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Homes destroyed, students shot, curfews imposed, as Palestinians revolt against Israeli occupation and demand: ZIONISTS GET OUT

ISRAEL'S UNILATERAL establishment of a 'civilian' government on the West Bank has prompted a wave of angry protests by Palestinians, who see the move as a cosmetic change designed to pave the way for the imposition of the 'autonomy' called for by the Camp David accords. The savage Israeli repression of the demonstrations has eloquently proved the Palestinians' point that the 'civilian' administration, contrary to Israeli claims, has not brought any 'liberalisation' of the Zionist occupation. It looks more like a policy of official state terrorism against the Palestinian population.

The military government that has ruled the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the past fourteen years was ostensibly abolished on 1st November, when Colonel Menachem Milson, a former adviser to the military government, was appointed as the 'civilian' governor of the regions. The day before, all the major Palestinian institutions in the West Bank, including the elected municipal councils, issued a strongly worded statement denouncing the new regime, and insisting that the Palestine Liber-

ation Organisation was the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The statement added that the Palestinians would accept no alternative leadership that Israel tried to foist onto them.

On 31st October an armed settler from the Kiryat Arba colony on the edge of the West Bank city of Hebron was stabbed by a Palestinian as he swaggered through the city. Opening fire wildly into the crowd, he wounded two Palestinian children. Later the same day, Zionist settlers hurled a grenade into a café in the Palestinian village of Targumieh, killing one man and wounding eight others. Immediately after the ambush in Hebron, occupation forces imposed a strict curfew on the city that remained in force for four days. During the curfew, Israeli troops demolished three Palestinian homes (see page 4).

The imposition of Colonel Milson's 'civilian' regime, and the repression in Hebron triggered three weeks of angry protests by West Bank Palestinians. The first eruption came on 2nd November, the 64th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain pledged herself to work for the estab-

lishment of a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine. A peaceful demonstration by students from Bir Zeit University near Ramallah was attacked by Zionist troops using tear gas. Baton-wielding troops chased the students onto the campus, and put the university premises under siege. In Nablus students set up roadblocks, burned car tyres in the streets and painted slogans against the occupation on walls. Bethlehem and Ramallah were the scenes of other angry protests, while in occupied Arab Jerusalem a commercial and school strike was staged.

Israeli repression against the persistent demonstrations reached a new peak on 4th November when Bir Zeit University was ordered closed for a two month period. The order came as Israeli troops were once again besieging the campus, after they had used tear gas and fired shots in the air to break up another demonstration by students.

With no sign of any abatement in the daily protests throughout the West Bank, the Israelis resorted to increasingly severe repression. In the first week, several dozen Pales-

tinians were injured, and about thirty arrested. On 10th November a number of prominent Palestinians were detained or placed under town arrest without charges. They included four members of the Bir Zeit University Council, the institutions' two Vice Presidents, the editor of the Arabic daily *Ash Sha'ab*, a member of the El Bireh municipal council and leaders of the lawyers', doctors' and engineers' unions. On the same day, the Zionists imposed a ten-day ban on the daily *Al Fajr* for publishing 'seditious material'.

On 11th November, curfews were imposed on the West Bank towns of Beit Suhur and Kalkilya after petrol bombs had been thrown at Zionist troops. In East Jerusalem occupation forces tried to break the continuing commercial strike by forcing shopkeepers to open their stores at gunpoint. The following day, Israeli troops opened fire on student demonstrators in Jenin, wounding one of them. Bethlehem University was declared a 'military zone' and besieged by troops. Kalkilya remained under a tight curfew.

On 15th November the 15,000

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Colonel Milson Rules!

A RESERVE colonel now heads new 'civilian' administration on the West Bank. A special report on page 4 examines the strategy behind Israel's moves, and reality of life under Israel's occupation during recent weeks.

Palestinians in Exile

THE LIFE and experiences of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is vividly portrayed in a special report by American journalist William Stief which appears on pages 6 and 7. He visits the refugee camps which come daily under bombardment from the Zionists to the south in occupied Palestine, and examines the services provided by the PLO to this exiled community.

Exiles in their own land

IT IS a reality of the Zionist experience that Palestinians living inside their own land are forced to live in refugee camps. Grace Halsell talks to some of these internal refugees in a report on page 10.

The birth of Palestinian resistance

ALTHOUGH Palestinian armed struggle began only in 1965, there is a long history of Palestinian resistance to the Zionist invasion. On page 9, Dr Alan George examines the birth of the Palestinian national identity, and how the Palestinians were betrayed at the most critical times by feudal leaders.

residents of Beit Suhur were subjected to the second curfew in a week after a petrol bomb was thrown at Israeli forces. The following day the Israelis made more than 25 Palestinians homeless when they dynamited three houses in Beit Suhur in reprisal for the alleged involvement by a member of each family in petrol bomb attacks. Another Palestinian home was dynamited in Ramallah. The next day the Israelis blew up another family home, in Bethlehem, making another 15 Palestinians homeless.

By the intensity and duration of their protests, the Palestinians have made forcefully clear their outright rejection of Israel's plans to impose the Camp David 'autonomy'. The savage repression of the demonstrations by the Zionists has shown that the 'civilian' regime of Colonel Milson has not heralded a 'softer' occupation. Mr Charlie Bitton, a Communist member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) put his finger on it when on 10th November he was thrown out of the Knesset for accusing Zionist defence minister Sharon of governing the West Bank 'like Hitler'.

SINAI: No British Troops in Middle East! See Pg 8

Palestinian dies while under detention

EAST JERUSALEM newspapers on 27th October carried obituary notices mourning the death in detention of a 23-year-old resident of the village of Bani Naim near Hebron.

Abdel-Fateh el-Tariyeh was detained for questioning for alleged security offences five months ago and was being held in the Hebron jail. He had not yet been tried for any offence.

A week earlier he was moved to the Ramle prison after suffering a brain haemorrhage and was finally taken to Tel Hashomer Hospital at the request of his family.

According to sources in East Jerusalem, prison authorities would not agree to transfer him until the family had deposited a bond to ensure that he would not try to escape.

His family and residents of the area assert that Tariyeh died as a result of torture during interrogation. Neither a spokesman for the prison services nor for the military government could be reached for comment.

Two youths seized in Israeli raid

AN ISRAELI military patrol, acting in conjunction with the rightist militia of the renegade Lebanese army major Sa'ad Haddad, has kidnapped two Lebanese citizens, provincial authorities in southern Lebanon have announced.

Before dawn on 1st November, the Zionist patrol, guided by rightist militiamen, infiltrated north from the border enclave controlled by Haddad into the village of Shaqra, and abducted Ali Hussein Daher and Abbas Muhammad Ahmad, both 23 years old. Shaqra lies in the area of south Lebanon policed by troops from the UN peacekeeping force installed after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in May 1978.

Reprieve for mosque 'development' plan

FACED WITH determined opposition from the Palestinians, and fearful of international repercussions, the Zionists have abandoned plans to develop the historical Hassan Beq mosque in Jaffa as the core of a new tourist and commercial centre. On 10th November the Knesset (parliament) Interior Committee deemed the scheme too controversial. The same day, Israel radio reported the committee members as having agreed unanimously that 'the best thing now would be to forget all other ideas and simply restore the mosque'.

Defiant Palestinian commandos spurn Zionist 'justice'

FOUR PALESTINIAN resistance fighters have been sentenced to life imprisonment by an Israeli military court in Nablus on the occupied West Bank for their alleged involvement in a raid that killed six armed Zionist settlers and wounded sixteen others.

Adnan Jaber Jaber, Yasser Hussein Zayadat, Muhammad Abdallah Shubaki and Talsir Mahmoud Taha, were sentenced on 11th November. There was uproar in the court when the prosecution asked for life sentences rather than the death penalty. After the session, enraged settlers from the Zionist colony of Kiryat Arba, chanting 'Death, death, death,' tried to assault the defence lawyer and an observer from the International Red Cross.

The raid, one of the most daring ever mounted by Palestinian commandos, was staged on 2nd May last year in the centre of Hebron. It came after settlers from the Kiryat Arba colony on the edge of the city had seized a building in the centre of Hebron in a major escalation of their



Palestinian resistance still offers olive branch to Israel Jews, Zionist court is told.

colonisation of the town. All the dead and wounded came from Kiryat Arba.

On hearing the sentence, Yasser Zayadat declared: 'I pray to God that you will see the youngest Palestinian

lion cub raise the Palestinian flag over our homeland.' The lion cubs are the youth wing of the Palestinian resistance forces.

Adnan Jaber told the court, 'We are not highway robbers; we are people with a just political cause. The Palestinian cause is recognised by almost everyone in the world except you.'

From the start of their trial on 5th July, the four accused had refused to recognise the court, saying they were prisoners of war. In a statement, they declared, 'We recognise neither the court nor the occupation, and we do not recognise the right of the occupiers and oppressors to bring us to court and try us.'

'We do not intend to react to the charges against us, and the only report we will make about our actions will be to the Palestinian revolution. No doubt in the court of history we will be acquitted,' the statement continued.

Saying that those who died were 'land robbers and law breakers' who deserved their fate, the four Pales-

tinians declared: 'You, who came to Palestine, armed and with colonising intent and hostility, you should know that it is only natural for us to defend our land and our people. The Palestinian struggle defends to the best of its ability — at times with stones and at times with hand grenades — our rights and our lives. As long as you are endangering us, we will bear the rifle.'

The Palestinians also referred to the PLO's programme for a secular, democratic state in Palestine, where Jews, Muslims and Christians would live together as equals. They recalled PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's speech to the UN General Assembly in November 1974, when he declared, 'I come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.' The Palestinians' statement concluded: 'The olive branch is still on offer to you, the Jews who live in Palestine. You can still share in a life of peace and equality in the democratic secular state. Until then, revolution. Revolution until victory.'

only a tiny space for prayer, and the rest they will turn into the private business centre of Gershon Peres,' declared Abed Kubub the new chairman of the new waqf committee. 'They will build only over our dead bodies,' he added.

3,000 Palestinians from the 1948 and 1967 occupied territories staged a protest demonstration at the mosque on 10th November to coincide with the Interior Committee meeting. They demanded an end to the Zionists' 'development' plans and the return to the Arab community of all waqf property seized by Israel.

Nazareth strike against Zionist discrimination

A STRIKE staged by the Palestinian municipalities of the 1948 occupied territories has been described by the *Daily Telegraph* as the Arab community's 'biggest challenge to the

Israeli Government for many years'. On 19th November the paper reported that the strike by the Nazareth municipality, called by Mayor Tewfik Zayyad to protest against Zionist financial discrimination against Arab communities, had entered its third week, and was about to be backed by the other Palestinian local councils in Israel.

There have already been scenes in Nazareth reminiscent of those on the West Bank. Angry demonstrations by townspeople have been broken up by Israeli police, and many protesters arrested. The strike is seen as a reflection of the growing nationalist sentiment amongst the Palestinians who came under Israeli rule in 1948, and their increasing identification with their brethren in the West Bank and in exile.

Nazareth's deputy mayor, Mr Ramiz Jaraisy, was quoted by the *Daily Telegraph* as saying, 'Jewish land authorities get a government grant equivalent to £250 per head of population, while we are getting less

than £60.' He added: 'It amounts to a national discrimination against the Arab population of Israel.'

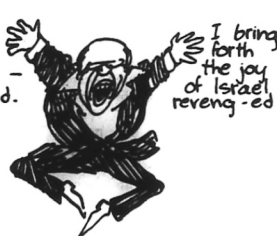
The Nazareth council is demanding about £6 million, which it needs to pay its 150 staff, who have been without wages for two months.

