforts by the committee,» and the priority is that Israel has to «stop interfering in the Lebanese affairs and to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.»

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas stated that France «confidently supports the committee's mission, adding his country's preparation to «support any useful step that can help in resolving the Lebanese crisis.» (Al Nida, June 29)

In a joint statement, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and President Francois Mitterrand of France appealed for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon and a cut-off of arms deliveries to Lebanese factions involved in the conflict. The statement said that both of them «are convinced that Lebanon must remain a sovereign, independent and united country with its territorial integrity respected.» It said they «called for an immediate cease-fire, rigorously respected as an in-

dispensable condition for the establishment of a constructive inter-Lebanese dialogue, aiming at national reconciliation and peaceful building of a country founded on a balance of the interests of all Lebanese communities.» (AP, July 6th,)

It was reported by *Al Safir* that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal that Britain supports the committee in its efforts «to reach a solution to the Lebanese crisis» as well as «achieving peace, independence and sovereignty.» (*Al Safir*, June 20)

In spite of the worldwide support to the top-level committee, it has been still facing many obstacles, first and foremost General Aoun who has constantly tried to torpedo every effort to get the Lebanon settlement out of its impasse. First of all, he was apparently disappointed because the summit's resolutions did not call openly for the withdrawal of Syria's troops from Lebanon. The resolutions of the Arab summit were fully supported by Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces. Acting Prime Minister Salim Hoss was quick to declare support to the summit's resolutions, «I welcome

the resolutions of the Arab summit and hope they will be implemented as soon as possible.» (AP, May 29)

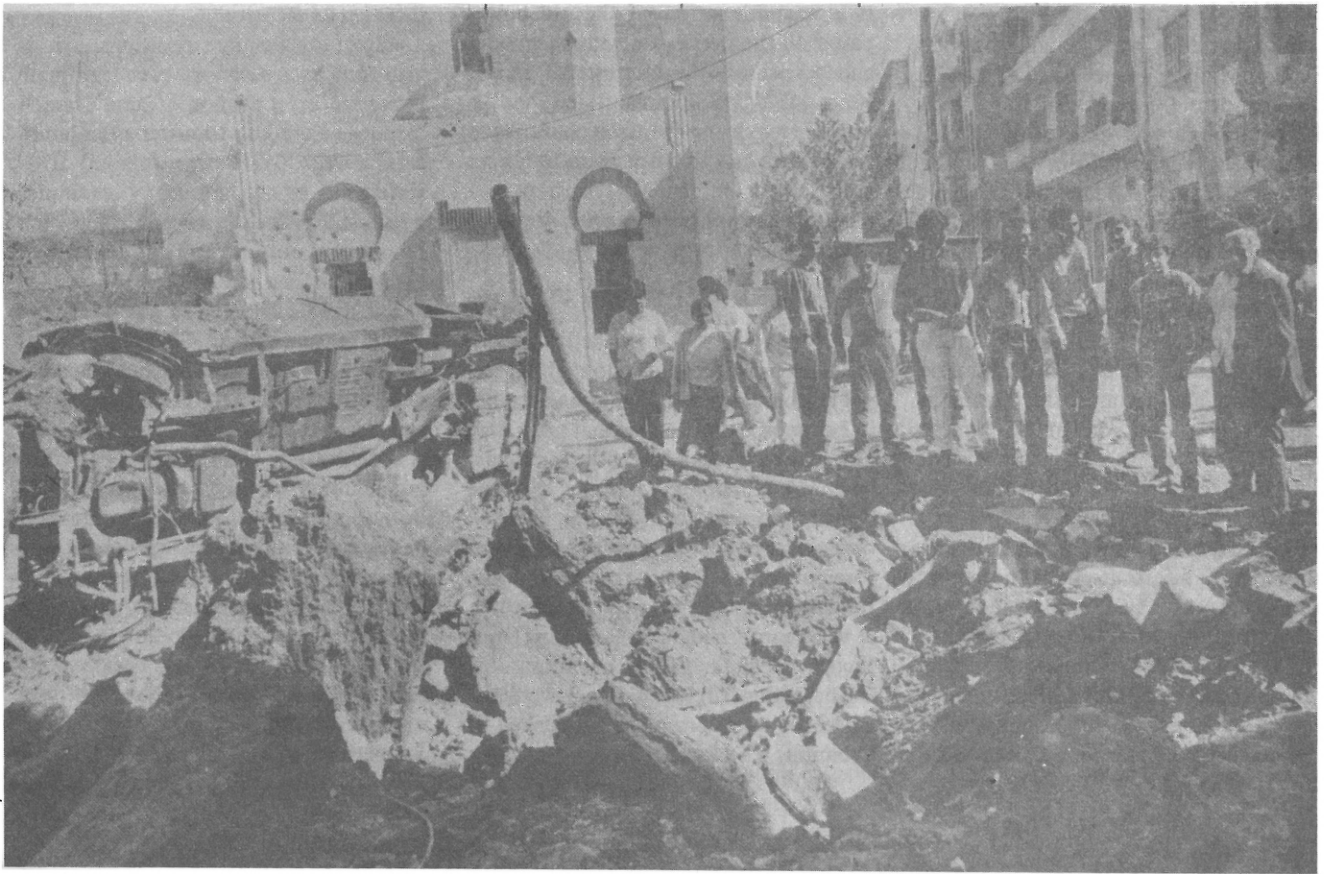
Therefore, Aoun constantly threatens further escalation saying that «roads leading to capitals of occupation (forces) will not be safe henceforth.» (AP, June 19)

His stubborn insistence of only lifting the blockades deliberately aims at foiling the Arab committee in order for it to change its role into a security committee as is the case of the previous six-man committee. Based on this, he wants the Arabs to take «the appropriate action to resolve the Lebanese crisis» or he will go to the UN to seek help. «We are determined to go to the end. I will take the necessary measures needed for independence. Maybe I will be compelled to fight,» said Aoun. (AP, May 24)

Instead of responding positively to the latest call of the three-man committee to invite Lebanese MP's to meet outside Lebanon, which was welcomed by the majority of the Lebanese people, Aoun refused under the pretext of the illegality of holding the meeting outside Lebanon.

It is obvious that he wouldn't have

Destruction in West Beirut.



gone further in escalating the situation militarily and politically, if it had not been for the encouragement he received from some Arab and non-Arab circles.

