

free palestine

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ISSUE

PLO condemns attacks on French Jews

ANY ACT of discrimination against Jews in Europe is an hostile act against the Palestinian people, the PLO's London Representative has declared. In a statement issued on 10th October, Mr Nabil Ramlawi expressed his abhorrence of the recent acts of violence against Jewish communities in Europe, and firmly rejected the 8th October statement by the Israeli Foreign Minister that the PLO is involved in supporting fascist and anti-Jewish organisations in Europe.

In Beirut an official, described by the PLO's Voice of Palestine radio as 'a responsible information source in the Palestine Revolution', was quoted on 5th October as saying that the Zionist claims against the PLO in the previous day's bomb attack on a synagogue in Paris 'are groundless'. The PLO 'cannot resort to such methods', he said.

The PLO respects and venerates places of worship and therefore, it denounces any attack of this sort.'

In Paris, the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) also denounced the synagogue bombing and recalled that Palestinians and Arabs have often suffered racist outrages in France.

Mr Nabil Ramlawi said in a press statement issued in London: 'we regret that Zionist leaders should now attempt to intimidate the EEC governments through cheap exploitation of the violence being committed against Jewish communities.'

He continued: 'Zionism — the political ideology of the Israeli state — is a direct consequence of anti-semitism in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Any re-emergence of anti-Jewish organisations in Europe today merely reinforces the Zionist movement, encouraging Jewish emigration from Europe to Palestine, and thereby strengthening the movement which has enforced the exile of millions of Palestinian Christians and Muslims from their homeland.'

'The Palestinians therefore share a strong concern with European Jewry that firm action should be taken by the appropriate authorities against those who use violence, or incite it, against Jewish communities or propagate anti-Jewish prejudices.'

'A just solution to the Palestine question, which the EEC governments are now working to secure,' explained Mr Ramlawi, 'depends not only on respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian state. The very foundations of a just solution require that Jewish communities wherever they exist should be free from discrimination and violence.'

Mr Ramlawi emphatically denied the existence of any links between the PLO and any anti-Jewish bodies. 'Despite the absurdity of the Zionist accusations against the PLO, I state categorically and unequivocally that the PLO has no links with anti-Jewish organisations in Europe or anywhere else.'

He added, 'We consider the acts of discrimination against Jews to be hostile acts against the Palestinian

people, serving only the interests of the Zionist movement in encouraging Jewish emigration to Palestine, and thereby strengthening the forces responsible for the exile of the Palestinians from their homeland.'

Mr Ramlawi also said, 'If anyone is to benefit from the recent acts of anti-Jewish feeling in Europe, it is the Zionists and Israel, but certainly neither the Palestinians nor the PLO.' He described the attempt by the Zionists to link the PLO with the anti-semitic attacks as 'a pathetic campaign to score political and diplomatic points against the Palestinian people.'

The PLO, along with all Palestinian resistance groups, has always stressed that its struggle is not against Jews but against Zionism and Zionists. Although Zionist leaders have constantly sought to claim that

Jews and Zionists are one and the same, the PLO has long rejected this distortion by Zionist propagandists.

The PLO's long-term goal for Palestine is that it should be a united, secular and democratic state. As PLO leader Yasser Arafat stressed in his historic address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1974: 'When we speak of our common hopes for the Palestine of tomorrow, we include in our perspective all Jews now living in Palestine who choose to live with us there in peace and without discrimination.'

The statement by Mr Ramlawi indicates that the PLO would welcome efforts by European authorities to deal firmly with anti-Jewish organisations and individuals. During the 1970s the PLO embarked on a behind-the-scenes campaign which involved

PLO envoys in top level talks with Arab leaders on ways of providing for the return of oriental Jews from Palestine to their Arab homelands. The PLO concern was that Arab governments should actively foster good community relations between the three religions.

In its efforts, the PLO secured the backing and support of Arab governments ranging from radical regimes such as Libya and Iraq to conservative rulers such as King Hassan in Morocco.

In Lebanon during the civil war, PLO leader Yasser Arafat despatched PLO commandos to the Jewish area of the city to provide armed protection for Beirut's Jewish community, then threatened by the indiscriminate killing of the country's Christian Phalangist forces.



Liberal Leader, David Steel



PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat

Liberal Leader Steel talks with Arafat

DAVID STEEL, the leader of the British Liberal Party, held talks with Yasser Arafat in Beirut on 21st September, and became the first British parliamentary party leader to meet with the PLO leader. With Mr Steel was a high-level Liberal delegation which included three of his parliamentary colleagues, David Alton, MP for Liverpool Edge Hill, Russell Johnston, MP for Inverness, and Stephen Ross, MP for the Isle of Wight. Also with the Liberal group was Mr Stuart Mole, the Liberal Parliamentary Press Officer, and Mr Roger Sibley, Chairman of the Liberal Party's Foreign Affairs Panel.

The Zionists made clear their anger at Mr Steel's meeting with the Palestinian leader. On his arrival in Israel Mr Steel

was refused a meeting with Premier Begin, and the highest ranking Israeli politician whom the Liberals met was Energy Minister Yitzhak Moda'i.

The British Liberals can claim to be the only UK party in parliament to officially call for the PLO to be recognised as the Palestinians' representative in any peace talks, and to back the establishment of a Palestinian state. The 21st September meeting was not the first between Mr Arafat and Liberal parliamentarians. Earlier this year he held talks with David Alton and Lord Avebury, formerly Eric Lubbock the Liberal MP for Orpington.

In Jerusalem Mr Steel expressed his frustration with the Zionist leadership, pointing out that on the Liberals' Middle East tour they

had had talks with Syria's President Assad, Jordan's King Hussein, and were later to visit Egypt for talks with Mr Sadat. Only the Israeli leader refused to meet Mr Steel.

And Mr Steel must have doubly angered the Israelis by stating at his press conference: 'What surprised us was the extent of support (amongst the 700,000 Palestinians of the West Bank) for the objectives of the PLO.'

Mr Steel told newsmen: 'So long as the Israelis stand back and look at the rhetoric and never get into dialogue, they can't find out what are the PLO's attitudes, or what are the prospects of a settlement. We came up against this all the time in talking to Israelis of every persuasion.'

Backing for Palestinian Rights

DAVID STEEL, leader of the Liberal Party, and Labour MP John Home Robertson each argue that the PLO must be recognised and a Palestinian state created if a just settlement of the Palestine question is to be achieved. See page 9.

Europe and the Palestinians

OVER THE past year the European Community has moved to adopt an independent stand on the Palestine question. And at the UN, Israel has come under strong criticism as 112 nations back a resolution supporting the PLO and the Palestinians' right to statehood. Free Palestine reviews these developments on page 4.

The facts of Zionist occupation

IN THE Palestinian territories seized by Israel in 1967 recent months have witnessed a new wave of Zionist terrorism and intimidation against Palestinian leaders and civilians. A special report on pages 6 and 7 looks at the catalogue of assassination attempts, deportations, and other violations of the Geneva Conventions, together with Israel's programme to settle the West Bank and bring Arab Jerusalem under 'eternal' Zionist occupation.

THE 'SLIDE TO WAR'

ISRAELI ATTACKS into Lebanon have reached such a scale that the region is now in a virtual state of war. In our review (pages 2 and 3), a PLO leader warns of the 'slide towards war', and Free Palestine looks at other recent events in Palestine and the Middle East.

ACTION BRITAIN

IN A review of activities in Britain, we report on the establishment of Conservative and Trade Union groups supporting the Palestinians, and give a photo report of the Palestine Exhibition staged in London. See page 8.

Palestine National Council meeting soon

THE PALESTINE National Council is expected to meet early in the new year, according to sources close to the PLO. The 550 member PNC — the parliament of Palestinian organisations, unions and student groups, had been expected to meet during September, but the convention was postponed.

It is understood that the decision to delay the meeting was to allow time for the EEC countries to formulate their 'European Initiative' on the Palestine question when the Heads of State meet in Luxembourg in early December. This will, therefore, provide the Palestinians a chance to consider whatever the EEC puts forward and allow for the PNC decision to provide the PLO leadership with the widest support for their response.

The PNC also has the task of electing a new PLO Executive Committee — the Palestinian 'Cabinet' of 34 members — which in turn elects the Chairman, the position held by Mr Yasser Arafat.

Given the increasing role being played by the PLO in international forums and diplomacy, the forthcoming PNC meeting will be of major importance in determining the overall strategy of the PLO in the months ahead.

Arafat meets with Israeli MPs

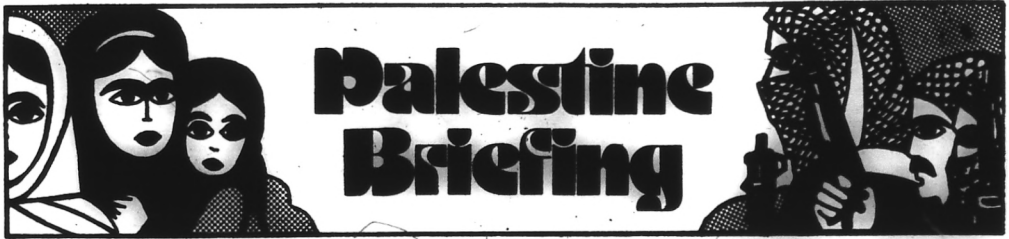
A MEETING in the Bulgarian capital Sofia between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and four Israelis, two of them members of the Knesset (parliament) has caused a storm in Zionist circles, with demands for the prosecution of the politicians for treason.

The controversial meeting took place on 24th September during a conference of the World Peace Movement. It was the first time that members of the Israeli parliament had met with the PLO leader.

The two Knesset members were Mr Charlie Biton, 29, a Sephardic Jew from Morocco, and Mr Tewfik Toubi, 57, an 'Israeli' Arab. Mr Toubi is a long-time member of the Israeli communist party, Rakah. Mr Biton heads the Black Panther movement in Israel, which outraged the Zionists in the early 1970s when members rioted to demand better housing and greater opportunities for the country's oriental immigrants. A third member of the Israeli delegation in Sofia was Mrs Felicia Langer, the anti-Zionist lawyer who has won world-wide acclaim for her work defending Palestinians from the 1967 occupied territories.

During the twenty-minute conversation between the PLO leader and the Israelis, Arafat said he was happy to meet 'the peace forces of Israel'. To Mr Biton he added, 'You are well known to me as a fighter for peace. I want you to know that we want friendship with the Jewish people. We are not against the Jewish people. The main fight is for a lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of recognition of Palestinian rights for self-determination.'

The meeting caused uproar in Israel, with Mr Yoram Aridor, a deputy minister in the Beigin government, demanding that the four Israelis be tried for treason. They had, he charged, been guilty of a 'grave felony'. Mr Shimon Peres, the Labour Party leader, also condemned the meeting.



PLO envoy warns of 'slide to war'

THE CONTINUED failure to attain a just settlement of the Palestine question means that the Middle East is sliding inexorably towards a new outbreak of war. This was the core of the message of Mr Ghazi Hussein, the PLO's Representative in Austria when he addressed a UN-sponsored seminar on Palestine in Vienna at the end of August.

Mr Hussein voiced his concern that Western European states, with the exception of Spain and San Marino, had refrained from sending official representatives to the conference. 'Western Europe has shown an unfriendly attitude,' he said. 'This has to be seen against the background of the present highly tense atmosphere in the Middle East. The region is facing the threat of war.'

However, the seminar was well attended by representatives from East

European and Third World countries and there was also a strong showing of western personalities involved in the Palestine question. The seminar was opened by Mr Fallou Kane, Senegal's Ambassador to the United Nations and Chairman of the UN Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It was one of four UN-sponsored meetings on Palestine. One was held in Arusha, Tanzania, in July and others are planned for Asia and Latin America.

Ambassador Kane said the recent Israeli annexation of Arab Jerusalem was a threat to world peace and appealed to all UN member states to respect the status of Arab east Jerusalem as an occupied territory. He deplored the United States stance on the Palestine question, saying the superpower was obstructing the steps

necessary for a just and peaceful solution of the conflict.

The conference devoted much of its deliberations to the continuing Israeli violation of Palestinian human rights and to the misrepresentation of the Palestinian case in the western media.

Mr Michael Adams, the editor of the London magazine *Middle East International*, told the meeting that fifteen of the thirty articles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights were currently being denied to the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. He urged the delegates not to forget, in the welter of debate about Palestinian political rights, that the Palestinians were being denied 'the ordinary, every-day human rights to which they are entitled just like any other people in the world.'

Israel begins annexation of south Lebanon

AS IF its settlement programme in the territories seized in 1967 were not enough, the Zionist state is now reported to be extending colonisation to the south Lebanese border enclave controlled by the renegade Lebanese army major Sa'ad Haddad. The region was occupied by Israel in the 1978 invasion of Lebanon and after the Israeli withdrawal was handed over to Haddad, who is entirely dependent on the Israelis.