Red Cross denounces violations of Geneva Conventions

THE INTERNATIONAL Conference of the Red Cross, convened in the Philippines capital Manila, has ruled that Israel's colonisation of Arab lands is contrary to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. In a resolution adopted on 11th November, the conference expressed deep concern at 'the continued refusal of the occupying power to comply with the totality of its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of August 1949 relative to the pro-



I bring forth the bursts of missiles so splendid.



So let me begin the Begin — Let me bomb.



tection of civilian persons in time of war.

The resolution referred to two articles of the Convention. Article 27 affirms in part that 'protected persons are entitled in all circumstances to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs'. Article 49 declares that 'the occupying power shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupied'.

Israel condemned for attack on Iraq

WITH ONLY Israel and the United States voting against, the UN General Assembly on 13th November strongly condemned Israel for its 7th June air attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor, and called on all states to cease supplying arms to the Zionists. Voting was 109 to two, with 34 abstentions.

The resolution demanded that Israel pay prompt and adequate compensation and cease its 'threats' and 'the commission of such armed attacks' against nuclear plants. The General Assembly resolution was much tougher than that adopted unanimously by the Security Council on 19th June, and called on the Security Council to investigate Israel's nuclear activities.

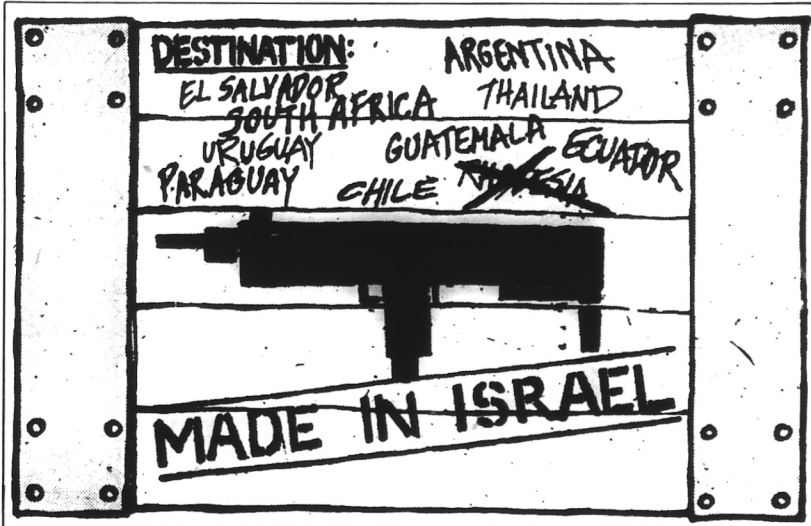
Suggesting sanctions, it asked the Security Council to take 'effective enforcement action to prevent Israel from further endangering international peace and security'.

The resolution, which was sponsored by nearly 40 Arab and other Third World countries, reiterated previous UN calls for all states to 'cease forthwith any provision to Israel of arms and related materials of all types'.

UN to debate Dead Sea Canal scheme

THE UNITED Nations General Assembly is to debate Israel's plan for a Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal, at the request of the Arab League. World-wide criticism of the project has increased since the Israeli government's decision to go ahead, in spite of the international laws it will be contravening.

The Arab-British Chamber of Commerce has expressed its opposition of the project by alerting all company members to the Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd's recent statement in the House of Commons: 'The project as planned is contrary to international law as it involves unlawful works in occupied territory and infringes Jordan's legal rights in the Dead Sea and neighbouring regions. No official support will be given by Her



New warplanes deal as Israel increases arms trade

ISRAEL HAS made its first export sale of its Kfir warplanes, the US Armed Forces Journal disclosed in October. Ecuador has placed a firm order for twelve of the fighters, with an option for another twelve. An order for 24 Kfirs placed by the Latin American state in 1976 was vetoed by the Carter Administration in early 1977. The planes have a US engine, and are therefore subject to American

export regulations. Carter blocked the sale because of Ecuador's appalling human rights record, and also out of a desire to slow down the international trade in conventional weapons. The way was opened for the Kfir deal in July this year when Ronald Reagan, as part of his more aggressive foreign policy, partially lifted the ban.

The Kfir sale represents a landmark in Israel's growing military links with

Latin America. The Zionist state first entered this market after the US banned the sale of heavy military equipment to the continent in 1968. The ban was lifted in 1973, but America presented Israel with another major opportunity in 1977, when the Carter administration embargoed military aid to Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay because of their human rights records. The ban

was partially lifted by Reagan in July, at the same time as he gave the green light for the Kfir deal with Ecuador.

Israel's worldwide arms sales have increased from \$425 million in 1978 to an expected \$2 billion this year, and now account for about 40 per cent of a the Zionist state's exports.

About half Israel's weapons exports go to Latin America's right wing regimes. The El Salvador junta, which on average has killed about 2,000 people per month this year, receives about 80 per cent of its arms from the Zionists. Argentina (where 26,000 people have 'disappeared' since the 1976 coup), Chile and Guatemala are other major recipients of Israeli arms. All have been repeatedly condemned by Amnesty International for their persistent and widespread human rights violations. Somoza's Nicaragua was another important destination for Israeli weapons. Ecuador has been condemned by human rights organisations for the mass detention and torture of Indians.

One reason for Israel's success in the Latin American arms market is the wide range of products on offer, and the fact that many items were designed specifically for use in counter-insurgency operations. Israel Aircraft Industries' sales literature boasts that the company can supply anything from 'multi-role combat aircraft to security and surveillance systems and operational training of personnel'.

The emphasis on sales of anti-guerrilla warfare products was also evident at this year's Le Bourget air show. In contrast to previous years, when major weapons systems were displayed, Israel for the first time exhibited high-technology electronics and avionics. Prominent was a new type of surveillance radar which can pick up a pedestrian at 20 kilometres and a truck at 70 kilometres, in all weather conditions.

Majesty's Government in respect of the project.

The ABCC were responding to the British-Israeli Chamber of Commerce launch of a UK-based campaign to raise funds and mobilise support for the implementation of the project.

Kufr Kasim remembrance ceremony

RESIDENTS OF Kufr Kasim commemorated the killing twenty-five years ago of 49 villagers with a day long shutdown of public institutions, shops and schools, on 29th October, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

The villagers were killed by Border Policemen during a curfew declared in Arab-populated areas at the start of the Sinai campaign. Three of the

policemen subsequently served minimal jail terms for their parts in the affair.

Hundreds of local villagers prayed in the local mosque in the morning and then walked in a procession through the village to the cemetery, where they laid wreaths by the graves of the dead. During the procession some villagers, who have lived under Israeli occupation since 1948, shouted slogans in favour of the establishment of a Palestinian State and against the decision to convert the Hasan Beq mosque in Jaffa into a tourist centre. Some villagers called for establishing a museum to commemorate the dead.

US demands 'Israeli occupied West Bank' stamp

THE US State Department has ruled that all imported goods from the West Bank should be stamped 'made in Israeli-occupied West Bank'.

Several pro-Israel congressmen were enraged at the ruling of 27th October, which stated the issue of Judea and Samaria — that it calls the West Bank — 'is in dispute'. The decision came after a recent shipment of wooden carvings and mother-of-pearl jewellery to the US from the West Bank. Customs officials had objected to the stamp, 'Made in Israel' and sought advice from the State Department.

New York Congressman Mario Biaggi charged the order was an 'anti-Israeli action', and the most direct American challenge yet to Israel's claim to the West Bank.

Radical Druze demand end to IDF service

THE DRUZE Initiative Committee, a radical group, has called on the government to exempt Druze from compulsory service in the Israel Defence Forces.

The committee met in the village of Yirka, Western Galilee, during late October, and decided to launch a public campaign against the compulsory service. The group also promised legal and financial aid to those Druze who avoid their compulsory service.

The call marks a further rejection by the new generation of Druze of Zionist efforts to separate them from the wider Palestinian community.

West Bank competition over electric grid

THE NABLUS municipality has condemned the pressure put on West Bank villages by the military occupation government to refrain from joining the electric grid sponsored by the municipality.

The large generator bought by the municipality with aid from external Arab sources has been competing lately with its Israeli grid, which supplies most of the West Bank. Several villages in the Nablus area have recently hooked up to the Nablus grid.

The competing grid reportedly was established to prevent villages from being dependent on Israeli-supplied

electricity, which is seen as part of the Zionist effort to establish a permanent hold over the West Bank region, and to lay the foundations for annexation of the territories to the Zionist state.

Three more settlements

ISRAEL'S MINISTERIAL Settlement Committee decided on 1st November to establish three new settlements in the occupied Gaza Strip and to speed up the completion of three others in the region. Two of the new settlements will be located in the northern part of the strip and the third in the south.

The committee also adopted resolutions calling for the enlargement of Jewish settlements in the Gaza region and to implement the first stage of a World Zionist Organisation Settlement Department programme to enlarge Jewish settlements on the West Bank. The programme prepared by the department's chairman, envisions a Jewish population of 100,000 on the West Bank by the turn of the century. It is presently about 20,000.

UNRWA faces new cash crisis

THE HEAD of the UN agency set up to care for Palestinian refugees has said the organisation faces the prospect of collapse next year because of lack of money. Speaking on 4th November, Mr Olaf Rydbeck, Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said it needed an extra \$34 million to keep all its schools open.



THE JERUSALEM POST/1981 © P.M. JAMES/1981



Milson rules, but it's not OK

Israel fails to impose 'autonomy' in West Bank

ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION of the Palestinian lands seized in 1967 entered a new phase on 1st November when Colonel Menachem Milson was appointed as the 'civilian' governor of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, ostensibly to replace the military government that has ruled the areas for the past fourteen years. The move was an integral part of a new Zionist strategy designed to crush support for the PLO, amongst West Bankers, and to encourage 'moderates' to 'co-operate' with the occupation regime. The aim is to impose the 'autonomy' called for by the Camp David accords.

West Bankers have not been deceived by the latest twist in Israel's policy. Colonel Milson's appointment prompted angry protest demonstrations throughout the occupied area that lasted for several weeks. Israeli troops responded with their habitual savagery, making a nonsense of Zionist claims that the establishment of the 'civilian' regime meant a 'liberalisation' of the occupation, writes Alan George.

Menachem Milson has spent about 25 years in the Israeli army, in which he holds the rank of colonel. His claim to 'civilian' status rests on a few short years he has spent as a lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He took on the academic job on the clear understanding that he would be subject to recall for mili-

tary service. A few years ago he was recalled to act as an adviser to the military government. Now he has been recalled to serve as the 'civilian' governor of the 1967 occupied territories, although the only persons under his command are soldiers.

The Camp David accords called for the creation of a Palestinian council in the 1967 occupied territories that would administer the 'autonomy' to be granted to the local residents. The council's powers were to be extremely limited. It would have control only over such matters as refuse collection, education and health services. The proposed 'autonomy' and the council to administer it have been flatly rejected from the outset by the Palestinians — both inside and outside the 1967 occupied territories. The scheme would deny the Palestinian people their inalienable rights to self-determination in an independent state of their own in Palestine. It offered nothing to the Palestinians driven into exile by the Zionists. No role was to be accorded to the PLO, the Palestinians' sole representative. And the Zionists themselves stress that 'autonomy' refers to population and not to territory.

Under the Camp David proposals, Israel would have free reign to step up its colonisation of the 1967 occupied territories, with the associated seizure of Arab land. Zionist military forces would remain indefinitely, ostensibly to guard the security of Israel

within its pre-1967 frontiers, but in reality to ensure the consolidation of its grip on the lands seized in 1967. In short, the Camp David 'autonomy' offered nothing more than continuing Israeli occupation, leading eventually to the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip into the Zionist state.

