



DEMOCRATIC

No. 7

PALESTINE

Dec. 1984

Interview with
Comrade
Hawi
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PLO - What Next





Democratic Palestine is an English language magazine published by the PFLP. It replaces the *PFLP Bulletin*, which was published monthly from March 1979, until the 1982 Zionist invasion of Lebanon (issues no. 25-62) and bimonthly through November 1983 (no. 63-69).

By changing the name we wish to signal our intent to engage a broader section of progressive forces around the world in dialogue and relations of mutual solidarity that will strengthen the struggle for a democratic Palestine in the context of the global struggle against imperialism and its allies.

Democratic Palestine is published with the following aims:

- conveying the political line of the PFLP and other progressive Palestinian and Arab forces;
- providing current information and analysis pertinent to the Palestinian liberation struggle, as well as developments on the Arab and international levels;
- serving as a forum and instrument 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, please fill out the subscription blank, enclose a check or money order for \$ 24, and mail to: Democratic Palestine, Pox 12144, Damascus, Syria.

We are eager to exchange *Democratic Palestine* with other publications on the Middle East and/or anti-imperialist issues in general. Please send your publication to our post box, and you will automatically receive *Democratic Palestine*. Exchange agreements established for the *PFLP Bulletin* will continue to be honored.

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

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

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

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

**On December 11th,
the PFLP marks
the 17th anniversary
of its establishment.**



PFLP
17th Anniversary

**The Struggle Goes on
Victory to the PLO!**



**النصر لمنظمة التحرير
والثورة المستمرة**

Letters

Peace Council of the
German Democratic
Republic

October 30, 1984

To the editor of *Democratic Palestine*:

Many thanks for sending nos. 4 and 5 of your magazine...We have read them with great interest.

The GDR Peace Council is closely following the events in the Near and Middle East. US imperialism, together with its reactionary accomplices, seeks to stop the wheel of history and to impose a solution of the conflict in this region which serves its interest, the same as it does in other regions of the world.

Affirming time and again their «strategic alliance», the USA and Israel imperil peace and security of the peoples in the Middle East.

We consistently advocate a political solution of the whole problem. To this end we welcome the Middle East initiative taken by the Soviet Union in July 1984 which we believe to be the only practicable way to a just and lasting peace in this region. Reality has given a clear proof: All attempts to solve the Middle East problem by imposing on the Arab states separate agreements with Israel reached a deadlock or brought about an escalation of the conflict. Therefore we support the Soviet proposal to seek a lasting solution through collective efforts with the participation of all interested parties.

The GDR Peace Council will continue its solidarity with all peace-loving and patriotic forces who work for a peaceful, just and lasting solution of the problem in your region.

May we ask you to continue sending your magazine and possibly other material published by your organization. Such information is very important for a better understanding and for explaining to our counterparts the heroic struggle waged by your people. The GDR Peace Council for its part takes the liberty of sending you regularly its publications.

Yours sincerely,

Vice-President
Gerhard Lindner

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September 25, 1984

CEDIP - Center of
Documentation and
Initiative for Peace,
Sicily

Dear friends,

We are sorry to answer so late to your letter which we found in the archive of the Catania Peace Committee...

As you know, 16 GLCMs are already operational in Comiso. Anyway we have not yet lost our hope to stop the process of militarization in Sicily, which supports the imperialist interests of the US and European trusts and governments, in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

In 1984 CEDIP has produced a slideshow and a booklet, both available in English, on the «Mediterranean theatre» and the NATO «Southern Front», which have been presented at the 3rd European Nuclear Disarmament Convention (Perugia, Italy, July 17-21, 1984) and at the international meeting «For a Mediterranean Sea of Peace» (Comiso-Adelfia Evangelical Youth Centre, July 27-29, 1984). We also participated in the organization of the second initiative.

As you see, our awareness of the Mediterranean «deadly connection» is growing. We would be very happy to receive your magazine.

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Editorial

For A Unifying PNC

The meeting in Amman, which was termed the 17th session of the PNC, started on November 22nd and ended its work on the 29th. It was boycotted by the majority of the Palestinian organizations and by a good number of national personalities.

The reasons for this boycott were clearly and openly stated by the Democratic Alliance (PFLP, DFLP, PCP, PLF). The Democratic Alliance refused to attend for two main reasons: The timing of the meeting and the place. The Democratic Alliance asked the Central Committee of Fatah to postpone the meeting in order to have more time for further efforts to bring all the Palestinian organizations into a comprehensive national dialogue. This dialogue was supposed to result in an agreement concerning the political and organizational programs to be presented at a later PNC. This, of course, did not take place.

As for the place, the Democratic Alliance considered Amman a dangerous choice because of the political connotations involved. The Jordanian regime has done its best over the past years to obtain a mandate from the PLO and Arab summits to negotiate the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with the USA and 'Israel'. The Jordanian regime has made it plain that it considers UN Security Council resolution 242 and the Reagan plan as a suitable basis for such negotiations. The PLO, for its part, had previously rejected both.

The Democratic Alliance expressed its concern about holding the meeting in Amman for these political reasons.

In any case, the meeting which took place in Amman lost its political and organizational legality in the moment it was boycotted by the majority of the organizations, for this violated the basic principle upon which the PLO was established, i.e. the principle of a broad coalition of all the political representatives of the various social strata of the Palestinian people.

Moreover, the process whereby a quorum was achieved in Amman further underlined the illegality of the meeting. As of the 16th session, the PNC had 384 members, of whom six had died since the last session, leaving 378. The two-thirds majority required as a quorum was thus 252 members in attendance, with less than 127 absent. However, 168 members of the PNC did not attend the meeting in Amman. For the purpose of mustering a quorum in Amman, 47 members were changed in mathematical juggling contrary to the rules and regulations of the PNC.

Dangerous results

The results announced in Amman showed how very justified the concern and fears of the Democratic Alliance were. In

fact, the results ring the bell of danger that the PLO might be led astray by the new Egyptian-Jordanian alliance.

The meeting, although rejecting the Camp David agreements, opened the door wide for contacts and relations with the Egyptian regime. At the same time, the meeting of Amman decided to have «special» relations with the Jordanian regime. The proposals of King Hussein, presented in the speech he delivered at the opening session, were neither rejected nor accepted, but referred to the Executive Committee for study.

These three issues indicate that the Fatah leadership has in mind to go ahead with a new political move together with the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes, aimed at paving the way for negotiations on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

What next?

The meeting in Amman is not «the end of the world». This is what Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, said in his recorded message to the Palestinian people. The *de facto* which the Central Committee of Fatah is trying to force on the rest of the Palestinian organizations will not last long. The PFLP has already announced the outline of its plan of action for the near future:

The first point in this plan is quite important because it stresses the determination of the PFLP, and its allies in the Democratic Alliance, not to support, facilitate or participate in any effort to create parallel institutions to those of the PLO.

The second point is that the PFLP will put all its efforts into strengthening the alliance between the organizations of the Democratic Alliance, and will work to broaden the Democratic Alliance by inviting nationalist figures to join.

The third point is that the Democratic Alliance will work to pave the way for a comprehensive Palestinian national dialogue that will lead to a unifying PNC as soon as possible.

In summary, the democratic forces that boycotted the meeting in Amman will not accept the results of that meeting, but at the same time will not create a parallel PLO in any form. Rather, the democratic forces will continue the dialogue with the Central Committee of Fatah and with the National Alliance (Fatah opposition, Saiqa, PFLP-General Command, Popular Struggle Front) to prepare for a unifying PNC.

How things will go in the immediate future is very difficult to foresee, because the efforts of the Democratic Alliance will not be exerted in a static situation. Yet we can be sure of one thing: The coming months will be quite decisive for the future of the PLO.

Our efforts continue to have subscriptions pay a reasonable share of the production expenses of *Democratic Palestine*. Please help us in this endeavor by sending the subscription fee of US \$ 24 for 12 issues by check to Democratic Palestine, Box 12144, Damascus, Syria. If possible, leave the line denoting receiver blank on your check. We hereby express our great appreciation of those who have paid their subscription, and urge others to do the same as soon as possible.

Joint Communiqué

On the 25th of November, 1984, the Palestinian Democratic Alliance held a high-level meeting with the participation of all its parties. The meeting discussing the issues on its agenda took the following decisions:

1- The Democratic Alliance emphasizes its absolute rejection of the political initiative proposed by King Hussein. This initiative bears serious dangers to the PLO's being the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and to the rights to return, self-determination and independent Palestinian national state. The Democratic Alliance calls upon all the Palestinian national forces and elements inside and outside the occupied homeland to express their rejection of this initiative. It also appeals to everyone who honors high national interests, including those participating in the Amman meeting, to stand against this initiative and to prevent its endorsement. This can be achieved by emphasizing commitment to the Aden-Algiers agreement supported by broadest Palestinian masses.

2- The meeting appreciates highly the results of the Democratic Alliance delegation's recent visit to Moscow and the meetings held with comrades in the Central Committee of the CPSU. The visit, especially in the context of the current complicated situation, reemphasizes Soviet Union's concern for the unity of the Democratic Alliance parties on the basis of a policy which guarantees the continuation of Democratic Alliance's unificationist role in restoring the unity of the PLO and in safeguarding its national line against imperialism and Zionism.

3- The meeting affirms its absolute solidarity with the comrades in the Palestinian Liberation Front under the leadership of its Central Committee headed by General Secretary Comrade Talat Yaqoub. In this context, Democratic Alliance condemns the position taken by the Central Committee of al-Fateh by encouraging the divisionist elements in the PLF and dealing with them as representatives of the Front. This position contradicts the basis of keeping national unity and the legitimacy of the institutions of the revolution's organizations.

DFLP - PFLP - PLF - PCP
(25.11.1984)

PFLP Visits Greek Communist Party

On September 25th, comradely talks took place between the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) and the PFLP at the CPG Central Committee headquarters.

The two parties condemned imperialism's adventurist cold war policy, especially that of the USA; they emphasized the unprecedented threat this poses to all mankind. They expressed support to the peaceful proposals presented by the Soviet Union, other socialist countries, and various states and personalities, intended to end international tension and reestablish detente and peaceful coexistence as a prelude to total disarmament.

Concerning the Middle East, the two parties strongly condemned all imperialist-Zionist-reactionary plans, especially the Camp David accords and the Reagan plan. They condemned the construction of Zionist settlements on occupied Palestinian land and the Israeli authorities' terrorist acts against the Arab people of Palestine. Special attention was accorded to the latest Soviet proposals on the Middle East, considered as an important contribution to the search for a just, lasting solution. An essential condition for such a solution is the complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all occupied Arab land, and recognition and respect of the legitimate, inalienable national rights of the

Arab people of Palestine, chiefly their right to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on their national soil according to the UN resolutions.

The two parties reaffirmed the importance of preserving Palestinian national unity within the PLO on the basis of the resolutions of the PNC's 16th session and the Aden agreement, which ensure the PLO's anti-imperialist position and alliance with the progressive Arab forces.

The CPG delegation reaffirmed the Greek Communists' solidarity with the PFLP and all Palestinian revolutionaries and progressives. The CPG appreciates the role these forces are playing in uniting the PLO and struggling to achieve the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian and Arab peoples.

The PFLP delegation reaffirmed the Front's solidarity with the CPG and its struggle in the interests of the Greek working class and toiling masses.

The two parties reaffirmed their solidarity with the Lebanese nationalist forces and the Lebanese National Resistance. They proclaimed support for their struggle to force the Israeli occupiers' withdrawal from Lebanon, to guarantee the sovereignty, unity and democratic development of the Lebanese people.

The two parties reaffirmed their solidarity with Syria in its struggle to liberate the occupied Golan Heights and to combat all imperialist-Zionist-reactionary attempts at internal sabotage aimed at weakening Syria's steadfastness and confrontation of the Camp David accords and the US-Israeli threats.

The two parties advocated an immediate halt to the Iran-Iraq war, reiterating their position that it serves only the interests of imperialism and reaction in the region.

They declared their solidarity with the people of Cyprus and condemned the declaration of the 'state' in the northern part of Cyprus which is occupied by the Turkish forces. They supported the struggle of the Cypriot people for a united, independent, sovereign and non-aligned Cyprus, free of Turkish and other foreign forces, on the basis of UN resolutions.

The two parties reaffirmed their solidarity with all anti-dictatorial, anti-racist national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, against the domination of imperialism and its local agents, and for national liberation, democracy and progress. They condemned the acts of violence and persecution against nationalists and progressives in Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Sudan and other Arab countries.

Finally, the two parties reaffirmed their determination to strengthen their bilateral relations.

What Zionist National Unity Means

The de facto annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is not being moderated by the Israeli national unity government. On the contrary, the new government is trying to capitalize on the results of seventeen years of occupation and especially the iron fist policy unabashedly applied by the previous Likud government. In this the Labor Party's role is providing the linkage between the iron fist and US plans for the region.

Israeli Defense Minister Rabin has announced plans for «improving the quality of life of the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.» He has also promised to replace the Israeli military officers appointed to run Palestinian municipalities with Arab appointees. Prime Minister Peres has hinted at easing political and economic restrictions, and announced a series of decisions: Nablus businessmen will be permitted to establish a bank dealing with Jordanian currency (something forbidden since the 1967 occupation); Al Najah University is to be opened before the expiration of the four months stipulated by the closure order; \$5000 rather than \$3000 can be brought in by those entering the West Bank from Jordan; licensing a cement factory and a hospital; reducing censorship.

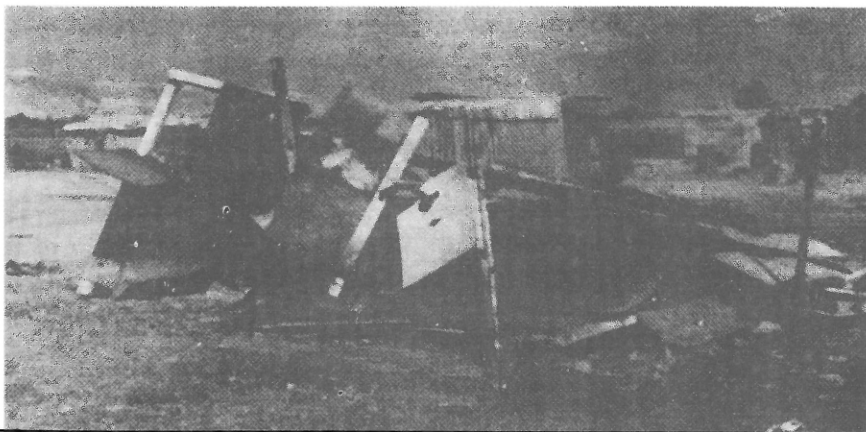
There is indeed reason to be sceptical of these 'goodwill' gestures. First of all, they are no more than gestures and will not actually improve the lot of the mass of West Bank and Gaza residents. The structural damage wrought on the Palestinian economy by occupation is too great to be reversed by a few projects. As an example, the bank will be supervised by the Bank of Israel. As such it will not be independent. Moreover, it will provide a new venue for Israeli monitoring of Palestinian economic transactions and further subordination of the West Bank's economy

to that of the Zionist state. Similarly, appointing Palestinians to head municipalities is just another attempt to cover the fact that the Israeli occupiers have fired the elected mayors, as well as a sleazy trick to lure collaborators willing to rule over fellow Palestinians.