It was reported on 9th October that an electrified Israeli fence had recently appeared around 450 acres of land in south Lebanon. Earlier in the year, Israeli bulldozers moved into the central area of the Haddad enclave and cleared a road linking the village of Adsiyyeh with the north Galilee settlement of Misgav Am. Electricity lines were recently installed in the region too, and the area was connected with the Israeli electricity

grid. Meanwhile, Israeli teachers are reported to be teaching the Hebrew language in schools in the Haddad enclave.

The Lebanese authorities have contacted the United Nations forces in the area and asked them to investigate this overt annexation of Lebanese territory.

Zionists shut down Palestine art gallery

THE ONLY art gallery in the occupied West Bank has been closed after only 16 months operation because the military government claims the paintings exhibited were an incitement against the state of Israel. 'Gallery 79', opened in May last year, was the brainchild of Hebron artist Issam Badir. A 31 year old graduate of the Baghdad Academy of Fine Art, Badir decided nearly ten years ago that a gallery of Palestinian art was needed on the West Bank. But it was not until 1979 that he had enough money to set it up.

'As a person who appreciates art, I felt that the Palestinians were being deprived. At least by opening the gallery, the children of the area would be able to see and hopefully appreciate art,' he says.

The gallery received favourable public reaction from the start, displaying all kinds of art, including paintings, pottery, copper work, enamel and wood engravings. For many of the 25 or so practising artists who live on the West Bank, the gallery was the only place where they could exhibit their work in an organised fashion. As director, Badir planned to give art lessons to children and sell art supplies as well.

But last August the gallery caught the attention of the occupation authorities and five paintings were confiscated. The scene was repeated on 21st September when military authorities burst into the gallery, removed the artwork and confiscated the keys to the building. They plan to charge Badir with lacking permits either to exhibit or to open a gallery. It is not yet known whether

Badir will be tried in a military or civilian court.

'We don't see this as an act against the gallery or even against political art. It is an attempt to stifle art from becoming a creative and popular outlet, a door to the outside,' says Suleiman Mansour, a painter from east Jerusalem whose pictures were seized by the authorities.

Mansour, a graduate of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in West Jerusalem, denies that the paintings and engravings he exhibited were political. Most of them depicted women at work and other village scenes. 'The problem is that art is an interpretative process. We have no way of predicting what will raise the wrath of the authorities,' he said.

Arab families evicted from Belgian's office

THREE ARAB families with 30 children have been told by Israeli authorities that they must leave their houses in Arab east Jerusalem to make way for the Zionist premier's new office. The houses stand on the periphery of the new Israeli government complex in the Sheikh Jarrah quarter of East Jerusalem, to which Beigin is planning to move his office in a move designed to emphasise the Zionist claim to the occupied Arab city.

The family members reported that the three families had all received identical letters from the Israeli Lands Authority informing them that the land on which their houses stand had been expropriated in January 1978. They said the letters asked the families to leave their homes immediately. It did not offer any compensation for the land.

Muhammad Atiyeh, father of 14 children who has been living on the land since 1964, said he had never been informed that his land had been expropriated. 'We will not move out. We have nowhere to go. We will fight this act by legal means and any other means necessary,' he declared.

Vatican concern over Christian persecution

POPE JOHN Paul II has been invited to visit Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and to 'take the lead in a worldwide movement to help the Palestinians return to their homeland'. The invitation, from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, was contained in a confidential message delivered to the Vatican on 17th September by Afif Safiyyeh, the PLO leader's personal envoy. The message was reportedly given lengthy consideration by the Pope, who is said to have told Mr Safiyyeh that 'Palestine, the Palestinians and Jerusalem are at the centre of all our preoccupations.'

The meeting between the pontiff and the PLO envoy was only the most

FACTS CONCERNING a new Israeli prison isolated in the Negev desert are just beginning to emerge following recent disclosures by two lawyers who visited Palestinian inmates held there. The lawyers, Walid al Fahum and Lea Rsemel, have now charged the Israelis with using the new Nafha prison as a sensory deprivation torture unit.

Opened in May 1980, the prison unit is planned by the Zionists to become the central jail for Palestinian prisoners under long-term sentence and those considered to be leaders of Palestinian resistance cells.

Amongst the current internees are Omar al Kassim, jailed in 1968 and Ya'akoub Odeh, now serving a life sentence.

At a recent press conference the two civil rights lawyers disclosed:

- Men prisoners crowded into 9 by 12 foot cells;
- No beds — prisoners sleep on mattresses on the floor;
- Cells without windows — ventilation depends on six tiny holes near the ceiling of the cells, and these are closed at night;
- Armoured cell doors remain closed for 23 hours a day;

Human deprivation and misery in Israel's new desert jail

□ A variety of eye complaints have resulted from the constant use of electric lighting.

According to reports reaching London, there is a continual smell from the toilet because of the low quality food, which includes no fruit or vegetables. The food is served on the floor. 'I haven't got two inches of privacy,' complains Abd al Aziz Ali Shahin, who has spent the last 12 years of his life in various Israeli prisons. According to the lawyers, the deputy director of the prison admitted: 'The overcrowding here is terrible.'

Twice a day the prisoners are allowed to walk for half an hour in a small concrete yard measuring 15

by 45 feet. 'We saw how the prisoners try to get as much out of the short walks as they can,' the lawyers said. 'They were all moving quickly backwards and forwards, as if in a Charlie Chaplin film.' All gymnastic exercises and sporting activities are strictly forbidden to prisoners.

A number of the prisoners suffer from heart diseases, including Abdullah Ajadami, aged 44, from Cairo, who has been in jail since 1967, and Abd al Razik al Kutub. According to the lawyers a doctor is not available at the prison, and the nearest hospital is at Beer Sheva, 45 miles away.

The area in which the prison is located is plagued by natural dis-

asters. Extended sand storms often cause the food to be mixed with sand, and create burning of the eyes. At night it is fiercely cold and during the day intolerably hot, especially in the non-air conditioned cells. Occasionally snakes and scorpions find their way into the cells.

'Since 1967 we have been struggling to improve the condition of our imprisonment,' said one of the long-time Palestinian prisoners. 'strikes and hunger strikes, punishment and solitary confinements, suspension of visitations and a host of other limitations — we have gone through all that until finally, drop by drop, we gained certain elementary rights. Now once again we are being deprived of

them. At Nafha we must start from the beginning.'

The prisoners demand elementary living conditions: a real bed, and not a thin mattress on a floor covered with insects and reptiles; a table for eating and writing; four persons to a cell instead of ten; a sink to wash; a longer walk outside their cells; permission to exercise; the provision of toilet paper; shaving gear, a mirror, books, newspapers, a change of clothes; permission to purchase basic staples at the canteen and the right to listen to the radio.

'They have broken our bodies, but they cannot break our spirits,' say the prisoners. 'Under the present circumstances we have nothing to lose.'

The Nafha prisoners started a hunger strike on 11th July in a bid to secure better conditions. In the course of the strike, which spread rapidly to other prisons containing Palestinian 'security' prisoners, two of the Nafha inmates died while being force-fed by the Israelis. The deaths prompted angry demonstrations on the occupied West Bank and also a hunger strike by the mothers of nine of the protesting Nafha inmates.

recent sign of a growing concern by the Vatican over the Palestine question. On 30th June, the same day as the United Nations Security Council censured Israel over its Jerusalem policies, the Vatican took the highly unusual step of issuing a statement at the UN and in Rome warning that any unilateral attempt to alter the status of the city would be 'very serious'.

The following day the Israeli paper *Ma'ariv* reported that the Catholic Patriarchate in occupied east Jerusalem had sent a dossier to the Vatican on the condition of Christian communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank towns of Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Suhur and Beit Jallah. The dossier accuses Israel of systematically attempting to reduce the number of Christians in the 1967 occupied territories by encouraging their emigration, and reveals that, because of the intolerable conditions of life under the occupation, 3,000 Christian Palestinians under the age of thirty had emigrated during the previous two years.

Pope John Paul issued a statement on 18th September, the day after his meeting with the PLO envoy, deploring the fact that 'Abraham's heirs are still painfully confronting each other' in Jerusalem and calling for a global effort to make the city 'a truly holy city, a city of peace.' Although the pontiff did not specifically mention Israel's formal annexation of Jerusalem, Vatican sources said the papal statement had been prompted by the Israeli move.

The Vatican's concern over the annexation was confirmed during talks between Mr Safieh and the Vatican Foreign Minister, Achille Silvestrini. Calling the talks 'completely satisfactory', Mr Safieh said: 'Silvestrini categorically condemned the unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel.'

WCC deplores Israeli Jerusalem grab

THE CENTRAL Committee of the World Council of Churches has passed a strongly worded resolution deploring the Israeli annexation of Arab east Jerusalem. The resolution, adopted at a conference in Geneva that ended on 22nd August, described the Jerusalem law as a 'threat to peace' which 'most dangerously undermines all efforts towards

a just solution of the Middle East problem.' The WCC resolution also urged member churches to 'exert pressure on Israel through their respective governments to withhold any action on Jerusalem, the future of which should be included in negotiations on self-determination involving Israel and the Palestinian people.'

The WCC resolution came hard on the heels of a similar denunciation of the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem from the Middle East Council of Churches, an affiliate of the WCC. A 13th August report stated that the MECC had denounced the annexation and called upon all Christian, Muslim and Jewish organisations concerned with the sacred character of the city to exert all possible means to consolidate peace and justice in Jerusalem.

The Secretary-General of the MECC, Mr Gabriel Habib, calling for a meeting of the member churches in the region, said in a press release issued in Geneva that the MECC categorically denounces the action of the Israeli authorities. The MECC lends its efforts to those demanding Arab rights in the city, and the rights of the concerned religious people about its sacred character, he asserted.

Habib said the destiny of Jerusalem should be viewed as the destiny of the indigenous people. The

matter should be settled with the people of Jerusalem themselves or whoever they designate as their lawful representatives. The problem of Jerusalem cannot be solved in isolation from the Palestinian question or from the destiny of the people of Palestine, he asserted. 'It is therefore a human issue and not a matter of shrines,' he continued. 'It is an issue of conviviality between peoples and different religious communities and not a matter of ancient ruins.'

He added that the unilateral annexation of Jerusalem and the Israeli policy of uprooting the indigenous people of the city through resettlement schemes are challenges to resolutions of the United Nations and acts undermining a just solution of the Middle East problem, thereby jeopardising regional and world peace.

PLO anger at US presidential candidates

THE PALESTINE Liberation Organisation has accused the main US presidential candidates of outbidding each other in expressions of hatred for the Palestinian people. The Palestine news agency (WAFA) quoted unnamed PLO sources as saying the

candidates' remarks were 'on an unprecedented scale and insulting to the point of insolence.'

The PLO was angered by Middle East policy statements in early September by both President Carter and his Republican rival Ronald Reagan. Both went out of their way to try to court the support of the Zionists by promising even more backing for the state of Israel. Reagan described the PLO as a 'terrorist' organisation with which he would never negotiate and Carter said he would not negotiate with the PLO until it recognised Israel's right to exist.

Increase in number of Arabs in Israel

ISRAEL'S TOTAL population in 1980 stood at 3,885,000, an increase of 82,000 over the figure for a year ago, according to figures published on 9th September by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. Of the total, 635,000, or 16 per cent, are Palestinian Arabs. The Palestinian population increased by 21,000 over the last year, entirely the result of natural growth at a rate of 3.4 per cent. This is much higher than the 1.9 per cent natural growth rate of Israeli Jews. The 61,000 increase in the Jewish population is due in part to net immigration of 16,000 new Zionist settlers in Palestine.

'Israeli' Arabs support PLO

ISRAELI ARAB leaders met on 6th September to agree a draft charter declaring the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the only legal representative of the Palestinian people. Arab mayors, members of the Knesset (parliament), writers and prominent personalities from Israel's Arab towns and villages, including representatives of the Negev desert bedouins, agreed on the text of a proposed charter to be presented to the first national 'Israeli' Arab conference to be held in November in Nazareth.

Although sponsored by the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah), the meeting at the Galilee village of Shafir Amr was attended by prominent Arab personalities from other political parties.

Speakers strongly attacked the

Israeli government's attitude to the 600,000 Israeli Arab minority and its policies in the occupied Arab lands. The proposed charter said that Israel's Arabs were a part of the Palestinian people and recognised the PLO as their only legal representative.

The meeting was held against the backdrop of growing unrest amongst the Palestinians of the territories seized by the Zionists in 1948, as they increasingly identify themselves with their fellow countrymen suffering under the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In August Israel passed a law making it a criminal offence to express support for the PLO.

Israel blocks UN aid to occupied territories

ISRAELI OCCUPATION authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have blocked six out of seven UNIDO projects of technical assistance to the Palestinians, according to a UNIDO report, writes Federico Nier Fisher in Geneva.

Developing country and socialist bloc delegates at the mid-October meetings of UNIDO's Industrial Development Board have strongly condemned Israel's non-co-operation.

Speaking for the Group 77 (developing countries) Ahmed Ghezal of Tunisia stressed the need for the UN Industrial Development Organisation to implement board decisions on assistance to the Palestinians as soon as possible. He also recommended that the board should work in close co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Israeli representative said that his government had denied UNIDO access to the occupied territories because the projects had been drawn up in co-operation with the PLO.