Faced with the persistent opposition of the Palestinians living under occupation to the Camp David 'autonomy' proposals, Israel has now decided that the only way to implement the scheme is to impose it. All the elected local leaders in the West Bank having rejected Camp David, Israel has set about creating an 'alternative' leadership of collaborators, who in due course will be co-opted into the autonomy council. As a corollary, the Zionists have launched a new campaign aimed at silencing opponents of the autonomy plan. The intention is to drive home the 'lesson' that collaboration pays.

Collaborators rewarded

Zionist defence minister Sharon has overall responsibility for the co-ordinated 'stick and carrot' policy on the West Bank, but its chief architect was Colonel Milson. Last May he contributed an article to *Commentary*, the journal of the American Jewish Committee, setting out his ideas at some length. Milson's 'solution' to the 'problem' of massive support for the PLO in the 1967

occupied territories draws its inspiration from western theories of 'counter-insurgency'. Israel, he argued, should not merely aim at stamping out opposition by arresting or deporting militants. A much more deliberate and 'positive' approach was needed. The key aim must be to undermine support for the nationalists while at the same time encouraging 'moderates' by openly rewarding them for collaboration. Milson advocated nothing less than the complete restructuring of political loyalties in the occupied regions.

In *Commentary* Milson stated his commitment to the Camp David process, and as part of it the establishment of the 'autonomy' council. 'In order to effect progress towards a peaceful settlement,' he said, 'one must create conditions in which moderates in the [1967 occupied] territories will be able to express themselves.' The 'conditions' to which he referred are the ending of a situation where 'radical vision and considerations of expediency came to be stacked on one and the same side'. In plain language, what he meant was that the Palestinians under Israeli rule must be faced with a clear choice between impoverished municipalities which support the PLO and are shunned by the Zionist authorities, on the one hand, and collaborators who are able to dispense both funds (supplied by Israel) and are given access to the occupation forces for the permits required for a wide range of everyday activities.

This active policy aimed at realigning loyalties in the West Bank has been in the making for some years. A key aspect has been the establishment of Israeli-sponsored and financed 'village leagues', with collaborators as their self-appointed leaders. The *International Herald Tribune* commented on 18th November: 'The Village League plan was conceived by the new civilian administrator of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Menachem Milson, when he was Arab affairs adviser to the military governor'. The first league was set up in the Hebron region in late 1978. Others have since been established in the Bethlehem and Ramallah regions. The latest is being formed in Nablus.

While the Zionists shower favours on their village league creatures, the independent, nationalist elected municipal councils have been starved of funds, and their members subjected to a range of restrictions. Moreover, permits for such matters as travel abroad that used to be obtained from the occupation auth-

orities via the municipalities can now be secured only through the village leagues.

Autonomy talks

The Milson strategy has been pursued with real vigour only in the past weeks, however. The 'autonomy' negotiations between Israel, Egypt and the US have produced no results because of the determined opposition of the Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories, and because Israel has insisted on a version of autonomy even more restrictive than that called for by the Camp David accords. After a 16-month suspension, talks on autonomy were resumed in Jerusalem on 26th October, and continued in Cairo on 11th November. With the Israeli-Egyptian part of the Camp David deal scheduled to end next April when Israel makes its final withdrawal from Sinai, all three parties are now anxious to break the impasse over the West Bank which threatens to bring Camp David to an end, and with it Israel's best-ever chance of 'legitimising' its occupation. The demise of Camp David would also entail a major setback to American plans to enhance its influence in the Middle East. The accords have provided a useful vehicle for US penetration of the region.

With this in mind, it seems that the parties to Camp David have agreed to bulldoze through their 'autonomy' proposals, and impose them on an unresponsive population. After the Jerusalem talks, *The Times* correspondent Christopher Walker reported on 27th October that it had been decided 'to bypass many of the present difficulties by concentrating on securing the election of a Palestinian autonomy council for the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip... diplomatic sources believe that the two sides may now be looking for a quick agreement in principle — with Israel being left to negotiate contentious details with the new autonomy body when it is selected.'

Ironically, the repression of nationalist sentiment by Sharon and Milson has backfired — not surprisingly when it includes such draconian measures as the demolition of the homes of suspected petrol bombers (see box). Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem has been regarded as a 'moderate' — although not a collaborator — for many years. On 18th November the *International Herald Tribune* quoted him as saying, 'If anyone has the illusion that by such severe punishment the people will be subdued, they are wrong. Violence breeds violence, and hatred breeds hatred.'

Families destitute as homes destroyed

MORE THAN 30 Palestinians were made homeless on 16th November when Israeli troops dynamited three houses in Beit Suhur on the occupied West Bank near Bethlehem, and another in Ramallah. The destruction in Beit Suhur was a reprisal for the alleged involvement of teenage members of the three families in petrol bomb attacks against occupation forces. The demolition in Ramallah was prompted by the suspicion that a family member belonged to the PLO. All four dynamitings were in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, which expressly forbid collective punishments.

Earlier, three other Palestinian families, numbering more than thirty people, including children under two years old, were made homeless when Israeli troops dynamited or sealed their houses in the West Bank city of Hebron. The pretext for the crime was the

suspected involvement of a teenage member of each family in an attack on an armed American settler from Los Angeles on 31st October.

On 4th November Christopher Walker, *The Times* correspondent in Jerusalem filed this report after visiting the scene of the punitive Israeli action in Hebron.

'Mr and Mrs Wahad Asily and six of their children clambered despairingly over the dynamited ruin of their house, telling on-lookers they had no idea where they were going to live,' said Walker. A few miles nearer the centre of town, he continued, '15 members of the Hussein Tamimi family sat outside the newly cemented-up entrance of their second floor flat. Women and children were weeping hysterically and all around lay haphazard piles of bedding, toys and cheap furniture, much of it smashed.'



'Down the road the twisted concrete and metal remains of the grocery store owned by Mr Fakhr Nimer Hassounah, still gave off the acrid stench of high explosives.'

said Christopher Walker, adding: 'In a neighbouring garage dusty heaps of stock lay where they had been dumped shortly before the building was destroyed.'

'More than 30 Palestinians were made homeless by the move,' the report continued, 'and prominent Hebron Arabs claimed that the action was proof that Mr Ariel Sharon, the Defence Minister, had no real intention of moderating Israel's harsh security policies in the West Bank.'

In a longer version of the same report that appeared in *The Scotsman* on 4th November, Christopher Walker quoted Hebron's Acting Mayor Mustapha Natche as saying: 'The new Israeli policy is not more moderate: it is more severe than before. Before the houses were blown up the town had been under curfew for more than two days, and last week the Israelis blew up two other Arab houses, which they said had been built without a permit although families had been living in them for over two years.'

'Accept the reality of the PLO' – Carrington

TWICE IN recent weeks British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington has reaffirmed his conviction that the Palestine Liberation Organisation must have a key role in any Middle East peace negotiations. He has also stressed that a lasting settlement of the Palestine conflict must be based on justice for the Palestinian people. Addressing a meeting of the Con-

servative Friends of Israel on 2nd November, a day before his departure for Saudi Arabia for talks with Prince Fahd, Lord Carrington said: 'I make no apology for my firm belief that no good will come of pretending that the PLO can be ignored or that they do not have a very wide measure of support amongst the Palestinians.' Amid frequent heckling and booing

from his Zionist audience, the Foreign Secretary continued: 'The European Ten believe that peace — lasting peace — will only be possible in the Middle East if there is a measure of justice for all parties. This must include justice for the Palestinian people, not simply in physical and humanitarian terms, but in political terms too.'

Lord Carrington added that the Camp David formula 'is not and will not be sufficient' to secure a Middle East settlement.

The Foreign Secretary expressed similar sentiments on the ITV programme *Weekend World* on 8th November, on his return from Saudi Arabia. 'In any settlement and in any negotiations the PLO must be

involved, and that surely must be right,' he declared. 'I know some people find that a very offensive remark, but it is no good ignoring reality,' he continued. 'Just because you do not happen to like some aspects of the PLO, it is not going to go away. You have got to accept reality,' he said.

□ See editorial on page 11.

1.2 million Zionist settlers planned by year 2010

ISRAEL IS pressing ahead with a thirty-year master plan providing for a settler population on the occupied West Bank (excluding Arab East Jerusalem) of 1.2 million by the year 2010, against a Palestinian Arab population of 1.3 million. A segment of the plan covering the next four years was presented for their approval to Zionist premier Beigun and defence minister Sharon on 16th November. The intention is to build 100,000 new housing units in the West Bank, to house 160,000 colonists over the next four years. Most of the new construction will take place at existing settlements, but the plan also provides for the setting up of about twenty new colonies.

Already there are more than 24,000 Zionist settlers living in the West Bank, according to Matityahu Drobless, head of the World Zionist

Organisation's settlement department. On 11th September the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported him as saying that some 7,000 colonists had moved into the occupied region in the previous six months. In the same period, he said, 1,870 housing units had been built. In the previous year 23 new settlements had been established, bringing to 82 the total in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, he added.

The alleged replacement of the Israeli military government with a 'civilian' regime headed by Colonel Milson has not slowed down the pace of colonisation. In late October settlers moved into four new colonies, and plans were announced for the establishment of another within a month. On 5th November Sharon inaugurated a new settlement in the Hebron area, and on 16th November

Israel radio reported that two more would be established 'soon' in the north west of the occupied region.

Work has also started on a major new suburb of occupied Jerusalem. Reporting the imminent start of the construction, Israel radio on 23rd November said the new suburb, to be called 'North Jerusalem', will be located between French Hill and the existing Zionist housing estate of Neve Ya'akov. The report added that it will have 12,000 apartments.

The Gaza Strip (for which Zionists have also drawn up a master plan for colonisation, taking in the years to the turn of the century) has also been the scene of continued settlement. On 1st November Israel radio announced a decision to establish 'two new settlements and a regional centre in the northern part of the Gaza Strip, near Beit Lahiyah'.

A particularly ominous development has been the moves by settlers to increase their numbers in the heart of Palestinian towns. The West Bank city of Hebron is the focus of their efforts, and it appears that they are seeking to set up a corridor of settlements through the town's centre. In recent months they have stretched out from the former Beit Haddasah clinic, which they seized in 1980, to an adjacent house and to another house a few hundred yards away. The latest step came in early November when Israeli soldiers took over the Usama Ben Murath school and declared it closed indefinitely on the pretext that it was needed by the army.

Hebron's Acting Mayor, Mustafa Natche, is convinced that the school will in time be handed over to Zionist settlers. 'The 700 students now have to go to school two miles away,' he said. 'We are afraid that eventually the soldiers will leave and the school will be handed over to Jewish civilians.' That is just what happened recently to one of the houses seized by the Zionists. Soldiers first moved into the building, saying it was needed as an observation post, and soon after it was turned over to the settlers.

'They want to link up their settlement in the middle of Hebron with Kiryat Arba (a major Zionist colony on the edge of the town) and drive out the families in this part,' says Acting Mayor Natche. 'We believe the plan is to increase settlements along a path that takes in the tomb of Abraham and extends to Kiryat Arba,' he added.

There may, however, be a fatal flaw in the Zionists' grandiose settlement plans for the 1967 occupied territories — a shortage of settlers. On 4th November Israeli government statistician Moshe Siron disclosed that 1979 and 1980 saw a net emigration of 20,000 people from Israel. A net emigration of about 10,000 was projected for 1981. A measure of the Zionists' deep concern at this trend came on 17th November, when Matityahu Drobless left on a trip to the United States and Colombia. Israel radio said the purpose of his visit was to convince Jewish families to come to Israel and settle in colonies that were 'in dire need of additional residents'.

Report says 250,000 Palestinians left West Bank since '67

THE PROTESTS of Palestinians in the Israeli occupied West Bank over the past two weeks were caused by Israel's policy to clear the zone of its Arab inhabitants, Palestinian sources said in Beirut on 16th November.