The confrontation between Syria and Iraq is another obstacle added to those facing the Arab committee. Iraqi Foreign Minister Tarik Aziz told reporters after a five-hour session in the summit: «We are still looking at the options. The main one is for total Syrian withdrawal. If that is not achieved there cannot be a solution.» (AP, May 26). After the Wahran meeting, the Iraqi News Agency reported that a statement delivered by Iraqi foreign ministry's spokesman said «if cutting off arms deliveries to Lebanon could help the three-man committee, Iraq would declare its full adherence to that.» However he stipulated «not to exploit these circumstances by the Syrian government and its allies... the committee has to move quickly to ensure a cease-fire, reopening crossings and lifting blockades.» The committee also has «to be firm towards any party impeding the steps needed to achieve peace and security in Lebanon, or trying to sabotage national reconciliation,» added the spokesman. (*Al Nahar*, July 3)

US ROLE

In a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, US President George Bush stated that the committee was «met with strong, enthusiastic support from the United States, as it tries to be helpful in bringing peace to Lebanon. That's something we're very much concerned about.» (AP, June 15)

The US government has now found it useful to pretend that it is very much concerned about the unsettled Lebanese crisis, and has declared that peace in Lebanon is a vital goal of US foreign policy. However, the falseness of US claims is revealed by the words and deeds of many US officials.

The advertised «strong, enthusiastic support» manifests itself in the recent statements of US ambassador to Lebanon John McCarthy saying that President Bush's administration was «discouraged by Syria's failure to enter into a dialogue with Aoun. The Syrians and certainly the Lebanese

Moslems should be holding dialogues with the general rather than criticizing him. One of our positions towards the Syrians has been that General Aoun certainly represents an important current of public opinion and political influence in Lebanon.» (AP, May 31)

It seems that the US administration has been disappointed by the outcome of the Arab summit, since the US hoped it would be an Arab siege aiming to isolate and weaken Syria and the nationalist forces. This dissatisfaction emerges as a result of the Arab emphasis on the priorities of reform, elections and withdrawals, and the necessity of the Israeli withdrawal as a precondition to resolving the Lebanese crisis. So directly or indirectly the US government encourages Aoun and the isolationist forces in escalating the situation and torpedoing the efforts of the three-man committee to resolve the crisis.

Pursuing its line in respect to Israel, the US government overlooks that it is thereby giving Tel Aviv a chance to continue its aggression and consolidate its hold on the occupied Lebanese territory. Washington apparently follows the traditional principle of its Middle East policy: What is good for Israel, is bound to be good for the United States. It is a continuation of the old policy based on the desire for Arab surrender and to protect the interests of Israel. From the US point-of-view, it is necessary to bring the Arab countries to their knees and to force them to accept a settlement on Israel's terms. Accordingly, Lebanon is a proper arena to achieve such an aim.

THE ISRAELI DESTRUCTIVE ROLE

Much has been said about the internal factors that led to the armed clashes in Lebanon. It is obvious that no matter how such internal contradictions exist in this Arab country, and not even the Syrian presence could lead to such tragic consequences, if there were not foreign forces that stood behind the Lebanese crisis, primarily Israel which is very concerned with escalating conflicts between factions in Lebanon.

The ruling circles in Israel were the biggest winners from the bloodshed in Lebanon. The facts that prove Israel's

fear of normalizing the situation in Lebanon are numerous.

While efforts are being exerted towards achieving stability in Lebanon, Israel starts to bombard Lebanese towns and Palestinian refugee camps in order to further escalate tensions and bring this country back to the tragic and sad situation that has prevailed since 1975. It is not mere chance that the constant Israeli attacks on June 1st and 2nd, against Lebanese and Palestinians in Lebanon coincide with the convening of the Arab summit and later taking decisions related to resolving the Lebanese crisis. Undoubtedly, Israel wants to dispatch a direct message in the form of Israeli planes, gun-boats and explosions of mortar fire. Then Israel will not permit the three-man committee to normalize the Lebanon situation without taking its (Israel's) interests into consideration. So it will carry on its ugly practices until the Arabs define two things. The first is connected with guaranteeing the security of «its northern borders» with Lebanon, the second is to force the Arab summit to recognize «Israel's vital interests» in Lebanon and to create an Arab conception which opposes total domination of nationalist and progressive forces because they will threaten its security.

«Syria knows our positions... it is also fully aware that we have legitimate interests in Lebanon,» said Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (*Al Safir*, June 3) This statement is one of many examples which shows the destructive role which Israel plays not only in Lebanon, but in the Middle East as a whole.

The role of Israel in the Lebanese events is quite clear. Therefore, what has to be done to stabilize the Lebanese situation and resolve its crisis is to put an end to the Israeli occupation which is a central problem due to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its essence the Palestinian cause. This complication has created an impression about the incapability of the Arab League to resolve the Lebanese crisis, since the three-man committee doesn't have the ability to force Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, although it does represent the maximum that the Arab League can do. ●

US Intervention in Panama

The US is once again flexing its muscles in Central America with a military beef-up of US troops in Panama. On May 11th President Bush announced that he was sending about 2,000 additional combat troops to Panama under the pretext of protecting American lives, after the US-backed opposition candidates Guillermo Endara, Guillermo Ricardo Ford and Arias Calderon failed to assume power after the May 7th national elections.

The elections were annulled by General Noriega on May 10th due to «the obstruction by foreigners and the lack of tally sheets» which resulted in the non-election of a president, two vice-presidents and the national assembly.

ELECTION INTERFERENCE

The US interfered in the sovereign elections in Panama using various means to ensure the election of the «right» slate. Firstly, President Bush instructed the CIA to fund the opposition candidates to the tune of \$10 million. Then, Bush sent a 13-member uninvited delegation of elected officials to Panama to «supervise.» After the elections the state department was referring to the opposition candidate, Guillermo Endara, as the president-elect of Panama.

WHY THE US WANTS NORIEGA OUT

There are two inter-related reasons why the US wants Noriega out and therefore beefed up its troops to approximately 12,000 in Panama. The first reason is because Noriega and the 15,000-strong national defense force he heads, challenge US imperialist interests concerning the Panama canal. Noriega has called for the over 10,000 US troops stationed in the canal zone to go and the implementation of the September 1977 Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal. These two treaties, which were signed by President Carter and General Omar Torrijos of Panama

and took effect in October 1979, maintain that Panama alone shall operate the canal and maintain military forces in Panama after 1999.