The PLO delegate, Ghazi Hussein, condemned this as a violation of international law and the UN Charter. He charged Israel with sabotage of economic development and deliberate efforts to impede improvement in Palestinians' living standards.

The US delegate reiterated that his government still opposed the channelling of technical assistance through the PLO.

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UN: 15th November deadline for Israeli withdrawal

IN A resolution passed on 29th July, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly reaffirmed Palestinian rights and gave Israel a deadline of 15th November to commence evacuation of the territories seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

The pattern of voting underlines the extent of Israel's international isolation, with 112 nations supporting the resolution. Only seven countries, including Israel, opposed the resolution while 24, including the EEC states, abstained.

The vote came at the end of a week long emergency Assembly session, only the seventh to be called in the UN's 35 year history. The special session was convened under the 'Uniting for Peace' procedure, which gives the General Assembly the right

to debate and call for action on specific emergency situations when the Security Council is deadlocked because of the use of the veto by one of the five permanent members. 87 countries called for the special session — seven more than the UN rules require.

What prompted the General Assembly to move was the failure of the Security Council to adopt a resolution calling for recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the 1967 occupied Arab territories. That resolution was vetoed by the United States at the end of April.

The General Assembly resolution was one of a series of strongly worded UN resolutions passed this

year, either censuring Israel or supporting Palestinian rights. In the Security Council, there have been resolutions condemning Israel's continued colonisation of the occupied Arab lands, denouncing the expulsion of the Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul and condemning the Zionist state's annexation of Arab Jerusalem.

The General Assembly's 29th July resolution affirmed that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East could not be attained without a total Israeli withdrawal from all the lands seized in 1967 and without the Palestinians attaining their inalienable rights. It declared the right of the Palestinians to self-determination in Palestine, without external interference, and their right to establish their own independent state.

The PLO's status as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians was also accepted.

The General Assembly demanded that Israel commence withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories by 15th November 1980 and insisted that Israel should comply with all UN resolutions on the status of Jerusalem. The Security Council was requested to consider what action the UN should take in the event of non-compliance by Israel, a provision of the resolution that opens the way either for sanctions to be taken against the Zionist state, or for its expulsion from the United Nations.

Israel's contempt for the United Nations was underlined by Mr Zehdi Terzi, the PLO's delegate to the

world body. 'The UN has passed 250 pro-Palestinian resolutions,' he said, 'but the only ones which Israel has obeyed have been those setting up UN forces to protect Israel.' He argued, however, that the PLO presence at the UN has been invaluable.

'The United Nations has given us a platform where we can say what we have to say to the international community. Now only seven countries oppose the Palestinian right to return and to establish an independent state in Palestine,' Mr Terzi said.

The PLO's immediate aims at the UN are now to impose sanctions against Israel and to secure the passage of a resolution setting up a Palestinian state.

Washington limits EEC Palestine plan

EUROPEAN LEADERS will meet in Luxembourg on 1st-2nd December to consider a report from the Dutch's Foreign Minister, Mr Gaston Thorn, and discuss the formulation of the long awaited 'European Initiative' for resolving the Palestine question.

However, the Israeli government has made it clear in meetings with Mr Thorn and Premier Beigin, that the Zionists will not accept Palestinian self-determination in an independent state, nor is Israel willing to accept participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in future peace discussions, or accept that Jewish settlements established in the Arab territories seized by Israel in 1967 should be dismantled as Europe is urging.

The proposed European initiative by the nine member states of the EEC follows the PLO's own initiative in opening a dialogue with the European governments in 1978 and 1979. The PLO urged the European community to launch an 'initiative' to break the impasse created by the American sponsored Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt, which effectively stalls any moves towards Palestinian statehood, and fails to recognise or involve the PLO as the representative body of Palestinian opinion.

Throughout 1979 there was increasing evidence that the EEC states accepted that the Camp David accords will not resolve the Palestine question. France, Austria and Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington urged their European colleagues to accept that the PLO should be included in future discussions concerning the future of Palestinian territories. However, as the European states appeared to be moving towards a stand which would include recognition of the PLO, they came under strong pressure from the United States not to make any proposals which would jeopardise the ailing Camp David process between Israel and Egypt.



President Carter

Venice Summit

Throughout early 1980 the EEC delayed launching what has become known as the European Initiative. This was due largely to the pressures coming from Washington, where President Carter acted to forestall any moves from Europe which might put the final death blow to the Camp David process, claimed by the Carter administration in the current presidential campaign as a major foreign policy success.

Meeting in Venice on 13th June, the nine EEC Heads of State, concluded with the issuing of the Venice Declaration which recognised that the PLO should be involved in future peace talks and discussions concerning Palestinian territory. But in failing to recognise the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, the Declaration, in the words of Mr Farouk Qaddoumi, Head of the PLO's Political Department, 'ignored essential problems.'

In London, Mr Nabil Ramlawi, the PLO Representative in the British capital, called the Venice Declaration a 'progressive step', but added that it could not be considered as a 'European Initiative'. Nevertheless, Mr Ramlawi saw it as a 'starting point' for a European initiative, and 'a position from which the European countries can proceed towards formulating a practical and comprehensive proposal which will avoid the shortcomings and failings of previous declarations such as UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the Camp David accords.'

One decision of the Venice summit was to despatch Mr Gaston Thorn as a special envoy to the Middle East for a fact-finding mission. In Beirut in late July the Luxembourg minister held talks with PLO leader Yasser Arafat, and later said that he was very satisfied with the results of the encounter.

In Israel, however, Mr Thorn had only brief talks with Premier

Beigin and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, during which the EEC envoy was told that Israel would not contemplate any change in the present negotiations between Israel and Egypt within the framework of the Camp David accords. And on the instructions of the Israeli government, Mr Thorn was barred from holding talks with any Palestinian personalities from the 1967 occupied territories on the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

However, recognising the enmity which the ban was creating between the EEC and Israel, Zionist leaders subsequently relented and agreed that Mr Thorn should return to the Middle East in September during which he had talks with nine Palestinian civic leaders from the West Bank and Gaza.

With the lack of any positive advances in the Venice Declaration and the continued stalling of the formulation of the so-called European Initiative, there is now a strong belief in Arab circles that the EEC countries have, in fact, done nothing more than provide the façade of movement during the US presidential campaign period, when the White House is paralysed by the Zionist lobby from taking any initiatives of its own.

EEC Foreign Ministers met again in Brussels on 15-16th September and merely announced that they might agree on a Middle East initiative when they meet again in December. There are signs that the 'initiative' might take the form of a Security Council Resolution specifying the Palestinians' right to a state of their own — a position already adopted by the UN General Assembly.

America's Red Line

As Voice of Palestine radio, controlled by the PLO, said in a 17th September commentary, 'there is nothing new in this position'. It added, 'Nothing new had been expected, especially since the US administration has drawn a Middle East red line for the EEC over which it cannot step.' According to VoP, the US red line permits the European states, separately or collectively, to make statements on the Middle East crisis without the matter developing into political initiatives that could hinder or disrupt the Camp David process.

However, the commentary said that 'this does not mean giving up the Palestinians' constant initiative to move on the European level to win greater popular support and as much official support as possible for the Palestinians' just rights, which the Europeans have increasingly begun to understand.'

Report by Louis Eaks

Ten-fold rise in Zionist settlers planned for 1967 occupied territories

WHILE THE western world has been preoccupied with events in Afghanistan and Iran, and with America obsessed with the presidential elections, the Zionist state of Israel has been pressing ahead quietly but determinedly with its colonisation of the territories seized in 1967. A unanimous UN Security Council resolution condemning the settlements was ignored by Israel, as have so many other resolutions of the world body.

Official claims by the Zionist premier Menachem Beigin that Israel intends to establish only ten more settlements on the West Bank were proved false by the disclosure of secret plans drawn up by the World Zionist Organisation for the establishment of 85 settlements there, writes Alan George.

There are now more than 100 settlements on the West Bank area, including those built as suburbs of occupied Arab Jerusalem. In the Gaza Strip there are another half dozen while on the Golan Heights, seized from Syria in the 1967 war there are about thirty. A further dozen have been established in the Rafah Approaches, to the south of the Gaza Strip and there are four others in the rest of Sinai. In fact, a total of about 30 per cent of the West Bank has so far been either expropriated or closed off by the Zionists for settlement.

Against the background of Israeli plans to allow Jewish settlement in the centre of Hebron, the United Nations Security Council on 1st March passed Resolution 446. This reaffirmed that Israeli colonisation constitutes 'a flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva convention... and a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.'

The resolution went on to demand that the Israelis cease the erection of new settlements in the occupied territories and dismantle the existing ones. The resolution was adopted unanimously, although the United States subsequently performed an amazing volte face, claiming that it had intended to abstain. The fact that it did not do so at the time of the vote suggested to most observers that even the United States, Israel's principal backer, is growing weary of the excesses of the Beigin government, which threaten to jeopardise the US sponsored Camp David peace process between Israel and Egypt.

Needless to say, the Israelis treated the resolution with the contempt they have always reserved for rulings of the world body. On 23rd March the Beigin cabinet decided in favour of Jewish settlement in the heart of occupied Hebron. New settlements continue to be founded, and existing ones expanded, throughout the 1967 occupied territories.

In an effort to appease the United States, the Israeli premier has insisted that the intention is to establish only ten new settlements on the West Bank. But in July widespread publicity was given to a secret plan drawn up by the Settlements Department of the World Zionist Organisation that provides for the establishment of 85 new settlements in the West Bank within the next five years. The plan estimates that by 1985 the Jewish population of the West Bank, excluding Jerusalem, will have risen from today's 14,000 to between 120,000 and 150,000. A copy of the secret plan had found its way into the hands of the Palestine Liberation Organisation which, much to the embarrassment of the Israelis, instigated its circulation as an official document at the United Nations.

Jerusalem moves anger Christians

THE QUESTION of Jerusalem is currently at the centre of a serious conflict between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and international Jewish bodies.

Last August the Central Committee of the Ecumenical Council of Churches denounced the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem and declaration of the city as its 'eternal capital' under its exclusive sovereignty. This Israeli decision 'most dangerously undermines all efforts towards the just solution of the Middle East problem and thus jeopardises regional and world peace,' the WCC's Central Committee felt.

It also expressed the view that consultations between Christians, Muslim and Jewish communities concerned with the future character of Jerusalem should be considered in order to seek ways to consolidate justice and human co-existence in the 'city of peace'.

This statement has led to vehement attacks on the WCC by several international Jewish organisations. In Vienna a protest-telegram from the 'International Jewish Committee on International Religious Consultations' (IJIC) has been released. It accused the WCC's declaration of being 'one-sided, biased and flagrantly partisan'. The IJIC, representing among others the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and the Synagogue Council of America, blames the WCC of 'encouraging extremists'.

The IJIC reaffirms 'the unity of the city of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel'. The 'Holy City' had evoked deep spiritual attachments and emotional ties for Jews, Christians and Muslims, but 'for Jews only Jerusalem has been the eternal city, the centre of their spiritual world, and the focus of hope for millennia'.

Answering the IJIC protest, the Secretary-General of the World Council of Churches, Dr Philip Potter, has 'profoundly regretted its tone and content'.

In the letter, made available by circles close to the WCC, Dr Potter rejects the accusation of partisanship.

He stressed that the Central Committee statement was made after careful consideration of all the factors involved in the conflict.

The WCC Secretary-General underlined his organisation's view that a settlement of the Middle East conflict must be perceived to be just and permanent by all parties and in particular those directly involved, including the Palestinian people.

To promote an atmosphere in which reconciliation can take place, Israel should refrain from unilateral actions on Jerusalem, Dr Potter argues in his letter to the Chairman of the International Jewish Committee on International Religious Consultations, Prof Shemaryahu Talmon (the Hebrew University, Jerusalem), to Rabbi Bernard Mandelbaum (New York) and Dr Gerhard Riegner (World Jewish Congress, Geneva).



Zionist occupation condemned by International Jurists

Israel acts like Chile says jurists' report

ISRAELI MILITARY authorities in the occupied West Bank have extended their legislation and administration far beyond that of an occupying power, and have ensured for the state of Israel many of the benefits of an annexation of territory, a new study published by the International Commission of Jurists concludes.

The study, 'The West Bank and the Rule of Law, is described as the first survey of the changes in the law and legal system introduced by the Israeli military authorities during the thirteen years since the Zionist state occupied the West Bank. It was undertaken by two West Bank lawyers, belonging to the 'Law in the Service of Man' group, and affiliated to the ICJ.

As Secretary-General Niall MacDermot points out in an introduction, the study could be done only by West Bank lawyers. MacDermot says that the military powers, constituting the only form of legislation applicable to the area for over thirteen years, are not published and are not found in any library. Most of them are only distributed to practising lawyers, and some are sent directly to the members of the public they affect. Nowhere is a complete set available and efforts even by lawyers to obtain copies of missing orders are usually unsuccessful.