More than 250,000 Palestinians, out of a total Arab population of 1,200,000, have migrated from the West Bank since the 1968 war, according to the American Foundation for Peace in the Middle East. About 12,000 young Palestinians leave the West Bank every year, owing to the increasing difficulties that have stemmed from the Israeli occupation authorities.

Palestinian circles in Beirut point out that Israel, wishing to extend its sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza, has slowly been gnawing away at these territories by expropriating land and property. By April 1979, expropriation had already accounted for 150,000 hectares of these areas.

Israel's continuing policy of founding Jewish settlements is also carried out at the expense of the local Arabs, the Palestinians said. Last February there were 165 settlements, according to Israeli figures, of which 85 were in the West Bank and the others in Gaza and the Golan.

The settlement policy is carried out with violence, and included the expulsion of whole Arab families as well as the destruction of their homes. Palestinian sources said that by May 1981 the Israeli army had destroyed 1,259 homes in the occupied territories.

In addition, these territories were recently deprived of water, electricity, and telephones, formerly supplied through a mixed Jordanian-Palestinian commission, on the borders of the Israeli authorities. Israel aims, by this move, at an economic assimilation of these territories by increasing their dependence on Israel.

At present the West Bank imports 90 per cent of its requirements from Israel and 35 per cent of its labour force works there.

The administrative autonomous statute envisaged for the West Bank inhabitants is purely formal because current emergency laws are still in force, and will remain so even after the installation of a civil governor.

In addition, political activities are severely limited by the occupation laws. Curfew is clamped down at the least pretext and strikes and demonstrations which are not forbidden, are nevertheless often dealt with by the Israeli army, the Palestinians said.

The three Arab-language newspapers — *Al-Shaab*, *Al-Fajr* and *Al-Quds* — are censored, issues have been frequently seized and journalists arrested.

The liberal policies announced last August by Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon which envisaged an end to collective punishment and petty bureaucratic aggravations have just never been implemented. In fact, current policies in the West Bank and Gaza have just one aim — their annexation.



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HUMAN
RIGHTS
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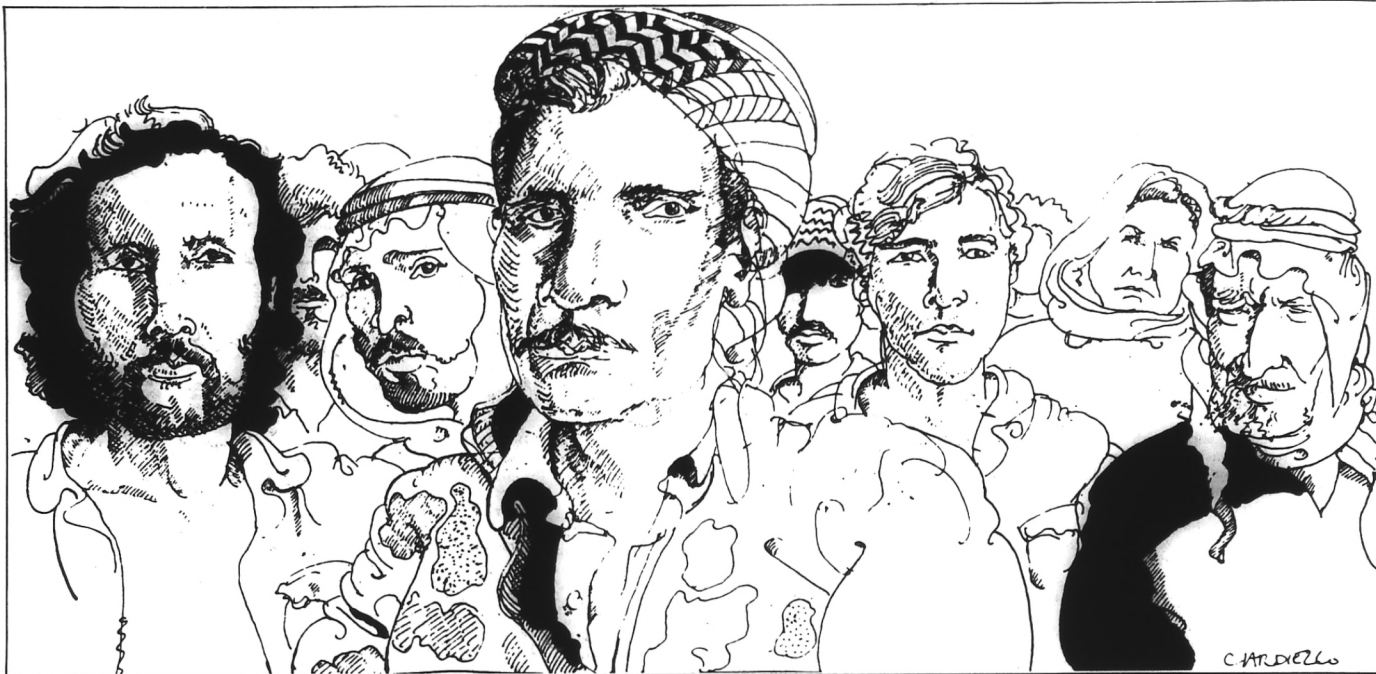
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Lovers of peace, victims of war

RASHIDIEH is a Palestinian refugee camp, established by the United Nations more than thirty years ago. It is in the heartland of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), seven miles from the Israeli border, four miles from Major Saad Haddad's pro-Israeli Lebanese forces, two miles from the ancient coastal city of Tyre.

Since the Israeli commando raid on Tyre in March 1978, Israeli shells and bombs, mainly supplied by the United States, have killed 175 Rashidieh residents, wounded more than 1,000 others, and destroyed 1,200 houses. Shell scars are all over the whitewashed two-room homes. There are dozens of ruined houses, abandoned, on the path to the beach. At the Mediterranean's edge I look to my left and see the headland that marks the border between Lebanon and Israel. It is an easy walk.

The American media usually describe Rashidieh as a 'terrorist camp', but it is not a camp at all. It is a town. Small groceries sell melons and cigarettes. There are paved streets, chickens, old cars, irrigation canals for nearby vegetable fields, occasional goats, and mosques. Two shell-scarred churches remain, but they are closed; United Nations officials moved most of the Palestinian Christians away in the late 1950s.

More than 10,000 Palestinian children, women, and children live in Rashidieh. The town has running water, electricity, seven kindergartens, six grade schools, and a high school. It has three medical clinics, seven sports clubs, five theatre groups, and a dozen poets and painters. On the average, six couples a week marry in Rashidieh.

Rashidieh's cement work catches my attention. Yusef Zamzam, who represents the Revolutionary Popu-

BEHIND THE headlines which present the Palestinians as a nation of terrorists exists a nation of refugees, over half of whom have been driven into exile by Israel. William Stief, a correspondent of Scripps-Howard Newspapers in the United States filed this report on a recent return from the Middle East. He concludes it is time that Washington broke its ties with Israel and recognised its debt to the Palestinians.

lar Committee, a kind of town council, explains: 'In the 1970s we didn't have enough bomb shelters. Now we do.'

He gestures to cement steps leading underground and says, 'Since March of 1978 we have been shelled 450 times.'

I am very touchy about long-range shelling. I have recently undergone two days of shelling on Beirut's Christian east side. I make a quick calculation: I have one chance in two not to be shelled this day.

Zamzam smiles slightly and asks, 'You wouldn't like that every other day for months on end, would you?'

No, I wouldn't.

HASSAN Abbass asks his wife to bring tea as his daughters, four and one and a half, play at his knees on the patio of his two-room home. He is a handsome man with a black beard who was born in Rashidieh twenty-eight years ago. His parents came from Galilee when Israel was created in 1948.

The patio is tiny but pleasant, overhung by a grape arbor that provides shade from the hot Mediterranean sun.

Six weeks earlier, a shell landed squarely on the two-room house next to Abbass's. Three neighbours were killed: the fourth, a woman of thirty,

was 'driven mad', he says. We walk past the ruined house to an adjacent hut. There, in darkness, a figure is stretched on a mat, babbling. She gives no sign of recognition.

Abbass leads the way to his bomb shelter. Down a dozen concrete steps are a narrow slab and blankets. 'See how we live,' he says. 'If someone goes up to get water or to urinate, he can be killed.'

He has been to grade school and high school in Rashidieh and now works in the nearby fields.

Yusef Ismaile Ali, twenty-eight, walks onto the patio and sits down. He has a scraggly beard, broken teeth, and a disoriented look. He, too, was born in Rashidieh. His parents also fled from Galilee in 1948. He lived with his mother and father in a two-roomed brick house they had built in Rashidieh. A month earlier, a shell destroyed their home. He persuaded his parents to move to Damour, forty-five miles up the Lebanese coast, where he thought they would be safe. A week ago both were killed in an Israeli air raid.

Now Ali has returned, alone.

'Israel caused the emigration of my parents,' he says, 'and followed them to Lebanon to kill them. Yet Israel alone, without America, is nothing. American help is the cause of all that happens to us.'

YUSUF Zamzam sits with several other members of Rashidieh's Revolutionary Popular Committee in the small building that serves as the town's headquarters.

'There is a great similarity between the Israelis and Hitler's Nazis,' he says. 'In the end they will fail. We are sure we will overcome. The Palestinians are living within history and will free the world of the Zionists.'

Another committee member, Halid Ibn Walid, speaks up. He wears a Boy Scouts of America shirt he bought from a secondhand dealer. He says, 'Most of the Palestinian people are farmers. They work in the fields around here' — Lebanese-owned fields lush with bananas, citrus, and truck crops.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin 'intends to destroy the Palestinian people,' says Walid. 'He thinks he will be able to force them to accept a Camp David agreement. He thinks by striking here continuously he can create a split between the Palestinian and Lebanese joint forces. Through our committee we enlighten our people about Begin's plan. The PLO supplies literature and helps us rebuild our houses. Some families have left permanently, but most return again and again.'

Abu Khaldoon is the police chief, but he says 'the Palestinian Armed Resistance Police are different from other police.' As he talks, his fingers move over prayer beads. 'Our police are involved in health, culture, political, social and information activities. We rarely have crimes. But we have five embroidery and sewing workshops and two dancing teams.'

He adds, 'There are only civilians here. We teach them to use the Kalashnikov-47 in case of attack from the sea.'

The harvest of bitterness, toward Israel and the United States, is reflected everywhere. Four Palestinian camps are groups around Tyre, a city of about 50,000 people whose classical ruins continue to sustain direct hits from Israeli artillery. Rashidieh is closest to the Israeli border and closest to the thin United Nations forces trying to keep Haddad's units away from the Palestinians. About

70,000 Palestinians live in the four camps. Thousands more are scattered through the area.

The only visible signs of law and order, south of the Litani River, are the Palestinians' red berets. The green-bereted Syrians stay north of the river.

AMONG the sandbags at Al Buss, another Palestinian camp near Tyre, Abu Saleh discusses his people's problems. He is deputy to the commander of the joint forces in the South, a middle-aged man who grew up in Haifa, 'just down the coast'. He wants to go home some day.

'To develop ourselves,' he says, 'we Palestinians move to Tyre, to Sidon, to Beirut. Working in agriculture and fishing doesn't provide enough income, so the PLO helps support our schooling and gives money to those in need. It establishes hospitals, clinics, businesses, factories. The continuous Israeli bombing has hindered our development.'

'We're not against Jews, we're against Zionists who want to exploit as much as possible from the Middle East and its wealth. We lived peacefully with Jews before 1948 and there was no trouble. I tell you this faithfully and honestly.' He adds:

'As PLO fighters we have gone many times to the South. It is easy to do. But it's useless to talk about it too much. We know the imperialist and Zionist information departments will try to distort this. It is a matter of commerce, of trading. What will happen if no people buy your mass production? As Palestinians, we don't like to make war, we are lovers of peace.'