Dollars for imperialist 'peace'

More important, these measures are linked to US plans to resolve the issue of the 1967 occupied territories and the Arab-Israeli conflict generally to imperialist-Zionist advantage. The statements of Labor figures in the national unity government coincide with US Secretary of State Schultz's call for «improvement in the living conditions» of the population of the occupied territories. They also coincide with the invitation of five Palestinian professors from West Bank universities to participate in a New York conference in October entitled: Middle East Peace and Development. This was sponsored by a group of US businessmen, mainly of Jewish and Arab origin, including Najib Halibi, father-in-law of Jordan's King Hussein. Peres himself had met with representatives of this group when he visited the US in September. According to *Al Fajr*, October 26th edition, there are reports

The reality of Zionist «development»: On November 1st, the Israeli military authorities demolished 33 shacks inhabited by Palestinian migrant farmers in the Jiftik area of the Jordan Valley.



that 'Israel', Egypt and the US have secretly approved the group's plans for investing in projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These US businessmen have been deliberating such ventures for over a year but were earlier discouraged by then Prime Minister Shamir. Labor's entry into the Zionist government provides the chance for hitching this 'private' initiative up to the US-Israeli plans. Jerusalem newspaper, *Al Talia*, had the following comment in its October 11th edition:

«This proposed investment belies American claims that the Reagan plan will restore the occupied territories to Arab control. It is legal recognition of Israeli authority over the West Bank and Gaza Strip through the permission which these authorities will grant for investment. (This) means that the future of this area will be neither Palestinian nor Jordanian. It is the expression of the American policy which opposes Palestinian rights to self-determination. Foreign investment, they think, will bolster non-nationalist tendencies and broaden the social base of the pro-American forces.»

Also in mid-October, Freij, the only mayor of a major West Bank town not disposed by the Israelis, and five mayors appointed by the 'civil' administration, as well as a village league head and a West Bank deputy in the Jordanian parliament were invited to attend the cocktail party held by Defense Minister Rabin for his US counterpart, Weinberger. This meeting was condemned by Palestinian nationalists such as mayors Bassam Shakaa and Karim Khalaf, and Haider Abdul Shafi, head of Gaza's Red Crescent Society.

These political and economic moves combine into the most serious attempt to date to split the united position of the Palestinians under occupation. Waving dollars and promises of less restrictions, the enemy forces hope to entice an exclusive group of Palestinian businessmen and pro-Jordanian notables to definitively break ranks with the majority's adherence to the PLO and its goal of an independent state. More dangerous still is that the enemy hopes to broaden this group to include middle class professionals and intellectuals who are sincerely concerned about the desperate need for development in the

occupied territories. In short this is an attempt to split the Palestinians along class as well as political lines, breaking the national unity that has thwarted Camp David's 'autonomy', 'civil' administration, the village league scheme, etc. Instead a new Palestinian 'leadership' would be formed to preside over the 'development' of the occupied territories in line with US-Zionist interests. This would provide the prerequisite for the reactionary Arab regimes to enter negotiations with 'Israel' and expand Camp David.

Small carrots and big fists

The clearest proof that Israeli 'goodwill' is only intended to split the Palestinian position can be found in the treatment simultaneously meted out to nationalist leaders and the masses. Liberal supporters of the Zionist state would like to depict these gestures as a change from the Likud's iron fist. On the contrary, these gestures can and will only be made as an embellishment on the iron fist.

While Peres was breathing 'goodwill' in mid-October, the major nationalist leaders of the West Bank were being summoned by the military governor and warned against political activities, especially of reactivating the National Guidance Committee. While five Palestinians were allowed to travel to the New York capitalists' conference, the majority of nationalist leaders cannot leave the country without special permission in advance; some cannot leave their home or their town. Israeli patrols are again round-the-clock at the home of Bassam Shakaa, the elected mayor of Nablus, while the pro-Jordanian Thabet Masri, deputy mayor and head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, is now allowed to open a bank. The carrot now being offered to the select few is overshadowed by the iron fist still perched over the heads of the vast majority. Shakaa told *Al Fajr*, October 19th, that Shmuel Goren, the Israeli military coordinator for the occupied territories, threatened to «return the iron fist stronger than ever before» if the nationalists engage in politics.

Settler-state terrorism

The carrot has not reached into most Palestinian towns, much less the villages and camps. Life under occupation is much the same: Palestinian demonstrations countered by IDF tear gas and «shooting in the air», as happened when protests shook the West

Bank after Zionist terrorists launched a rocket attack on a bus near Jerusalem, killing one Palestinian and wounding ten others, on October 28th. Again the occupiers were out in force to attack demonstrations on November 2nd when Palestinians traditionally protest the Bal-four declaration which gave British imperialist backing to the Zionist project in Palestine.

Settler provocations have become bolder under the national unity government with the fascist Kahane's parliamentary immunity being exploited to the hilt. The pattern established in Um al Fahm in the Galilee on August 29th has since been repeated with slight variations in Dheisheh camp, south of Bethlehem in early October, in Taibeh on October 12th, and Haifa on October 14th. In all cases, Palestinians mounted demonstrations against Kahane and his settlers' presence; in Haifa and Taibeh they were joined by anti-fascist Israeli Jews. In some cases, Kahane entered the targeted area; other times the Israeli police kept him out. But in all cases the provocation was used to crack down on Palestinians.

In the six weeks after Kahane tried to enter Um al Fahm, 300 residents were interrogated for their role in the demonstration. Police attacked the anti-Kahane demonstrations in both Taibeh and Haifa and made arrests. After 300 armed settlers had raided Duheisheh, and Kahane had prayed near the camp's mosque, the camp was curfewed; eight of its ten entrances were permanently sealed; forty residents were detained. Defense Minister Rabin approved the settlers' initiative to patrol the road in front of the camp. The settlers are also demanding that three rows of the camp houses closest to the road be demolished «to prevent stone-throwing». This has with good reason elicited fears among Duheisheh residents that the occupiers are considering abolishing the camp altogether. The refugee camps and their inhabitants have no place in the 'development' schemes for the occupied territories; to the enemy, they are a blemish constantly exposing that 'Israel' is built on stolen land; they are also a breeding ground for the fervent nationalism which the Zionist enemy aims to squash.

Aside from generally using Kahane's campaign for expelling the Palestinians from Palestine as an excuse for more repression, the clearest proof of the national unity government's support to settler violence came on

October 18th. On this evening, Al Khalil (Hebron) was placed under curfew to allow 7000 settlers to assemble in the city center. Purportedly this was to celebrate a Jewish feast, but the event was sponsored by the Committee for the Defense of Underground Settlers, i.e. Zionist terrorists. Slogans and posters lauding anti-Palestinian terror pervaded. Members of the Knesset were in attendance, and the rally was addressed by Minister of Industry and Commerce, Ariel Sharon, who pledged that next year the event would be celebrated in Nablus, the largest city of the West Bank. Defense Minister Rabin had refused requests by Peace Now, the Citizens' Rights Movement and Al Khalil's Mayor Natshe, to have the event cancelled.

The trap

Clearly the Zionist national unity government holds out no prospects of easing repression against our people. Rather it is setting a trap for the PLO. The Zionists are preparing for the anticipated reactivation of the US initiative in the area with Reagan's reelection. They are consciously seeking to exploit the situation created by Arafat's alliance with the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes, which threatens to split the PLO on the one hand, and gives the green light to collaborators on the other. This does not mean that the Zionists are ready to deal with Arafat, or that they are willing to give meaningful power to the Palestinian bourgeoisie under occupation. It does mean that they will try to exploit the disarray in the PLO to stabilize their own control over all the occupied territories in the context of imperialist 'peace' in the area. Once again, 'peace' initiatives which circumvent the Palestinians' legitimate rights are proven to be a cover for more Zionist expansion and aggression.

At this point we see the direct relation between the situation in occupied Palestine and the efforts being made, by the Democratic Alliance in particular, to reunite the PLO on the basis of the Aden-Algiers agreement with Fatah's Central Committee. Our masses under occupation need the backing of a strong, united PLO in resisting the enemy's new attempts to divide and squelch their struggle. In particular, the Aden-Algiers agreement's stress on rebuilding the Palestinian National Front, to lead the popular struggle against occupation, provides the means for resisting both the fraudulent Zionist carrot and the very real Zionist terror.

In mid-November we conducted an interview with Comrade George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party.

Communist Party

For a National Democratic Front to Abolish Confessionalism



The Reagan Administration has made no secret of its intention to try and reverse the major advances of the national movement in Lebanon. How does the Communist Party see the upcoming US strategy?

There is no question that the US will begin to act more aggressively, now that the presidential elections are over. While it continues to act to increase tension on a global scale, and to steer away from negotiations with the Soviet Union on limiting the arms race and other peace-related issues, we expect the US administration to concentrate on two main regions: Central America and the Middle East. The US is clearly poised for aggression against Nicaragua and increased intervention in El Salvador. It is threatening Cuba which stands in solidarity with the liberation movements in that region.

In addition we anticipate that Washington will soon turn to the Middle East as the other major target of its aggression, using its two surrogates: Israel on the one hand and Arab reaction on the other. As in the past, Lebanon is likely to be the focal point. By this, we do not simply mean the local Lebanese dimension of the struggle going on, but also the Palestinian movement, Syria's role in Lebanon and, by extension, its status in the region as a whole.

The US will first try to sabotage the achievements of the nationalist forces in order to regain the initiative and eventually realize its previous objectives. The Lebanese regime, which was forced to abrogate the May 17th treaty with Israel, has for the time being opted for the so-called Arab approach, meaning relatively good rapport with Syria. Under strong pressure as a result of the defeat of the so-called Lebanese Forces (the Phalangists) and the sectarian army in the Shouf mountains and subsequently in Beirut, the regime has seemingly opted for national dialogue, first at the Lausanne and Geneva conferences and later in the context of the government of national unity. In effect, it had no choice given the unity of the nationalist and progressive forces, and their solidarity with Syria and with the forces of the Palestinian revolution that chose to participate in the struggle under the banner of the Lebanese National Resistance Front in southern Lebanon, in the Beqaa, in Mount Lebanon and elsewhere.

In reality, however, the regime is dragging its feet and preventing any progress towards genuine national unity in anticipation of new developments that might lead to a change in the situation. It is actively trying to create division among the various components of the anti-fascist camp and at the same time rebuilding its sectarian army as well as the «Lebanese

Forces». On the other hand, it is seeking to defuse Arab support to the Lebanese progressive movement by soliciting Syria's cooperation.

As a result, we expect further deterioration of the situation in Lebanon. We believe the US is intent on causing such deterioration so as to open the way for eventual direct intervention, which may initially take the form of political pressure, while constantly maintaining the option of military action. This, we believe, is what lies behind the current political impasse in Lebanon, and the failure of the Gemayel regime to effectively deal with the three major requisites for a political solution: putting into effect a viable security plan, pursuing the objective of an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, and agreeing to genuine reforms in Lebanon's political system. Instead, by deceitfully talking of the priority of one task over the others, the regime ends up dealing with none: the liberation of the South must take priority over democratic reforms; the security arrangements preclude efforts to liberate the South, and so on.

The regime seems determined to block any real progress, and this is likely to lead to further confrontation in Lebanon, particularly in the South and the Kharroub district (along the coast and southeast of the capital), and perhaps other areas of the country, paving the way for US involvement in some form.

Such designs for Lebanon will also coincide with increased efforts to liquidate the Palestinian issue. The call for convening the Palestinian National Council in Amman can only be interpreted in this context as a determination by the right-wing of the PLO to accommodate current and anticipated US initiatives. As such, it threatens to split the Palestinian movement and signals a major new development in the emergence of an Arab reactionary pact that will eventually group Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Morocco, as well as the right-wing elements in the PLO. This pact is to serve as a tool for US policies aimed at encircling Syria, the Lebanese progressive movement and the revolutionary forces in the PLO, in preparation for a fresh US initiative based on the Reagan plan.

On a broader scale, the US will use increased pressure on such countries as Democratic Yemen, Libya and Algeria to prevent them from acting in solidarity with those of us that are confronting the imperialist strategy. This strategy will therefore consist first of trying to bring political pressure to bear on Syria in order to force it to agree to US-Israeli terms for resolving the Middle East conflict. Given Syria's commitment to preventing an imperialist settlement, we anticipate that the US will then threaten the use of force, or even actually use force, by prompting an Israeli military action against Syria, as well as against



Celebrating the destruction of Israeli trucks after a successful Lebanese National Resistance operation in Nabatiyeh.

ourselves and our Palestinian allies. However, we are confident that by working to consolidate the anti-imperialist alliance, by exposing the maneuvers of the United States, and by readying ourselves to repulse armed aggression, we can foil these designs. We, as Lebanese progressives, will be ready for this next confrontation. We trust that our allies in Syria and the Palestinian movement will be ready also.

The Lebanese Communist Party's Politbureau issued a statement warning against the current Lebanese-Israeli military talks leading to a new May 17th-style treaty. Could you elaborate on your position?

There is no doubt that Israel, the US and the regime in Lebanon would like to see these talks deviate from their stated objectives and eventually evolve into direct negotiations towards a new treaty similar to the May 17th treaty, though perhaps less offensive in form. For this reason, our Politbureau not only cautioned against such a possibility but actually expressed its rejection of these talks, standing in solidarity with other nationalist and religious forces that also rejected them and expressed similar concerns.

Israel was forced to make substantial concessions in agreeing to talks that are strictly military in nature and conducted under UN rather than US auspices. The truth of the matter is that Israel will go ahead with the talks to show goodwill, while maintaining positions that can only lead to a deadlock. The ultimate Israeli objective is not to withdraw from southern Lebanon, but rather to redeploy its forces in such a way as to maintain its occupation at a reduced cost in terms of casualties inflicted by the Lebanese Resistance. The enemy is hoping that the combined pressures by the US, Israel and the Lebanese regime will succeed in channeling the talks towards committing Lebanon to guaranteeing Israel's security, and forcing Lebanon to seek Arab guarantees, particularly Syrian, for Israel's security along its northern borders. This, of course is designed to prevent the Palestinians as well as the Lebanese nationalist forces from waging their struggle.

However, our rejection of these talks does not stem from the same considerations as those expressed by other parties

which question the integrity of the nationalist wing of the government, represented by Nabih Berri of the Amal Movement and Walid Jumblatt of the PSP as well as Prime Minister Karami. We consider as legitimate the position of calling for going ahead with the talks, insisting on total and unconditional Israeli withdrawal according to the relevant Security Council resolutions and rejecting any compromise on this matter. Our own position as a communist party is designed to reinforce this position of the nationalist elements in the cabinet, to encourage them to end the talks if their conditions are not met, and to join in calling for popular armed action to force the withdrawal of the occupation forces.

Recently it was announced that a preparatory committee had been formed to found a national democratic front. What has the committee been able to achieve to date?

The formation of the preparatory committee followed consultations among various nationalist and progressive parties, including the Communist Party. It is well known that since the Lausanne talks, our party has called for a more advanced form of coalition as compared with the National Salvation Front. We estimated that the National Salvation Front had fulfilled its objectives, which amounted to the following: defeating the May 17th accords, preventing the Phalangists from controlling Mount Lebanon (and eventually all of Lebanon), preventing the Phalangists from controlling state institutions (political, military and security-related) and finally beginning a national dialogue to build a new Lebanon. These objectives were fulfilled to a great degree, although not in their totality.

We in the Communist Party believe that a national front represents at any given time a class coalition uniting representatives of the various social classes that have an interest in such unity. The pursuit of total liberation (from Israeli occupation), the unification of Lebanon and reforming its political system are objectives that require a new class coalition that is united on such advanced tasks and not limited by the political program of the National Salvation Front. Rather there could exist other forms of cooperation with these allies that agree with us on, say, the need to rid Lebanon of Israeli occupation, ►

National Democratic Front Announced in Lebanon

On October 9th, Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, called a press conference to announce the formation of a preparatory committee for the establishment of a national democratic front in Lebanon. He described the proposed program of action for the front, containing six main points:

1. Continuing the struggle against Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon; providing full support to the armed resistance.
2. Struggling to reestablish the unity of Lebanon, preserving its integrity and independence, and defeating all partition schemes.
3. Confirming and preserving Lebanon's Arab identity.
4. Conducting an independent and progressive foreign policy.
5. Structural democratic reforms in the overall political system, and an overhaul of the armed forces according to patriotic principles.
6. Fundamental social and economic reforms.

The preparatory committee was made up of representatives of the Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the Arab Democratic Party, the Arab Socialist Union, the Baath Party Organization in Lebanon, in addition to Najah Wakim, a progressive member of parliament.

Membership in the front was left open to all other progressive and nationalist organizations, including the Amal Movement. A transitional period would be used for further consultations on organizational aspects as well as the final draft of the front's political platform.

of the South, the unification of Lebanon, Lebanon's Arab identity, an independent foreign policy, political reforms based on the cancellation of the confessional system, and social and economic reforms.