Not Published

There have been isolated cases in the past, such as Chile, where one or two decrees of a military government

have been treated as secret documents and not published, the ICJ notes. 'But this is the first case to come to the attention of the ICJ where the entire legislation of a territory is not published in an official gazette available to the general public.'

The chief factor affecting law in the West Bank, the introduction says, is that for thirteen years it has been without an indigenous government and the only legislative or executive authority is the military occupying power.

As an occupying power, the Israeli military authorities are entitled under international law to make only such changes in the administration of the territory as are necessary for the security of their forces. The authors argue that in fact the

military government has extended its legislation and administration far beyond that of an occupying power, concerned only with the security of its forces, and has exercised powers akin to those of a sovereign government, thus ensuring for Israel many of the benefits of an annexation of the territory.

In the beginning the Israeli military government declared that it accepted the precepts of international law and would apply to the occupied territories the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The secrecy of its legislation has helped to convey the impression that the military occupation continues to be guided by these principles, the ICJ says. 'But the military administration has altered the existing laws and administration in such a way as to make the economy of the West Bank subordinate to Israeli interests, and to facilitate the encroachment on the territory of Jewish settlements, which are universally condemned as violations of international law.'

The study shows how the authority and efficacy of the local judiciary has been weakened, how their jurisdiction has been reduced, and how their function of hearing appeals from administrative decisions in wide and important areas has been supplanted by a 'curiously named and dilatory "objection committee" which is composed entirely of Israeli military officers.'

The study analyses the legislation and administration in such areas as land rights, water rights, trading and commerce, town planning, trade unions, education, literature and information. These, according to the study, appear to go far beyond the needs of Israeli security and to result in the state of Israel obtaining many of the benefits that would accrue from an annexation of the territory.

The Palestinians: What the Israelis think

A RECENT opinion survey conducted amongst Israeli Jews provides an insight into their view of the Palestinian Arabs who have lived inside the Israeli state since 1948, as this report in the Hebrew daily Ma'ariv by Ronny Eshel on 19th August shows.

The survey meant to test the level of tolerance among Israeli Jews towards minority groups, as well as to examine the image of the Arabs among the Jewish public, to discover the response of Israeli Jews to the term 'Arab', to find out how they felt about equal rights for Arabs and about the need to impose restrictions on Arabs living inside Israel. A questionnaire to this effect was given to 1,223 people. 36 per cent replied that the Arab was dirty, 41.7 per cent defined Arabs as primitive, 33 per cent said that Arabs did not value human life and 40.7 per cent described Israeli Arabs as violent.

Interviewees were asked to comment on various attitudes allegedly held by Israeli Arabs towards Israel. The majority agreed with the following statements: 'The Israeli Arabs are disloyal to the state of Israel' (57 per cent); 'They are glad when Israel is attacked' (53 per cent); 'They hate Jews' (52 per cent); 'They don't accept Israel's existence' (52 per cent). Nevertheless, only 16 per cent believed that most or all Israeli Arabs were spying against Israel.

The survey did produce some positive results: the presence of the Arabs in the Israeli labour market on a day-to-day basis has helped to dispel some myths. 40.9 per cent said that the Israeli Arab is hard-working, while only 26.3 per cent thought the same of the Israeli Jew. 33.2 per cent thought that Israeli Arabs produced good quality work.

The survey disclosed the distinct ambiguity felt by Israeli Jews when it comes to minority groups. About 90

per cent expressed general tolerance towards them, saying that this was based on 'the principles of justice and morality they wished to see applicable all over the world, as well as on religion, tradition and the history of the Jewish people. It was also based on the struggles that had been fought on behalf of persecuted Jews abroad and on international public opinion.'

However, when it came to applying the principle to the Arab minority inside Israel, this tolerance was less noticeable. When asked to make free associations with the word 'Israeli Arab', about 60 per cent displayed a negative attitude in their responses. Moreover, a detailed study of the answers revealed that a quarter of the interviewees held this negative attitude only with regard to Arabs, but not with regard to any other alien group of people.

77.3 per cent of interviewees said that the state of Israel was doing enough for the minority groups living there. 80 per cent said that any claims of discrimination made by Israel's Arab citizens were unjustified. 36 per cent believed that the Arabs must not be given the same rights as the Jews, and over 60 per cent said that the Arabs should have the same duties. When it came to concrete issues, Israelis displayed strong opposition (between 41 and 66 per cent) to the granting of equal opportunities to Arabs. This applied to acceptance to higher education institutions, jobs in private companies, housing aid to large families, national insurance benefits, loans for

agricultural development and the chance to be employed in senior positions in government offices.

The contradiction between a commitment to justice in the abstract and to civil rights in concrete terms was again obvious when it came to the subject of preventive detention. 40 per cent justified the preventive arrest (without trial) of Arabs in almost all cases, but only 5.3 per cent justified similar forms of arrest in Russia. 70 per cent described the detention of Jews by Egypt during the Six Day War as completely unjustifiable.

When presented with a list of arguments in favour of imposing restrictions on Israeli Arabs, the security argument was generally selected. It was chosen by 76 per cent of all interviewees.

According to further information revealed by the survey, about a third of Israeli Jews are demanding that a way should be found to encourage Israeli Arabs to leave the country. A similar proportion supports the expropriation of Arab land for Jewish development requirements.

The most negative attitudes appear to be held in the age groups 18 to 22 and 51 to 60, and among people with elementary schooling, sabras of oriental origin, and Israelis who had immigrated from Africa and Asia. Positive attitudes were most common among people with higher education, those of European or American origin, inhabitants of Haifa and the North and people living in Beer Sheva and the South. There was also greater tolerance among Labour voters.

Special report

Life under Zionist occupation

1980 WILL be the year in which the harsh face of Israeli military occupation became finally exposed. The year recalls memories of two eras of Palestinian history. The newly defiant stand of the Palestinian people in the West Bank indicates a rebirth of the militant mood of the Palestinian Arabs in 1936, when on reallising the goals of the Zionist colonisation scheme in Palestine the Arabs staged a six-month national strike which the British were hard-pressed to put down.

The influx of Zionist settlers into the West Bank, coupled with the provocative, armed nature of their presence on the Arab lands seized by Israel in 1967, and the clear and stated intentions of the settler organisations to drive out the local Palestinian Arab population is, for the Palestinians, a mirror of events in 1948 when Palestine fell under Zionist colonisation and the state of Israel was proclaimed.

The West Bank region of Palestine has taken the brunt of Zionist activities in recent months:

Palestinian towns and villages have found themselves under increasing threat and intimidation from the establishment of Zionist settlements nearby.

Palestinian communities have faced increasing provocation by well-armed settler groups, backed by, and integrated with, the force of the Israel armed forces.

Municipal leaders in the Palestinian towns have experienced growing intimidation—two have been deported this year, and two more seriously injured in assassination attempts now linked with Premier Begin's plans for the region.

Curfews have been rigidly imposed by the Israeli occupation army on towns and cities in a bid to confront the civilian disobedience and resistance to the 13 years old occupation.

Agricultural land, when not confiscated by the Zionist regime, has become threatened (along with the livelihood of thousands of peasant farmers) as new Zionist settlements draw away precious water supplies through the drilling of new wells.

Zionist provocations

The Palestinians have responded to Zionist provocations with a series of strikes and demonstrations. A focal point of the West Bank revolt has been Hebron. From the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba, armed soldiers roam the Arab town, abusing the inhabitants. Then in January one of the settlers was shot dead in the city centre. 20,000 Palestinians were placed under a 10-day curfew, lifted for only 90 minutes a day.

On 23rd March the Israeli government approved Jewish settlement in the heart of the Arab city. A general strike by Palestinians brought commercial life to a halt; schools closed, public transport was at a standstill. Busy markets in occupied Jerusalem closed in sympathy; at a rally in the Holy City thousands of Arabs protested, proclaiming 'Israel, No—PLO, Yes' and waving Palestinian flags.

On 30th March, the Day of the Land, demonstrations recalled the killing of 6 Palestinians in 1976 as they protested the confiscation of their land. Inside Israel Arab students at Umm al Fahm clashed with Israeli police.

On 21st April, Israeli troops shot and wounded two villagers from Deir Assad, south of Jerusalem. A week later clubs and teargas were used against a protest march in Ramallah. Four Palestinians were injured, and several wounded.

On 24th April Gush Emunim settlers stormed through Ramallah and El Bireh, smashing scores of car and shop windows, terrorising the local inhabitants.

On 1st May a 17 years old Palestinian schoolboy was shot dead in Anabta, by Israeli troops. Palestinian resistance members then struck back. In the centre of Hebron a group of Gush Emunim settlers were ambushed; six were killed and two dozen injured. New curfews were imposed, two mayors deported, and Israeli Defence Minister Weizman declared acts of civilian resistance would be countered mercilessly. On 2nd June, in a terrorist operation now linked with the Begin regime, the Zionists attempted to assassinate three West Bank mayors. One escaped harm, but two were seriously maimed and injured.

In this special report Free Palestine looks at events during the past year in the Arab territories occupied in 1967—the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza.



Mayor Bassam Shaka (right) with Nabil Ramlawi, London Representative of the PLO, addresses a press conference at Heathrow Airport on his arrival in London for medical treatment.

West Bank bombing: Begin accused of cover-up

THE ZIONIST premier Menachem Begin has been accused of deliberately seeking to frustrate the investigation into those responsible for the 2nd June car bomb attacks on the West Bank that left two mayors maimed. The allegations came to a head with the resignation of the head of Israel's national security organisation, Shin Bet, who was rumoured to have relinquished his post because of obstruction by the Zionist premier of the investigation he was conducting into the attacks. The security chief's allegations of official involvement in the bomb outrages tend to confirm the views of the victims of the car-bombings, who have consistently stated their belief that the attacks were perpetrated with the blessing of the Israeli government, writes Alan George.

It was on 2nd June that Mr Bassam Shaka, the Mayor of occupied Nablus, lost both legs in an explosion that wrecked his car and that Mr Karim Khalaf, Mayor of Ramallah, lost a foot in a similar attack. The Mayor of El Bireh, Mr Ibrahim Tawil, narrowly escaped a similar fate when he was alerted to the two other bombings. It was discovered that his car too had been booby-trapped and an Israeli sapper was blinded defusing the bomb. The same day a grenade was hurled into the crowded market place of occupied Hebron, injuring seven Palestinians. The Israelis announced a full-scale investigation into the incidents, but all evidence now points to an official cover-up by the Begin regime.

The allegations that Begin in fact had acted to restrain the investigation were first made by David Halevy, the Israeli correspondent of the *Washington Post*, and local staff member of *Time* magazine. In a report on 7th August, the same day that the head of the Israeli internal security service submitted his resignation, Halevy alleged that the security chief had refused to permit intensive penetration of the ultra-nationalistic Gush Emunim movement, which was suspected of involvement in the attacks. According to Halevy, Mr Abraham Achitov presented the Israeli premier with evidence suggesting that the bomb attacks were carried out by six people and

reported that investigators had focused on the Gush Emunim settlement of Beit El, on the West Bank north of Jerusalem. Begin allegedly vetoed requests for telephone tapings, arrests and penetration of the settlement and of the Gush Emunim movement by security agents. Since coming to power Begin has been closely allied with Gush Emunim, and ensured that funds are made available for their provocative settlement programme.

So alarmed were the Zionists at the *Washington Star* report that the Shin Bet chief, in an unprecedented move, shed 30 years of professional anonymity and went on Israeli radio to deny Halevy's allegations. For his part, the reporter stuck to his guns. In an interview he released further details of secret meetings between Begin and Achitov and said that he was quite willing to go on trial and defend his story. The question of a trial arose because by naming the Shin Bet chief in his original report, Halevy had divulged a state secret, an offence that carries a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment.

Further strong evidence of official Zionist complicity in the bomb attacks surfaced in September, when the Paris-based Israeli journal *Israel and Palestine* reported that the security chief had been persuaded to remain in his post until the end of this year purely to discredit the *Washington Star* report. The magazine also gave details of a special Zionist terrorist group established by one of Begin's own advisers. Begin, while in opposition, said *Israel and Palestine*, became convinced of the need for a clandestine killer department. The Paris-based magazine claims that the Israeli premier had prevented Achitov from prosecuting two members of this terrorist organisation. The magazine claimed that Achitov believed the two suspects had each led groups of three men in a special commando unit, which booby-trapped the mayors' cars.

The allegations by David Halevy and *Israel and Palestine* support the consistent accusations of the bomb victims themselves of complicity by the Begin government in the atrocities. Speaking at a press conference at London's Heathrow Airport on 15th August, Mayor Bassam Shaka said

that responsibility for the bombings lay with the Israeli government, the Zionist security services and the Israeli military governor of the occupied West Bank.

To back up his accusation, he detailed to reporters how the Israeli authorities were seeking to frustrate a proper investigation of the incidents. Asked what progress there had been in the investigation, Mayor Shaka replied, 'I can't give you any information because I have not been asked anything about the explosion, or about what I saw. My wife has not been questioned either, nor has anybody in the quarter.' He said the only contact he had had with the Israeli police was when his family reported the discovery of footprints in their back garden and signs that someone had tried to enter over a wall. 'When the inspector came and saw the footprints, he erased them and said to my children, "If you find any more evidence, call me".'