Lovers of peace?

The phrase echoes through my mind as my car plods at the end of a Palestinian funeral procession in Beirut. The dead man died in an Israeli air raid. Now a half-dozen young Palestinians are sending him to the cemetery by firing round after round into the air.

I remember the phrase while visiting the Palestinians' Red Crescent Hospital in Beirut. A man, now thirty-five, is in charge of the handicapped workshop. He tells me he was captured 'in a military operation in the

occupied lands' at Nablus in 1969. 'I was shot in the left leg, the Israelis amputated the right leg,' he says — and then the left leg.

AHMED Abu Ala hands me a green sheet of paper. It is a flowchart headed, 'PLO Structure'. Ala is chairman and general manager of SAMED, the Palestine Martyrs Works Society. We sit in his panelled office in a high-rise Beirut building full of PLO offices. Above Ala is a painting of Yasser Arafat, to one side a photo of Arafat with Ho Chi Minh. SAMED is the Arabic word for 'steadfast'. It was started in 1970 'mainly to take care of the children of martyrs, the 27,000 Palestinians who have been killed since we began our armed struggle,' says Ala.

The green paper's organisation chart shows eight 'resistance organisations', trade unions, a 301-member parliament, a sixty-member central council, a fifteen-member cabinet. Arafat is cabinet chairman. Below his box is the military department — Palestine Liberation Army. Forces of Resistance Organisations, militia forces. Eight boxes trail beneath the cabinet: political department, health department, education department, and so on. SAMED falls under the finance department.

SAMED, says Ala, operates forty-two workshops or factories 'in all ten Palestinian camps' in Lebanon. The workshops employ 4,500 workers and provide 'ready-made clothes for all civilians and the military, furniture, plastics, blankets, civilian shoes and military boots, canned foods, detergents and soaps, bakery goods, textiles.'

There are separate handicraft shops for women, which concentrate on 'traditional dress' and permit women to work at home.

A second SAMED sector produces films. A third is agricultural, with projects in Syria, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, 'and soon Madagascar'. Skilled Palestinian farmers work to help Third World peoples feed themselves. Ala says 'our profit is to strengthen their relationships with our people.'

Another SAMED sector imports machinery and raw materials to keep PLO factories going. Some products are exported to Africa and to Arab nations and some go elsewhere. 'We exported 100,000 shirts to the Soviet Union,' says Ala. 'The price and conditions were good. We were paid in hard currency.'

Sonic booms interrupt us. 'Israeli jets,' says Ala.

The Palestinians may be the best-educated, most highly skilled Arab population. Ala cites figures: 25,000 engineers, 27,000 physicians, more than 120,000 technicians in various fields.

The Middle East's biggest bank is Palestinian. So is the biggest insurance company, the biggest contracting firm, the biggest accounting firm.

I ask Ala how he would create an independent Palestinian economy. He answers with a question:

'Does Japan have petrol or raw materials?'

Would an independent Palestine be socialist? He replies. 'It is too early to say. I don't know. If the people want socialism, that is okay. If they want capitalism, that is okay. Or a mixed economy. Our basic problem here in Lebanon is economic.'

The factories are in place and operating. On a hill outside Damour, a shoe factory produces 180 pairs of military boots daily, using Hungarian machines. The manager is



Children too shocked to cry

AMONG THE 1,100 bodies dragged out of the rubble when the Israeli planes left Lebanon on 17th July, were scores belonging to children. Figures are hard to come by, but the following statistics were obtained from hospital personnel: 32 children were admitted to the Gaza Hospital after the 17th July attacks on Beirut and the South. Ten were dead on arrival; 22 survived.

The Acca Hospital admitted 21 children. Seven could not be saved. Nineteen children were received at the Makassed Hospital. Twelve survived.

At the Berbir Hospital, they admitted eight injured children. It is not known how many of the 20 bodies also taken in to that hospital were children.

How many more little victims there were at other hospitals around the country and how many never made it to a hospital is now known.

A few days after the raid, Beirut's weekly *Monday Morning* sent a reporter, Lydia Georgi to interview surviving children. 'You should have come earlier,' was the comment she heard in each of the five hospitals she visited.

pushing to raise output to clean up a backlog of orders. Down the hill is a blanket factory, where workers earn \$250 to \$275 a month. Director Amin Issa, thirty, works two shifts to keep up with orders. At Borj Al-Barajenieh, a Palestinian camp on Beirut's outskirts, furniture is being made in a large factory. Next door, a smaller shop produces gifts. Upstairs, a small factory churns out halevah, a sweet candy based on sesame seeds. The manager presents me with a box.

'YOU are now entering the IBM countries,' said an old friend who met me at Beirut Airport in 1973. 'I for *Inshallah* (God willing), B for *bokra*, M for *malesh* (never mind). Just remember those three Arabic words and you'll get along fine.'

And I did, from Taiz in North Yemen to Tangier in Morocco, from Sharjah in the Emirates to Samarra in Iraq. No problems, aside from heat, dust, and discomfort. The Arabs were exquisitely courteous. But mine was an exterior view, as if the Arabs were exotic animals in a zoo.

When it came to political commitment in the Arab-Israeli conflict, I and most others of my generation — I served in World War II — felt emotionally tied to the Israelis. That is our legacy of guilt from the Holocaust.

Scenes of tiny, blood-drenched corpses, of infants too shocked to cry, of half-crazed parents rushing about the corridors looking for their children, were described by hospital personnel, who were themselves too shocked to speak coherently.

The interviews

Mona Mohammed Ahmed, a seven-year-old Palestinian girl at the Gaza Hospital, was moaning softly when I walked into her room. I asked her what had happened to her.

'It hurts,' she said and turned away from me, shutting out the rest of my questions.

Her mother, Hajira, took me aside to explain that her daughter didn't want to talk to anyone. 'Even to me. All she says is that she wants to die.'

Mona's left leg had been amputated. It had happened in the South, when she, her parents and her six brothers and sisters were on the Zaharani road waiting for a car that could take them away from their home in the Bourj Shemali Palestinian camp to what they believed was the safety of northern Lebanon.

The most silent child I met at the Beirut Hospital was Ghada. Ghada's mother, had had a premature delivery on the stairs of her apartment house as she was trying to run from the raiding Israelis. She died in childbirth, leaving the baby with severe lacerations. Ghada was rushed to the hospital and the operating room. The doctors are doing their best, but it is not certain she will survive.

Six-week-old Azmeh Kanj does not live in Fakhani, but he was there when the Israelis attacked. He was with his mother that day as she did her shopping. Azmeh's father, Lebanese construction worker Hani Kanj, told me: 'We live in Khaldah, and when my wife and Azmeh still hadn't shown up by afternoon, I was certain something had happened to them. I ran from hospital to hospital looking for them. I found them here, at the Berbir Hospital.' Azmeh's arm had been broken and he had had an operation. His hand was also injured. His mother's arm and leg were broken.

I found Sawsan Hamame, an eight-year-old Syrian girl, lying alone and silent in her bed at the Gaza Hospital.

Her head, left leg and left arm were bandaged, and she answered most of my questions with a stare and a barely perceptible shake of her head. But she did say enough for me to understand that she had been having lunch with her family when the attack started.

'We went down from the fourth floor to a lower floor, but they kept shooting,' she said in disjointed sentences. 'Then we went outside and the ambulance took us to the hospital.'

If she knew what had happened to the rest of her family, she said nothing to me. The nurses believe she still doesn't know and they have no intention of telling her that her mother is dead and one of her three younger brothers, Wissam, has been injured.

Walid el-Masri, a four-year-old Lebanese, was having a snack in his West Beirut apartment when the Israeli planes attacked. 'The house blew up,' he lisped. 'It fell down on us. Mama and Marwa and Safa were hurt.' And like his mother and sisters, Walid was also 'hurt'. He was taken to hospital with a serious skull fracture and several shrapnel wounds and rushed into surgery.

to lug their guilt around much longer.

Americans, more than any other people, are the key to Middle East stability. That means American recognition of Palestinian rights, and American recognition that Arabs are people, not exotic desert fauna. That means dealing with the PLO, as we've already done indirectly several times. It may mean committing American troops to keeping peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It certainly means telling the Israelis that Americans have expunged their guilt, and telling the Israelis they must make room for the Palestinians. Indeed, the Israelis may find they have more in common with the Palestinians than Menachem Beigin thinks.

The pressures on the Israelis from the United States (and Western Europe) will be too much for Israel to withstand, I think. Thoughtful Israelis know and say this already. They yearn for those pressures.

But the Reagan Administration is stuck in the time of the Berlin blockade. Its world view is the United States vs the Soviet Union, period.

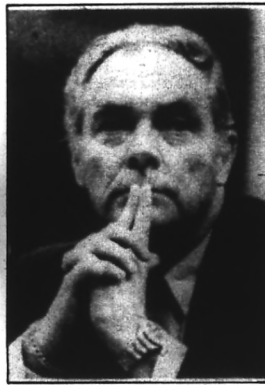
I think change will come, if not with the Reagan gerontocracy then surely with the first American President who was a child in World War II. The politics of oil will play a part, but so will the American feeling that the debt has been paid, the guilt assuaged. And the knowledge that there is another outstanding debt — to the Palestinians.



We sought generational justice, a generation after the horrid injustice. American sentiment is still tied to righting that injustice, though thirty-

six years have passed since the end of World War II, thirty-three years since Israel's birth.

I don't think Americans will con-



Carrington (right) offers British troops, but will they become involved in Haig's (left) wider plans for US military involvement in the Middle East

Sinai: 'Britain's big mistake'

THE DECISION to contribute to the Sinai military force announced by the British government has been strongly condemned by Labour Member of Parliament, Mr Ernie Ross, the Chairman of Trade Union Friends of Palestine. He told a rally in London on 24th November that it was 'the biggest mistake that Britain could take'. There was no way, he said, that the decision could be separated from support for the Camp David accords, which had deliberately refused to recognise the Palestinians and the PLO.

Already the decision by Britain and other EEC governments has created an international crisis. Israel has expressed its rejection of European participation because, as the Zionists point out, the Sinai force is to be created under the terms of the Camp David accords, and the EEC has said on occasions that it considers the Camp David process is no longer active or valid in the search for peace.

The European decision came after heavy pressure from the United States for the EEC to become involved. At stake was the whole credibility of the Sinai force as a multinational project. Originally intended as a UN corps, the General Assembly rejected the scheme as part of overall rejection of the Camp David process.

It was critical that the US should be able to form a unit which could pass as 'international', with the support of some other major powers. Britain and other EEC states, therefore, came under firm pressure from Washington to join the force, even though the decision has probably dealt a final blow to any claim which the EEC might have made to the Arabs that it could act as an independent group in formulating a peace initiative.

Britain's decision came after strong protests from the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the League of Arab States and individual Arab governments over early speculation that the UK and other European governments would agree to send contingents to Sinai.

The PLO case was clearly put by London Representative Nabil Ramlawi, in a memorandum delivered to the Foreign Office on 4th November on behalf of Mr Farouk Qaddoumi, Head of the PLO's Political Department. Support for the Sinai force, said the PLO, was against 'the consensus expressed in the General Assembly' in its December 1980 resolution condemning 'all partial agreements and settlements' related to the Palestine question.

The Camp David accords, said the PLO, 'undermine all efforts by the international community and the PLO to secure a settlement based on full respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'.