It is worth noting that our party has expressed reservations about the manner in which the National Democratic Front was actually announced. We had believed that prior to announcing the founding of the Front, there should have been further, extensive consultations in order to broaden participation in the formulation of the political program and other aspects of the Front's work. Since then, some right-wing forces



Southerners protest in the face of the occupiers.

but not necessarily on the task of democratic reforms, or on the question of Lebanon's Arab identity in the manner that we propose.

Consequently, our party held that the alternative to the confessional character of the recent upheaval against Israeli occupation and Phalangist domination, must be a democratic secular one, based on a national democratic program which seizes on the fact that such upheaval did in essence have a democratic content despite its confessional appearance. If the confessional dimension played a positive role in the anti-Israeli and anti-Phalangist struggle so far, its potential has peaked, and it will certainly begin to play a regressive role should it remain the driving force. The thesis that the best that can be achieved at this stage is reforms based on confessional redistribution of power, is a fundamentally wrong one that risks extending and perpetuating the Phalangists' 'Maronite' dominance, and thus perpetuating Lebanon's division rather than promoting its unification. By contrast, a democratic approach, which seeks to do away with confessionalism altogether, will succeed in achieving the tasks of liberation, unification and democratic reform.

Accordingly, our party proposed to its allies, that share an interest in such an approach, a program for the National Democratic Front. This program was not simply proposed for internal consultations. Rather we invited mass participation in its development. On the 1st of May, during a large rally called by our party and with the participation of representatives from the Baath Party Organization, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Amal Movement, we publicly presented the proposed program for the National Democratic Front, centered on six major points: the liberation

have embarked on a campaign against the National Democratic Front, instigating some nationalist forces against it by pretending that they had been purposely excluded from participation. Our party had the view that the announcement should have been preceded by broader consultations as well as more mass mobilization. Today, in fact, we are facing some difficulties as a result. There are those who try to portray the National Democratic Front as an anti-Moslem coalition, while in reality the very program and objectives of the Front are fully compatible with the objectives of the nationalist Islamic forces fighting against Israeli occupation and Phalangist domination. Others, particularly in the capital, Beirut, are against the National Democratic Front, because they have a narrow interest in maintaining the organizational disunity and decentralization of the national and progressive movement; instead they are calling for organization on the city or regional level.

To confront this, we in the Party believe that we need to broaden the base of support for the National Democratic Front, explaining to other potential participants why such a front is needed and involving them in the decision-making process. We do not see the National Democratic Front as an alternative to the broad national political work, but rather as a structure that will accommodate this work and develop it. We are hopeful that soon other parties will choose to join the Front, and that our cooperation with the Amal Movement will advance our national struggle.

Recently the Lebanese Communist Party was joined by all progressive and democratic Lebanese in celebrating its sixteenth anniversary. What are your impressions of the large mass participation in the festivities?

We believe that the festivities on the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary of our party amounted to a broad popular vote of confidence in the program and policies of our party, which in essence are the program and policies of the newly born National Democratic Front. We are proud that these festivities provided for large mass participation as well as the participation of progressive Arab and international parties and organizations. In addition to the Arab Socialist Baath Party, the Algerian National Liberation Front Party, the Yemeni Socialist Party and fellow Arab communist parties, the Palestinian revolution showed its solidarity through the message sent to our central rally in Beirut by Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP; the speech to our rally in Akkar, North Lebanon, delivered by Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, Deputy General Secretary of the PFLP; and the large participation in our rallies by the Palestinian masses across Lebanon. Scores of solidarity messages were received from fraternal Arab and international parties; the Soviet Communist Party and the Cuban Communist Party were represented at our festivities.

Our major source of pride, however, was the overwhelming participation of our Lebanese people, which exceeded all expectations. We believe that our masses are aware of who is playing a major role in the current struggle against fascism and occupation; the massive turnout indicates their confidence in

our party and its role. We believe that this participation represented a vote of confidence in the role of our party in the context of the Lebanese National Resistance against Israeli occupation, which we had the privilege to launch in cooperation with other nationalist parties and in which we play a major role today. It is a vote of confidence in our party's line of armed confrontation of the US occupation forces prior to their forced exit from Beirut, in our party's leading role in confronting the Phalangists and the sectarian army in the Shouf, the Upper Metn and in Beirut, in alliance with our comrades and brothers in the Progressive Socialist Party and the Amal Movement. It is a vote of confidence in our firm defense of democracy and our struggle against Phalangist dictatorship; in the approach of our party on uniting the struggle of all anti-fascist and anti-occupation forces, an approach that is flexible in form yet firm and principled in substance, and which considers that victory lies in the victory of the slogans that our party puts forward (as opposed to narrow organizational gains).

It was a vote of confidence in the program of those social forces that seek to complete the tasks of liberation and continue with the other tasks of the national democratic revolution in Lebanon, unconstrained by the regressive approach that seeks redistribution of power on a confessional basis instead of doing away with confessionalism altogether.

Furthermore, the large mass participation in our celebration indicated the willingness of our masses to continue to sacrifice for their cause. This determination presents us in the Communist Party with new challenges and responsibilities in the task of providing for the mobilization of the masses towards the realization of their goals. ●

Crowds gathered at the LCP anniversary celebration in Balbeck.



Jordan

Tactics for Reviving the Reagan Plan

When Jordan's King Hussein became the first Arab head of state to resume full diplomatic and political ties with Egypt, there was quick agreement among observers that the king was laying the ground for eventual negotiations with 'Israel' on the basis of the Reagan plan some time after the US presidential elections. For his part, Egyptian President Mubarak lost no time in capitalizing on the Jordanian offer. He visited Amman within days of Jordan's announcement of the resumption of relations, and confidently urged other Arab states to follow Jordan's lead. The Iraqi government extended an invitation to Mubarak to visit Baghdad and indicated it was only a matter of time before relations with Egypt were officially restored.

It appeared that the stage was rapidly being set for a formal end to Egypt's isolation in the Arab world, and that the Reagan plan, conceived by the US president as a mechanism for implementing the Camp David accords, was once again gathering momentum.

Yet as soon as Jordan's intent to reestablish relations with Egypt was made public, a number of statements by various Jordanian officials, including the King and Crown Prince Hassan, stressed commitment to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This would imply rejecting bilateral or trilateral talks on the status of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, offering instead to participate in an international peace conference under the UN auspices. In fact, Jordan's move came against the background of repeated public statements expressing dissatisfaction with the US's Middle East policy, which in the words of King Hussein «is completely biased in favor of Israel». At the same time, Jordan was pressing its overtures to the Soviet Union and preparing for King Hussein to visit Moscow.

If Jordan's motive for unilaterally ending the diplomatic boycott of Egypt was to help reactivate the Reagan plan in anticipation of a fresh US Middle East drive after the elections, how then can

we explain other Jordanian actions and signals that indicate a desire to keep a safe distance from US-sponsored initiatives? Why would King Hussein risk what was certain to be a confrontation with Syria at a time when Syria's influence seemed to be at an unprecedented level?

It is a fact of history that the Jordanian regime has consistently acted in concert with the objectives of imperialism. Over the years, King Hussein has proved himself to be a close ally of the US and worked to insure Jordan's collaboration with every regional plan initiated or sponsored by the US. Jordan's overstated 'annoyance' with the Reagan Administration has in fact less to do with the king's lack of desire to accommodate the Reagan plan than with the failure of the US to deliver on its own promises. The US's unconditional support to 'Israel' under the Likud and failure to pursue its own proclaimed strategy, the Reagan plan, have left the Jordanian regime in a precarious situation and forced it to seek ways out of the impasse. It was also feared that 'Israel' might in the meantime enter and occupy the East Bank (Jordan) in order to create a new set of facts before negotiations got underway.

Royal Jordanian calculations

Jordan's initial strategy was based on the assumption that the Likud would be replaced by Labor in the last Israeli elections, and that Reagan would seek to reactivate his dormant plan soon after his own reelection. King Hussein was too politically vulnerable to act on his own, and a strong reaction on the part of Syria could be anticipated. Hussein thus proceeded to protect his flanks by cultivating eventual partners and preparing to seize the initiative. Quietly, he unofficially ended all boycott of Egypt and sought to get a majority of Arab League member states to formally restore ties with Mubarak's regime. He gave strong political and military support to Iraq in the war with Iran, in return for Iraq's abandoning opposition to the Camp David

accords and Reagan's plan. In the willingness of a number of right-wing elements in the PLO leadership to accommodate US strategy, King Hussein found a basis for bringing in the PLO as a partner in some form acceptable to the US and eventually to 'Israel'. This, of course, means a PLO in a form that would effectively do away with its status as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and bypass its demand for an independent Palestinian state. In addition, the king sought to normalize Jordan's relations with the Soviet Union which is the primary source of support for Syria, other Arab nationalist states and the PLO.

In effect, King Hussein proceeded to prepare for the anticipated fresh US initiative by seeking to encircle and neutralize Syria, by reinforcing Jordan's status as the legitimate party in any negotiations on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and by linking up with Egypt as a prospective partner. Arafat's visit to Cairo provided the cover for Hussein to make his own Egyptian connection public. By inviting Mubarak to visit Amman, Hussein also served notice that Jordan intended to maintain its role of chief broker in the new alliance: At stake was the relative position of Jordan and the PLO in the developing partnership, and the King sought to make it clear that Jordan would certainly not be the junior partner. The most the PLO could hope for in fact was to name Palestinian members of a Jordanian delegation to the prospective talks, in return for conceding to the king the role of chief negotiator on behalf of the occupied territories. A Jordanian-Egyptian rapprochement would go a long way in insuring precisely that.

The PLO leadership, by opting for the Jordanian connection and failing to take the lead in confronting the US strategy, in cooperation with the national and progressive Arab forces and states and the socialist countries, is compromising the fundamental objectives of the Palestinian national movement at this stage, namely self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

It should be clear that the recent Jordanian decision to end the boycott of Egypt can only be seen in light of the regime's pursuit of a settlement of the conflict with 'Israel' that will allow Jordan

to regain parts of the occupied West Bank along the broad lines of the Reagan plan. All talk of continued commitment to a comprehensive settlement amounts to little more than a signal to the US administration that Jordan can ill afford the perpetuation of the status quo and that a fresh US initiative is imperative. At most the regime's tactics are designed to keep open the long-shot option of an international peace conference, though this option is most probably not viable given the current regional balance of forces.

It follows that Jordan's move must be confronted in the context of the broader struggle against the US-sponsored Camp David accords. Jordan will now seek a new Arab consensus that will represent a serious departure from previous Arab League resolutions pertaining to efforts to recover the occupied territories. The proliferation of the Camp David accords is underway.

Counterstrategy

The collapse of the US policy in Lebanon, the abrogation of the May 17th treaty between Lebanon and 'Israel', the emergence of Syria as a major regional power with massive Soviet assistance and the Soviet's own recent diplomatic advance in the Middle East, have all contributed to a relative change in the balance of forces in favor of the anti-imperialist forces in the region, since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. It is significant that under such circumstances Jordan would risk provoking Syria, which is strongly opposed to a separate Jordanian-Israeli deal. The reason Jordan dares take this risk, in addition to anticipating a fresh US initiative, lies in the current fragmentation of the Arab anti-Camp David front. The Steadfastness and Confrontation Front has for all practical purposes ceased to function. Recent differences between Algeria and Libya, the differences between Syria and Fatah, the major organization of the PLO, have converged with the serious differences that exist within the PLO itself to cause obvious disarray in the anti-imperialist camp.

The task of reestablishing the PLO's unity on an anti-imperialist platform continues to be of paramount importance. This view has been relayed to the Palestinian organizations by all the friends of the Palestinian people, including the socialist countries. The Aden-Algiers accord between the Central Committee of Fatah and the Democratic Alliance continues to represent the

correct basis for restoring the unity of the PLO on a sound political platform and convening the 17th session of the Palestinian National Council. All obstacles to implementing this accord need to be removed as soon as possible. Outstanding disputed issues, including that of Yasir Arafat, can only be resolved at the PNC, the supreme Palestinian institution. The democratic forces are preparing for a sharp struggle at the PNC against right-wing elements, the most extreme of whom have no genuine interest in national unity. In this struggle, the democratic forces deserve the support of all who have a stake in a unified PLO, including the national and progressive Arab states. In this context, strict adherence to the principle of the PLO's independence is requisite. Only a strong independent PLO can be an effective partner in a regional anti-imperialist alliance, of which Syria, the Lebanese progressive movement and the PLO are the core.

By continuing to reject the principle of a comprehensive Palestinian dialogue with the participation of Fatah's Central Committee, the National Alliance bears a major responsibility for preventing the resolution of the current crisis. By insisting on a fundamentally adventurist line, the National Alliance not only delays the process of reconciliation in the PLO, but also opens the way for the right-wing tendency to pursue its strategy of accommodating US policies without any constraints. All illusions about an alternative 'revolutionary' PLO only serve to accentuate the current

crisis and increase the vulnerability of the Palestinian national movement. In contrast, joining with the Democratic Alliance in the struggle to adopt a genuinely anti-imperialist platform at the next PNC session is the only viable alternative to the current state of affairs that threatens to marginalize the PLO, opening the way for a US-sponsored settlement that circumvents Palestinian self-determination.

The dual task of restoring the unity of the PLO and insuring Palestinian-Syrian reconciliation lies at the heart of current efforts to develop an anti-imperialist counterstrategy. In the short run, there is every reason to believe that a firm Syrian-Palestinian-Lebanese alliance is fully capable of foiling King Hussein's plan to strike a separate deal with 'Israel'. In addition, this will assist the Lebanese people in their struggle to force an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. On the other hand, Syrian-Palestinian cooperation will greatly facilitate the consolidation of a broad Arab anti-imperialist front capable of holding off the emergence of a US-sponsored regional pact. With the firm backing of the Soviet Union, which is making headway in breaking US hegemony in the region, the balance of forces will eventually be redressed in such a manner as to make possible the convening of an international conference and achieving genuine peace based on Palestinian rights to self-determination and establishing an independent state under the leadership of the PLO. ●



Newspaper headline: International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.
Comment: 365 minus 1 equals 364 days to conspire against the Palestinians.

Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan

Jordan has been lacking democracy since the kingdom was established. The constitution does not satisfy the requirements of modern democratic life. Moreover, the authorities have constantly violated the constitution as well as all democratic values. Martial law and emergency provisions have been an integral part of Jordan's political life.

There has been an insistent demand for democratic liberties ever since the national movement and political opposition came into existence. This demand, however, has not had a specific body to defend it. In view of this, a number of people concerned with the issue joined together on their own initiative in Beirut, June 1979, to form the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan. The Committees took a series of steps, making contacts, holding meetings and submitting memoranda to Arab and international bodies concerned with the question of human rights and liberties. The memos aroused interest in these bodies who in turn contacted the Jordanian authorities, and published some of them in their annual reports and other material. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the departure of most of the leading members of the Committees from Beirut, new contacts were made to organize the resumption of the Committees' activities. As a result the Committees are now led by an expanded and highly qualified General Secretariat.

The Committees welcome into their ranks any democratic organization willing to participate in their activities. The banner for the Committee's work is stepping up the struggle for democratic rights, which is an immediate daily concern of vast sectors of the people in Jordan. The right to political and trade union activities is still fettered by the regime's arbitrary and coercive laws and measures, as are rights to employment, travel, passport and expression.

The Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan have now taken a new step by beginning to publish a regular bulletin in Arabic enti-

tled *Democratic Jordan*, to be their mouthpiece in the struggle for democracy. The role of this bulletin is to reinforce the call for democratic liberties, to expose all coercive and arbitrary practices, and to defend all those who are illegally detained, deprived of their basic rights or otherwise mistreated.

1954 Uprising Commemorated

Significantly, the publication of the first issue of *Democratic Jordan* coincided with the 30th anniversary of the popular uprising that occurred in Jordan on October 16, 1954. This was sparked by flagrant fraud in the parliamentary elections, enacted by Tawfiq Abu Huda's government, with a view to sec-

uring a subservient parliamentary majority that would approve linking Jordan to imperialist pacts, and grant the regime a free hand to suppress the mass movement.