Mayor Shaka's account of the laxity of the investigation was confirmed by his lawyer, the Israeli anti-Zionist Felicia Langer. In a report in the *New Statesman* on 15th August she was quoted as saying that none of the Shaka family has been invited to submit evidence to any enquiry, despite Begin's claims that a thorough investigation was under way.

She added that the area where the bomb exploded had not been surveyed, and that the car in which the explosion took place had mysteriously disappeared.

The magazine recalled that reports from the time of the bombing note that Mr Shaka's phone was cut off 45 minutes before the attack and reconnected 15 minutes afterwards, while Nablus residents claim that extra troops were drafted into the town immediately before the bombing. The *New Statesman* drew the only possible conclusions: 'The implications of all these allegations, if they are true, is that right-wing terrorist groups, with the connivance of strong elements of the military administration, are out of control and are now dictating government policy in the West Bank or, indeed, that the government has actively encouraged attacks against political leaders in the West Bank.'



Voice in Exile: Zehdi Terzi, PLO Observer at the UN (left) joins (l-r) Mohamed Milhem, Rajab Tamimi and Fahd Kawasmeah at a press conference in New York.

How Israel silences Palestinian critics

ON 14TH October two Palestinian mayors walked across the Allenby Bridge over the River Jordan which divides the Hashemite Kingdom from Israeli occupied Palestine. Undeterred by threats from Zionist groups that they would be assassinated, the two men returned to appeal against their deportations by the Israeli military authorities on 2nd May, when Muhammad Milhem, mayor of Halhoul, Fahd

Kawasmeah, the mayor of Hebron and Sheikh Rajab Tamimi, the Muslim qadi of Hebron were unceremoniously thrust into exile.

The return of the two mayors follows international condemnation at their deportation in violation of the Geneva Conventions. Shortly after they crossed the bridge to their occupied homeland the Israeli military authorities cast a black-out on all press interviews and public statements by the mayors.

The blackout on news concerning the two men suggests that Israel's decision to permit their return was for other than humanitarian reasons, or a willingness to submit to international protests. Once inside the occupied homeland the two mayors can be effectively silenced in their protests at the brutality and oppression being experienced by the West Bank Palestinians under Israeli military rule.

The Zionists have learned a hard lesson from the deportations. In the five months since their deportation the two mayors have travelled more than 50,000 miles on a tour of world capitals, speaking to government leaders and the press.

Alan George looks at the background to their deportations in early May, and talked to Mayor Milhem during a visit to London.

Israel exiles West Bank leaders

ONLY HOURS after a Palestinian resistance operation in Hebron left six armed Zionist settlers dead and another sixteen wounded, on 3rd May the Israeli military authorities summarily deported the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul and the religious leader of Hebron. The Zionists sought to justify the expulsions by alleging that the three men had in some way been responsible for the guerrilla attack, through their encouragement of civilian protests at the continuing Israeli occupation.

The deportations have drawn a storm of international condemnation of an affair which demonstrates once again Israel's contempt for the Geneva Conventions, designed to protect occupied peoples. The Conventions expressly forbid deportations, regardless of motive.

The deportations prompted a wave of protest action on the West Bank. General strikes were staged in Nablus, Halhoul, Jenin, Ramallah, East

Jerusalem and Gaza. Street marches, protest meetings and stone throwing were broken up by Israeli troops using tear gas and clubs. Palestinian prisoners in Zionist jails also staged a hunger strike in protest at the deportations.

The harsh Israeli action also sparked a wave of international protest. Even the United States, Israel's staunchest ally, condemned the deportations out of hand. The State Department on 6th May issued a statement saying the expulsions were a violation of international law. The Department noted that the Zionists had not linked the three deportees with the guerrilla attack in Hebron and also noted that the expellees 'did not have access to appeal procedures normally available under prevailing law.' The US government statement said, 'deportations are, in any case, prohibited by the fourth Geneva Convention, regardless of motive.'

Two days later, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning the expulsions and calling on Israel 'as an occupying power, to rescind these illegal measures and facilitate the immediate return of the three deportees. During the Security Council debate, the PLO's UN representative, Mr Zehdi Terzi, compared the expulsions to 'Nazi behaviour in occupied Europe.' He said the Israeli action underlined that under Zionist rule 'You have no right to freedom of thought or freedom of speech.' The voting on the resolution was 14 to nil, with the United States abstaining, a move seen as appeasement of the influential Zionist lobby in a presidential election year.

Israel has previously ignored the Security Council call and when the three deportees attempted to cross into the West Bank from Jordan on 11th May they were barred by Israeli soldiers. The Israeli attitude

drew a further stern rebuke from the United Nations. On 20th May the Security Council adopted another resolution deploring Israel's failure to abide by the 8th May ruling.

Restrictions

The deportations heralded the imposition of the new Israeli 'iron fist' policy in the 1967 occupied territories, designed to quell the rising tide of civilian resistance to the occupation. A number of the new measures are aimed specifically at silencing the West Bank mayors, who have played an active role in the Palestinian protest movement. They are now banned from making political declarations and meeting the foreign press, and are forbidden from holding joint meetings or from planning collective protest action. In the context of this new level of Israeli ruthlessness, it is not surprising that the three deportees remain in exile to this day.

Harassment continues

THE MAYORS of the occupied towns of Kalkiya and El Ebroh have been the latest targets of the Zionist campaign of intimidation and harassment of West Bank Palestinian leaders. Israeli security forces arrested Mayor Amin al Nasser of Kalkiya on 22nd September, accusing him of publishing a pamphlet allegedly containing inflammatory material. The mayor was detained on the orders of West Bank military governor Major-General Binyamin Ben-Eliesser. All copies of the pamphlet at the town hall were confiscated.

The mayor's arrest sparked a wave of protests in the town and in the West Bank as a whole. A general strike called in Kalkiya on 27th September was prevented by harsh action by Israeli troops. Military roadblocks were set up at the town's entrances, while soldiers forced shopkeepers to open up for business. Ten shopkeepers were arrested for interrogation. The town hall and the chamber of commerce succeeded in carrying out their strike action, but Zionist troops prevented demonstrations by local school-children.

In a telegram to the Israeli Defence Ministry protesting against the Mayor's arrest, West Bank Palestinian groups, including the Red Cross, women's organisations and student unions recalled the deportation in May of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul for alleged incitement.

'They are trying to destroy all the mayors and rid themselves of our elected leadership,' said the telegram.

Mayor al Nasser was released from detention on 28th September, on bail pending trial for publishing the pamphlet.

Earlier, on 9th September, Israeli radio reported that the West Bank military government had refused permission for Mayor Ibrahim al Tawil of El Ebroh to travel to the United Kingdom at the invitation of British organisations dedicated to fostering good relations between the UK and the Arab world. Mayor al Tawil had been a target in the 2nd June West Bank car bomb atrocities which left the mayors of Nablus and Ramallah maimed.

Zionists stoned

ISRAELI TROOPS and armed settlers clashed on 2nd September with Palestinian villagers in the West Bank near Bethlehem and Ramallah. In the first incident, troops and settlers backed with armoured vehicles entered the village of Al Khodr near Bethlehem and set on the Arab land surrounding a bridge just outside the village. Palestinian villagers resisted the invasion with stones. The troops and settlers fired shots over the villagers' heads and attached the crowd with clubs. A number of Palestinians were arrested. The major settlement complex of Efrat was recently built near the village and plans are under way to further expand the Israeli settler presence in the area.

Meanwhile, in the village of Mazraa near Ramallah, Palestinians armed only with stones confronted Israeli soldiers who had come to occupy a large tract of the village's land.

Mayor speaks: My day of deportation

IN AN exclusive interview with Free Palestine given shortly after the deportations, Mayor Muhammad Milhem of Halhoul gave a graphic account of the circumstances in which he and the two other prominent West Bank personalities were exiled.

'After midnight, the night of 2nd-3rd May, each of us was visited by a different officer from the Israeli military government in the occupied West Bank,' said Mayor Milhem. 'Myself, I was told that the military governor of the West Bank wanted to see me for a short period of time. By way of confirmation, when my wife asked him whether I would be absent for a long time, he told her that I wouldn't be away for more than 15 minutes. He took me to the government building in Hebron and there I was kept for half an hour alone in a room. Later I was accompanied by another officer to a helicopter which had landed near the governor's office.'

Mayor Milhem was told that the helicopter would be taking him to Tel Aviv to meet the Israeli Minister of Defence. In the helicopter, he found Mayor Fahd Kawasmeah of Hebron. Later Sheikh Rajab Tamimi, the qadi, or religious leader of Hebron, was put on board. The three men were under heavy guard. The fact that they were under such a guard raised the three men's suspicions, said Mayor Milhem, 'but we didn't believe that we were being deported until after a flight of about one hour when they put smelly hoods of thick canvas over our heads. A very bad smell, almost suffocating us. The helicopter landed and we were taken to a pick-up truck, then to another pick-up truck, and an order of the military governor of the West Bank that we were to be deported was read out to us in south Lebanon. At about 4am we found ourselves in

a village in south Lebanon.' The three deportees made their way to the Lebanese capital Beirut, arriving there at about 10am. It was about this time that their families first had word of the three men's fate.

At no stage did the Israelis give the three deportees an explanation for their expulsion. All they said, according to Mayor Milhem, was 'Go to Arafat.' The Zionists attempted to justify the expulsions by accusing the deportees of responsibility for the 2nd May Palestinian guerrilla attack in Hebron. The three Palestinian leaders, alleged the Israelis, had prompted the assault by stirring up Palestinian nationalism, and encouraging civilian protests at the occupation.

This is a spurious argument. The reality is that the deportations were an act of vengeance for the guerrilla raid. At the same time, the Palestinian attack offered the Zionists a pretext to remove three of the

most outspoken critics of the occupation.

Israel has employed deportation as one means of reducing the Palestinian population of the territories seized in 1967. The fewer the Palestinians in the areas, the easier is Israel's task of colonising them.

It is in this context of Israeli expansionism at the expense of the Palestinians that Mayor Milhem sees the May deportations. 'The three of us were deported and an attempt was made on the lives of the three mayors, and seven people were injured in Hebron, because they want land without people.'

'They deport some, they kill some, they harass the others and force them to flee. And if any Arabs choose to stay, they will be plain coolies, plain labourers sweeping the streets of the Israelis and doing very humble jobs in their farms and factories. That's what they want. They are liquidating the people.'

BRITAIN'S FOREIGN Secretary has again repeated the British Government's view that the Palestine Liberation Organisation must be a party to any discussions concerning the future of Palestinian territory, and firmly rejected Zionist claims that the PLO is merely a terrorist organisation. Lord Carrington was speaking at a private meeting on 17th September in London organised by the Board of Deputies to impress the Foreign Secretary with the alleged opposition amongst Britain's Jewish community to the Government's Middle East policy.

Lord Carrington and his fellow ministers at the Foreign Office have played a leading role in the moves by the European Community towards recognising the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and in supporting the Palestinians' right to national self-determination.

Yet despite Lord Carrington's assertion to the Zionists in London that, 'I think it is undeniably true that the PLO represents a very large body of Palestinians,' the British government has continued to reject any official recognition of the PLO as the Palestinians' sole representative.

Lord Carrington did, however, defend his Palestine stand before his Zionist audience. 'Those who say you cannot negotiate with an organisation that they do not like, or do not approve of, or which is engaged in terrorism, cannot sustain that argument, in my opinion,' he said.

Soon after the resolution of the Zimbabwean independence, the British government disclosed its inten-



Lord Carrington



Nabil Ramlawi



Douglas Hurd

PLO must be party to peace talks says Britain

tion to give added emphasis to dealing with the Middle East conflict and in particular the Palestinian dimensions to tension in the region. British officials made it known that the government recognised that failure to end the Palestine conflict could only act as a destabilising factor in the Middle East.

Britain, like her European partners, is also convinced that the US sponsored Camp David process, along with the controversial UN Security Council Resolution 242, will not lead to a settlement of the Palestine question.

The first public sign of the shift in British government attitudes towards the Palestine question came late last year, when on 3rd December

a brief but planned encounter between Sir Ian Gilmour, Lord Privy Seal and principal foreign affairs spokesman in the House of Commons, and Mr Farouk Qaddoumi, Head of the PLO Political Department, took place at a Syrian Embassy reception in London. The brief but top level dialogue marked an end to British government pronouncements that it would not undertake any talks with PLO officials.

The shift of British policy was further emphasised in December when Mr Douglas Hurd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, visited occupied Palestine. A reportedly acrimonious meeting took place on 12th December between Mr Hurd and Premier Begin over a remark by the British envoy that the PLO's

'diplomatic and political approach' should be taken into consideration when assessing the Middle East peace process. During his visit Mr Hurd also held talks with Palestinian personalities from the occupied West Bank, which further underlined Britain's intention to open a dialogue with the Palestinians.