RDF capability

However, there is another aspect to the Sinai force which has not been examined by the British media, although it is one which has far reaching and serious implications. Not only is the Sinai force an integral part of the Camp David process, but it is also an integral part of the US scheme to create a Rapid Deployment Force in the Middle East. With the US openly voicing plans for the invasion of Libya and barely concealing its plans to seize the Arab oil fields in the event of oil policy decision being taken of which the US disapproves, the prospects for a major US-Arab confrontation cannot be taken lightly.

US sources have stated that Wash-

ington plans to use the military bases over which it gains control in Sinai to integrate the Sinai force with an RDF logistical capability. The Sinai bases will be part of the RDF scheme, but presented to the Egyptian people as being part of the Sinai force to silence public criticism of US bases on Arab soil. It was decided by President Sadat.

The RDF capability of the Sinai force has been recognised by the Legislative Research Service which examined the issues involved for Australian participation in a document prepared for the Federal Parliament earlier this year. *Current Issues Brief No 4 1981* notes: 'While danger has been said about the role of the force, the danger cannot be ruled out

that the Sinai force, with its long term policing mission, could become in some future crisis, irrespective of current American intention, an advance guard of the RDF. If hostilities arose in some Middle-East trouble spot and spread towards the peace-keeping area, it could lead to US forces including the peace-keeping unit, being directed from tasks such as the Sinai patrol to fight an action more vital to America's national interest, while RDF reinforcements are being mobilised.'

Vietnam

And the influential Melbourne *Age* newspaper on 26th June referred in an editorial to 'a peace-keeping force that could be transformed at

short notice, no matter what guarantees Mr Haig may provide at this time, into a vanguard of the proposed American Rapid Deployment Force.'

Australians do not need long memories to recall how their country was dragged into the Vietnam War by the United States under similar pretexts to those now being given in respect of the Sinai force.

There are also other factors which Europeans should consider. Both the Sinai force and the RDF project are strongly opposed in the Arab world, and the present economic crisis in Europe can only be deepened by any decline in export trade to the Arab states. The consequences of British troops being involved in a scheme so closely identified with the RDF could be catastrophic in the event of American military intervention. Yet these longer term interests of Britain and Europe have been pushed aside, hardly debated in the press or Parliament, as the United States exerts its influence over the European community.

And for the Palestinian people, this reassertion of US control in Europe sets back the prospects of a political initiative from the EEC to deal with the Palestine question, and heightens the prospects of a new military confrontation in the Middle East. In short, Britain's decision is bad news for peace. British troops have no legitimate place in Sinai or elsewhere in the Middle East.

Louis Eaks

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SINCE 1968 Free Palestine has been an important part of the Palestinians' struggle for their liberation of their homeland. It is a British campaign because we believe that we have the duty to oppose violations of human rights as part of an international movement against oppression. The campaign is also being fought here in Britain and the English speaking world because support for the Zionists from the British and American governments makes it important that public opinion should be informed of the facts so that it can challenge the decisions of western governments which are counter to the rights of the Palestinians.

We face a difficult task in attempting to challenge the mass circulation newspapers, radio and television which present daily the Palestine conflict in terms of American government policies. When the press is not directly supporting the Zionists, it claims objectivity by promoting peace proposals which still betray the rights of the Palestinian people.

Through our daily monitoring

of events in occupied Palestine and international capitals, and by giving coverage to the real issues involved, Free Palestine seeks to ensure that public opinion is better informed, and better armed to challenge the myths and propaganda promoted by the Zionists and their allies.

Free Palestine does not have the resources of the mass media. It struggles from week to week on a small budget made possible only by the donations which it receives from supporters and friends.

Our regular readers will know that sometimes Free Palestine newspaper does not appear, simply because we do not have the funds to produce it. When we have the funds it also means that we are unable to service the steady flow of requests for literature and information.

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TODAY ISRAEL and its major backer, America, stand virtually alone in refusing to recognise the Palestinians as a people with the same national rights as any other. Until quite recently it was a view shared by most western states. They saw their imperial and strategic interests as entailing unswerving support for Israel. Inevitably, their Middle East policies foundered. They were based on a myth. Palestinian nationhood is a reality, and every attempt to bypass it has not only failed, but has fuelled nationalist sentiment.

Palestinian nationalism came of age when Yasser Arafat was elected Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1969, but its origins go back centuries. For hundreds of years the Palestinians have felt an affinity with each other based on common occupation of a distinct region. Their sense of continuity as a community, although not in itself amounting to nationalism by modern definition, formed the essential bedrock for later developments.

The Palestinians' regional identity can be traced back at least to Roman times, and was encouraged by the tendency of successive conquerors to administer the territory as a distinct unit. The name Palestine came from the Philistines, who settled in the coastal areas in the second century BC. The Romans set up three districts, Palaestina Prima, Secunda and Tertia. When the Arabs ousted the Byzantines in the seventh century, they set up *Jund Filastin* on the area of the Roman Palaestina Prima. Subsequent conquerors adopted similar administrative units.

Although Palestine has been ruled by outside powers for most of its history, only the Arab invasion had a profound and lasting impact. At first the Arabs ruled as an elite, but in time they were absorbed by the populace, who became Arabised and for the most part adopted Islam. To this day, Palestinians call their country by its Arabic name — Filastin.

Another factor contributing to regional identity was the significance of Jerusalem and its environs to the three great monotheistic religions. Palestine became known as the Holy Land — in Arabic *Al Ard al Muqaddasah*.

The administrative and religious factors setting Palestine apart from surrounding regions came together most strongly during the nineteenth century, when the country was still under Ottoman rule and at a time when modern nationalism was first stirring in colonial dependencies throughout the world. The southern two thirds of the country constituted the sanjak (district) of Jerusalem. The northern third formed two sanjaks of the vilayet (province) of Beirut. Because of the religious importance of the city, however, the Jerusalem sanjak was accorded special status in 1887, and was ruled direct from the imperial capital Constantinople.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Palestinians' sense of being an Arab and mainly Islamic people, dwelling in a distinct land of their own had become strong. In his *The Emergence of the Palestinian Arab National Movement 1918-1929*, the Israeli scholar Yehoshua Porath notes: 'At the end of the Ottoman period the concept of *Filastin* was already widespread... denoting either the whole of Palestine or the Jerusalem *Sanjak* alone.' He adds that Palestinian Arabs saw their land 'as a special area, which does not form part of Syria'. This sense of regional identity was strongly reinforced by the frontiers drawn by the European Powers for the British Mandate of Palestine.

The first signs of modern Palestinian nationalism came in the nine-



The Palestine Revolt lasted from 1936 to 1939

The Birth of Palestinian Resistance

teenth century. Palestinians began to evince an unmistakable wish to become their own masters. Elsewhere in the Arab world the same process was under way but the problem was simpler. The sole aim of most Arab nationalists was to throw off the Ottoman yoke. The Arabs of Palestine had a double burden. Self-determination meant not only ousting the Turks, but also halting the settlement in Palestine of Zionist settlers from Europe.

Paradoxically, the Zionist movement gave an enormous boost to the rise of modern Palestinian nationalism. The first Jewish settler immigrants arrived in the 1880s, and the Palestinians quickly grasped the long term implications of the Zionist enterprise. Implacable opposition to Zionism came to centre-stage in local politics. Anti-Zionism became a potent rallying point for all Palestinians, and fuelled national loyalties that transcended strong ties to family and village.

There was, however, a fundamental difference of approach between the populace as a whole and their leaders. Palestine was a strongly traditional agricultural society. The majority of the people were peasant farmers, and their leadership came from 'notables' from major land-owning and merchant families, such as the Husseinis and Nashahibis of Jerusalem. Violent attacks on Zionist settlers began soon after the arrival of the first immigrants. They were spontaneous and localised acts by peasants who had been dispossessed from the lands bought up by the Zionists.

The notables were much more restrained — reflecting their traditional role as brokers between imperial powers and their subjects. Their first formal act of opposition came in 1891 when a group of Jerusalem notables petitioned Sultan Abdul Hamid to forbid land purchases by Zionists in Palestine. A decree was

JANUARY 1ST will mark the 16th anniversary of the first armed Palestinian resistance operation against the Zionists by Al Fatah, the Palestine National Liberation Movement, headed by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. In this report Alan George examines the historical developments which provide the basis for Palestinian nationalism, in the years prior to 1948, when Palestine fell under Zionist occupation.

issued, but proved ineffective, not least because some of those making huge profits out of land sales were the very leaders who in public condemned such transactions.

The gulf between the peasant masses and their leaders deepened during the British occupation. The Palestinians had always faced a clear choice: to resist the Zionists physically, or to minimise their impact by reaching some accommodation with them. Prior to the arrival of the British, the leadership had tried conciliation, but without effect. The British, with their mandate to further the Zionist cause, made resistance seem futile. It means taking on not only the Zionists but one of the major military powers of the time. The traditional leadership felt that the national interest could best be defended by co-operating with the British, in the hope that they might be induced to drop their commitment to Zionism.

Their hopes were badly misplaced,

and as their failure became even clearer, ordinary Palestinians increasingly took matters into their own hands. Violent protests against Zionist immigration and assaults against the settlers intensified, but they remained essentially spontaneous and without any central direction. Indeed, the elite leadership consistently urged 'moderation', arguing that violence would only antagonise the British, leading them to favour the Zionists even more.

At length, the notables became totally discredited, a process hastened by their constant internecine bickerings. In 1935 Shaikh Izzedin Qassam, a Palestinian cleric from Haifa, embarked on a hitherto untrod path of resistance. Sidestepping the traditional leadership, he had built up a group of followers numbering about 800, of whom about 200 had received military training. In November he led his band into the hills inland from Haifa with the aim of launching a sustained guerrilla campaign against the British and Zionists. The authorities, however, acted swiftly to crush Shaikh Qassem's men. Refusing to surrender to the vastly superior government force, the Palestinian guerrillas fought a pitched battle lasting several hours. The Shaikh and a number of his companions were killed. The rest of his band were captured. To this day Palestinian commandos revere Shaikh Qassem as the first *fedayi* — 'one who sacrifices himself'.

What Shaikh Qassem's brief rebellion lacked in military effect it made up for in political impact. The Shaikh inspired the Palestinians in a way that the traditional leadership had never managed. His funeral was a truly national event. His coffin was borne by large crowds for ten kilometres from Haifa to the village of Yajour. All the way the throngs shouted slogans against the British and the Zionists.

The traditional leaders were con-

spicuously absent. David Hirst, in *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, says: 'When Shaikh Qassem stirred the people with his martyr's death, the politicians were still opposing violence — but failing to provide any alternative. Instead of marching behind the coffin, they sent lukewarm messages of sympathy — and ran to the High Commissioner to tell him that if he did not grant them some timely concessions they would lose what influence they still possessed and the situation would get quite out of hand.'

It did. Shaikh Qassem's death prompted a full-scale national rebellion that lasted from 1936-1939. Palestinians, acting in isolated groups, launched a national campaign of guerrilla warfare against the British and Zionists. In the first six months, the armed struggle was backed up by a general strike. David Hirst writes: 'The revolt was largely spontaneous in origin; its main impetus came from below, from the largest, lowliest segment of the population who had suffered most from the Zionist invasion. It was a people's war. It represented a new stage in the Arab resistance that had begun, with those clumsy localised outbreaks, some fifty years before: the use of armed violence, in a sustained, organised and purposeful way, not only against the Jews but against the British who had brought them there.'

The rebellion was nonetheless doomed. The fighters were poorly armed and lacked central control. Their power was dissipated by personal feuds. There was no chance of success against the military might of Britain. The rebellion was eventually crushed, although it took 20,000 troops and entailed a virtual reconquest of the country. The Palestinians were ruthlessly suppressed. Even the traditional leadership was eliminated. In 1937 several hundred notables were arrested, the Arab Higher Committee, which comprised representatives of the dominant families and acted on behalf of the Palestinians as a whole, was dissolved and its members exiled to the Seychelles. Haj Amin Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and the leading figure in the Palestinian leadership, was officially deposed, and escaped to Lebanon.