The masses in Jordan and the West Bank rose up to reject the authorities' having thus scorned their will. People poured into the streets in thousands, condemning both the electoral manipulation and the regime's policy of subservience to the colonial powers. They shouted for democracy and freeing Jordan from the fetters of colonialism, then symbolized by the 1948 treaty (with Britain), Glub Pasha's control of the army, and the administration of the country by the British Embassy in Amman.

The armed forces were ordered into the streets by General Glub to suppress the demonstrations. In the resulting clashes, scores of patriots were killed or wounded. Yet the uprising was not in vain, for it exposed the bogus character of the emerging parliament, which as a result had to be dissolved. Moreover, the 1954 uprising paved the way for later mass movements protesting Jordan's joining the Baghdad Pact, and demanding that the army be transformed into a patriotic one and that the colonial treaty with Britain be cancelled. It also opened the way for the advent of a patriotic majority in the parliament that was antagonistic towards imperialism and under which, for a time, the country enjoyed relative democratic liberties.

Political Prisoners

Today opposition to the regime's policies continues to be displayed in a variety of ways. One of the most significant is the widespread support expressed to the demands of the political prisoners who waged a courageous hunger strike in March. (See *Democratic Palestine* no. 3). Since then the regime has released some political prisoners while at the same time continuing to detain others. In September, another hunger strike was staged, lasting two weeks, but as yet the regime has not fulfilled the demands for the release of those detained solely on political grounds. One example of public support to the political detainees was the memorandum submitted to the Council of Deputies by 35 signatories representing the popular, trade union and profes-

sional sectors in Karak province. The memo stated in part: *In response to the political detainees' appeal and considering their deteriorated health condition...we herewith declare our solidarity and support their demands, including the release of the detainees from occupied Palestine, particularly those whose term is or almost is over; the release of those arrested on political grounds and those who have not completed their sentence; and the restoration of civil life and the operation of the constitution.*

Also noteworthy was the memorandum to the Prime Minister submitted by the Jordanian Engineers Association in August. While demanding the release of one of their imprisoned colleagues, the Association also linked the demand for

democracy with the requirements of the regional situation and the struggle against the Zionist enemy:

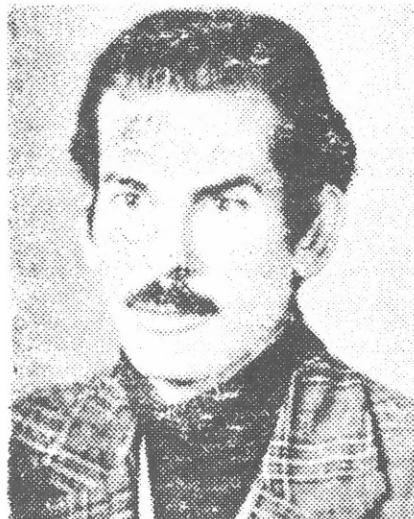
Under the critical circumstances our homeland is experiencing owing to Israeli aggression and occupation, the total denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, the ongoing threat of Israeli aggression and expansion, and the attempts at imposing US-Israeli hegemony on all Arab countries, and particularly Jordan, we add our voice to those of our compatriots...We demand the declaration and maintenance, under the constitution, of man's inalienable rights, democratic liberties and the right of all citizens to employment, dignity, travel and movement, without the threat of passport seizure, and the proclamation of freedom of opinion and thought, together with the means of expression, such as the press and other mass media.

Like the various sectors of our society, we firmly believe that public and democratic liberties would promote our compatriots' self-confidence and release their vast potentials in confronting the Zionist threats and defending the homeland.



Imprisoned trade-union activist Abdul Razzaq Said. The Confederation of Trade Unions in Jordan asks all concerned organizations to demand his release.

Proceeding from this belief, our association's council has decided to submit this letter to your excellency, hoping that you will intervene for the release of our colleague, Abdul Munem Jeredat, who is employed in the technical division of our association and a member of the council of the electrical engineering section, who has been detained by the Intelligence Service since August 15th.



Special concern has also been shown about the situation of two other detainees. At the same time, their cases exemplify the kind of persons considered «dangerous» by the regime:

- Trade union activist Abdul Razzaq Said, Secretary of the Trade Union for Secretarial, Banking, Insurance and Accountant Workers. He was arrested on April 10th, charged with playing an active role in the union.

- Mohammad Yousef Aoad is married and the father of four children. He was released from Ansar, Lebanon, by the Israelis on November 23, 1983, and then rearrested by the Jordanian Intelligence Service on February 12th of this year.

Waves on the political scene

In October, the Jordanian Council of Deputies held a scheduled session.

Some Jordanian politicians took this occasion to submit a letter to the council's chairman and members, demanding review of the law banning political parties, as a preliminary step to the restoration of free political activity through legally formed parties.

Indeed the Council of Deputies session turned out to be a stormy one. The regime violated the laws and regulations, a fact which was denounced in the council. A number of deputies protested the restrictions put on the council's discussions and the disregard shown for the council's resolutions. They deplored the authorities' suppression of reports on the meetings where there was heated discussion on certain points as the council prepared its reply to the monarch's address. At the session there were attempts to restrict some deputies' right to speak, which led the deputy of Karak to submit his resignation in protest.

The Council refused to approve and postponed making a decision on a number of bills. Many deputies criticized the regime's impatience in having enacted certain bills although they did not satisfy the requirements of being «necessary or expedient».

The questions put by deputies placed the regime in an awkward position, highlighting its failures, such as failure to deal with the case of a number of Jordanians detained in Iraq since the beginning of the year. The waves created in the Council of Deputies takes on special significance when we know this is an appointed rather than elected body. As opposed to the parliament, which relates to the government (cabinet), the Council of Deputies is supposedly the link between the king and the people. Thus, the waves created in the council reflect the people's dissatisfaction with their ruler and his policy. Throughout the recent period, various groups of citizens have been petitioning the council deputies with their grievances - the arrest and detention of relatives, being barred from employment, or from passport renewal, etc. This generated a sort of pressure that erupted in the protests and questions posed by the deputies. ●

Although «Democratic Jordan» is published in Arabic and therefore inaccessible to our English readers, the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan will on occasion circulate material in English. If you are interested in receiving such information, on political prisoners, etc., you can write to the following address:

**Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms in Jordan
P.O. Box 9080
Damascus, Syria.**

Ireland

Interview with Sinn Fein

This interview with Gerry Adams, MP and President of Sinn Fein, was granted to «Democratic Palestine» in August. Since then, Gerry Adams was briefly detained by British security forces in their frenzy following the Irish Republican Army's October 12th bomb attack aimed against Margaret Thatcher and others of her cabinet. Gerry Adams has just been reelected as President of Sinn Fein at their November congress.

There has been talk of a move towards the left in the Irish Republican Movement. Would you comment on this and explain something about Sinn Fein's political and mass work?

First of all I should perhaps explain the composition of the Republican Movement. We are not an alliance of political organisations like the PLO. The Republican Movement is a loose title historically given to several branches of the movement for national liberation, which today share the common goal of establishing a Democratic Socialist Republic of all Ireland. Those branches are Sinn Fein, the IRA, Cumann na mban (women's section), Na Fianna Eireann (youth scouting organization) and An Cumann Cabhrach (political prisoners support organisation) as well as the National Graves Association which is responsible for the care of graves of our patriot dead.

The partition of Ireland was achieved by a combination of the British threat of «fatal war» and its acceptance in 1921, by a middle class section of the republican leadership, which was satisfied that its interests could be maintained in a 26 county Free State. In the counterrevolution which followed, the republican forces were defeated and «dumped arms» in 1923. A few years later another section of the movement, under the leadership of Eamonn de Valera, with a pluralist political outlook, broke away and involved itself in Free State politics. These two parties became known as Fine Gael and Fianna Fail.

Over the years with the consolidation of the Free State, the leadership of both parties became progressively more middle class and upper middle class, with politics to match... What they lacked in political policy, both parties made up for in widespread political patronage throughout the state.

Both, like their unionist counterparts in the six counties, have a vested interest in maintaining partition and the conservative nature of both states. The preponderance of Irish politics on both sides of the border, with, on the one hand, civil war alignments and on the other, maintaining the British border, has prevented the organisation of a serious socialist organisation in either state.

Republicans have consistently believed that the border - with British military occupation in the six counties - is the greatest obstacle in any attempt to organise towards a socialist society. In consequence, we have set about gaining the active support of the unborn working class, small farmers and rural workers by making our policies relevant to them. This is not solely on the national question but also in the areas of unemploy-

ment, housing, welfare rights, community organisation, culture, women, youth, etc. Organisationally this has meant the creation, over a period of years, of departments of women's affairs, trade unions, culture, etc.

In practice, the political work is carried out in over thirty Sinn Fein offices/advice centres throughout the country. These are involved in all areas of community politics with a wide scope of activities ranging from involvement in co-operative enterprises to assisting communities to organise to combat dealers in hard drugs, which is particularly prevalent in Dublin.

Wall painting in Northern Ireland.

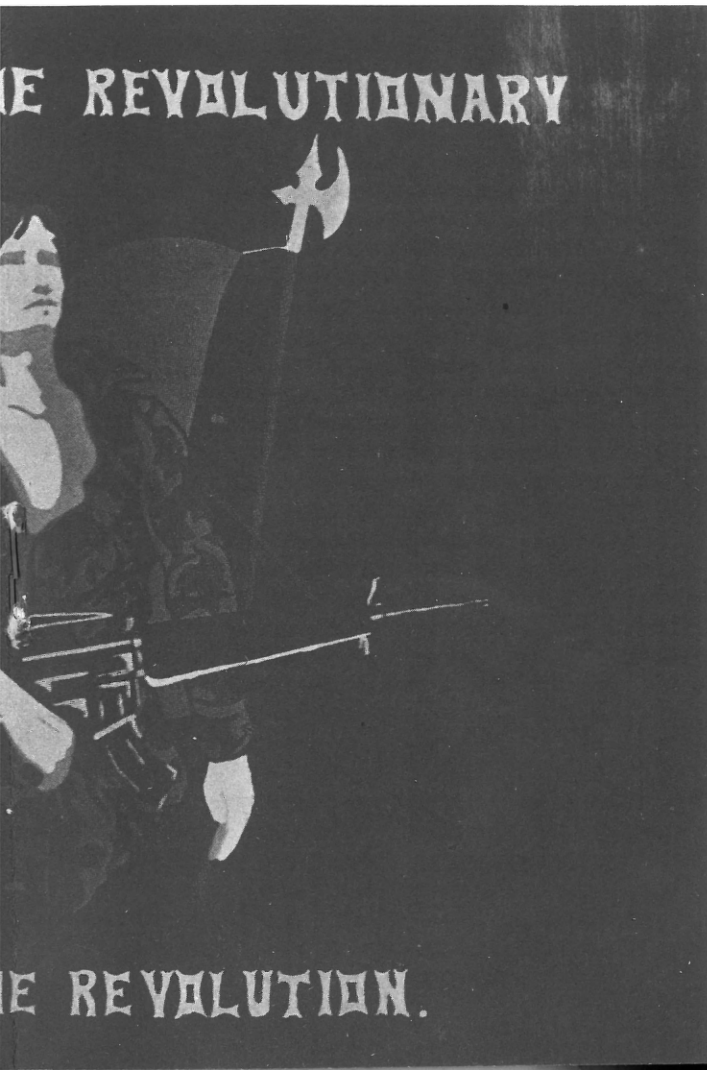




Demonstration supporting women prisoners in Armagh prison.



Gerry Adams



In brief we have something of a political dilemma. Socialism cannot be constructed within the framework of partition which militates against even the construction of a serious socialist organisation. And national liberation can only be achieved by an organisation which is socialist. Partition has been successful in pushing the national movement, the labour movement, the cultural movement, etc. into relatively airtight, separate compartments and in a way in which they are often antagonistic towards each other. Our task then is to build a movement which is separatist (from Britain), socialist, secular, non-sectarian and culturally Irish.

In retrospect, how do you evaluate the results of the hunger strikes of Irish republican prisoners? What is the relation to the armed and mass struggle generally?

Republican POWs in Belfast prison forced the British government to recognise them as political prisoners after a prolonged hunger strike in 1972. In an attempt to disguise the political nature of the newly won political prisoner status, the British described this as «Special Category Status». However the unique conditions of imprisonment which ensued left no doubt that the British government had, in fact, conceded political status to the POWs.

These conditions included: recognition by the British prison authorities of the OCs (Officer Commanding) of the republican prisoners or their representatives, free association, no prison work, no prison uniform, as well as other minor concessions on visiting rights, etc.

In a major policy review put into practice circa 1976, the British government evolved the three-pronged strategy of «Ulsterisation, Criminalisation and Normalisation.» Very briefly, this meant pushing locally recruited British forces, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), into the front line of the British government's counterrevolutionary effort with a corresponding diminution in the role of the regular British army. Nationally and internationally they also set about trying to portray the national liberation struggle as no more than a «criminal conspiracy» in just the same way as in other colonies they have tried to disguise their imperialist endeavours by proclaiming that they were engaged in «police actions against communist bandits». The «criminal» tag was also intended to undermine the republican struggle nationally and to facilitate the Dublin government's cross-border collaboration. Central to a successful outcome to the attempted criminalisation policy was the removal of the political status from the POWs in Long Kesh and Magilligan prison camps and in Armagh women's prison. To achieve this the British government simply declared that anyone charged with actions in pursuance of the liberation struggle after March 1, 1976, would not be granted the status of a political prisoner. Internal resistance to this in the prisons began with the sentencing of Kieran Nugent in September '76; when his gaolers attempted to force him to wear prison uniform, he declared that they «would have to nail it» to his back.

From September '76 until October '81, republican prisoners were forced to live naked in their cells, without beds, in the midst of their own excreta and urine, without reading or writing materials or any other recreation or mental stimulation. After four years of these horrendous conditions and after all other attempts to gain proper prison conditions had failed, the hunger strike was undertaken by republican prisoners in Long Kesh prison camp and Armagh women's prison in October

1980. They had five basic demands: (1) No prison uniform; (2) No prison work; (3) Free association; (4) Full remission on sentences; (5) Adequate visits, food parcels and recreational/education facilities.

The British government promised to concede these demands and the hunger strike ended after 53 days. When the British reneged on their promises, a second hunger strike led by Bobby Sands began on March 1, 1981. By August 20, 1981, ten republicans had died on the hunger strike and no meaningful concession had been offered by the British government. By October of that year the combination of concessions and the intervention by the families of the hunger strikers at the critical part in their sons' hunger strike brought an end to this protest. The British conceded on all the demands except the major one of free association.

But importantly the massive support demonstrated for the hunger strikers destroyed the thrust of Britain's criminalisation policy both nationally and internationally. That policy, which was an integral part of Britain's attempt to politically isolate the Republican Movement from the Irish people, was buried by the 100,000 people who attended the funeral of Bobby Sands in May 1981.

In the face of broad mass support for the hunger strikers, the political response of the British government was one of deceit. In attempt to pose as reasonable people but in reality to stall for time in order to sap the will of the hunger strikers and undermine support for their cause, the British government encouraged and facilitated interventions by the European Commission for Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, and various political and religious individuals including a papal envoy. In the course of these interventions the British alluded to concessions without producing the substance. Militarily the response was equally typical of imperialism in crisis-naked force. The British army and the RUC killed at least eight civilians during this period of heightened protest, including three children under 15 and a young married mother. Hundreds of others were injured, many seriously and permanently, while nationalist people were subjected to a massive upsurge in arrests, house searches and mini-curfews.

Concerning the relation to armed struggle: During the hunger strike in 1980, the level of IRA activity was deliberately restricted. This, they explained, was in order to prevent any diversion of public attention from the issues of the hunger strike.

However, fearing that the British would very consciously cause a protracted hunger strike in 1981, in order to maintain a low level of armed revolutionary activity to accommodate their scheme for normalisation, the IRA employed revolutionary force throughout the second hunger strike.