In January Mr Hurd, on a visit to Qatar, seized the opportunity to brand Israel's settlement programme as 'a major obstacle' to closer relations between the West and the Arab countries. Indicating that Britain and other western powers were not prepared to jeopardise their political, economic and trading interests with the Arab world for the sake of defending Israel's expansionism and repeated violations of UN

resolutions. Mr Hurd said, 'As long as the new settlements policy continues, Israel cannot expect a lasting peace, and without that, there can be no full understanding between the Western powers and their Arab friends.'

Back in London a few days later, on 24th January Lord Carrington told the House of Lords of the need to find a settlement to the Arab-Israel conflict which recognises the rights of the Palestinian people.

The month ended with Mr Hurd making a major policy statement to the Middle East Association on 30th January, in which the Minister declared, 'No one should doubt that the PLO will have to be involved in the peace process.' This remark marked the first from a British government minister that the PLO should be a party to Middle East peace negotiations.

Tory Conference

In Brighton on 10th October, Lord Carrington defended the British government's Middle East policy against criticism from some Conservative delegates at the Party's annual conference. The Foreign Secretary rejected the claim that the establishment of a Palestinian state would be communist dominated and against Western interests.

Lord Carrington said that while British policy was based on recognition of Israel and its right to live within secure boundaries, 'The Israelis must equally recognise the rights of the Arabs, including the Palestinians, to order their own affairs.'

Special Report by Louis Eaks

New Conservative group backs Palestinians

WITH BRITAIN'S Conservative Government moving with the rest of Europe towards increasing recognition of Palestinian rights, Conservative parliamentarians have formed themselves into a new group to press for a just solution of the Middle East conflict. The Conservative Middle East Council, which is open to members of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, has already attracted more than forty members. In a letter to the Council's President, Lord Chelwood, formerly the MP Sir Tufan Beaulah, Mr Nabil Ramlawi, the London Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, has welcomed the creation of the Council. The PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat, has also expressed his appreciation of the group's formation.

The Council's Chairman is Dennis Waters MP, who has long been an



Dennis Walters

active supporter of Palestinian rights. He says that the new group's aims are very broad. 'Basically they are to

improve relations between this country and the Arab world and to support initiatives, like the one proposed at Venice, which recognise the fact that there cannot be any lasting settlement in the Middle East that does not respect the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.'

Mr Walters said that a number of Conservative parliamentarians had been thinking of forming such a group for some time, to work in co-ordination with the long-established Labour Middle East Council, a similar group in the parliamentary Labour Party. It was really a question, he said, of choosing the right moment to launch it.

'The formulation of the European initiative, in which the British Government played a considerable part, seemed a very opportune time,' he said. 'We felt the Council would

both attract members who have supported the just claims of the Palestinians for a long time, and who moreover recognise that it is also a British political interest to support their right to self-determination, as well as other members who have not been involved in Middle East politics in the past but who see the political need for an initiative and who are anxious at this stage to show their support for the Government.'

Mr Walters has emphasised the Council's hope that the European states would move rapidly towards the formulation of a series of concrete proposals to solve the Middle East conflict. 'The Venice communiqué quite clearly recognised the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. It also stated that all parties to the conflict must be involved in negotiations and this would have to include, in my view quite rightly, the

PLO. We feel that this dialogue should start as soon as possible, that it should be conducted at a high level and move towards a series of European proposals for a solution to the problem.'

The Council was not disappointed that the EEC declaration at Venice did not confer formal recognition on the PLO, Mr Walters said, because the British government has never granted recognition to organisations that were not actually in control of a country. The Council feels, says Mr Walters, 'We should talk with the PLO, recognising that the PLO is the only effective representative of the Palestinian people. Our group certainly believes that the PLO does represent the majority of the Palestinian people. If there was an election I would have thought the PLO would certainly be able to form a government.'

Trade unions: 'A vital role to play'

A NEW organisation has been formed in Britain with the specific task of speaking for the Palestinian cause within the labour and trade union movement. At a recent inaugural meeting in Dundee, founding members heard Mr Nabil Ramlawi, the London Representative of the PLO declare, 'Each of you here today has a vital role to play as a voice of the Palestinian people inside the British trade union movement.'

The new grouping has already won the backing of Mr Bill Symon, Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, and Mr George Galloway, vice-chairman of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party, together with Mr Ernie Ross, Labour MP for Dundee West.

It was in Dundee that the inaugural meeting was held earlier

this year. Mr Ramlawi was welcomed to the city by Dundee's Lord Provost, Mr James Gowans.

Mr Ramlawi explained, 'For many years it was difficult for the Palestinian people to understand how a labour movement, which has been a champion of liberation movements and human rights causes, could turn its back on the plight of the Palestinians and the suffering which we have endured as a result of Zionist actions.'

'Today we are aware that this can only be changed if our voice is heard within the ranks of the trade union movement. We are also aware that when our voice is heard, British trade unionists become our strongest allies and supporters. It is in this context that each of you here today has a vital role to play, as a voice of the Palestinian people inside the

British trade union movement.'

Mr Ramlawi emphasised, 'The events of the past few weeks in our occupied homeland only stress the urgency with which we all must work to secure a solution to the plight of the Palestinian people. A clear, loud and determined voice is required in the West to protest the Zionist campaign to settle the territories seized by Israel in 1967, and drive out our people.'

He pointed out, 'What is happening today in the West Bank is not only due to Zionist ambitions to colonise that region, and as a consequence to force out the Arab population — as they did in 1948. The settlements, the violence against our people, and the rape of our land, are taking place because the world has been silent about these crimes. These actions

are not new. We have lived with them for more than 33 years — not just in Nablus, and Ramallah and Hebron. We have been subjected to these crimes before, in Haifa, and Jaffa and across Palestine.'

'When people call the Palestinians terrorists, we look to you — the British trade union movement — to explain that we have been the victims of terrorism. We were a peaceful and industrious people living in our Palestinian homeland. We had no aggressive intentions against anyone — a rare characteristic in this modern world. It was Zionists, not the Palestinians, who brought violence and terrorism to the Middle East, the trade unionists were told.'

'The message which I bring to you today,' said Mr Ramlawi, 'is that this violence will continue unless the prob-

lem is resolved. And I am forced to add this point: there will be no peace so long as the Palestinian people are the victims and sufferers of injustice and oppression. No people will submit to oppression.'

He added, 'Peace in the Middle East, and justice for the Palestinian people, will come one step closer when Britain, and the European Community as a whole, puts its strength behind securing a just peace for the Palestinian people.'

'We look to the British labour movement and trade unions to play an equally vital role in explaining our cause to the British people. In turn we believe that the British people will demand that the British government plays an active part in ensuring respect for Palestinian people,' the PLO envoy concluded.

Two British MPs comment: Palestinian rights

'ANYONE who thinks there can be a peace settlement in the Middle East without involving the PLO must be off his head.' That was the blunt answer to a question I asked King Hussein of Jordan in Amman.

Given the past turbulent relationship between his own country and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, such a statement is important. It was echoed in different forms by the Mayors and other leaders of Arab opinion I met from the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Indeed, the idea that the PLO is a minority and solely terrorist group representative of the Palestinian people, I found to be wholly groundless. The PLO is an amalgam of many Palestinian groupings, some just political, others involved in acts of brutal terrorism to advance their aims.

As I prepared to meet their leader, Yasser Arafat, I recalled a meeting with Robert Mugabe in Mozambique in 1978. At that time he was denounced in Britain as the head of a bloodthirsty terrorist organisation, a Marxist and a puppet of the Communist powers. Today, he is hailed as the embodiment of statesmanship, and certainly my own meeting had left me with a much more positive impression.

I had met Arafat briefly in a slightly awkward and embarrassing moment during Tito's funeral in Belgrade, when he shook hands with Prince Philip, Margaret Thatcher, James Callaghan and me in a display of undiplomatic bravura. My colleagues, David Alton and Lord Avebury, had arranged to see him at his headquarters in Beirut, where they explored the idea of my having a formal meeting with him in the course of my Middle East tour. David Alton was in my team of six for the visit and noted a more subdued Arafat across the formal conference table from one he had met three months before.

We had arranged to meet in the

David Steel: Injustice begets violence

The rights of the Palestinians must be recognised

Syrian capital, Damascus, because this suited his itinerary, and the preliminaries to the meeting verged on the farcical as we sped in convoy apparently in circles round the streets of Damascus, since the venue was so secret the security police had difficulty finding it. We eventually met at 9.30pm and went on talking until nearly midnight.

We began on the subject of the Venice declaration by the nine EEC governments which recognise the role of the PLO. I told him I had talked to M. Gaston Thorn, chairman of the EEC Council of Ministers about his earlier meeting with Arafat. He was lukewarm about the European 'initiative' (as, next day, was President Assad of Syria) because it amounted to no more than a declaration, and because it did not specifically reject the Camp David process, which Arafat described as a 'betrayal' and sees as purely an Egyptian-Israeli bilateral agreement.

Arafat described himself as 'pragmatic and brave enough to be able to live with Israel'. But since the only card he has to play in any peace negotiations is the recognition of Israel, he declines to play it in advance. He is exasperated when

challenged with past statements and resolutions of the PLO which have demanded the destruction of Israel. He appealed to outsiders to 'look beyond the rhetoric and get into dialogue.'

It will obviously be essential for him, publicly and specifically to reject such statements if he is ever to be involved in peace negotiations. But, bearing in mind the nature of the organisation over which he presides, it may be impossible to secure that straight away.

On the status of any new Palestinian State on the West Bank and Gaza, he made it clear that he would accept a UN presence for some time to guarantee the borders and reassure its neighbours that it was not a militarist State.

Arafat described the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr Begin, ironically, as 'my best ally', because the 60 new Jewish settlements in occupied territory since the Camp David agreement, plus the passage of the Bill annexing East Jerusalem, had done much to undermine Begin's own agreement with President Sadat and consolidated Arab opinion against the Camp David process.



IN DAMASCUS, a few weeks ago David Steel, the Liberal Party leader, became the first British party leader to hold talks with Yasser Arafat. In this article, written for *The Observer*, Mr Steel reports on his meeting with the Palestinian leader. He asserts the need to recognise the rights of the Palestinians as the basis for a just settlement in the Middle East.

Palestinian people, fear that the terror and violence, and especially the tragic civil chaos in Lebanon, will continue.

When I saw some of the Israeli border settlements, behind tall barbed wire fencing with outlook posts at the corners, I was appalled. The moving Holocaust memorial of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem acts as a reminder of the past suffering of the Jews behind barbed wire. There can be no 'secure' future in this direction or in the machine-gunning teenagers in the cafes.

A visit to the Golan Heights is sufficient to realise that Israel must not be expected again to sit with gun emplacements overlooking her territory. But real security for Israel must lie in the direction of a full peace settlement with her neighbours that is internationally guaranteed. To achieve that, all the evidence suggests that she will have to come to terms with the rights of the Palestinians to a homeland next door, for in that route lies the only real peace and security worthy of the description.

This article first appeared in *The Observer* on 12th October 1980.

I saw Israeli planes bomb Palestinian refugees

A RECENT Renter report from the Middle East quoted an Israeli statement 'that their forces had raided two Palestinian guerrilla bases, destroying several buildings and inflicting casualties on the defenders in the Lebanese port city of Tyre and the nearby village of Rashidiyah.' I happened to be in both those places on the day in question with a delegation of British MPs. I heard the bombardment of Tyre and saw the buildings which were destroyed in the sprawling Palestinian refugee camp of Rashidiyah.

These buildings were not military bases, they were pitiful breeze-block and corrugated iron dwellings which have been the homes of Palestinian Arab families since they lost their homeland in 1948. The people seem to be accustomed to sporadic bombardment and they have underground shelters. However, there had been one casualty that day — not a defender, but a little girl.

It is difficult to understand why Israel should want to harass refugees in this way. The objective cannot be military, because of the very nature of the Palestinian guerrilla army — by definition there is no such thing as a guerrilla base, so it seems pointless to deploy long-range artillery in the way it is now being used in South Lebanon. These tactics have actually helped to weld the Palestinian diaspora into a well-organised nation-in-exile with its own leaders, parliament, army and even a health service.

DURING AUGUST a group of four Labour and four Conservative British Members of Parliament visited the Middle East at the invitation of the PLO. In this report John Home Robertson, Labour MP for Berwick and East Lothian, reports on the day he watched Israeli planes bombing Palestinian refugees in a south Lebanon camp.

I doubt if the Israelis really intended this to happen, but their Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, appears to be pursuing another objective with all the vigour that made him notorious as a terrorist leader when Palestine was under the British mandate before 1948. The objective is to destabilise and, if possible, to occupy parts of neighbouring Arab states. This has the effect of creating a military buffer zone around Israel and it also keeps the unfortunate Palestinians on the move.

My visit to Lebanon provided a dramatic illustration of what the destabilisation of a state means. The Lebanese government actually control merely a small pocket of Lebanon — and that only with the aid of Syrian troops. At one stage in the programme of visits to Lebanese dignitaries by our delegation, we were virtually hijacked, complete with our armed guards, to the HQ of the extreme Right-wing Phalangist organisation and a large area north-east of the city.