Additionally, until the year 2,000, the US will operate the canal through an independent federal agency appointed by the US president consisting of five Americans and four Panamanians. Presently, the administrator is an American and his deputy is a Panamanian but in January 1990 this will be reversed. This treaty also states that the only permissible purpose of US intervention is to keep the canal «open, secure and accessible» and that such intervention «shall never be directed against the territorial integrity or political independence of Panama.»

Reaganites objected to Carter's agreement with Torrijos thinking that the canal belongs to the US. Recently, Republican leader Newt Gingrich reiterated Reagan's line that the US would never cede the canal to Panama. Therefore, for over 18 months the US has embarked upon a campaign—overtly and covertly—to oust Noriega and put in his place someone who will ultimately be willing to change the terms of the canal treaties, since Noriega has been the key figure favoring the return of the canal to under its country's control. This waterway is extremely important to US interests because not only does it facilitate commercial shipping but more importantly it enables the US Navy to move its ships freely between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The second reason why the US wants Noriega out is because it needs a client government in place there to continue to operate freely their Southern Command base which is in charge of most US military operations in Central and South America and is headquartered there. This Command is imperialism's main military outpost in Central America and is essential to continue US-backed counter insurgency activities in El Salvador and elsewhere in the area. Therefore, with Noriega in power, the US sees the future of this base threatened.

SANCTIONS AGAINST PANAMA

The US over the past year and a half has implemented various sanctions against this country of 2.2 million in an effort to destabilize the country and oust Noriega. Among these efforts include economic sanctions which have been in place since late 1987. These sanctions include a freeze on the Panama canal revenues and on Panamanian assets in the US. As a result, Panama has suffered an economic crisis which has reduced output by 25%. Meanwhile, the US is also threatening to seize the General's assets in the US and Europe or impose additional sanctions like prohibiting trade between the US and Panama thereby squeezing the noose on Panama's economy and deepening Panama's economic crisis.

The US has also recalled its ambassador to Panama, Arthur Davis who left on May 15th. At the same time, it ordered all US citizens to move on to the US military bases. Last year, US courts indicted Noriega on drug trafficking charges in a Florida court trying to discredit him morally on the international level.

Other maneuvers include Bush's offering the carrot to the Panamanian people by saying that if Noriega were to step down from office then the relations with the US would improve dramatically and instantly.

The US has even gone so far as to give the green light to the Panamanian Defense Forces to overthrow Noriega. Bush said, «I would love to see them (PDF) get him out. He's one man and they have a well-trained force.» (International Herald-Tribune, May 18)

MILITARY BUILD—UP

Since unilateral sanctions have not worked, the US resorted to the military option. The over 10,000 US troops in Panama were put on a very high state of alert following the elections. Addi-

tionally, 890 troops were dispatched immediately from the 7th Light Infantry Division at Fort Ord, California, and arrived on May 12th while another group from the 5th Light Infantry Division from Fort Polk, Louisiana were sent. In total 1,700 soldiers and 165 marines of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force were dispatched.

US troops in Panama now just about equal the number of Panama's Defense Forces. Presently, American personnel are based at 10 military installations along the 50-mile long Panama Canal. These additional troops were sent under the pretext of protecting American lives, similar pretexts were given for the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic and the 1983 invasion of Granada to justify US intervention in an effort to protect US interests in the region.

OAS RESPONSE

On May 12, 31 representatives of the Organization of American States

(OAS) met to consider a request by Venezuela to discuss Panama in a special session to be held on May 17th. The US circulated a petition among the region's leaders prior to the May 17th meeting to condemn Noriega's annulment of the May 7th elections and call on him to relinquish power. The US also asked all Latin American countries to withdraw their ambassadors from Panama. Subsequently, Mexico recalled its ambassador, the first Latin American country to do so. One should take into account here the fact that the US funds two-thirds of the OAS budget, \$40 million yearly. The US has historically resorted to using its economic leverage whenever it sees fit.

On May 17th, the OAS met to discuss Panama's «serious crisis.» In this meeting they called for the «transference of power» in the quickest possible time. The OAS also condemned Noriega with the exception of Nicaragua.