By September '81 the British government had acknowledged thirty-seven fatalities and over 150 casualties among its forces over that nine month period as a result of IRA actions. The largest proportion of these (29 deaths) were from the indigenous British forces of the RUC and UDR, reflecting their role in the forefront of Britain's «Ulsterisation» of the war. Millions of pounds worth of damage, for which the British government is liable, was caused in attacks on commercial property, while there were also two attacks on British military establishments in Britain itself.

British security was also penetrated at the Sullom Voe oil terminal in the Shetland Islands where the IRA planted a bomb

on the day of an official visit by the English Queen.

The IRA seems to have had little need to explain its action throughout this period. Against the background of young patriots dying on hunger strike on almost a weekly basis, of children being murdered on our streets by the British army and intense general oppression, such an explanation would have been superfluous. That is not to say, however, that the IRA has not had to patiently explain its actions throughout the past fifteen years of armed struggle. But in circumstances which prevailed during the hunger strike, the toleration of any people in regard to the employment of revolutionary force is naturally much higher.

How did Sinn Fein's policy of contesting elections develop?

Republican participation in the elections in 1981 was coincidental rather than planned and in nature was more of an electoral intervention than part of an electoral strategy. It was coincidental in that in the occupied zone the opportunity arose out of the death of the sitting independent nationalist MP for the Westminster constituency of Fermanagh/South Tyrone at a time when Bobby Sand's hunger strike was already well advanced, and in the Free State as a result of a snap general election called by Charles Haughey, the then premier, at a time when four hunger strikers had already died. Republicans seized these occasions as further opportunities of publicising the prisoners' cause.

In the event, the Irish electorate, where given the opportunity rallied to the hunger strikers. In Fermanagh/South Tyrone, Bobby Sands, then 41 days on hunger strike, gained 30,492 votes on April 10, 1981, and was elected as MP to the Westminster parliament in what was then the clearest rebuttal of the British government's attempt to criminalise the struggle and politically isolate republicans from the people.

In the August by-election which resulted from Bobby's death, Owen Carron, his election agent, was then elected to the same seat on an increased majority of 31,273 votes. Carron's intervention was instanced by the on-going H-Block campaign and the legislation passed by the British Parliament after Sands' death which prevented prisoners from becoming parliamentary candidates.

In the Free State general elections in June '81, the electoral intervention of H-Block prisoner candidates caused the ousting of the incumbent government and the election of two H-Block prisoners to the Free State parliament, Leinster House. Between them the prisoner candidates gained some 40,000 votes. All of those candidatures were on the basis of the H-Block campaign and not as members of the Republic Movement.

From those electoral interventions and in conjunction with our ongoing review of policy and analysis of the struggle, Sinn Fein's electoral strategy evolved. It is perhaps necessary at this point to explain the Sinn Fein attitude to the various elected assemblies in Britain and Ireland. Republicans refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the London or Dublin government authority. That refusal is based on the refusal by those governments to accept the democratic wishes of the Irish people as expressed in the last all-Ireland election in 1918, when Sinn Fein won 78 out of 105 seats, and on the armed enforcement of the partition of our own country by the British government in direct contradiction of those wishes. The Sinn Fein constitution forbids any member to take his/her seat in any of the partitionist assemblies in London, Dublin or Belfast. Sinn Fein candidates, therefore, contest such elections on an abstentionist basis.

At our annual convention in 1981, where the electoral strategy was intensely debated, there was some opposition from members who have an inherent suspicion, based on historical facts, of such a strategy. The majority however were won to such a course of action by the soundness of the debate and perhaps to no little degree by our National Director of Publicity, Denny Morrison, who at the height of the debate asked: «Who objects to our liberating Ireland with an Armalite in one hand and a ballot paper in the other?»

Since then we have participated in several elections. In the elections to the Stormont Assembly in Belfast in October '82, Sinn Fein gained 64,191 votes, winning five seats. This represented 35% of the nationalist vote in the occupied six counties. In the Westminster elections in June '83, we increased that vote by 60%, gaining 102,701 votes or 43.5% of the nationalist vote in the six counties. The remaining 56.5% of the nationalist vote went to the reformist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). Our electoral strategy must, of course, involve Sinn Fein in attempting to replace that party as the majority nationalist voice. We can never, of course, hope to totally erode the SDLP vote as a substantial part of their electoral vote comes from the nationalist middle class whose interests cannot be served by a radical republican party.

Sinn Fein has also won three out of four municipal by-elections which we have contested in the past fourteen months.

In June of this year, we contested the direct elections to the EEC parliament on the basis of opposition to EEC membership and NATO. We contested the elections both in the occupied six counties and in the Free State. In the six counties we maintained our percentage share of a reduced poll, getting 91,000 votes. The SDLP leader had a substantial increase in his vote as a result of 30,000 unionist voters casting their votes for the nominally nationalist SDLP to ensure a defeat for Sinn Fein. However we do not believe that they can sustain that vote and especially not in next year's municipal elections when we shall witness the most important election to date in the struggle for political representation of the nationalist people in the six counties.

In the Free State we polled 54,672 votes in the EEC elections, giving us an all-Ireland total of 146,148 votes, representing 8.09% of all first preference votes cast throughout Ireland. Fianna Fail, which is the largest party in the country and which gained most votes in the EEC elections, polled 438,946 votes, representing 24.31% of all first preference votes cast. So clearly we still have much work to do both organisationally and in making our policies relevant to all our people, especially in the Free State.

IRA operations have continued abreast with Sinn Fein's electoral strategy and it would seem that there is an ongoing refinement of their operations for maximum overall political effect.

On international solidarity...

Irish republicanism has always been internationalist in its outlook, an outlook which is probably best summed up by James Connolly who was executed by the British for his part in the 1916 rising against British rule in Ireland: «We mean to be free, and in every friend of tyranny we recognise our enemy, though he were as Irish as our hills.» And it is probably best evidenced in the IRA volunteers who gave their lives in the International Brigades fighting the fascists in the Spanish Civil War.

Today we correctly identify with oppressed and nationally dispossessed throughout the world. Solidarity, because of resources and geography, is all too often restricted to publicis-

ing other struggles and moral support which we recognise as being of little comfort to the victims of Shatila, Kassinga or British imperialism in Ireland.

We particularly identify with our Palestinian brothers and sisters whose national dispossession, like our own problems, is rooted in the imperialist duplicity of the British government.

We have had a shared history: imperialist oppression.

We have a shared experience: struggle

We shall have a shared future: victory.

What has been the British response to the growing strength of the Republican Movement?

British policy in Ireland has meant the gradual combining, over a period of years, of all parts of the British government machinery in pursuit of its desired objective which is the maintenance of the status quo in Ireland for ideological, strategic and economic reasons. This has meant the employment of political, social, economic and military initiatives backed up by a well-developed psychological warfare apparatus.

Politically it appears to bring about a settlement in the six counties, which it hopes to secure through agreement between the SDLP and the unionist parties - the consent of the Dublin government requiring no more than SDLP agreement. Initially this meant the introduction of some of the more obviously necessary political reforms, which in no way threatened the British occupation itself, in an attempt to gain nationalist support and politically isolate republicanism.

Militarily they set about attempting the total defeat of the IRA. In its politico-military relationships the British army was in the ascendancy with disastrous results for the British government's plans. British army excesses against the nationalist population, in combination with a murder campaign directed against nationalists by loyalist murder gangs, destroyed any benefits which the minor reforms may have gained for the British government.

Despite this, the SDLP's desperation for a share of power led them, with the support of the Dublin government, into an alliance with a section of the unionists in 1974. Ironically this attempt at a settlement suitable to British requirements was thwarted by loyalist paramilitaries and the ultra-reactionary section of unionist politicians who had maintained the six counties for the British government for over fifty years. In the intervening years all other efforts at bringing such a situation about again failed, although at present another attempt is in embryonic form.

Over that period the British have refined their politico-military strategy but with the same ultimate objective. Politically they have continued to seek the support of the would-be opinion makers of the nationalist middle class while attempting, to some extent, to be more selective in their application of oppression; with republican political and military activists being more accurately targeted for assassination and the prison camps. The activities of the loyalist murder gangs, over which British intelligence either has control or strong influence, were tailored to meet British intelligence goals: their attempted assassination of Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and five other members of Sinn Fein some months ago being an example.

«The Law» according to Brigadier Gerard Kitson, the chief theorist of British counterrevolutionary action, «should be no more» than a cover for the disposal of «unwanted members of the society». And so, in several variations, it has been used in Ireland to remove those who are opposed to the British occu-

pation. The latest variation has been the use of paid perjurers as «crown witnesses» against republicans in the special juryless Diplock courts. Several hundreds of people have fallen victim to this practice so far.

Militarily the British hope to reduce the intensity of revolutionary force to a level which is «acceptable», that is, to a level which cannot prevent the development of a political climate in which the SDLP and the unionists can successfully collaborate in a manner which alienates as few nationalists as possible.

The theory is good but the practice is somewhat different and underestimates the will of the Irish people to be free. The size of the Sinn Fein vote in the six counties and the active support of the people, that have sustained fifteen years of IRA armed resistance, testify to that. Nationalists are already alienated and will not lie down.

In the face of the British imperialist policy, can you comment on the political development and problems faced by the Republican Movement?

In the early years of this phase of the struggle for liberation, some thought that it would be short in duration. Events such as the British negotiated truces with the IRA in 1972 and 1975 tended to support this view. Indeed it was not for some years after this that it was fully realised that the struggle was going to be of a protracted nature.

Moreover, it took some time to realise that political work and military activity in isolation -sometimes even in contradiction- from each other could not bring about a British withdrawal and the establishment of a unitary Irish state. On top of this is the problem of the vastly differing conditions, created by partition, between the occupied six counties and the Free State. In the six counties British imperialism is evident every day in the presence of British forces patrolling our streets. In the Free State, while the majority of the population aspire to a united Ireland, successive governments, which the majority of people also view as legitimate, see such a state as a threat to their own power, privilege and wealth. So while the Dublin government pays lip service to Irish unity, in practice they set about the suppression of republicanism.

These are but some of the major problems which republicans have had to encounter in formulating policy and a strategy for national liberation. The first hurdle to be crossed was breaking out of the political isolation into which both the London and Dublin governments were trying to push us. This we have been fairly successful in countering in the six counties but as is evident in our vote in the Free State, at the European elections in June, we face a major political task there. It is there we have been concentrating a great deal of effort in building our organisation, reviewing and updating policies to make them more relevant to passive supporters of Irish unity whose more immediate concern -in the absence of obvious symbols of British imperialism- is daily economic survival: the working class and small farmers, the socially and economically deprived.

Militarily, the IRA has no illusions about their capabilities. In several interviews over the years they have acknowledged that they can never aspire to a military defeat of the British army. Rather, they say they have set themselves the task of making Britain's occupation as costly as possible in terms of both finance and British soldiers' lives in an attempt to bring about a set of circumstances where social and political forces, not least of which is the British population itself, will force a British withdrawal.

In brief, it is Sinn Fein's task to organise and mobilise the Irish people in active political opposition to British imperialism and all its effects on the Irish people. It is the IRA's task to persuade the British people and their government that it is time to leave.

What has been the policy of the Free State towards the Republican Movement?

Since the inception of the state, successive Free State governments have been consistently opposed to the Republican Movement. Throughout its 63 year history they have lent themselves to the suppression of republicanism in their effort to collaborate with the British.

In the counterrevolution of 1922-23, they arbitrarily executed 77 republican prisoners in direct reprisal for IRA actions. Republicans have been interned without charge or trial in the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. This is despite the fact that for decades now the IRA has strictly forbidden military action by its members in the Free State. In the last decade it has imprisoned hundreds of republicans through its special non-jury courts. Under Section 31 of its Broadcasting Act, it is illegal to broadcast an interview with a member of Sinn Fein or the IRA on television or radio. Other acts of collaboration include the arrest and trial of republicans for military activities conducted in the occupied six counties or Britain. Several republicans who escaped from Belfast Gaol in 1981 are now serving long prison sentences in a Free State gaol for daring to escape from a British prison. Gerry Tuite who escaped from Brixton Prison in London, is serving a long sentence for bombing operations carried out in London, while one of the 19 republicans who escaped from Long Kesh's H-Blocks last year was arrested some months ago and awaits a similar fate. More recently they have begun to extradite republicans into the hands of the British to face trial on allegations of involvement in military activities against the British forces in the six counties. For some time now the Free State government has been spending more money per head of population on protecting the British-imposed border than the British government itself does.

In 1921, the British Lord Birkenhead predicted that the creation of the Free State would «protect British interests in Ireland with an economy of English lives». He appears to have been right. The British government talks imperialist and acts imperialist. Free State governments talk nationalist but act imperialist. And the reasons are simple. The two major parties in the Free State -Fianna Fail and Fine Gael- are conservative, aligning themselves, for instance, in the European parliament with Gaullists and Christian Democrats, respectively. Government of the state has alternated between these two conservative parties with Fine Gael sometimes forced into coalition with the smaller ineffective Labour Party which is social democratic in outlook and an affiliate of the Socialist International. Politics in the Free State have not evolved into left and right as is the case with the rest of western Europe. Nor can they while the country remains partitioned. The conservatives' interests are best maintained in a partitioned Ireland.

Currently the Free State government is involved in discussion with the British government aimed at bringing about a settlement within the partition set-up, which they hope will cater for Irish nationalists in the occupied zone by providing some symbolic form of national identity in an ongoing bid to dilute the relevance of republicanism.

The Free State government's invitation to Ronald Reagan to visit Ireland earlier this year speaks volumes of its domestic and international outlook.

Britain

Miners' Strike

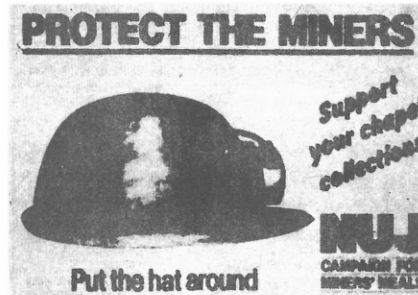
We were very pleased to receive the following article from Bill James, member of the National Union of Mineworkers, writing in his personal capacity. In printing it, we heartily echo the closing words of his manuscript: VICTORY TO THE MINERS !

To overseas observers of the political and industrial situation in Britain, particularly in regards to the epic struggle of the miners, circumstances may not appear quite as clear as they should. I think a very brief history will be of great help to readers of this article.

Shortly after the last war, the coal industry consisted of about a thousand pits and employed nearly a million men; it was taken into public ownership by the pre-war Labour administration in recognition of the fact that it was an important national asset and that under previous private ownership continual demands for subsidies were being made to compensate for bad management and lost profits. Since that time the industry has been run by an appointed board in the interests of monopoly capitalism; in fact, it has on many occasions been referred to as «state monopoly capitalism», like other so-called nationalised industries designed to serve the interests of private profit.

Since that time and particularly with the increase in world oil production, which was available to «the West» at very low prices, and the vastly increased use of oil-based fuel for the production of energy and motive transport power, the coal industry has been subject to enormous cutbacks in the number of pits and therefore also in the number of men working in them. These facts together with the vastly improved technology, which in turn has increased productivity to unprecedented levels, has reduced our industry to less than 200 pits and employing less than 200,000 men.

Much of this closure programme was carried out during the 1960s under the chairmanship of Lord Robens and against the advice of the National Union of Mineworkers, who warned of the folly of closing pits in favour of cheap oil, for they had the foresight to see that one day the oil-producing states would demand a greater cut of the cake. This as we all know has indeed happened, making oil at this time up to fifty percent more expensive than coal. During this



time miners' incomes were eroded to a totally unacceptable level which eventually resulted in the strikes of 1972 and 1974.

Since 1974, when the miners won substantial increases in wages and helped to bring about the downfall of the Tory Government under the leadership of Edward Heath, once again their wages have been and are being eroded, their basic grade rates being substituted by divisive incentive bonus schemes introduced by back-door methods and the use of the High Courts by right-wing leaders.