This unscheduled stop was reminiscent of a bad James Bond film,

complete with an evil genius, Pierre Gemayel, his thug son Bashir, who leads a bizarre private army; an elaborate headquarters building with all the necessary trappings including a computer; and, for good measure, a former president of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, who is apparently being held hostage by his former rivals and acting as their spokesman to give the organisation an air of respectability. This outfit has close links with Major Haddad, another Right-wing buccaneer, who controls the southern tip of Lebanon and is known to be armed and financed by Israel.

So Lebanon is now divided against itself and against its reluctant Palestinian guests, and what was once a unique Middle Eastern democracy has become a cockpit for conflict between armed factions representing numerous internal and external interests.

All this instability may suit Israel, but the rest of us have nothing to gain from so much friction in an area where the super Powers could be drawn into conflict. Furthermore,

Western European interests are not helped by the constant troubles in the Arab world — many of our present economic difficulties can be traced back to the Arab oil price explosion of 1972.

These factors account for the new EEC initiative for a Middle East settlement which, although it does not yet take the form of concrete proposals, is exciting because it recognises for almost the first time the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people. The US-sponsored Camp David negotiations cannot succeed because nobody ever consulted the Palestinians about them. These people cannot be ignored: there are three million of them, they all regard Palestine as their nation and it is abundantly clear that practically all of them support the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Yasser Arafat.

Our delegation spent two and a half hours with Arafat and I came away convinced that he is a pragmatic leader who would be prepared to accept and respect a compromise partition of Palestine. This would involve the setting up of an independent Arab state in the West Bank and Gaza. However, the necessary Israeli withdrawal from these territories could only be achieved given cast-iron guarantees from external Powers and a level of statesmanship in Israel which the present Likud government lacks completely.

It is therefore necessary for both

the Europeans and the Americans to apply massive pressure on Israel to compromise for the sake of its own long-term security, world peace and, not least, justice for the Palestinians. It really is high time that the peoples of the Middle East learned to recognise that each other exist, and the Israelis should know by now that their efforts to persuade the world that the Palestinian Arabs were figments of Nasser's imagination have failed. A refugee mother in Rashidiyah told me to 'bring all the world to see what they do to us', very much as a Jew in a Nazi concentration camp might have appealed not so very long ago. Surely the Jews of all people should recognise the obscenity of trying to eliminate a whole nation.

The alternative to an early compromise is alarming. Both Arafat and the local Palestinian commander to whom I spoke close to the front line near the old Crusader castle of Beaufort, talked of massive Israeli troop concentrations nearby. If this means that Begin is planning a new major incursion into Lebanon as a continuation of his policy of aggression and annexation while America is preoccupied with its elections, then European governments should use all their powers of influence and persuasion to defuse the situation.

This article appeared in *The Scotsman* on 17th October 1980.

SINCE THIS column last appeared the international community as a whole has moved a considerable way towards recognising that respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians is the only solid basis on which peace in the Middle East can be secured. This has naturally alarmed the Israeli government and Zionists around the world, who remain committed apologists for the Zionist régime as ever, despite Beigín's unashamed violation of international law and disregard for human rights.

Much of the battle for the future of Palestine over the past decades has been fought in propaganda terms by the Zionists in their bid to capture the hearts and minds of western public opinion, not least those of western governments. As the Zionists have pushed ahead with their expansionist schemes in the 1967 occupied territories, even the most hardened of western newspaper editors has found it difficult to give the Zionists the kind of support which they enjoyed in the past.

Faced with the loss of political and editorial support, the Zionists have not been short of ingenuity in launching an international propaganda campaign. And with the increasing recognition of the PLO, it has been the PLO which they have sought to discredit. To state that the Zionist propaganda campaign is 'orchestrated' is probably an understatement. It is more akin to a military manoeuvre.

In *The Jerusalem Post*, the Zionist state's English language daily, on 24th September, appeared an article by Chaim Herzog, former military governor of the West Bank and ambassador to the UN explaining 'why this country should be conducting an international public opinion campaign'.

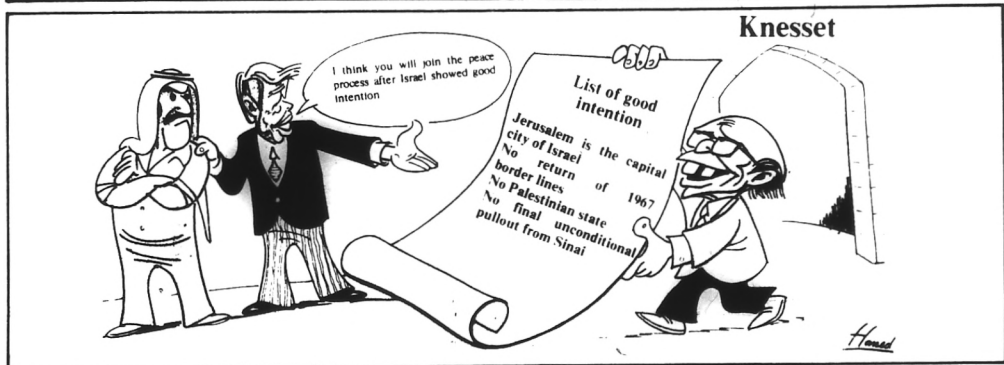
On 29th September the Israeli Foreign Minister appeared before the UN General Assembly. *The Jerusalem Post* reported the following day: 'The conflict between Iran and Iraq shows the folly of placating the Arabs to ensure the world's oil supplies. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir told the UN General Assembly yesterday . . . Shamir said the war in the Persian Gulf "demolishes the naive and groundless belief that the world's oil supply is dependent on a pro-Arab solution to the dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbours".'

Two weeks later the ripples began to appear in the British press. On 13th October Mr Arthur Super appeared in the Letters Column of *The Times*. I doubt if he claims any credit for originality of his letter — it was almost the same as Mr Shamir's speech at the UN (strange as it might be that *The Times* could not spot a bit of plagiarism when it falls before their eyes). Having stated that 'the problem of the Palestinian refugees is irrelevant to the present struggle between Iraq and Iran', Mr Super's argument centred around the view expressed by Shamir, namely that the establishment of a Palestinian state will not bring stability to the Middle East, and assure the West of her oil supplies.

What Mr Super was asking was: 'Would the resolution of the Palestinian problem, on European terms, usher in an era of pastoral peace to the Middle East?' Those elegant words are not mine, but those of the Israeli Ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov, who was given considerable space in *The Guardian* on 13th October, the same day Mr Super's letter appeared in *The Times*, to argue the very same points.

The thrust of the Zionist campaign is to undermine the governments in Europe in a last ditch attempt to stall the inevitable moves towards EEC recognition of the PLO, and the community's moves towards pushing

Western Press Review



for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. It is not the longed for state which the Zionists so much fear but the longer term ramifications of its creation: that Palestinian Arabs within the 1948 occupied territories seized for the Israeli state will identify with Palestinian nationalism and reject the psychological, cultural and national oppression to which the Zionists have subjected them for the past three decades; the contrast between free Palestinian Arabs in their own state and the less than free, second class citizenship endured by the Palestinians in Israel.

Naturally Mr Beigín has been over-exerting himself on this current point, but it cut little ice with *The Times*, which remarked somewhat cryptically in its 14th October editorial: 'This is a fair debating point and no one can blame Mr Beigín for seizing the chance to make it. But few people — and certainly no responsible Western leaders — have ever argued that the provision of a Palestinian homeland for the Palestinians is the be all and end all of Middle East peace.'

The Times concluded its editorial with this warning to the Zionists: 'When the [Iraq-Iran] war is over the Palestinian problem is not likely to have diminished in importance.'

One question which arises from the current Israeli policy under the Beigín government is whether a return of Labour government would herald any real change in policy. It can be argued, anyhow, that Beigín is only admitting in public what the Labour regimes under Ben Gurion, Golda Meir and Rabin plotted in private. It is interesting to note that the self-styled Zionist liberals of the Labour Party are quite ready to defend the Beigín regime. Abba Eban, always paraded in the West as a 'nice guy' appeared in print in *The Daily Telegraph* on 8th September to present an apology for the recent Knesset approved law declaring united Jerusalem the eternal capital of the Zionist state. So delighted was the Board of Deputies of British Jews (who have often been said to be concerned at the excesses of the Beigín regime) that they paid to insert the letter in *The Times* on 22nd September. Against the recorded background of the mass expulsion of Arab families, Muslim and Christian alike, from their homes in the Old City, Mr Eban delightfully refers to Israeli rule in the City as 'its age of enlightenment'. 'Jerusalem,' he opines, 'has to be governed by someone.'

It seems any old clap-trap is good enough for feeble western minds, at least as far as the Zionists contemptuously believe.

Of course the Zionists are delighted by recent events. The upsurge of anti-semitism in France, together with the conflict between Iran and Iraq, suit their purposes very well. Each is being ruthlessly exploited, even shamefully in the case of the assaults on European Jewry which in Zionist eyes appear of secondary concern to undermining the Palestinian cause. Nevertheless, the moves towards the European stand on the Palestine question, largely supported by the London press (in contrast to the American newspapers) stem from a recognition that the Camp David process does not really exist at all except in the imagination of Mr Carter and Mr Sadat, and increasing recognition that Israeli occupation is not the nice benevolent life that Mr Eban and his cohorts claim.

As far back as last January the press came to recognise that Palestinian 'autonomy', as offered by Israel, and wholly within the terms of the Camp David scenario, was hardly a recipe for satisfying Palestinian national rights. *The Times* (21st January) declared, 'The Israeli autonomy model contained in a 26 page document is notable chiefly for the long list of important functions, responsibilities and activities which Israel makes clear it intends to keep in its own hands. Some of the remaining administrative functions would be

exercised by an elected 11 man council, and others would be "shared" with the Israeli authorities.'

As *The Guardian* said in its 23rd January editorial: 'Israel has produced a scheme for the self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs which leaves virtually everything which might eventually contribute to statehood in Israeli hands.'

As the year dragged on, with Israel frustrating every effort of the EEC, and, it might be said, of Carter himself, although he would be the last to admit it in the election year, the press editorials become more critical of the Zionists.

The Spectator on 7th June said of the Palestinians: 'They are, after all, much more entitled to a national home for themselves somewhere in Palestine — their home country — than the Jews in diaspora, whose remote ancestors left Jerusalem in AD67, ever were.'

Most western newspapers editors now recognise, even if they are loath to admit it, what the *Daily Telegraph* editorial of 18th June stated. In respect of the Camp David accords, the editorial declared: 'Mr Beigín was only interested in neutralising Egypt, and had no intention of giving up the West Bank and Gaza.'

Aziz Yafi

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FREE PALESTINE was launched in London in 1968 in the aftermath of the 1967 War in which Israel seized the West Bank and Gaza regions of Palestine along with other Arab territories in Sinai and the Golan. Free Palestine provides the only voice in Britain reporting regularly on the plight of the Palestinian people living under Israeli military rule.

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London Notes



A ZIONIST IN THE GULF

AS PART of the British government's efforts to strengthen ties between the UK and the Arab Gulf states, Energy Minister Norman Lamont was despatched on a tour of the region during early October. Hardly a wise choice on the part of the Prime Minister — Mr Lamont is listed in *Who's Who* as Treasurer of Conservative Friends of Israel. Since Mrs Thatcher herself was a founding member it seems unlikely that she should be unaware of the fact.

ISRAELIS IN THE WHITE HOUSE

IF RONALD Reagan succeeds in his bid to occupy the White House in the 4th November elections, the American President's residence seems destined to become simply an annex of the Israeli Embassy.

Amongst the closest of the Reagan campaign advisors are Uri Raanan and Edward Luttwak, both Israeli citizens. Rabbi Joseph Churba, an associate of the Zionist terrorist Meir Kahane (whose group is believed to have been responsible for the bomb attacks on West Bank mayors), and Robert Tucker, author of the 1975 article in *Commentary*, advocating seizure of the Gulf oil fields.

It is, no doubt, from this group of advisors that Mr Reagan obtained the understanding that Security Council Resolution 242 entitles Israel to establish settlements on the occupied West Bank, as he explained in *Time* magazine on 30th June.

TWO-FACED CRITICS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

IN BRITAIN we do not have to look to France for acts of anti-semitism. However, there seem to be two standards applied in reporting such acts. The bomb outrage against a synagogue in Paris received international coverage, but not so a subsequent incident in Manchester. In fact, it was left to the tabloid 'popular' *Daily Star* to report on 18th October that 'Police were last night probing a Ku-Klux-Klan style attack on an Islamic academy. A 20 strong mob — some wearing white hoods and brandishing iron crosses — stormed the building.'

The 1980 Price for Complacency must go to Mr Ralph Less, assistant chief constable of Manchester who

told the *Daily Star*: 'While we have received reports of vandalism there is no evidence it is racist.'

However, Mr John Tummon, spokesman for the Manchester Council for Community Relations says, 'The coloured community are being terrorised and abused and their homes and property damaged. Racists and fascists are stepping up their campaign.'

Perhaps 2nd prize should be reserved for *The Guardian*, the national daily based in Manchester, which did not report the incident.