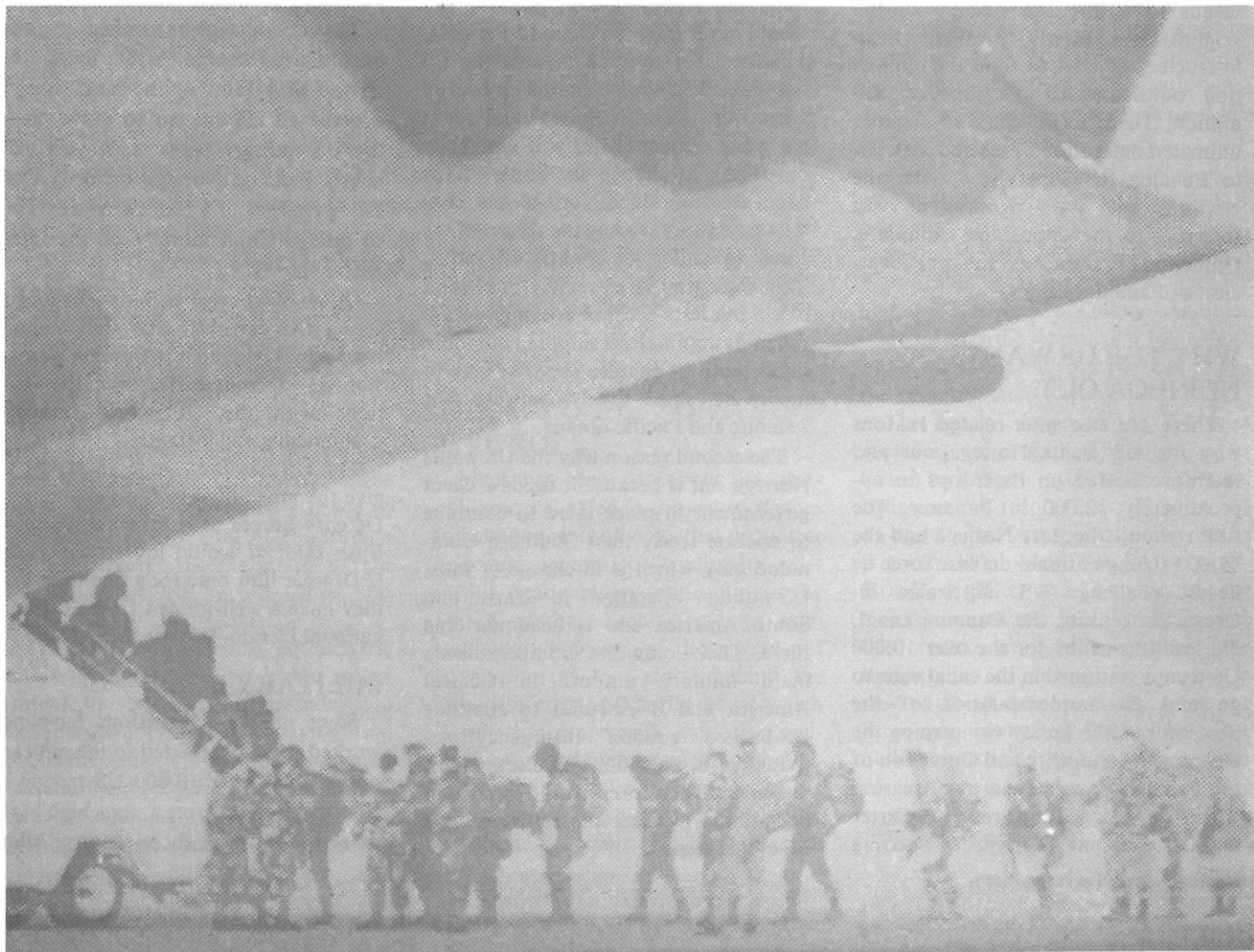
A delegation of three foreign

ministers and the Secretary-General Joao Baera Soares arrived in Panama on May 23rd to try to induce Noriega to step aside. Noriega responded by saying that the attitude of the OAS toward Panama is the result of US pressure and sets a dangerous precedent.

The Panamanian cabinet condemned the OAS accusing it of reverting to their traditional role of supporting North America.

US intervention in the internal affairs of any country is a violation of the sovereignty of said nation and therefore should be condemned. The principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Panama should be respected as stated in the Panama Canal treaties and dictated by international law. This deliberate violation of the Panama's sovereignty is Bush's attempt to forestall the transferring of the Panama Canal to its rightful owners. ●

US soldiers from Fort Ord, California as they leave for Panama.



NGO Meeting on Palestine

Linking support to the Palestinian intifada with work for a just peace in the Middle East was the keynote of the 6th UN North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, which was held June 21-23rd in the UN headquarters in New York. Representatives from many organizations in the US and Canada attended the symposium, along with a number of Palestinians from the occupied territories and Israeli peace activists.

coming period, linking the current situation of the Palestinian intifada and the PLO's peace initiative with the need for action, especially in the light of the increasing Israeli repression. She said, «We are challenged as never before. Time is running out. Mass deportations are possible. Starvation is possible. Genocide is even possible. But peace is possible too, if we will it enough to act effectively to make it happen.»

MOBILIZING SUPPORT

The symposium opened with a speech by the chairman of the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Then, Palestine's permanent observer at the UN read aloud a message from PLO Chairman and President of Palestine, Yasir Arafat, wherein he reaffirmed the PLO's commitment to the peace initiative adopted at the November 1988

PNC. The message also reiterated the PLO's refusal of Shamir's election plan, since democratic elections are impossible under occupation.

The next speaker was Jeanne Butterfield, chairperson of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. She took status of the NGO's work to date and outlined their tasks for the

There were two panel discussions at the symposium focusing on political issues related to NGO's goals and concrete work. The first centered on the topic, The Intifada: Creating a New Context for Peace. Three panelists contributed their viewpoints on this topic: the Rev. Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Melkite priest serving in the Galilee; Zahira Kamal, chairperson for the Federation of Women's Action ►



Committees (in the occupied territories); and Meir Amor, an Israeli of Moroccan origin who, under the impact of serving in the Israeli army in Lebanon in 1982, joined Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit), and subsequently refused to serve in the occupied territories in 1988. All three of these persons are involved in the field of education.

The second panel's topic was entitled: Convening the International Peace Conference in Accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 43/176: Implications for Israel and the US of the Proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian Peace Initiative and the Intifada. The panelists were Mahdi Abdul Hadi, founder of the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem; Margaret McCormack, political consultant and former congressional aide; and Mattityahu Peled, chairman of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

Discussions on these topics were supplemented by concrete, action-oriented workshops. The first day's workshops were on the overall theme of mobilizing public awareness in North America, addressing specific concerns such as:

- mobilizing support for Palestinian children as they are the particular victims of the Israeli occupation, both in terms of physical abuse and deprivation of education; this workshop stressed the need to work for permanent reopening of the schools;
- mobilizing support for Palestinian health services as one way of supporting the development of a Palestinian infrastructure leading to a future independent state;
- mobilizing support for victims of punitive violations of the 4th Geneva Convention, i.e., those who have suffered as a result of the Israeli policies of expulsion, house demolition, summary punishment, killing, etc; this workshop also focused on the situation of prisoners, torture and the unjust taxes levied on Palestinians under occupation;
- mobilizing concern for Palestinian workers and their conditions of work; this workshop emphasized the importance of establishing firmer relations between Palestinian and North

American union movements, intervening when Palestinian workers' rights are violated; it issued a condemnation of the Histadrut's discriminatory policies.

The above-mentioned workshops benefited from presentations by Palestinians involved in labor organizing and in the field of health in the occupied territories, namely Hani Mohd of the Progressive Trade Union Labor Front, and Dr. Umayeh Kamash of the Medical Relief Committees.

A special resolution was adopted at the symposium on the Israeli violation of the labor rights of Palestinians under occupation. Special note was taken of the policy recently introduced by Israeli Defense Minister Rabin, banning Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza from entering Israel without obtaining a special identity card which is refused to anyone with a record of political activity against the occupation, for this in effect denies the right to work in Israel to the majority of the West Bank and Gaza population. The resolution also noted the dehumanization involved in the Petah Tikva municipality's building of a fenced compound on the edge of Tel Aviv for confining Palestinian laborers who are seeking work.