With the further threatened closure programmes of the Tory Government and the election of a progressive leadership in the National Union of Mineworkers, we are once again in the position of having to take industrial action, not only to save jobs but our communities and our industry. The President of our union, Mr. Arthur Scargill, warned before being elected of a massive closure programme amidst shouts of «lies», «rubbish», «it doesn't exist» from our enemies, but time and events have proved him correct.

Today the British miners and indeed the British working class are faced with a far more sinister attack on their well being, the enemy being the same, but the stakes very much higher. Today we are faced by a vindictive right-wing extremist administration who have made all possible preparations for confrontation with the working people and their elected representatives for the purpose of propping up their outdated and ailing system.

The coal miners' strike has been going on since 11th March of this year. A vicious attack has been waged by the media against the National Union of Mineworkers, its leadership and the strike itself. This has affected support from other unions, but a majority of the miners have supported the strike. Picket line violence was provoked by the police who were sent out in enormous force. As a result, 6000 miners have been arrested; five miners are still in hospital in life-supporting machines; quite a few others have suffered broken limbs. The financial loss caused by the strike to date is £20 million weekly from using gas instead of coal as fuel, and £400-500 weekly in the cost of policing.

The Political Significance

It will be common knowledge to many people, particularly those active in the labour and trade union movement, that the Tories and their backers have no regard for the organised working class and have an age long desire to render them impotent and unable to represent the people that elected them. With the deepening crisis of monopoly capitalism, the need to expedite this onslaught has become more and more urgent as far as the Tories are concerned. It is in this context that we must observe the titanic struggle being waged by the miners and their supporters, and attach the political significance that it so richly deserves.

It is worthy of note, and much to their everlasting shame, that previous Labour administrations have participated in these attacks whether it was in the form of Barbara Castles «In Place of Strife» or attempts to hamstring free collective bargaining by so-called «Social Contracts» etc., based on the assumption that high wages are the cause of inflation and therefore responsible for unemployment.

Many people will agree that this hatred, particularly of the miners, has magnified itself as a result of the historic victories in 1972 and 1974; as a result the Tories and their backers have schemed to seek revenge on the miners and in the process to pave the way for the destruction of the whole trade union movement, the only opposition to the draconian economic measures that they wish to impose on the ordinary working people, to enable them to ride out the crisis that is inherent in their system to a lesser or greater degree at all times.

The Heath Government's attempts

to neuter the trade unions with the Industrial Relations Act failed because of the policy of non-compliance adopted by the Trade Congress. The groundwork for that act in part was a campaign by the Tory media to convince the nation that trade unions were «too powerful» and therefore warranted laws to curtail their activities.

One of the first overt indications of what the Tories were up to was the Ridley Report of 1978, the implications of which are only now becoming apparent. Published in *The Economist* of 27th May 1978, over a year before Thatcher's election, it suggested six points to be considered: (1) The build-up of coal stocks. (2) Plans to import large amounts of coal. (3) To encourage road haulage employers to take on non-union labour. (4) For dual coal / oil-fired power stations. (5) Changes to social security payments to strikers. (6) A large mobile police force. All these points have in fact been carried out to the letter as the miners and their families have discovered to their cost.

Since Thatcher's election in June 1979, we have witnessed the introduction of anti-trade union legislation, not on a wholemeal basis like the infamous Industrial Relations Act, but on a piecemeal basis, culminating in total to legislation far more draconian, legislation that allows the judiciary to interfere in the democracy of our union and to bankrupt it for non-compliance with their diktat. We have also seen the frightening increase in the power of the police as well as a substantial increase in their numbers. One of the first policies to be carried out by the Tories was to award the police a handsome wage increase.

The Nuclear Catch

In December 1979, the Secretary of State for Energy announced the government's nuclear power intentions which were to construct one nuclear power station of the pressurised water type (P.W.R.) every year for ten years from 1982 on; at the same time they authorised the construction of two advanced gas-cooled reactors at Heysham and Thorness. It is estimated that one P.W.R. will remove 2 1/2 million tonne capacity from the industry which in turn will mean 5,000 miners' jobs. Twelve such projects therefore will remove up to 60,000 miners' jobs.

On 23rd October 1979, two months before the announcement of their nuclear programme, a leaked cabinet document noted that «a nuclear programme

would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity generation from disruption by industrial action by coalminers and transport workers». Also in 1979, Mrs. Thatcher was heard to comment: «We will rid Britain of every vestige of socialism». We must regard this as a major threat to almost every democratic gain the working people have enjoyed and struggled for in the past.

It is quite clear that one of the weapons the Tories are going to use to smash the miners is the increased use of nuclear power. It is not just a question of the immediate closure of the five named pits or even the much talked about «20» pits which represents Mr. Mc-Gregor's so-called 12% uneconomic capacity, but a long term attack which would result in the loss of over half our industry and up to a hundred thousand jobs up to the turn of the century. We must also recognise that many jobs outside the industry will also be lost, like railmen, busmen, transport and mining machinery to name but a few.

It is extremely difficult to argue a case for nuclear power on economic grounds or social preference. Contrary to Central Electricity Board claims, nuclear power is far more expensive than good old king coal, and it is plain for all to see the problems being created by nuclear waste, its disposal and the fact that it is being washed up on our beaches and polluting our seas to the extent where the leukemia incidence in some areas is considerably above the national average. What of the future? How will we dispose of nuclear power stations when they have completed their useful life? Will they remain an edifice to man's folly like Three Mile Island at Harrisburg in the U.S.A.? Three Mile Island exposes the risks of possible catastrophic situations which would pale into insignificance any mining disaster the world has ever known. Are we to sacrifice an immense indigenous asset for this form of generation which only has two by-products: nuclear waste and the materials for expanding nuclear arsenals.

It is fact that the U.S.A. has abandoned many nuclear projects on grounds of expense and danger to the environment, and is once again basing its energy policy on coal. Many countries are also basing their energy policies on coal even though they enjoy no appreciable coal reserves, unlike Britain which is built on coal.

Returning to the economic arguments for closing pits, even a moder-

ately close scrutiny of National Coal Board and government claims proves them to be without any real foundation. If we can keep our comments to the so-called 12% uneconomic capacity which they claim is costing the veritable taxpayer some £275 millions per annum, closures on this scale would mean the loss of 40,000 miners' jobs and probably up to 35,000 other jobs outside, but connected to the industry, it would also mean the loss of over £500 million worth of coal each year. The cost of redundancy payments, unemployment benefits and transfer costs, where and if they apply, together with the loss to the exchequer of income tax revenue, national insurance contributions and so on, will it is estimated add up to about £345 million per annum. It is quite clear that to close pits would cost twice as much as to keep them open.

We must also not forget that the majority of these pits are rendered «uneconomic» by lack of investment, the greater part of investment being pumped into the super pits with the view to privatisation at some later date.

It is generally accepted, even by the National Coal Board, that the British deep mined coal industry is one of, if not the most, efficient industry in the world as far as actual production cost is concerned, but it does face unfair competition by highly subsidised foreign markets and a market suppressed by Tory economic policies.

Now returning to the Tory political thinking behind all this. It is quite clear that the miners are facing a two-pronged attack: first the use of nuclear power to decimate the industry down to one of super pits, and the other, facing the trade union movement as a whole, the repressive anti-trade union laws being introduced and used on an ever increasing scale, particularly by the sequestration of assets.

It is apparent to many in the trade union and labour movement in this country, and indeed abroad, that a victory to the miners is paramount to the interests of the working class as a whole, although they may not be in possession of all the facts about the industry that have brought about the present situation.

Many, I think, hoped for the day when the miners would take up the gauntlet with all the power at their disposal. Many doubted the wisdom of commencing industrial action in March with the spring and summer in front of them, but the miners were quite clearly

manipulated into that position by a government hell bent on confrontation with the trade unions, underestimating the degree of fight-back that would be engendered. It must be said at this time that the struggle would not have gone on for as long as it has without the tremendous support we have received from the working class movement as a whole. But also, it must be said that it need not have gone on as long as it has if certain sections of the trade union movement led by bad reactionary leadership had not been dragging their feet or refusing to recognise the importance of ensuring victory for the miners. Much of this attitude stems from notions of self-preservation and interest. Those people must be won.

The trade union and labour movement have suffered many setbacks in the last few years. Apathy has prevailed, but the miners have started to change all that. Many trade union activists and

leaders have been born out of this strike, quelling the doubts many of us had about the commitment and determination, particularly of our young men. These doubts have been proved without foundation by the performance they have put up, equal to any struggles of the past. We have seen many other organisations such as C.N.D., Anti-Apartheid, ethnic minorities, old age pensioners, being able to relate their problems to that of the miners. The miners hold out the hand of solidarity to other sections of workers in dispute, such as the Barking Hospital cleaners who have been on strike longer than the miners themselves. We are all being beaten with the same stick. We must all recognise the significance of the involvement of the miners' wives and women in support groups the length and breadth of the country. Without them, also, the miners would have crumbled.

A victory to the miners will in the very least be an inspiration to the working class as a whole and will cause the Tories to think again of pursuing further attacks on the trade unions and our democratic systems in the shape of the abolition of metropolitan councils, the political levy, the election deposit, privatisation, the assault on the Health Service and welfare state, the social wage, job losses, etc.; the list is endless.

A 50p per week levy paid by every trade unionist would remove the possibility of the Tories starving us back. More commitment by the working class is what is needed to ensure victory. A great man once said about the progress to a socialist society, as, «two steps forward and one step back». Let us ensure that the miners strike of 1984 will be three steps forward to a higher and better society; let us hammer a nail into the coffin of reaction and despair. ●

IOJ Call for Peace

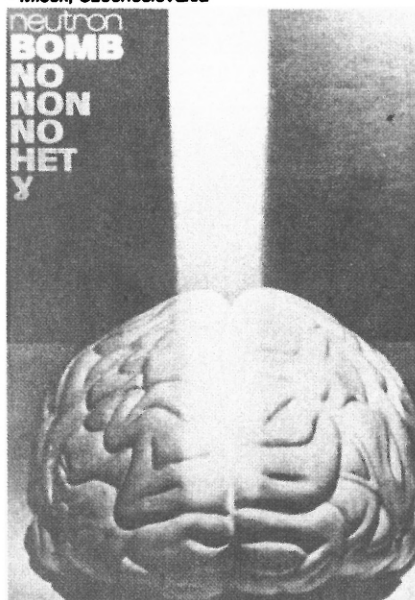
The 20th session of the Executive Committee of the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) was held in New Delhi, September 20-23rd. Among those attending was Comrade Bassam Abu Sharif, member of the PFLP's Politbureau, Vice-president in charge of international relations for the Palestinian Writers and Journalists Union, and IOJ Vice-president.

The main focus of the IOJ Executive Committee session was the struggle for peace. As stated in the main declaration adopted at the session: «...because of the adventurous, militaristic policies of world imperialism, led by the Reagan Administration, a real threat of thermonuclear war now hangs over the world...Imperialism attempts to involve all the new countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the arms race, in aggressive blocs. Along with its militaristic policies, imperialism is pursuing a punitive monetarist policy which is responsible for the unprecedented debt crisis in many developing countries, a crisis which has increased the social and economic hardship of hundreds of millions of people around the world. Enormous means and resources that could help solve global problems related to starvation, disease and illiteracy are being senselessly wasted on the arms race instigated by imperialism.

«A substantial element of the present crusade by imperialism is the ever

more reckless use of psychological warfare for which the mass media are being increasingly misused. The press, radio, television and news agencies of West-

- Mišek, Czechoslovakia



ern countries interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states, causing hostility and mistrust among nations. Their aim is to mask the attempts by the United States government to achieve hegemony, to give the impression that the insane arms race is something normal, that military strength is the only form of policy-making, and that chauvinism and racism are legal in international relations.»

While condemning these imperialist policies, the IOJ expressed support to the peace proposals made by the socialist and developing countries. In particular, it advocated the idea of transforming the Indian Ocean into a region of peace. The declaration stressed the task of democratic and progressive journalists to play an important role in the struggle for peace.

Call off IFJ meeting in Jerusalem!

At the session, attention was called to the fact that the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), together with its member organization in 'Israel', is planning to hold a regular meeting of the IFJ Bureau in Jerusalem in November 1984. The IOJ Executive Committee judged that such a meeting would violate the norms and resolutions of the United Nations, and branded the decision as a provocation. In a special resolution, it protested against the flaunting of UN decisions and called on the IFJ not to hold its Bureau meeting in Jerusalem. ●

On Indira Gandhi's Death

To Prevent India's Fragmentation

The bullets that were fired by the Sikh guards not only put end to the life of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, but also threatened to end the firm grip of the Congress Party on India.

However, it is not that the Congress Party had such a strong grip on the affairs of the Indian subcontinent until Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. On the contrary, the Congress Party, which had suffered splits in the past few years, was day by day losing control. It was due to the extraordinary capacities of Mrs. Gandhi that the party had managed to retain power. The party has been plagued by serious contradictions. This had a negative influence on its ability to run the affairs of India, which suffers increasing social, economic and political problems.

The contradictions inside the party stemmed from the differences in the points of view between the old leading members and the growing new generation. These points of view concerned the basic economic and social policies of the Congress Party. Parallel to the augmentation of internal contradictions, the Congress Party had been losing influence in several regions of India.

The Congress Party established its power as the ruling party in all regions of India immediately after independence. For many years, the program of the party, which was mainly one of national independence, managed to survive. Yet later with the accumulation of social, economic and ethnic problems, the party's program became unacceptable to broad sectors of the Indian people and even to the young generation of the Congress Party.

However, all the alarm signals failed to influence the attitude of the Congress Party leadership which insisted on retaining the role of the party as *the* ruling one at a time when other parties were growing and acquiring popular support in various regions of India. The program became insufficient and the party became weaker, relatively speaking; it was no longer the indisputable ruling party.

These developments were due to the accumulating problems of India. As became apparent in the seventies and

eighties, these problems required different programs and methods. Politically speaking, India came under a great deal of pressure from the USA, because of the non-aligned stance practiced by the Congress Party. Economically, the line chosen by the Congress Party helped to develop India's industry and thus led to an expansion of the working class. At the same time, the party's policy did not restrict private enterprise and investment. The contradictions between the public and private sector grew to the extent that the big bourgeoisie started to pressure for further concessions on both the economic and political levels. Throughout all this, Mrs. Gandhi, with her abilities, managed to maintain the balance. Yet this did not change the fact that the Congress Party was losing its ability to lead and that social problems were increasing.

The assassination of Indira Gandhi, in a single blow, brought all these contradictions dramatically to the surface. Inside the Congress Party, Rajiv, her son and successor, supports and is supported by the advocates of a more «open» economic policy. This means that the contradictions between the supporters of his mother's policies and his

own supporters will develop rapidly. The eventual result will be the further weakening of the Congress Party, while social and economic problems will become more acute. Rajiv, who is known to be pro-Western, will encounter increasing difficulties with no Indira Gandhi to steer things.

Thus, India stands at a crossroads. The program of the Congress Party will not suffice to cool the problems of the country. While other political forces are not capable of leading the country, if any one force insists on imposing its own program, India will face fragmentation. The only solution for the present period is the establishment of a coalition between the Congress and other democratic parties on the basis of a joint program to solve some of India's problems and maintain its non-aligned status.

This has importance which extends beyond India's internal situation, since India constitutes a decisive factor in the regional balance of power. United, non-aligned India has presented an obstacle to imperialism's hegemonic ambitions in this strategic area, especially by being a counterweight to the dictatorship in Pakistan and its role in the US military plans. Accordingly, India's fragmentation would mean a change in the regional balance of power which would be favorable to imperialism and local reaction.



US Politics and the Struggle Against Zionism

The following article was submitted to us by Dale Borgeson of the «Line of March» editorial board. «Line of March» is an anti-imperialist journal published in the USA.

Zionism is one of the most potent instruments of imperialism in the world today, a dangerous threat to world peace and the freedom of the Arab peoples. It is also a major source of opportunism within the U.S. itself that must be confronted in order to build a stable progressive and working class movement within this country.