The suppression of the rebellion left the Palestinians helpless to resist when the Zionists went on the offensive to seize the country in the late 1940s. 'The unpreparedness of the Palestinians was pathetic,' says David Hirst. 'The British had smashed their military potential in the 1930s; they had kept them disarmed ever since. They had prevented the re-emergence of such effective political leadership as they had ever enjoyed; only in 1946 was the Arab Higher Committee legalised again; the Mufti was exiled to the end. At the beginning of 1948 the Palestinians could muster some 2,500 riflemen; not only was this derisory force poorly trained, it lacked logistical support, and operated as a collection of separate regional units without centralised command and subject to the vagaries of remote and often divided political control.'

The British suppression of the Arab nation opened the way for the Zionist seizure of the country in 1947 and 1948, and the expulsion of the majority of the Arabs. It was more than a decade after this dispossession, or as they call it, the Catastrophe, before the Palestinians had recovered sufficiently to resume actively their national struggle for self-determination.

□ In the next issue of *Free Palestine*, Alan George will examine the rise of the Palestinian national liberation movement in the years following 1948.

Palestine: Its people and their struggle

THE GROWING momentum of the Palestinians' military and political struggle to secure their national rights has been accompanied by a rising interest both in the nature of the Palestine conflict and in the Palestinian people themselves. In response, recent years have seen a succession of new publications on these topics. The London-based Third World Centre for Research and Publishing has been particularly active, and has just added two more books to its list.

Bassam Shak'a: *Portrait of a Palestinian* offers a passionately-written account of the personal experiences of Bassam Shak'a, the Mayor of Nablus on the occupied West Bank, setting these in the context of the broader Palestinian-Zionist conflict. Political history can often make very dry reading, but this approach vividly brings to life the tragic story of Palestine.

Ever since his victory in the 1976 municipal elections, Mayor Shak'a has been a thorn in the Zionists' side, because of his consistent outspokenness in condemning conditions under the Israeli occupation. In 1979 the Israelis tried to deport him on the grounds that he had openly condoned Palestinian resistance operations. Under the occupation regime, such an endorsement constitutes a 'crime'. In fact, all that Shak'a did was to explain, in the course of a private conversation with General Matt, the military governor of the West Bank, that resistance was an inevitable consequence of Zionist policies. 'If I have a child,' the book quotes him as telling Matt, 'and if he does something wrong, I shall try to discover what made him do it. If I find there is a reason for his action, I shall attempt to deal with what has caused his wrongdoing, but if I find there is no reason for his misbehaviour, then I shall take him to a doctor.'

After being served with a deportation order, the Nablus Mayor was imprisoned in Ramleh jail. The Israeli moves against Shak'a provoked widespread demonstrations on the West Bank, and the mayors and councils of all 24 of the region's municipalities resigned *en masse*. International outrage added further pressure on the Zionists. At length, after Shak'a



Bassam Shak'a: Profile just published in London

had served 26 days in prison, the Israelis decided to cut their losses and rescind the deportation order.

It was not the last attempt to muzzle him, however. A few months before the deportation affair, Ezer Weizman, then defence minister, had summoned Mayor Shak'a and told him that if he continued to denounce the occupation he would 'be punished physically'. Shortly after, General Matt issued a similar threat. 'If you continue in this way, you will encounter the worst things you have ever experienced in your life,' Shak'a quotes him as saying.

The threats were not empty. On 2nd June 1980 bombs exploded in the cars of two West Bank Mayors. Bassam Shak'a lost both his legs, and Mayor Karim Khalaf of Ramallah had a foot blown off. Mayor Ibrahim Tawil avoided death or maiming from another bomb planted in his car only because news of the other explosions reached him in time. The Israeli investigation into the bombings has been at best half-hearted. Zionist settlers planted the bombs and there is evidence of the connivance of the Israeli government. Like the deportation attempt, the bombings proved counter-productive to the Zionists. Shak'a has refused to

be silenced and is more respected than ever by the West Bankers.

Portrait of a Palestinian Village is the latest in a growing number of books dealing with the Palestinian people themselves, rather than their struggle. Such books nevertheless have an important, if indirect, political value. For years the Palestinians were treated — by Zionists and western powers alike — as a 'non-people', as being somehow of no consequence. In the words of Mayor Shak'a: 'There we were, having to convince the world not only that we were a people but that we actually existed before we could even think about embarking on the struggle for our inalienable rights.'

Portrait of a Palestinian Village reproduces 226 of the black and white photographs taken during the British Mandate period by Dr Hilma Granqvist in the course of anthropological research in the village of Artas, near Bethlehem. In her pictures, Dr Granqvist never tried to force the villages to fit any preconceived ideas she might have had about them. Many photographers — even to this day — have tended to portray the Palestinians merely as picturesque relics of Biblical times. In her Introduction, Shelagh Weir, of London's Museum of Mankind, says Dr Granqvist 'never succumbed to what she called the "Biblical danger" which had caused so many writers to distort and misinterpret contemporary village life in order to provide illustrations for Biblical texts'.

The book is admirably produced, each illustration having a concise but informative explanatory caption. As Shelagh Weir says, it offers 'a unique pictorial record of one Palestinian village in the 1920s'.

□ **Bassam Shak'a:** *Portrait of a Palestinian*, by Marion Wolfson. Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, London 1981. 132 pages. Price: £5.

□ **Portrait of a Palestinian Village:** *The Photographs of Hilma Granqvist*, edited by Karen Seger. Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, London 1981. 174 pages. 226 illustrations. Price: £11.

□ In case of difficulty in obtaining these books, you can order direct from Third World Centre, 117 Piccadilly, London W1. Telephone: 01-499 7622



The summer fruit harvest during happier times in Palestine, recalled in the new book 'Portrait of a Palestinian Village'.

NAHLA: A refugee in her own land

GRACE HALSELL, an author who has covered both Korea and Vietnam as a journalist in the past, recently visited Jerusalem. Her visit became the basis for her new book. In 'Journey to Jerusalem' (New York: McMillan Co), Grace Halsell has contributed a detailed account of her experiences in the West Bank.

Following an article written by Grace Halsell that includes excerpts from her upcoming book:

NAHLA, 16, a tall and slender Palestinian, with dark eyes and dark hair, at first seemed painfully shy, even furtive, like an animal in a cage. She seemed to carry an aura of humility that comes with knowing you are living in a very limited space belonging to others who are more powerful than you. This was my first impression. But as I came to know her I saw strength, a determination, expressed most often in her desire and her need to establish her national

identity. 'I am a Palestinian,' she told me. 'And I must live in my Palestine.'

Before staying a while with Nahla and other Palestinian refugees in a camp on the West Bank, I had always wondered: Who are they? Why year after year do we see pictures of them, standing at an outdoor spigot drawing water? Why are their camps not dismantled, and new and better quarters built? Why did they get into this situation? Obvious questions with difficult answers.

The first time I enter the refugee camp in the Israeli-occupied West Bank where Nahla and her family live, I feel I am entering some medieval ghetto. I walk along a narrow alley, skirting an open sewage ditch. I pass tens of dozens of one-and-two-bedroom houses, each leaning on the other for support. I am in a ghetto without streets, sidewalks, gardens, patios, trees, flowers, plazas or shops — among an uprooted, stateless, scattered people who, like the Jews before them, are in a tragic diaspora.

Nahla's father, Bashir, her mother Samantha, a brother Zayid and his wife, and another brother, Ahmad, a university student, and I all share one room. This one room is the only home Nahla has ever known. A closeted hole in the floor provides a toilet. Nahla has never known the convenience of a tub or a commode, nor does any member of her family enjoy that greatest of all luxuries, a room or even space into which one can, for an hour or a few moments of each day, retire, and in solitude meld mind, body, and soul.

One morning I walk with Nahla to her school. She leaves me in the office of one of the administrators, a Palestinian who earned degrees in Boston and Chicago universities. We talk over small cups of Arabic coffee.

'Overcrowded classrooms are our worst problem. We have not been permitted by Israeli authorities to build new schools since they militarily occupied this area in 1967. Our school population has more than doubled. Consequently, we have to use our schools on double shifts.'

'Censorship is another problem,'

he continues. 'We made a list of 117 textbooks we think necessary. But the Israeli government censored 52 of these.'

I glance around his office, bare except for his desk and three chairs. I see no wall decorations, no photographs, diplomas or books. What, I ask, does he need most? It is a perfunctory question, and pencil poised, I await a perfunctory answer, such as, 'We need more books.' But he is done with discussing school needs as such.

'Our freedom. Our freedom,' he replies fervently. 'We are a people exiled and held under a yoke of tyranny. About three million of us now live in exile — in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Persian Gulf countries, and in scattered groups throughout the world.'

'About half of the Palestinian people living outside Israel are still considered refugees, and about 20 per cent continue to live in refugee camps. I see the psychological effect of the prolonged stays in camps: there is a hatred that builds on a lack

of freedom. Israel forcibly produces a generation of tongueless people, and we will, in the end, speak with fire.'

Nahla, he continues, helped stage a demonstration on the school grounds. 'This was when the Israelis arrested the mayor of Nablus, Bassam Shak'a. Nahla and other students marched, carrying a placard, 'We are Palestinians. We must be free.' Six armed Israelis stormed onto our grounds and fired shots around the students. They arrested Nahla and a dozen other students and held them in jail for two days.'

Later, as Nahla and I walk back to the refugee camp, I ask whether she was humiliated about being in jail. 'No,' she replies. 'Nowadays it is a badge of honour to fight for our freedom.'

The walls of her one-room home have one decoration, a drawing of an olive tree. 'The olive tree has strength because of its long, tough roots,' she says. 'The colour green and the olive trees represent our future. We have roots here. This we know is our homeland.'

Editorial

Britain and United States: Time to end appeasement of Zionists

AS WE go to press the United Nations General Assembly begins its 1981 debate on the Palestine question, and no doubt the majority of countries represented will once again voice their support for the legitimate rights of the Palestine people, as they have done in the past. Yet despite their lip-service to the United Nations, for how long can the contempt for General Assembly resolutions by the United States and her allies be tolerated. If nothing else can be done, at least this contempt must be exposed.

From the statements of western political leaders, and the newspapers which reflect their opinions, it could be assumed that the Palestinians, and the PLO in particular, is the real obstacle to peace in the Middle East. *The Times*, in its editorial comment on 13th November accused the PLO of 'narrow vision and duplicity' and said 'the PLO is merely helping to prolong the tragic cycle' by playing 'a double game' and inflaming 'Israeli anxieties'. Israel, on the other hand, 'shows respect for the rule of law', the paper said in the same editorial, only days after Israeli troops destroyed three Palestinian homes in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions which make illegal every single act by Israeli forces in the 1967 occupied territories.

The Times was prompted to make these facile remarks by the criticism

of the British government voiced by PLO spokesman Abdul Mohsen Abu Maizer in which he accused the British government of 'black hatred and evil intentions toward the rights of the Palestinian people'. They are not words which we would fully endorse, but it has become evident that the promises of a European initiative have become little more than a charade.

If anything, the EEC has shown its contempt for the Palestinians, and the Arab nation as a whole, by the way it has manoeuvred around the so-called European initiative. We do not know by what logic the British government rejects recognition of the PLO on the basis that it does not recognise 'organisations' but only states, while at the same time pressure on the PLO to recognise Israel is paramount in the EEC scheme. Of course, Britain is not opposed to recognising an organisation which represents a nation, even though it does not govern territory. Britain established de Gaulle's Free French Army, and afforded it the highest recognition.