The workshops on the second day of the symposium addressed questions related to coordinating action in North America for the purpose of organizing people-to-people campaigns, twinning projects and other means of increasing public awareness of the situation in the occupied territories.

CUT BACK US DOLLARS TO ISRAEL

On the background of these panels and workshops, the symposium ratified a declaration and plan of action which affirmed «the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with all relevant UN resolutions, including the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to establish an independent state under the leadership of the PLO, and the right of return,» and calling for an immediate end to the occupation. While affirming support to the intifada, the declaration called for an extraordinary session of the UN General Assembly to discuss

«the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory... and dispatch an interim international peacekeeping force to replace the Israeli occupying forces in order to provide protection and ensure respect for the human and political rights of the Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza.» The resolution expressed special concern about «the role that racism, both de facto and de jure, plays in the situation and treatment of Palestinians inside and outside the 1967 occupied territory. We are particularly alarmed at the recently uncovered Israeli Ministry of Interior document directing the implementation of the 1986 (Markowitz) government commission report which calls for the eradication of tens of so-called 'unregistered' Palestinian villages within the green line.»

Two political campaigns stand out from among the various forms of action decided upon by the NGOs. The first is entitled Peace in Palestine and Israel in 1989. It involves gathering a quarter of a million signatures to be presented to the US Congress and White House on November 15th, calling on the US to recognize the PLO and the State of Palestine, the convention of an international peace conference and immediate steps to end the occupation.

The second campaign is by its nature more long-term. It is a project aimed at having the US government reduce aid to Israel by an amount equal to the sum expended by Israel to:

- maintain the belligerent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including East Jerusalem;
- maintain and expand settlements;
- violate Palestinians' human rights;
- maintain Ansar III;
- develop and stockpile an unmonitored nuclear arsenal; and
- provide military and financial aid to anti-democratic states, specifically South Africa, Chile, Haiti, Guatemala.

The idea of this campaign is first to embark on research and education that makes it clear to the US public how the US funds the occupation and also the link between US foreign aid and the decreased funding to domestic social programs. Subsequently, Congress will be lobbied to reduce aid to Israel in accordance with the above-listed criteria. ●

Palestinian Women

at the Core of the National Struggle

This essay by Dr. Faysal Darraj addresses theoretical and practical questions about the liberation of Palestinian women, in the light of the outstanding role played by women in the intifada.

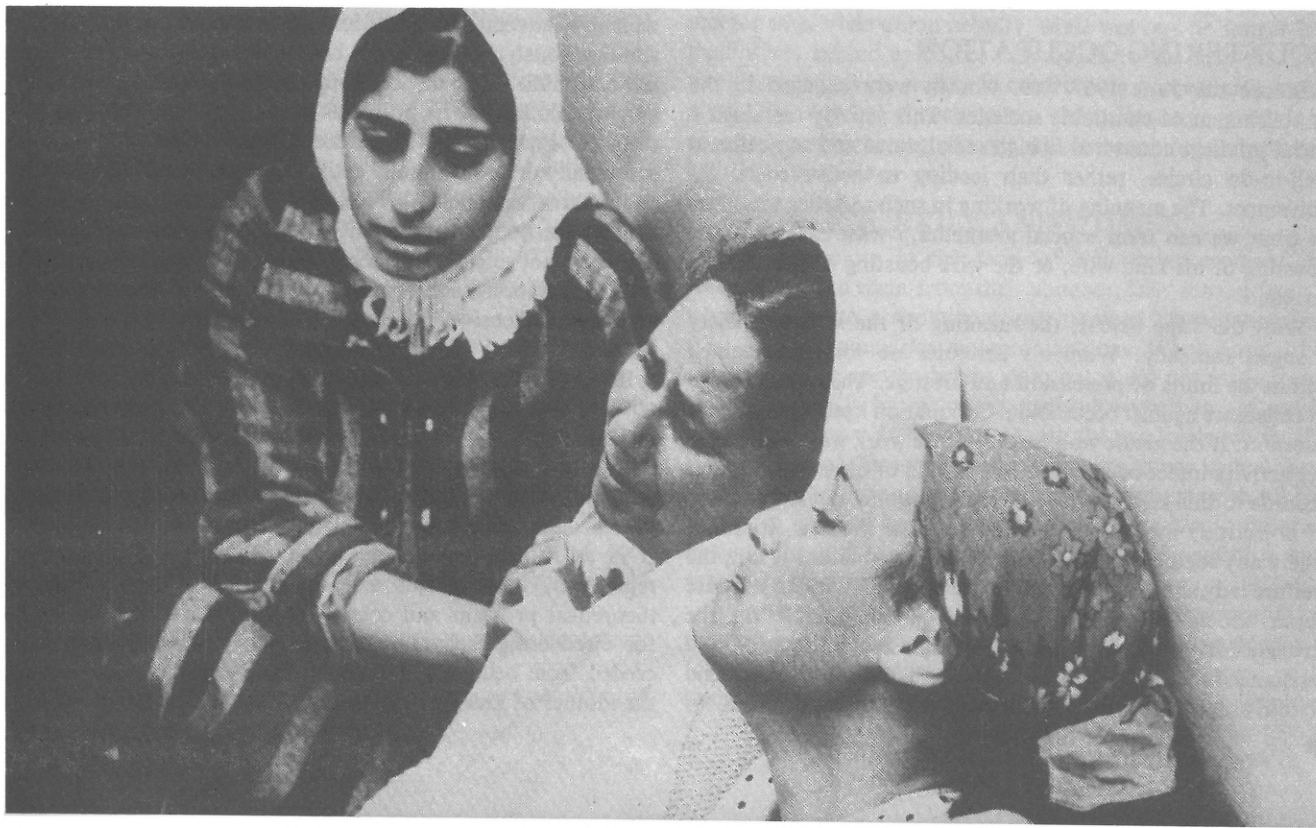
By many criteria, Palestinian women emerge as militant fighters and mothers of generations of both militants and martyrs. Each woman is a human monument evoking pride as well as sorrow. While remaining a staunch fighter, she is equally the mother of a lad martyred before he reaches twenty, the sister of a fedai whose body is torn by enemy bullets at dawn, the daughter of yet another fedai who departed for the occupied homeland and has yet to return, the comrade of a youth who has never tasted the pleasures of childhood.