However, it is quite evident that a broad pro-Zionist consensus is still a fundamental fact of U.S. political life. Since 1948, every U.S. presidential election campaign has seen Republican and Democratic nominees vying for the title of «staunchest friend and defender of Israel.» Liberal Democrats often outdo conservative Republicans in the bidding, as happened this year when both Mondale and Hart challenged Reagan to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. And the U.S. labor movement is also militantly pro-Zionist.

Such a dismal 36 year political history prompts the question of how this pro-Zionist consensus will ever be broken. What are the prospects for cracking, and eventually breaking down, this Zionist consensus? And why is this such a pressing task?

Cracks in the Zionist consensus

Since 1982, two major developments have produced initial cracks in the Zionist consensus. The first was public reaction against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, with its subsequent bombardment of Beirut and massacre of Palestinian refugees. The grisly TV scenes of Israeli planes bombing civilian housing projects and the media accounts of Israeli complicity in the Sabra and Shatila massacres dealt a heavy blow to the vaunted Zionist «moral authority», which had been so painstakingly built up using the memory of the Holocaust.

Lebanon produced a crisis among U.S. liberal supporters of Zionism, torn between their desire to defend Israel and their shock at the brutality of the invasion. Unfortunately, the U.S. anti-imperialist movement was not able to set an anti-Zionist political pole within the broad anti-invasion front, due to its own problems of conciliating liberal Zionism. As a result, most of the people propelled into political activity by the invasion focused

their anger on Begin and Sharon for having «betrayed the true democratic traditions of Zionism,» and did not come to a general critique of Zionism itself. Still, the fact that many people stepped forward to criticize Israeli «excesses» was a new and important development.

The second major development was the presidential campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson and the emergence of the Rainbow Coalition as a potent progressive political force. Jackson is the first major U.S. presidential candidate ever to put the issue of peace in the Middle East and Palestinian national rights squarely on the national political agenda. His trip to Syria heightened the pressure on the Reagan Administration to withdraw U.S. troops from Lebanon, and his open support for a Palestinian homeland challenged the traditional knee jerk support for Israel by the other Democratic candidates. Jackson's electoral success proved that millions of Americans, particularly Blacks, would support his Middle East position and opened up public opinion as a whole to further education on Middle East politics.

Ruling class reacts to Jackson

For his efforts, Reverend Jackson was declared «Public Enemy Number One» by U.S. based Zionists as well as by the U.S. ruling class. Even the liberal wing of the ruling class accused Jackson, in the words of the New York Times, of «collaboration with the enemies of democracy in embarrassments of the government of the U.S.» And the establishment press as a whole outdid itself attempting to discredit Jackson, especially by its unrelenting attacks on his unfortunate Hymietown remark. As usual, such attacks were made in the guise of opposition to anti-Semitism but were little more than a demagogic attempt to stop the Rainbow Coalition and discredit its position on the Middle East.

Of course, ruling class hostility towards Jesse Jackson does not stem simply from his Middle East stance. They are disturbed by what they see as his all-sided role as a spokesman for the «dispossessed and dis-enfranchised» of U.S. society. His staunch program of peace and justice has brought

Re-enactment of the Sabra-Shatila massacre in Austin, Texas, staged as part of this year's commemoration sponsored by the November 29th Coalition.



Jackson and his supporters into sharp opposition with the main thrust of imperialist policy on almost every major issue of the day nationally and internationally.

Yet it was no accident that Jackson's Middle East position gave rise to a particularly sharp polarization with the U.S. bourgeoisie. By opposing U.S. intervention and Israeli expansionism, and by calling for negotiations with the PLO and recognition of the right to a Palestinian homeland, Jackson is throwing up a major political and ideological challenge to a strategic vital interest of both imperialism and Zionism.

Jackson's basic point is that if we are to have peace and justice in the Middle East, the U.S. must pursue principled and friendly relations with the 22 Arab states and their 100 million people, and not treat the Arabs as enemies while maintaining exclusive ties with Israel and its 4 million Jews. This is a direct hit on U.S. imperialism's Middle East strategy of using Israel as its main local policeman against the Arab people's striving toward national democracy. And it challenges forthrightly the racist ideological dehumanization of the Arabs that justifies that strategy.

Equally important, the Rainbow Coalition has put the Middle East issue squarely on the progressive agenda, affirming that one cannot be a reliable advocate of peace and justice unless one is prepared to fight the imperialist/Zionist axis and support Palestinian national rights. The campaign showed that the role of the «dispossessed,» especially the minority communities, in the struggle against Zionism cannot be underestimated.

These are signal developments given the longstanding conciliation of liberal Zionism by many U.S. progressives. Zionism is a powerful political and ideological bulwark of the bourgeoisie that stands at the juncture of racism, national chauvinism, and jingoism. Yet it is particularly insidious and widespread, even among the progressives, because it parades under the banner of «the struggle against anti-Semitism.»

Zionism is therefore a mortal danger both to world peace and to the struggle for democracy and socialism internal to the U.S. This vantage point is absolutely key in order to properly clarify the stakes involved and the formidable class interests that must be confronted in this bitter fight.

Imperialism's stake in the region

Jackson's Middle East position touches an exposed raw nerve of U.S. global strategy. One of the cardinal tenets of this strategy is that keeping the Middle East firmly in the imperialist orbit is absolutely essential to the survival of the imperialist system as a whole. Within this, Israel is assigned the role of chief local surrogate. Israel is, in essence, a military garrison state charged with defending U.S. dominance in the Middle East from the threat posed by the Arab people's national liberation struggle.

There are two basic reasons why the Middle East is a region of such qualitatively special interest to U.S. imperialism. The first, of course, has to do with Middle East oil, though not simply because of gigantic U.S. oil company profits. The bigger picture is that, since WW II when oil replaced coal as the main energy source, the advanced capitalist economies of Western Europe and Japan have become fundamentally dependent on Middle East oil. 65% of Western Europe's petroleum comes from the Middle East, as does 80% of Japan's.

While the U.S. itself is not directly dependent on Middle East oil, its concern is no less compelling. Without ready access to Middle East oil, the entire world imperialist economy



Jesse Jackson at a press conference with Barbara Lubin, of Jews for Jackson, and Osama Doumani, of Arab-Americans for Jackson.

would be qualitatively destabilized, including the U.S. economy itself. Moreover, the U.S. role as military and political guarantor of oil to Western Europe and Japan gives it enormous leverage over its erstwhile allies. After all, the U.S. still largely controls Middle Eastern oil through the refining process and transportation.

The second, and more longstanding strategic stake in the Middle East has to do with geopolitics. The region's location at the intersection of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and the great waterways of the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean means that it holds sway over key naval and trade routes. It is thus of inestimable political, military, and economic value. Not only does the U.S. use this leverage against its imperialist rivals, but also as a threat to the Soviet Union's vital access to the Mediterranean.

For these reasons, the U.S. sees the Middle East as a critical battleground in the international class struggle, a front which it is openly prepared to «defend» with the full weight of its economic influence and military arsenal, including nuclear weaponry.

However, unable to impose outright colonial forms, the U.S. must seek and cultivate allies in the region to serve as its surrogates. In addition to Israel, its commitment to the reactionary Arab regimes in the area—especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia—is massive. These regimes, while standing in conflict with Israel's unrelenting expansion into their territories, are nonetheless completely tied to imperialism. Although they posture as champions of Arab nationalism, the reactionary Arab classes who hold power in these countries are increasingly impelled to seek a U.S.-sponsored accommodation with Israel.

Still it is the U.S./Israeli axis that stands as the centerpiece of imperialist defense of its massive interests in the region. The U.S. commitment to Israel is staggering, constituting the largest single sector of all U.S. military and economic assistance. More than \$3 billion per year, nearly one-third of the entire U.S. foreign aid budget, goes to the land of kibbutz-owned swimming pools and Jews-only «settlement towns» to shore up U.S. influence in the Middle East. And this is supplemented by another \$2 billion from private U.S. sources.

As Joseph Harsh wrote in the Christian Science Monitor: «Few countries have ever been as dependent on another as Israel on the U.S...Israel's major weapons come from the U.S. either as gifts or on long-term, low-interest loans that few seriously expect to be repaid in full. Israel's survival is underwritten and subsidized from Washington. Without American arms Israel would soon lose the 'quantitative and qualitative advan-

tage' which President Reagan has promised to maintain for them. Without the economic subsidy Israel's credit would vanish and its economy would collapse. In other words, Israel can only do what Washington allows it to do.»

Israel's role and the logic of Zionism

What is the specific role assigned by imperialism to Israel within this struggle? Israel functions as the dominant local military power in the Middle East, responsible for frontline defense of U.S. regional domination. Its aggressive military provocations are aimed at smashing the Arab national liberation movement, particularly the PLO.

While functioning as the principal instrument of imperialism in the Middle East, the aggressive compulsions of Israeli Zionism also derives from its own aims and needs as a distinct capitalist entity. The central political drive of Zionism has always been and continues to be the establishment of an exclusivist, racialized Jewish settler state carved out of the Arab nation. This inherently requires the obliteration of the particular Arab people--the Palestinians--whose homeland was seized in order to realize Zionist ambitions.

In addition, the Zionist entity must expand in order to attain the land, water and cheap labor necessary to achieve a degree of economic viability, drive the vast majority of Palestinians into permanent exile and to disperse them as a nation. Such are the fascist underpinnings of Zionist policy vis-a-vis the Palestinians, underpinnings that do not vary from one Israeli administration to another, but are inherent in its nature and practical reality.

Zionism began in the late 1880's as one of several responses to the increasing wave of anti-Semitic pogroms terrorizing Jews across Europe. It is a classic kind of bourgeois nationalism, matching the aspirations of the Jewish bourgeoisie for a «nation» which it could rule by resorting to white settler colonialism.

From the beginning, Zionism as a political movement completely identified its cause with the emerging imperialist system in Europe. But it was not until after WWII that this effort was crowned with success. The horror of Hitler's Holocaust led many to see an exclusivist Jewish state as the only protection against genocide. But the key factor in the formation of Israel was the qualitatively increased importance of oil in the world imperialist economy which impelled the U.S. to step forward as the main guarantor of a separate Jewish state.

From the outset, terror and aggression have been unavoidable necessities for Zionist Israel. While all capitalist economies must incessantly grow to survive and prosper, this drive is grossly magnified in Israel by virtue of it being no more than a military garrison state that is unviable as an independent economic entity. Despite an annual infusion of some \$6 billion from the U.S. alone, the Israeli economy is in shambles, suffering from 400% inflation per year.

Thus, behind the absurd and inherently racist conception of a «Greater Israel» promised by God to the Jews are compelling material considerations. Access to the water of the Jordan and Litani Rivers, for example, is one of the reasons why Israel has seized and stubbornly holds on to the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Southern Lebanon. The incessant seizure of land is key to clearing the way for capitalist expansion and preparing for a hoped for increase in Jewish population.

And, as the Christian Science Monitor noted, «The final exploitable resource in the occupied territories is the block of more than 75,000 laborers who migrate daily into Israel. Their wages are much less than Jewish workers and they do not

receive the same benefits, which further reduces their cost.» In short, any Zionist hope to stabilize the Israeli economy, is premised upon aggressive expansion to attain badly needed land, water, cheap labor, and military security.

It is Israel's avid pursuit of these economic necessities; its unshakable commitment to a religious state in which non Jews have no rights that Jews are bound to respect; as well as its role as a gendarme for imperialist interests; that Israel has carried out one atrocity after another against the Palestinian and other Arab peoples. The fascist terror that now reigns in southern Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza is thus no recent aberration of the Begin-Sharon-Shamir regime, but a relentless compulsion of the inner logic and reality of Zionism.

The vulnerability of Israel

Yet this on-going Zionist terror policy toward the Palestinians and its Arab neighbors masks the inner weakness of the Israeli state. This weakness resides in the fact that Israel is a politically-imposed white settler state, which, according to the logic of Zionism, must attempt to disperse a real nation rooted in hundreds of years of development.

Immediate military security is not the main way this problem manifests itself today, as Israel is qualitatively superior militarily to its adversaries in the region. Rather, it is the gross instability of the Israeli economy that focuses all of the problems facing the Zionist settler state. The economy is totally dependent on massive and ongoing U.S. aid. Israel's huge military budget and the fact that Israel's largest industry is arms production (40%), means that huge sums of money are tied up in the defense area, where they are not producing goods for the market. This results in the capitalist world's highest inflation rate--400% per year. This high inflation is not just a temporary problem but endemic to the distorted nature of the Israeli capitalist economy.

The political impact of this economic distortion is profound. Jewish workers, concentrated in the most privileged and highly unionized jobs, are institutionally protected from the ravages of inflation by monthly cost of living allowances in their union contracts. Even so, their buying power has been steadily decreasing over the last several years. On the other hand, Palestinian workers, who make up the basic mass of the proletariat in Israel are concentrated in the least privileged, mostly non-unionized sectors, and are overwhelmingly unprotected from the inflation rate.

Political discontent among Jews over the high inflation rate is a strong pressure on Zionist leaders. This is because Zionism must be able to offer both security and prosperity in order to attract and keep its settlers. It must be able to offer to the average Jew a standard of living that is not only far superior to that enjoyed by the Palestinians and other Arabs in the region, but that is not inferior to what they enjoyed in the U.S., Western Europe and the Soviet Union before they immigrated to Israel.

Yet it is the grotesquely intense national, racial and class brutalization of the Palestinian people that produces the greatest political challenge to Israel. In response, a powerful national liberation movement has taken deep root among the Palestinians. This movement encompasses all classes, yet its backbone is a highly exploited, specially oppressed working class population. Herein lies the deep roots of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, especially its anti-imperialist forces, and the basis for the development of a highly conscious, well-organized populace. Their struggle against Zionism and for national democracy--i.e. for a democratic secular state in

Palestine--stands at the cutting edge of the Arab national liberation struggle as a whole.

Support for Israel within the U.S.

Given what is at stake, it is not surprising that the U.S. ruling class has spared no effort to promote support for Israel and Zionism within the U.S. The primary domestic effect is the continuing ideological stranglehold of Zionism among Americans, including the working class and even, to an unfortunate degree, the progressive movements.

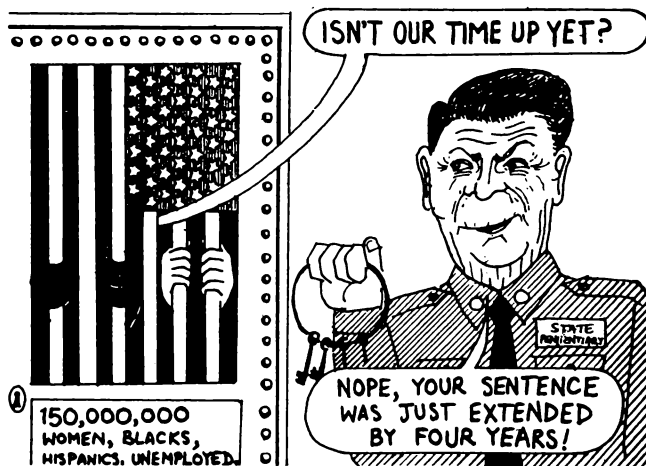
This ideological fetter is not shared by the vast majority of the world's peoples. In virtually every other country, the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly that Zionism is racism is broadly understood and supported as an accurate depiction of the Jewish exclusivity, anti-Palestinian terrorism, and attempted destruction of the national existence of the Palestinian people. Almost three times as many nations recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people than maintain normal diplomatic relations with the state of Israel.

Yet broad support and sympathy for Israel flourishes in the U.S. Zionism is here most concentrated at its sharpest in the Jewish community. Within that community today, the perceived merger between Jewish interests and those of the Israeli state is virtually complete. With the emergence of Israel, Jewish nationalism was transformed from a response to anti-Semitism to support for an oppressor, racist state. Simultaneously American Jews in the post-World War II period have been socio-economically integrated into the white majority sector of the U.S. society. And like most other white people, they have acted in most cases to maintain the privileges they derive from racism at home and super-exploitation abroad--including the Middle East.