Afghanistan?

Europe's contempt for the Arabs was also shown at the recent preparatory meeting for the Euro-Arab Dialogue held in London. When the draft final communiqué was presented to the Arabs by the EEC side, it referred

to the need to end the 'illegal occupation' of Afghanistan, but on the question of Palestine, it merely referred to the Venice Declaration. No European concern was voiced over the Zionists' violation of Palestinian rights, and the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

Meanwhile, in Washington, while the Reagan administration waits loud and long about what it perceives as 'international terrorism', the regime in Palestine, which it arms and affords political protection, rampages around the region bombing densely populated capital cities, and destroying the homes of innocent families living under its military oppression. Yet this delinquent state is given the widest possible support by the United States, including the military equipment with which to attack the Palestinians, while the PLO is vigorously denied any role in the search for a just peace.

PLO recognition of Israel, and its right to exist, is not a pertinent issue. It would not resolve the problem. The problem existed before the PLO was created. The problem has been created by the Zionists' total disregard for the rights of the Palestinian people, and why should the PLO confer any legitimacy on such a regime? Who would argue that the problem of apartheid and oppression of the Black Africans would be solved

by recognition of the South African regime by the African National Congress? Was Mr Mugabe required to recognise the racist state of Rhodesia as a precondition for his invitation to the Lancaster House talks? If the British government wants to place Zionist conditions on recognition of the PLO, so be it. But it has no right to feel abused when the plain facts of bias and prejudice are acknowledged by the Palestinians. Nor does Britain have any right to masquerade around the Middle East tout for trade and acting as a friend and ally of the Arab people, while it acts as a mouthpiece for the Zionists and the United States on the issue of Palestine.

The list of crimes committed by the Zionist regime is so long it would more than fill every column of this newspaper, and more. If Britain wants seriously to address itself to the task of securing a just settlement to the Palestine question it should stop deceiving itself, and take urgent steps to halt Israel's persistent violation of international law, the Geneva Conventions, and the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. These are the real issues which must be tackled. That will mean confronting the United States, but if Britain is not prepared to act independently from the US it should at least be honest and admit it has no independent role in the Middle East.

Biggest mistake

Speaking on behalf of Trade Union Friends of Palestine, Mr Ross condemned Britain's decision to participate in the Sinai force. It was 'the biggest mistake the British government could make,' he said.

He also referred to the twinning of occupied Nablus with his constituency city, Dundee. Mr Ross paid tribute to Nablus mayor Bassam Shak'a, and told the meeting that despite Zionist pressures to end the twinning, 'The courage of Bassam Shak'a won the hearts and minds of the people of Dundee, and many ordinary people went out of their way to express support and solidarity.'

For the first time a representative of the Communist Party attended such a meeting, reflecting the recent decision in Moscow to afford the PLO full diplomatic status. Mr Gerry Pocock of the Party's Middle East Committee, told the meeting that the recent CP Congress in Britain had unanimously adopted a resolution in support of Palestinian rights, and urging recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Mr Alan Watson from the National Union of Students also regretted that the British student movement had for too long ignored the Palestine question. Referring to the Zionist lobby in the student movement, he said Jewish students had a right to be concerned about the problems of other Jewish communities, such as those in the USSR, but they must realise 'Palestinians have rights too, and it is time that students stood up and argued for those rights.'

Alan Watson went on, 'Amongst those rights is the right to land and the right to live in peace, and to be represented by the PLO, an organisation which is recognised throughout the world.' He called on British universities to twin with Palestinian universities, and concluded, 'Once the real message gets across, students in Britain will come to realise how just is the Palestinian cause.'

Telegram

Earlier, Mr Edward Henderson, Director of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (CAABU), warned of the explosive situation prevailing in the occupied territories, from which he had just returned. He called on Britain to exert more pressure on the US, arguing, 'I think it is not understood in America how grave the situation is.'

He warned, 'Unless the world powers do something about it soon, something like 1948 will take place in 1982.'

The rally was placed firmly in its international context at the start of the meeting, with an opening address from Mr Gilberto Rizzo, Director of the United Nations London Information Office. The Palestine question is 'a concern which pervades the whole of the United Nations General Assembly,' he said. The UN Day was intended 'to focus the attention of the international community on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.'

The rally concluded with unanimous approval from the various organisations attending, and from the public in the audience, for telegrams to be sent to Lord Carrington and UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, calling for a solution to the Palestine issue based on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and urging governments to recognise the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians.

Reagan's sick bed comments

THE REAGAN Administration has deservedly become renowned for its incomprehensible foreign policy statements — a reputation to which Alexander Haig's command of the English language has greatly contributed. How refreshing, therefore, to read the text of the speech Ronald Reagan gave to the National Press Club on 18th November.

The first part was taken up with the content of a letter he had written to Leonid Brezhnev last April while the President was recovering in hospital from the attempt on his life. 'The peoples of the world,' the letter said, 'despite differences in racial and ethnic origin, have very much in common. They want the dignity of having some control over their own individual destiny'.

'If they are incapable, as some would have us believe, of self government, then where among them do we find any who are capable of governing others?' the letter continued.

If Reagan believes all this — and surely he would not lie to the leader of the Soviet Union — then perhaps he ought to have a word in Menachem Begin's ear.

Will Tony Benn take Eric Heffer's lead?

SUPPORT FOR the Zionists within the British Labour Party continues to decline. When the Israelis launched their blitzkrieg on Beirut in July it proved to be the breaking point for veteran Zionist supporter Eric Heffer, a former government minister, and now newly re-elected to Labour's Shadow Cabinet in the House of

Credit: Emirates News, Abu Dhabi



Commons. He resigned from Labour Friends of Israel in protest not only at the Beirut bombing, but at the policies of the Beigin government which he felt were beyond any form of support.

Chairman of the Middle East sub-committee of the Labour Party's National Executive, Mr Heffer has been urging recognition of the PLO at recent Labour Party meetings, and has engaged himself in talks with the PLO's London Representative, Nabil Ramlawi.

Just prior to the Labour Party conference in October, Tony Benn was described by Labour Friends of Israel as a staunch supporter, and indeed he has long been so. However, it appears his mind is turning. At a recent meeting of Poale Zion, the

Labour Zionist movement (*sic*), Mr Benn shifted a little to urge a dialogue between the PLO and Israel. The Zionists' hysterical response, reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* seems likely to push him rapidly in the direction taken by his colleague Eric Heffer.

Lies, damned lies.

'OFFICIALS IN Jerusalem have privately rejected American calls for a suspension of Israeli land settlements in occupied Arab areas but an authoritative source said none was in fact scheduled at this time.' *The Times* reported on 13th October. The article was all about the Israelis' response to a call by Secretary of

State Haig during a recent television interview for a moratorium on colonisation in the 'delicate present phase of the peace process'.

The 'authoritative source' was none other than Dr Raanan Weitz, co-chairman of the World Zionist Organisation department that deals with colonisation of the 1967 occupied territories. *The Times* quoted him as saying that all new settlements authorised by the joint Israeli government-WZO colonisation committee had in fact been established.

What, then, is one to make of all those new colonies set up since Dr Ranaan's comforting message? With all due acknowledgements to Winston Churchill, it appears that there are not just lies, damned lies and statistics. There is also Zionist propaganda.

London notes

فلسطين حرة free palestine



Nabil Ramlawi, London Representative of the PLO, addresses the Rally Day rally at the Riverside Studios (left) which included performance of Palestinian folk dances (below). In Trafalgar Square further support for the PLO at a rally organised by the Arab students.

UN Palestine Day: Packed meeting pledges support for PLO

LONDON WAS the scene of the most impressive event of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle on 24th November, when hundreds turned up to pack the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith for a rally and evening's entertainment to mark the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. With an impressive line-up of speakers, it was evident that the Palestine cause now commands wide-

spread support from all sections of political opinion in Britain, and the audience was clearly enthusiastic in its support for the PLO.

There was loud applause as Nabil Ramlawi, London Representative of the PLO, paid tribute to 'the patriotism of my Palestinian brothers and sisters, who by their daily determination and defiance have forced the world to realise that the Pales-

tinian people will never submit to foreign occupation.'

He spoke of 'the black years of our tragedy' when in 1948 'the world was largely deaf to our voice which cried out for justice'. He added, 'We do not apologise for taking up arms to liberate our homeland and to defend our

people. When we are oppressed by the arms of our enemy — American arms in the hands of Zionist troops — we will respond with arms.'

The PLO envoy referred to the legitimate rights defined by the General Assembly, and the 112 states which had voted to support those rights. 'There is no peace in Palestine because we are denied our rights by Israel and the United States,' he declared. 'The American-Israeli alliance against the Palestinian people is the real cause of conflict in the Middle East today. With American support in the supply of arms and military technology, Israel not only rejects our rights, and deprives us of those rights, but it also wages war against us.'

The current situation on the West Bank, where Israeli forces have imposed curfews, arrested many student protesters, and demolished Arab homes as reprisals, could not be allowed to continue, said Mr Ramlawi. He renewed the call from the PLO for the European community to act, and praised Lord Carrington. 'He has done more to come to terms with the realities of the Palestine issue than any other British Foreign Secretary,' said the PLO envoy. However, Mr Ramlawi believed that the EEC was unable to act independently of US policy in the Middle East. The decision to send troops for the Sinai

force was only 'the most recent sign of Europe's inability to distance itself from Washington.'

Zionist decline

Speaking for the Anglo-Palestine Parliamentary Group, and the Conservative Middle East Council, Mr Tony Marlow MP referred to 'the hurts and pressures that must bear on a people, the far greater proportion of whom are not only without jobs, but are refugees living far from home or under foreign military occupation'.

In Parliament, he said, 'the Zionists are in decline'. People in all parties recognised that a settlement 'will never come about with the establishment of a Palestinian state'.

He concluded, 'Those who suffered so much at the hands of the Nazis in Germany have themselves turned into pale imitations of that tyrannical regime. That paradox will not endure.'

Labour MP Mr Ernie Ross spoke of the growing support for the Palestinian cause among Britain's 13 million trade unionists 'with their historical opposition to colonialism and racism'. For long they had heard only the Zionist case, but, he added, 'Once the case of Palestine has been explained, it is very easy for trade unionists to see on whose side they want to be.'

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Action in Glasgow

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY newspaper has called on students to re-establish links with Bir Zeit University after a twinning arrangement had been rescinded by the Student Representative Council (SRC).

In its 19th November editorial the Guardian said that 'recent developments on the West Bank shed new light on the situation there'. The closure of Bir Zeit 'should not go unnoticed', it added and urged students to reconsider a May Emergency General Meeting (EGM) decision to rescind the twinning.

A motion condemning 'educational oppression' at Bir Zeit and agreeing that the two Universities should be twinned was passed at SRC in January 1981. The Jewish Students Society responded by accusing the SRC of 'anti-Zionist policies' that promoted the PLO and called an EGM to reconsider the twinning decision.

The EGM voted against the twinning and the University Labour Club proposed the matter be put to SRC, maintaining it would be undemocratic to continue with the arrangement. This the SRC upheld.

In early November the Israeli government ordered the closure of Bir Zeit for a two month period. Trouble had flared when students protesting peacefully at the arrest of fellow students were attacked by Israeli troops wielding batons and throwing tear gas. The Guardian said 'for the students of Glasgow to fight against cuts and at the same time ignore the horrific plight of fellow students, to whom "Books not Bombs" is a notion far closer to home, would be grossly irresponsible'.

The Palestinian Action Society at Glasgow University plans to raise the twinning arrangement at a second EGM, after the return of a Glasgow student delegation from Bir Zeit.



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