The Palestinian woman is a mixture of the splendor of dignity and the bitterness of grief. No comparison can be made between her and the traditional woman who starts life openly admitting that she is helpless. While some consider the emancipation of women as a luxury or a pastime with little significance, history has plucked the Palestinian woman from her traditional bed and inherited functions, to throw her into the furnace of the struggle for big dreams stemming from the usurped homeland, or small dreams relating to providing bread for her family, or waiting for her husband to return safely from battle.

The Palestinian woman was born into a gloomy and unjust history; she was destined to write an epic full of blood, tears and suffering. More than a century of struggle and oppression

has given the Palestinian woman the strength to withstand the martyrdom of the child she brought up on a pittance, to rebuild her shanty in the camp time after time. It has created the great woman of the intifada, a woman who, armed with a stone, walks in the martyr's funeral, visits her imprisoned son, upholds the flag of Palestine, cradles her cheeks in anguish, ploughs the land, reads the daily newspaper, kneads the dough and discusses daily matters. She knows the qualities of the kings and the presidents, together with the language of the enemy. With her traditional gown and distinct dialect, that barefooted woman looks much more beautiful than those who wear uniforms; she is richer than all the kings who have by chance obtained a handful of silver from the sand; she is wiser than all those who never speak without first mentioning their academic titles.

In the course of her life, the Palestinian woman has experienced her transformation in a number of localities: in the refugee camp, in the Palestinian resistance movement, and in the anti-occupation movement in the occupied territories. The question now is this: If we put aside the miserable period of the refugee camp, is it then possible to talk about the women under occupation and the women of the Palestinian political



organizations created by the resistance outside Palestine, in the same language?

While searching for an answer, we will briefly refer to a few points: Firstly, the general condition of life has pushed the Palestinian woman from her traditional position into a new one. Secondly, the Palestinian resistance in exile established a series of women's organizations, but administrative measures and overly general slogans did not invariably lead women to more advanced positions. This is aside from the fact that the bureaucracy, in accordance with its mentality, has often hindered women's initiative and impeded their progress. In this sense, the active process of both Palestinian women and men was too large for the bureaucratic limits of the existing organizations, with the exception of some attempts made by the left wing.

Due to their particularity and the varied forms of the Palestinian political organizations' struggle, the women's struggles in the occupied territories were more fruitful and thorough. This enabled women to be more obviously present in the overall national struggle and to take effective initiatives. The difference between the status of women in occupied Palestine and those in exile confronts them with a new issue: fighting for a moral and political reform in the PLO institutions in order to overcome the conditions which prevent them from undertaking their real role, and to obtain representation equal to their practical contribution to the overall national struggle.

Developing the women's status in the overall national struggle requires two forms of struggle: firstly, against the occupying enemy, uniting the struggle for the emancipation of the land and the woman; secondly, against the traditional view of the woman as weak and only suited for simple tasks and evening pastimes. This struggle is necessary because no view which is void of full respect for women will ever find the path to the homeland.

COUNTERING OCCUPATION

Before the June 1967 war, women were engaged in the establishment of charitable societies. This activity remained a social privilege connected to high social status and some liberal well-to-do circles, rather than leading to active social involvement. The meaning of working in such societies was close to what we can term «social aesthetics,» with each husband boasting of his kind wife, or the wife boasting of her famous husband.

With the June defeat, the meaning of the welfare society changed radically. Women's activities no longer remained within the limits of pretension and prestige. They became acts of resistance against occupation. Occupation itself raised a new question: If the gentle woman of welfare work was to continue her activity under occupation, she should of necessity alter her attitude to this activity - not by her will alone, but in the sense of objectively meeting the requirements of the new situation, where any social action is a rejection of occupation. If not, the welfare lady should give up her place to others who do not care about «social aesthetics» and instead concentrate on the struggle for the national cause. In this sense, occupation and resistance to it have been reformulating the structures of social action, as well as the intellectual state of the forces involved.

The consciousness which evolves in the comprehensive daily conflict between the Palestinians and Zionists affects the society as a whole, including women and their societies. Before occupation, these societies, in their traditional form, carried out a series of welfare, cultural and educational activities. Under occupation, however, the political element became the dominant factor in all women's activities. It is essential to stress that the replacement of the moral by the political was not the result of any voluntary or organizational action, but rather an objective reflection of the new situation. Based on the new situation, women began to play a significant if not leading role in the national arena.

There is no doubt that the Palestinian women's movement was formed within the same historical context as the Palestinian national movement. The two are inseparably interlinked. The trends in the Palestinian women's movement were formed within the trends and conflicts of the Palestinian national movement. Palestinian women never started their women's activities in order to afterwards join a particular political current; not did they join a particular political organization in order to later go over to the field of women's activities. They would rather make their choice and approach the political organization which expressed their interests in its daily struggle.

In this sense, the political choice of women was not only subject to class interests and general ideological attitudes, but also to their own aims as women, their quest for emancipation and open recognition that they are equal human beings capable of independent, creative activity. This is what renders the Palestinian women's movement, theoretically and perhaps also in practice, too big for the existing political organizations, because women do not aspire to an organization that speaks of women's liberation in general. Rather, they aspire to an attitude that is cognizant of the particularity of the woman's situation in society. It is this which motivates the Palestinian women's movement both within and outside the organizations simultaneously. It is in them because of unity of action and national aims. It is out of them because it does not see any correct solution for its problems in the programs and practice of these organizations. Therefore, it is no wonder that women are usually organizationally active between 18 and 25 years of age. Thereafter, their role recedes and is consequently reduced to their personal and family lives. This reduction, to whatever degree, is not solely due to the ordinary problems of marriage, family, traditions, etc. It is also due to the absence of correct and comprehensive programs dealing with the status of women.