But Zionism is by no means limited to monopoly capital, the liberal petit bourgeoisie, or the Jewish community. The leaders of organized labor--and much of its base--also pride themselves on an unflinching commitment to Israel. Politically representing only the most privileged sectors of the workforce, the AFL-CIO consistently supports imperialist ventures around the world that promise to enhance the «American Way of Life» enjoyed by its narrow constituency. It supported the war in Vietnam to the bitter end, manifests implacable hostility to the socialist camp up to and including sabotage of arms control talks, and has been a staunch friend of Israel since 1948. Just days after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the AFL-CIO executive board placed a full page ad in the New York Times proclaiming its full support for Zionist expansionism and viciously attacked critics of the invasion.

The reactionary AFL-CIO alliance with U.S. Zionism is further cemented by their joint hostility to the new thrust of the anti-racist movement. In defense of white privilege, these forces play a major role in opposing the struggle for affirmative action, for full enforcement of Voting Rights, for minority participation in the Democratic Party, etc.

To such forces, the racist parallels between Israeli and U.S. society are unmistakable. Both originated as white European settler states, founded on the decimation by any means necessary of the indigenous Indian and Palestinian populations, and both proclaimed «Manifest Destiny» over all surrounding territories to justify their unbridled expansionism. Both have erected impenetrable racial-national barriers which ensure privilege for whites and special oppression for non-whites. And both are champions of imperialism, white supremacy and anti-communism in a world increasingly dominated



by non-white peoples fighting for their liberation in conjunction with the socialist camp. In the Middle East they see themselves jointly defending «our oil» from «Arab terrorists,» «stopping the spread of communism» and defending «Western Civilization» from the «barbarians.»

Unfortunately, Zionism also penetrates deeply into the peace and other progressive movements. In the work of building a broad and multi-faceted movement against U.S.-backed dictatorships around the world, Israel is almost always exempted. The everpresent liberal Zionist threat that to challenge Israeli aggression would «split» the peace movement still serves to isolate and intimidate even fairly staunch anti-imperialists. During the Vietnam War, such forces used their positioning at the center of the anti-War movement to successfully isolate those forces who had adopted an anti-Zionist position, and to discourage others from ever seriously addressing the question. Given the strategic importance of the Middle East, the failure to challenge the U.S. role there is a major brake on the development of the peace and anti-imperialist movements within the U.S.

The Zionists have also, less successfully, worked to split the anti-racist movement. As in the Jesse Jackson campaign, they actively attempted to brand the left wing of this movement as anti-Semitic, both over the issues of Israel and over affirmative action, which they claim discriminates against Jews (and other whites).

In short, Zionism is a fundamental component of bourgeois ideology in the U.S. that serves to promote war mongering, racism and anti-communism. It is particularly insidious, though, because this version of racism and national chauvinism finds a «progressive» justification in the «defense of the national rights of the Jews.» By constantly invoking the image of the Holocaust, the Zionists seek to intimidate all critics of its rabidly imperialist, genocidal, and racist policies and to divert the progressive movement from its central anti-war and anti-racist tasks.

The fight against Zionism

Given the breadth of the pro-Zionist consensus in the U.S., who can be counted upon to take up the fight against it?

Here it is instructive to see the degree to which those who do or do not support Israel parallel almost exactly those who do and do not maintain class and racial privileges within the U.S. itself. As the Jesse Jackson campaign showed, the «disfranchised and dispossessed», based in the minority communities and encompassing the breadth of the unprivileged, basic mass of the U.S. proletariat must be viewed as the most

stable base for the struggle against Zionism. Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition have given an example of what will be required to transform the popular pro-Zionist consensus in the U.S., what forces will be key to this motion--and a glimmer of what price will be exacted by the imperialist/Zionist axis as we struggle to do so.

It is certainly true that since the invasion of Lebanon there has been a new openness among progressives in the U.S. to challenge certain of the most onerous aspects of Israeli policies. Yet the challenge to the U.S. left lies not in conciliating the widespread attempt to condemn Begin, Sharon and Shamir as aberrations from «democratic Israel» as envisioned by liberal Zionism. Rather, the goal must be to split the Zionist movement altogether, to force a break from any sort of Zionism for those forces claiming any shred of political or even moral consistency. Tactical alliances with liberal Zionism will undoubtedly have to be made to isolate Israel's drift to outright fascism, but there should be no strategic conciliation of it in the process.

In light of the dangerous rightward turn in both U.S. and Israeli policy, the stakes in this fight are quite urgent.

Tensions have heightened in the region as the Israelis have failed to crush the resistance of the Palestinian and other

Arab people. With direct U.S. involvement on the rise, new tasks are posed for the U.S. and international progressive movements. The role of the U.S. Marines on the ground in Beirut, the preparation of bases for the Rapid Deployment Force, the new military agreement with Israel, the stationing of U.S. naval armadas in the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian/Arab Gulf, are all ominous signs of an escalated U.S. military role that threatens peace not only in the region but in the world.

Thus, the struggle against Zionism is a key question, both for the international struggle against imperialism and the formation within the U.S. of a politically stable working class movement. Herein lies a focal point of our proletarian internationalist and our national tasks. This struggle challenges all the most deeply rooted race and class dynamics of U.S. capitalism, and evokes an unbridled response from the most powerful and rabidly reactionary forces in the country. For this reason it is critical that the progressive movement be built on a firm anti-Zionist basis and with a clear sense of the stakes and forces involved. Only in this way can the U.S. people be forged into a serious component part of the international struggle for peace, democracy and socialism at home and abroad.

CULTURE

Palestinian Folklore in London

On the invitation of London's municipal council and the committee for solidarity with the Palestinian people, the Palestinian folklore ensemble *Al Ard (The Land)* toured Britain in early

November, performing in several places.

In London, 900 people attended an evening performance expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause and

opposition to Zionism's racism. The *Al Ard* ensemble presented a variety of folk dances and songs, including a special dance entitled *Sabra*, depicting the massacre carried out by the Israeli occupiers and Phalangists in the camps of Beirut, in 1982. On the following days, *Al Ard* performed in Manchester and Brighton.



The Palestinian Kuffiya

Below is a short story written by Vesna Al Masharifa, a Yugoslavian friend of the Palestinian revolution, based on her experience during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Second week of Ramadan...The war in Lebanon was magnifying. The heavy burden of dark presentiments inhabited the vacancy left in the houses of families whose members were fighters in Lebanon. Ramadan's prayers and fasting permeated the hot sandy days and gloomy nights to break the unendurable uncertainty that had become the people's daily life rhythm.

In that time, Amna was in Damascus. She and part of her family had left their house in Ain al Hilweh camp near Saida, South Lebanon, after the Israeli invasion, and arrived in Damascus. Then Amna participated in social work in the Palestinian camp, Yarmouk. She was assigned to collect clothes from people in the camp for wounded comrades, and to pay visits to the Palestinian hospital, Jaffa, where she distributed cigarettes, newspapers and other personal things needed by the wounded comrades.

Every morning she would appear in her military uniform with a broad smile and the first drops of sweat on her forehead as an intimation of a new broiling day. Her curls were plastered over her eyebrows and she was always pushing them back before addressing someone. Although she was a silent person, a bit closed, her gesticulation was vehement and her lean figure moved with haste. Her eyes were set in deep hollows and always shining with tenderness and exhilaration. Everybody loved her and liked to tell her their life story. So, much of that she carried in her heart.

That morning Amna set off to the headquarters in Yarmouk to prepare things for the hospital. It was 8 a.m., but the sun was already very strong. Therefore, she kept trying to conceal herself under the shadows of the stone houses. «This street is so similar to the street where I lived in Saida», she concluded, glancing at the glittery yellow, dusty street, «but now everything there is ruined and there is only the debris of the houses sagging deeper and deeper into the ground...Who knows? Maybe our house is still undestroyed.» She rushed through the golden strip the sun had made through a crack in the wall and stumbled on a big stone which was in its shade. «Oh», she cried out, catching her toe in awkward pain, and instinctively sank down on the stone, checking to see if it was seriously hurt. There was no blood. She decided to rest for a while.

Then her attention was drawn by the excited voices coming from the other side of the street, which belonged to a group of barefooted and soiled boys around ten years old.

«What makes them so excited?» Amna was curious, trying to catch their discussion.

«Ohohoo, I am not going to be deceived this time», shouted a bowlegged boy bluntly. «Every time you need somebody to be an Israeli soldier, come along Hassan! This time I am very sure that I don't want to be...Why isn't it Ahmad this

time?!» He turned towards a skinny boy in worn-out trousers and shirt with sparkling eyes. Now Amna knew who Ahmad was, especially when he started to shout:

«I have been two times! Yes, yes, you remember? The first time you broke my head and the second time, my face was awfully scratched...»

«What do you think? To be an Israeli soldier and not be beaten?» a new voice interrupted him angrily.

«Then you be the enemy, Omar,» Ahmad was bold enough to respond without restraining his temper.

The boy named Omar snubbed him, «You know my father was killed by Israelis...»

Ahmad felt uncomfortable, trying uncertainly to keep his sombre face in the same expression.

«Oh, let us stop our quarrel,» appealed a short undernourished boy. «Let us begin our game. I suggest that whoever is chosen to be our army leader today, will propose the enemy.»

«Yes, yes, we agree,» the boys accepted.

«If you agree, I can be the leader today,» the same voice continued.

«Oh, look at him!» Hassan protested, «You were last time and now you want to be again.»

«Okay, who do you suggest?» The boy was a bit ashamed of his immodesty.

«Omar, Omar!» somebody shouted.

Omar was very pleased to hear his name and tried to hide a smile that was timidly stealing from his lips.

«Do you agree on Omar?» the same boy asked.

«Yes, yes, Omar.» The boys were sure that it was a good choice.

«Okay then, Omar, I promote you to leader of the Palestinian army,» the boy continued with visible importance.

«Okay, okay, I agree, thank you comrades,» Omar was very proud and still holding his smile. Then he cleared his throat. Somebody passed a Palestinian-kuffiya to him and he started to wrap it around his head.

«Comrades,» he resumed in a voice still hoarse, trying again to clear his throat, «Today we will begin to apply a new plan for tearing Sharon to pieces. And I am sure it will work...»

«But who will be Sharon?» somebody broke in.

«Hm...» Omar had a problem making the decision abruptly. «Well, I think it's better for somebody to volunteer himself.» He found a solution and then, silence...

«We are an army, comrades, and the enemy will not wait for us. We have to act accordingly and quickly.» Omar commenced to convince the soldiers.

At that moment a strange, squeaky laughter cut through his words. The boys and Amna as well automatically turned in the direction of the sound. The owner was a chubby boy in

short pants with big ears and reddish, mongoloid eyes. He was pointing his forefinger at Omar whose kuffiya was hanging down to the ground. Saliva drooled from his half-open mouth and his chin was rapidly becoming wet. Suddenly he realized that many eyes were watching him. He stopped his laughing and stuck out his long tongue.

«Oh, this is mad Hamada. Hamada! Hamada! Hamada! Come over here!» The children were delighted at the coming fun while their leader was rearranging his kuffiya after being insulted by Hamada's impudence.

Hamada quickly changed his bewildered face to a smile and began tottering toward the group, turning to all sides. The boys laughed and surrounded him, pinching his cheeks and mocking his outstretched tongue. Hamada was confused, alternately smiling and wrinkling his forehead.

«Hamada will be Sharon!» Omar shouted with self-confidence now that he had resolved one problem.

«Yes, yes, yes, Hamada will be Sharon,» the children agitated. While Hamada watched them embarrassed, some children had already started to shoot at him which annoyed him very much. Then he approached Omar, touching his kuffiya.

«Drop it, Hamada! It is not for you. You are Sharon. Omar was furious but Hamada stubbornly tried to drag away his kuffiya.

«Kill him! Kill him! Sharon wants to steal our kuffiya.» Omar exhorted his soldiers to improve their patriotism: «Don't let him put us to shame.»

Hamada got very excited. Omar and the other boys began to beat him, but he endured their blows, still clutching his corner of the kuffiya. Then he burst into tears.

«Airplanes!» somebody cried out, hearing the sound of a car on the neighboring street.

Amna was startled, intending to run, but she quickly calmed down and coldly noted that she was not in Saida anymore.

it from reality.

The boys were already in their shelters. Only Omar and Hamada were left in the dust, rolling over and over, each tugging at his corner of the kuffiya. Amna felt that the situation might turn into something very serious and she jumped up to separate the two brave fighters. She had pain in her toe but still she was very quickly above the wrestlers' heads.

«Stand up, both of you,» she ordered them sharply. They were still fighting but with less energy, having been surprised by her interference.

«And give me the kuffiya,» she was resolute, pulling at the third corner of the kuffiya until she had dragged it from their hands.

«Stand up quickly!» she urged them while they were trying to place their palms on the sandy ground to push themselves up. Their fingers were still convulsed and they were watching each other like harassed wolves. Hamada was crying silently.

«Sharon got help,» somebody cried from the shelter, intending to keep up the game.

«Look at Hamada, how he is crying,» another voice mocked, but with a deflated passion for play.

Hamada was startled to hear his name and then wiped his nose on his sleeve. His face was soiled by tear stains.

«Come out, you who are mocking your friend,» Amna was provoking him, watching the direction where the voice had come from. Nobody moved. Then she turned to Omar, «That was very nasty of you.» Omar cast his eyes down.

«We were only playing. Somebody had to be Sharon,» he hesitantly justified their behavior.

«But you violated your friend,» she countered his argument.

The boys were coming out of their shelters, interested in the conversation. Seeing that he was no longer being attacked, Hamada smiled at Omar in a friendly way, peering into his face. Omar tried to understand what he wanted.

«This is your kuffiya, Omar.» Amna ended their silent dialogue. Omar took it and energetically put it around Hamada's neck.

«It's for Hamada,» he said firmly. The children cheered their support for the new friendship, and Hamada got very thrilled about this new situation.

«As you like,» Amna shrugged her shoulders with a smile and then looked at her watch. «Oh, I'm late,» she said to herself, intending to go.

«Are you collecting help for our wounded fedayeen?» the bowlegged boy asked her.

«Yes,» she answered.

«I know you...I have seen you many times.» He was proud of having any relation to her, as she had gained a sort of respect from the others.

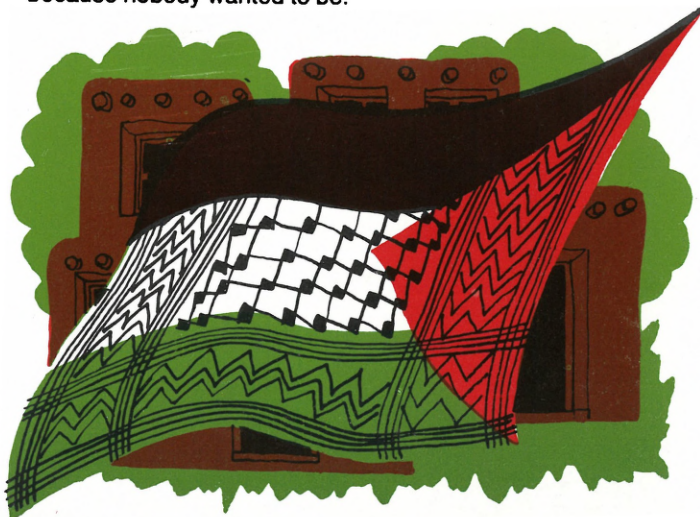
«Oh, really?» muttered Amna sunk in her own thoughts.

«But we haven't anything to send them,» Omar excused, finding this moment suitable for repairing the bad impression he had left on her.

«Never mind, never mind.» Amna was in a hurry. «It's important that you think about them.» She wanted to leave when Hamada took off the kuffiya and handed it to her. She understood from his eyes what he wanted.

«Yes, Hamada, it will be our Ramadan present to the wounded fighters,» the boys exclaimed support of Hamada's gesture.

«I will give it to them with great pleasure,» Amna promised and then disappeared in a cloud of dust with their valuable present. For a long time she could hear children's voices as they began a new game. But this time, nobody was the enemy, because nobody wanted to be.



٢٩ تشرين الثاني - اليوم العالمي للتضامن مع الشعب الفلسطيني
لا لمجازر جديدة

November 29th — International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Stop New Massacres!