TORY SEES ARAFAT IN MAGGIE'S IMAGE

ARAFAT 'HAS a great clarity of thought and expression, a defined philosophy and objective, an economic use of words and a complete lack of pomposity or self-importance — many of the acknowledged qualities of Margaret Thatcher.' This is the view of Conservative MP Anthony Marlow, who was one of eight British MPs to meet Mr Arafat in Beirut during the summer.

Writing in his constituency newspaper, Mr Marlow argues that British foreign policy must take into account the 'historic inevitability' that 'an Arab Palestine will be re-established'.

He adds, 'The Zionist state of Israel is like a foreign body that has implanted itself on a living organism. One day it will be expelled, though this does not mean the expulsion of moderate Jews who have already settled,' the Tory MP writes.

OH DEAR ... THAT IMAGE!

ONCE AGAIN Zionists from West European countries have gone into an enclave to consider the Zionist image, and once again, according to *The Jewish Chronicle*, 'a new public relations strategy for Israel has been worked out.'

Of course, all this has been decided at similar previous Zionist meetings, but apparently to no avail. I recall Abraham Lincoln's comment about 'You can fool some of the people all of the time ...'

FOOLING THEMSELVES ...

NO DOUBT when you are the international outcast that Israel has become, friends are so difficult to find that you can be excused if you are

forced to try and create them, even out of your most committed opponents. At least, we give *The Jewish Chronicle* recognition for its efforts.

On 17th October it sought to project Mr Robert Mugabe as the latest advocate of Zionist settlement schemes in Palestine, apparently as a result of some remarks made by the Zimbabwean leader about the potential for agricultural co-operatives as the *JC* preferred to call them. Although they quoted extracts from a Mugabe interview on Sweden, we note that the word 'kibbutz' was not actually credited to Mugabe.

Earlier this year Israel radio disclosed that Mugabe had rejected three overtures from Israel to establish diplomatic relations. During the Lancaster House talks in London Mr Mugabe was involved in a confrontation with a *JC* reporter, and made no effort to conceal his contempt for Zionist colonisation in Palestine. A view to be understood considering the military aid given by Israel to the Smith regime.

At the independence celebrations it was the PLO envoy who joined Britain's Prince Charles and others in Salisbury, not the man from Tel Aviv.

WHERE IS JERUSALEM?

THE JEWISH Chronicle has made a fool of itself again. Angry at press advertising by James Morris Travel which offers tours to Jordan, citing Jerusalem as one of the attractions available, the *JC* telephoned the travel firm to complain.

They were given short shrift by James Morris, who told them, 'It's people like you who are causing all the complications in the Middle East,' accusing the *Jewish Chronicle* of purveying 'racial propaganda'. The firm's spokesman added, 'Jerusalem is in Jordan, wherever you would like it to be.'

40 MILLION WATCH VANESSA

EQUITY, THE British actors' union, has come out strongly in support of the actress Vanessa Redgrave following a wave of protests over her portrayal of an Auschwitz survivor in a film broadcast on American television on 30th September.

Because of Miss Redgrave's strong support of the Palestinian cause, American Zionists had mounted a campaign to prevent the film being screened. In Hollywood a group of Zionists from the Jewish Defence League staged a mock trial of Miss Redgrave and then burnt her effigy outside the CBS studio. In Phoenix Arizona a petrol bomb was hurled at a TV station and demonstrations were also held in Philadelphia, Denver and Detroit.

The silly protests had no impact, however, and the three-hour film was shown as planned, attracting lavish praise and a record audience for a TV film of 40 million. The magazine *Newsweek* described Miss Redgrave's performance as possibly 'the finest ever given on a television screen' and as 'overwhelmingly powerful, subtle and compassionate.'

Mr Peter Plouviez, the general secretary of Equity, described the burning of an effigy of Miss Redgrave as reminiscent of the activities of the Nazis in pre-war Germany. He went on to say that attempted discrimination against actors and actresses on the basis of their political or other views was 'grossly offensive in a free society.'

EDITORIAL

What happens after November 15?

IN A few weeks, on 15th November, comes the deadline imposed by the United Nations for Israel to have begun evacuation of the Arab territories occupied by the Zionists in 1967. The deadline was set by the General Assembly Emergency Session on 29th July, when 112 nations re-affirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and property, and to self-determination with an independent state.

The past year has been marked by the increasing diplomatic activity focused on the Palestine question. Since 1st March alone, Israel has been censured and condemned in no less than three UN resolutions, including the unanimous Security Council Resolution (No 446) on 1st March concerning Israeli settlements in the 1967 occupied territories, and the Security Council Resolution (No 478) of 20th August adopted by 14 votes to nil, with only the US abstaining.

The Zionists, following their stance of thirty years, have persisted in rejecting the opinions of the international community, although they justify the creation of the Zionist state on the 1947 Partition Plan, and the subsequent recognition of Israel by the United Nations.

Only a few weeks before the UN deadline there is no evidence that Israel plans to evacuate the 1967 occupied territories. On the contrary, on 14th October Israeli radio reported that for the first time the military government is permitting Zionist settlers to cultivate land on the bank of the Jordan river. The previous day Israel television reported that the military government has taken possession of 'vast tracts' of land on the West Bank 'in the past few weeks' to 'put at the disposal of the settlements'.

To underline its contempt for international laws and conventions not only has Israel declared occupied Jerusalem its 'eternal capital' but a new law proclaiming the Syrian Heights as part of the Zionist state is about to come before the Israeli parliament.

Behind all this is the human dimension of the Palestine conflict — two million Palestinians under Zionist military rule, where lives are becoming increasingly difficult in the face of militant and arrogant Zionist colonialists. Another two million Palestinians live an enforced exile. That their right to return and to exercise self-determination in an independent state is now recognised in the General Assembly by 112 nations (to which can be added 9 EEC states who agree but abstained in the UN vote), leaving only 7 states in the world consistently opposed to the Palestinians, is of little comfort to the Palestinians unless firm action is agreed to turn rights into reality.

RECOGNISE THE PLO

A first step by the EEC countries, along with others, should be recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It is amazing that such reluctance to face reality should exist, not least in the absence of a single alternative voice claiming to represent the Palestinian people. The PLO enjoys the support of virtually every Palestinian, as many western observers have pointed out in recent months, including David Steel, leader of the British Liberal Party.

It is the PLO which represents the Palestinians both inside the occupied homeland and those in exile. It is the PLO which is recognised by 112 governments of the world as the sole representative of the Palestinians.

SANCTIONS

The call for sanctions against the Zionist colony in Palestine is being resisted by the western nations, despite Israel's arrogant flouting of UN resolutions. The same western nations fail to provide any reasonable alternative yet only one alternative exists, and that is war.

Unless the western nations end their prevaricating on the issue it can only be assumed that despite their pious words they remain committed to Israel, whatever the policies of the Zionist government.

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Defiant Palestinians: Resistance goes on.

Palestinian resistance: over 10,000 operations since '67

THROUGHOUT OCCUPIED Palestine, in territories seized by the Zionist settlers in 1948 as well as 1967, Palestinian armed resistance continues to strike against the occupation authorities. With the western press largely preoccupied with the ailing Camp David peace process between Israel and Egypt, little coverage has been given to the determined and heroic struggle of the Palestinians living under an increasingly brutal military occupation. But even the Israeli military strikes into Lebanon, where raids have become so frequent that the situation has become almost a full-scale, but undeclared war, have failed to relieve the settler community inside Palestine, which is facing a fierce battle.

Palestinian commandos operating inside the occupied territories carried out four attacks against Israeli targets during the early hours of 1st October, bringing the total operations in the previous two months to 30.

Commandos armed with hand grenades and automatic rifles ambushed an Israeli military patrol in al-Taibeh, near Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. An Israeli military vehicle was destroyed and its occupants all wounded.

Meanwhile, in Tel Aviv in the 1948 occupied territories, explosive charges planted in the Brak factory and a military storage depot in the suburbs of the city went off at dawn causing considerable material damage.

Further north in Acre, a bomb planted by Palestinian commandos in a café frequented by Israeli military personnel exploded in the early hours of the morning, killing or injuring a number of Israeli soldiers, officers and settlers.

Although the Israelis have constantly claimed that armed Palestinian resistance to the occupation does not really exist (just as they claim that the Palestinian people as a nation do

not exist), Israeli statistics provide a much different picture.

In February, the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations was forced to admit in the Security Council that since the 1967 war, the Palestinian resistance movement has carried out no less than 10,000 operations. The toll, as far as the Israelis are prepared to admit, has been 640 Israelis killed and 3,425 injured.

A few weeks earlier, on 10th January, Israeli radio reported an increase of some 70 per cent in resistance operations in the occupied Gaza Strip during the previous 12 months, and a 66 per cent rise in commando operations within the borders of pre-1967 Israel.

On 18th February, Israeli radio disclosed some 329 resistance operations during 1979, of which 98 had been staged in occupied Jerusalem.

The extent to which the Zionist settlers in occupied Palestine now see the resistance movement as a serious threat to their colonial venture was emphasised by the fact that, according to Israeli sources, security police had been called to a total of 60,000 incidents during 1979, most of them involving suspicious objects spotted by the public. Israel admitted to 400 people being injured by resistance operations and 21 fatalities.

By 18th May, the *Sunday Times* in London was reporting that the number of resistance operations within the 1948 occupied territories — the pre-1967 Israeli state in Palestine — had doubled in the past year. The report said, 'The appearance of small, self-contained cells with strict security, whose members have notably higher educational background than before are signs of change', who, the paper said, had 'acquired the skills needed to operate remote-controlled bombs and booby traps.'



Jerusalem: Israel's actions illegal, says UN

Jerusalem: Israel defies the world

IN DEFIANCE both of world opinion and international law, the Israeli Knesset on 30th July approved a law proclaiming occupied Arab Jerusalem an integral and 'eternal' part of the capital city of the Zionist state. The provocative move prompted a storm of international criticism and sparked a wave of protests by the Palestinians of the territories occupied in 1967.

The Israeli law has badly backfired on the Israelis, however. In response to a United Nations Security Council resolution, all the countries with diplomatic missions in Jerusalem withdrew them to Tel Aviv. The net effect of the new law has been to increase greatly the Zionist state's international isolation.

The 120-member Knesset voted by 69 to 15 in favour of the new law, which had been introduced in May by Mrs Geula Cohen, a former member of the infamous Stern Gang that carried out a succession of terrorist attacks both against Arabs and the British in the days of the British mandate over Palestine. The law attracted wide support in the Knesset, with only the tiny number of left wing and progressive members opposing it.

By approving the law, the Knesset was flying in the face of the expressed will of the international community. In a 30th June resolution, the UN Security Council had already denied Israel the right to change the status of the occupied city. Voting on the resolution was 14-0, with the United States, which could have exercised its right of veto, abstaining. The Zionist state is also acting in flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions, which forbid any changes in the status of occupied territories.

Not surprisingly, the Israeli measure brought forth an angry response from around the world. The United States State Department declared that the law had no legal impact. State Department spokesman John Tattner, in a notable understatement said the law was 'not helpful'. Other reactions were more forthright. In Paris a French Foreign Ministry statement called the law 'contrary to international law and UN resolutions'. The communiqué expressed 'strong concern over these actions that contribute to increasing tension in the region and contradict the

efforts in the direction of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.' In Bonn a West German Foreign Ministry spokesman said, 'The measure is apt to seriously hamper peace efforts.'

In a message to Arab leaders, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said the law represented 'a flagrant challenge to the international will and to the successive resolutions of the UN Security Council and the General Assembly since 1967.'

A meeting of the Islamic Conference's Jerusalem Committee, convened at the request of the PLO, urged the world's Muslim countries to impose a political and economic boycott on states that 'approve, encourage or participate in' the annexation.

And in occupied Jerusalem itself, thousands of Palestinians came out onto the streets on 1st August to protest against the new law. Some 6,000 people assembled at the Damascus Gate in the old city and marched through the city shouting slogans against the annexation and against the continuing occupation. Israeli forces fired warning shots over the heads of the demonstrators, about 50 of whom were arrested.

On 20th August the United Nations Security Council passed a second resolution on the Jerusalem issue, this time censuring Israel for the Jerusalem law and calling on all UN members to withdraw their embassies from the city. Again the voting was 14-0 and once more the United States abstained.

Before the Jerusalem law affair thirteen states maintained embassies in Jerusalem, all of them, with the exception of Holland, Latin American, and considered by Israel as amongst its closest friends. One by one all these countries announced that they would be shifting their embassies to Tel Aviv in response to the Israeli law. The first was Venezuela, which announced the transfer of its embassy on 28th July, before the law had even been passed. The exodus was completed by 6th September, when it was announced that Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, the last two states with embassies in Jerusalem were to shift them to Tel Aviv. A particular blow to the Zionists was the 26th August decision by Holland to make the transfer.

Alan George

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You can help ensure that the Palestinian cause is explained to western public opinion by completing the subscription and donation form on page 12 and returning it without delay.

If you belong to a political, labour or student organisation ask your colleagues to join in making a donation to our work. Zionism thrives only on ignorance.