In this connection, the researcher faces a simple or compound paradox with two aspects: First, finding a formula that satisfies the needs of women is extremely difficult; second, Palestinian women do play a leading role in the national struggle. This role is not dependent on the role of the organizations, but is essentially due to the state of occupation. It is as if this occupation, being organized, multi-faceted repression, has without any desire on its part solved a theoretical problem and created for women ideal conditions for discovering their capacities. In this way, they have proceeded from being a plaything, cook, «tender unequal half,» the mother of kids, etc., to being women confronting occupa-

tion, deriding imprisonment, carrying arms, getting involved in underground activities, etc. Paradoxically, occupation, which is evil rather than good, has enabled women to emerge from secluded chambers into the streets of struggle and confrontation. It is no wonder that in 1976, there were more than 38 women's societies in the West Bank alone. Certainly, the role of these societies was not to struggle only for women's rights, but to preserve the unity of the society and restore its weak links.

The woman's role was seen in many fields, such as medical care, fostering orphans, fighting illiteracy, helping poor families, safeguarding traditions, assisting prisoners' families, together with militant action in the direct sense. This multi-dimensional activity played an essential role in preventing the Israeli attempts to undermine the Palestinian social and cultural structure. One particular association, the Society for the Preservation of the Family in El Bireh, which was established before the 1967 occupation and continued thereafter, should be referred to here. This society concentrated on providing opportunities for women to work, to enable them to become self-reliant. While maintaining the vestiges of the past, such societies acquired new qualities through the state of occupation. Out of their interaction, a number of progressive women's institutions have emerged since 1978, pointing to the establishment of mass organizations oriented towards a radical solution for both the national and women's questions. The first activity of these institutions was to study the situation of women factory workers.

The Women's Work Committee, founded in Ramallah in 1978, was different in both structure and ideology from the previous welfare societies. It relied on direct effectiveness rather than on formal frameworks; hence the absence of both a center and a traditional membership. It was, moreover, opposed to the concepts of center and bureaucratic organization, instead releasing the freedom of initiative in action throughout the villages, camps and factories. Thanks to the advantages of self-initiative, the membership of the women's committees multiplied and spread to different places. Moreover, the absence of a formal framework helped to avoid direct Israeli censorship. Yet the essential factor in these bodies' success lay in their realistic policies which were based on the daily needs of the people. They were not bound by central directives, but respected the attitudes and wishes of the masses. Because of a high sense of responsibility and a democratic spirit, the influence of these committees went beyond class boundaries, reaching different types and groups of people.

While the previous women's organizations proceeded from voluntarism and abstract notions, the Palestinian Women's Committees, formed in 1980, worked to involve people via their daily interests which are inseparable from their national aspirations; this lent a high degree of credibility to their slogans. It should be stressed here that the use of such methods was only possible thanks to the positive qualities of the leadership of these committees, who possessed an advanced consciousness and a high scientific and cultural level, and were in touch with the ordinary people.

These committees formulated their national and ideological aims based on real knowledge of reality. The situation of Palestinian women has clearly been affected by the differing

conditions in the occupied homeland on the one hand, and in the various places of exile on the other. While the resistance movement, with its policies and ideology, defined the status of women in pre-determined parameters, the conditions under occupation provided women with a broad scope and a greater perspective in terms of united national action. This was also due to the absence of irresponsible organizational rivalry. Conditions under occupation accentuated the fact that there was a clear battle between a militant people and an aggressive occupation.

Another essential consideration is that occupation has led to the destruction of a great portion of the original social and economic structure of the Palestinian people. Previously, agriculture was the main economic field, while industry was limited. The occupation came to destroy the Palestinian agriculture, confiscating land and crops. Rural Palestinian women were obliged to go to the cities where the Israeli factories were ready to absorb them. Women thus entered the factory as «black labor» to suffer from multi-dimensional oppression: national oppression, capitalist exploitation and racial discrimination. Today, it is possible to speak of the Palestinian woman worker. In this connection, the category of labor acquires great significance; its meaning is not reduced to the relationship between product, surplus value and employer. It is manifest in the restructuring of consciousness and of personality. This takes women away from the traditional sphere, language and standards, to throw them into an arena of significance.

Here women were obliged to unite the economic and national aspects of their struggle. Gradually they freed themselves from their narrow consciousness which focused on a few abstract notions, such as honor, chastity, etc. They advanced towards a comprehensive struggle, entitled to reformulate their personalities as militant women and experienced workers. A new stage began where political organization merges with trade union activity. Male workers no longer left their wives behind at home; they began to see them at both work and strikes, as well as in confronting oppression and exploitation. Ancient consciousness was collapsing, giving way to a new consciousness without which the intifada would not have been possible.

RESISTANCE, EXILE AND WOMEN

Throwing water in the faces of Palestinian women, the resistance woke them from their slumber; they moved from a negative state to a situation which retained the negative factors, but with some positive modifications. When noting this awakening, we see the bright side, but it did not lead to real emancipation. It by no means enabled women to act rather than merely react. In the gap between the two levels, we see the negative side of this issue. At the beginning things looked easy. The very emergence of the resistance movement with all the battles it fought, its victories as well as its tragic failures, brought the revival of the Palestinian national identity, a very great achievement in which women share.

As we move on, the picture is less clear. Doing research on the status of women in the Palestinian national struggle means looking into the totality of the political and ideological practices through which it has been waged. Consequently, we move

from the beautiful picture of a woman upholding the banner and chanting songs of victory, to a cold climate saturated with ideology, bureaucracy, voluntarism, political consciousness lagging behind ideological consciousness, etc. Here we have to make a clear distinction between the national will and bureaucratic administration on the one hand, and the objective effects of national action which supercede both will and administration on the other.

The Palestinian national movement has occupied the political stage in the Arab world for more than two decades. It has experienced massacres, martyrs, sieges, famines, bombardments, assassinations, etc. It was enough to stir Palestinians, men and women, educated and illiterate, rural and urban, and draw them into the movement which is a mixture of war, maneuvers, attack, waiting, etc. From the moment of her birth, the Palestinian woman understood that the camps were not the roots of Palestine, and the tents were no more than passing phenomena.

The movement brought about undeniable objective changes which advanced or retreated in various ideological orbits. The gap between the sphere of the movement and its ideology was sometimes reminiscent of Balzac who was himself reactionary but wrote progressive novels. The Palestinian organizations upheld many slogans, ranging from left to right. Women too had a place in these slogans. Yet the problem here is not the raising of slogans, but implementing them. When it came to that, not all were progressive. Women were present in all the organizations, but they did not all move out of their traditional positions.

From the conservative camp, we often heard: Women are here to liberate the homeland, not to emancipate themselves. The positive aspect is clear in the first phrase in that women are accepted as integral parts of the organization and as individual fighters in the struggle. But the negative aspect stands out when the leader draws a line between human emancipation and the liberation of the homeland, as if the latter were possi-

ble without the former. The real problem here lies in the emancipation of the conservative leader from his traditional ideology which recognizes only the traditional woman. The researcher can also find another false motto: Women are half of the society. Although those who follow such a notion do recognize that women have a role, they reduce it to a quantitative role; they perceive women's labor without perceiving them; they recognize women only for utilitarian purposes.

The gap between the political consciousness of the militant fighter for the homeland, and the ideological consciousness which views the struggle only in terms of traditional standards, is only one of the obstacles to women's emancipation. There are other objective hindrances that compound the first. Here we see the contradiction anew, as well as the complexity of the situation of the Palestinians. Being bound to the family may seem a negative phenomenon according to sound logic, but it seems to be positive in the Palestinian case, because the absence of a homeland, together with the exile mentality and the various atrocities experienced, often mean that the family serves as a small homeland. Yet, this positive aspect itself is equivocal. Correct revolutionary logic always tends to break down all narrow relations. Facing this problem, the attitude of the resistance has been equivocal and diffuse. The left has tried to find theoretically progressive and unfettered formulae, while the right has continued to emphasize tribal and communal allegiances, supporting family ties and narrow individualism. In this way, it has contributed to the preservation of traditional values so that women would remain reproductive machines in spite of the fact that they have taken up arms.

Another contradiction is perceivable: The resistance has tried to preserve the traditions of Palestine. But instead of updating these traditions, it has time and time again tended to consecrate the past. This leaves women as peasants plunged in hard work day and night, while remaining traditional. Here I would venture to say: While revolution in the true sense approaches the future, the unforeseeable and what is new, the



dominant Palestinian orientation is towards the past, because it considers the lost past sacred. How can tradition be part of a future discourse? This question has no answer so far.

In this context, at a stage where the political and ideological balance of power favored the conservative forces, the General Union of Palestinian Women emerged. It had to be affected by the times, especially by this balance of forces. It could only be a bureaucratic body without autonomy. Although it was supposed to be a mass organization, all of its membership, both leadership and base, belonged to certain party organizations, depriving it of the chance to be a mass organization and rendering it the expression of a socio-administrative elite closely related to the leading political elite.

Bureaucratic mentality affects not only people working at offices, but goes further to impose the mentality of hierarchy, putting some above others for subjective considerations. The bureaucratic logic leaves no room for real emancipation of women. Such logic has affected the function of women in the resistance movement where she has remained on the periphery without taking up any important role in politics or administration, except in a few cases. This phenomenon points to the traditional concept of women which has remained dominant.

The resistance movement assigned women to a role beyond their traditional domestic role. Women became militants, taking part in military training as well as operations from time to time, taking jobs at offices and carrying out informational functions. Moreover, the resistance pervaded daily life, especially in the camps of Lebanon. Men and women divided their time between the small family and the bigger one, i.e., the movement. Thus, logically, women should have become equal to men in all fields, but at the practical level, things were different, not only because of the dominant ideological orientation, but also because of bureaucratism which is based on routine rather than creative development.

FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY UNIFICATION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN

The «exterior» and «interior» (referring to inside and outside of Palestine), were common terms in the resistance. Consciously or unconsciously, the intifada dropped this division to declare that the people are one in spite of many political and ideological differences. Since this integration is determined by a great event, it is necessary to look for the means of making this unity continuous and dynamic. Women have a big role in this unity which is bound to cancel the existing qualitative difference between the categories of exile and homeland.

Women involved in the resistance have usually ended up with their defined role in their political organizations; the particularity of the women's status was completely absorbed into the overall national - political struggle. Due to the prevailing organizational rivalry, relations among the different women's organizations were not governed by a mentality of dialogue and uniting efforts. Instead, they too were governed by the mentality of rivalry, weakening their role and influence. Women's struggle was based on a categorical motto that was subjective rather than objective: Measure all things exclusively from the point of view of the concerned organization. Although organizational discipline is a positive quality, the

spirit of competition has affected women's activities negatively. Palestinian women under occupation have concentrated on fighting the visible enemy, the women of the resistance have concentrated on their respective organizations fighting the enemy. Between the two mentalities exists a wide gap.

Over and above that, while women under occupation defend their dignity and that of the homeland, some organizations, the right-wing ones in particular, have reduced women's relation to the struggle to a socioeconomic one; thus the organization becomes a political and economic affiliation. Between the two, there is a clear distinction and a wide gap.

The Israeli occupation has destroyed the traditional social structure, especially at the economic level, and pushed women into the labor market. The resistance movement, on the other hand, especially in the camps of Lebanon, has had a significant effect on the social structure, especially at the economic level. It has pushed women into organizations to earn their living. This often happened without even minimal ideological education.

All the above-mentioned factors, as well as many others, necessitate the unification of women's efforts, especially after the political unification of the homeland and the diaspora, to wage a new continuous struggle for a comprehensive moral reform in the Palestinian resistance movement. Palestinian women, who are in the frontline of the struggle against the enemy, should occupy the leading position they deserve in all the national political activities. This call may appear feminist in the eyes of conservative-minded people, but it is the true expression of the reality and the revolution, because Palestinian women remain the excellent representatives of a heroic fighting people. Palestinian women have scored many successes in their striving for liberation, in the course of fighting both in exile and under occupation. However, the culmination of this emancipatory process with the full liberation of the Palestinian women is conditioned upon ousting all leading Palestinian personnel who see women as unequal creatures. ●



PFLP Congress Documents Available

Now available from the PFLP Central Information Department are reprints of:

*Political Report of the PFLP's
Fourth Congress. 269 pages*

*Tasks of the New Stage: The
Political Report of the PFLP's
Third National Congress,
131 pages*

Political Report of the PFLP's 4th Congress



Tasks of the New Stage

The Political Report of the
PFLP's Third National Congress



Each book is \$5(US), plus \$1 for handling and shipping. Order now by writing to *Democratic Palestine's* correspondence address, stating which book (s) you want. Deposit the payment in our account (see inside cover) and mark your deposit: For book (s). Please inform us of the date you made the payment so we can confirm it.