

PPP

Bulletin

No. 69 1983



*All guns
against
the
enemy!!!*

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	3
From Beirut to Grenada.....	4
Comrade Habash: The Crisis - Roots and Solutions.....	6
PFLP-DFLP: Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the PLO.....	12
Occupied Palestine: Old-New Zionist Tactics.....	17
Comrade Abu Saleh: 54 Years of Struggle.....	20
Lebanon: The South Resists.....	23
Why Imperialism Intervened Directly.....	24
Multinational Forces - NATO Extended.....	26
War Scars on the Zionist Entity - study part II.....	29
Democratic Yemen - Anniversary of the October 14th Revolution.....	32
Interview with Comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad.....	33
Comrade Habash in Algeria.....	35
First Official Visit to Hungary.....	36
Geneva: International Conference on the Question of Palestine.....	37
Nicaragua: Interview with the Deputy Foreign Minister.....	38
Interviews with Anti-Zionists: Women Against Occupation.....	40
Ralph Schoenman-"No Amnesty for Israel".....	43
Poem: Slaughter.....	44
Athens: Never Again Sabra-Shatila.....	45
Political Declaration.....	46
Program of Action.....	47
Sri Lanka: Tamil Nation Attacked.....	48
Interview with the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam.....	49
Poem: New Diaspora, 1982.....	52

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This issue was sent to press November 12, 1983.



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Editorial

The error of attempting to resolve the differences in the Palestinian revolution by armed force has reached the proportions of a crime. The immediate victims are the Palestinian and Lebanese inhabitants of the Tripoli area. The potential victim is the PLO itself - its unity and independence, and the possibility of democratic reform in its structure. This led to sharper stands on the part of all Palestinian forces who understand that there is a three-way dialectical relationship between national unity and democratic reform and guaranteeing the continuity of the revolution.

On November 4th, the day after the shelling of Nahr al Bared and Baddawi refugee camps began, the PFLP issued a communique calling for (1) an immediate ceasefire and an end to using any form of violence; and (2) the withdrawal of all military forces that were gathered in the North of Lebanon for the purpose of fighting, instead directing them against the Zionist occupation and the US-reactionary Lebanese alliance. "The interests of our masses and our national cause compell all, and specifically the protest movement within Fatah, to take a conscious position to avoid a catastrophe that will affect all without exception."

At the same time, Doctor George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP issued a special appeal, calling on "All Palestinian leaders who are participating in this fighting to stop and use your minds...to reconsider this destructive method that threatens our revolution and the PLO. Then, I call upon all Palestinian fighters ...Reject any orders to point your guns against your people. Then, I call upon the Palestinian masses everywhere - in the occupied homeland, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and all over - to express their decisive opinion by condemning the fighting through every means of expression..." Indeed, demonstrations against the internal fighting were already underway in many Palestinian camps and communities.

The next day, November 5th, a meeting between leaders of the PFLP, DFLP, Palestine Liberation Front and the Palestinian Communist Party resulted in a joint communique which condemned the fighting and shelling of the camps as "a crime committed against the rights of the Palestinian and Lebanese people", and demanded an immediate ceasefire. The four organizations underscored the dangers of the fighting by indicating the situation in which it occurs: "The bloody fighting coincides with the intensification of US threats and Israeli aggression against all Lebanese nationalist forces, the Palestinian revolution and Syria, in prepara-

tion for...a broad aggression against this nationalist alliance. It also coincides with the intensification of the popular uprising against the Zionist occupation in the occupied territories. Regardless of the motivations and declared intentions, this fighting will not but serve the enemies of the Palestinian people, nationalist Lebanon and Syria. Furthermore, regardless of the military outcome, it will not lead to solving the political differences, but rather to more divisions, self-destruction and digging a chasm of blood between brothers-in-arms..."

This theme was again stressed by the Joint Leadership of the DFLP and PFLP in a communique issued November 6th, which referred to the resumption of Israeli air raids on Lebanon two days before, and the continuing threats of US imperialism against the nationalist forces: "Today, more than ever before, we are required to strengthen the unity of the Palestinian revolution, and its alliance with Syria and the Lebanese nationalist forces, in order to combat the anticipated US-Israeli aggression and to preserve the gains achieved by the nationalist forces in the mountain battle. The Joint Leadership, based on a position of national responsibility and deep interest in the nationalist alliance between the organizations of the revolution, holds the protest movement in Fatah and its Palestinian allies primarily responsible for the continuation of the fighting... (We) call upon them to immediately stop the fighting and the shelling of the camps, to toss away the idea of using arms and adhere to democratic dialogue... Recent events prove that this is the sole path to reforms, and to protecting the unity and independence of the PLO, and its role as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people..."

The Tripoli battles are not isolated or accidental occurrences. Rather they are the tragic expression of the crisis in the Palestinian revolution, for which the right wing forces dominating the PLO leadership bear primary responsibility. For this reason, all serious Palestinian nationalist, democratic and revolutionary forces want reform in the PLO. The question is how to achieve this. The policies of the protest movement which began in Fatah indicate that they have not correctly grasped the problems at hand, or the relationship between ends and means.

The PLO is currently faced with two dangers of equal proportions: political deviation on the part of the Palestinian right, and containment by Arab regimes. Falling into either trap would lead to a split in the PLO. Using the method of armed force to resolve differences in the Palestinian arena only renders the PLO more vulnerable to these dangers, including the resulting split. A split as the result of the current fighting would not reflect a clear polarization between the left and the right, as

some like to pretend. Nor would it mean the marginalization of a few 'traitors' with the masses rallying around the revolutionaries.

Democratic reforms in the PLO will not be achieved through coup d'etat methods to remove individual leaders. Rather, this needs a long process led by a coalition of all democratic, progressive Palestinian forces, based on mobilization of our masses, which will gradually enforce a new balance of forces in the PLO. Palestinian national unity has an important place in this process for several reasons. For one, unity on the national platform has more than once kept the right wing from entering into compromises. After our departure from Beirut we witnessed an escalating willingness on the part of the Palestinian right to deal with the US solutions. However, the fact remains that, except for some strata, the Palestinian bourgeoisie still stands on the national platform, due to its contradiction with the Zionist occupation. Thus it has a role to play in the Palestinian national struggle and in the PLO. The aftermath of Beirut exposed that the programs and leadership of the Palestinian right lack the capacity to preserve, much less advance, the revolution and its gains. This dictates a political and mass struggle against the programs of the right wing and its domination of the leadership, but not a violent liquidation of its representatives from the PLO.

Palestinian national unity is also important if we want to involve the masses in the process of reform, for this unity has provided the backbone for their struggle, especially in the occupied land. The violent disruption of this unity not only gives the right wing new pretexts for pursuing their deviations; it also

weakens the framework for our masses' struggle, rather than utilizing the revolutionary potential of national unity among the masses to enforce reforms.

There can be many pretexts for the battles in Tripoli. Part of the prelude was the mid-October attacks on the offices of the Lebanese Communist Party in Tripoli, and the massacre of many of their cadre by the so-called Islamic Unification Organization, facilitated by the Fatah leadership present in the city. There was also the attack on the base of PFLP-General Command in North Lebanon, carried out by the Fatah leadership. We, along with all progressive and nationalist forces, condemned these attacks. No one has the right to infringe on the rights of progressive and nationalist forces to live in security and carry out their political activities. Yet here again, the solution lies in correcting the alliance policy and practices of the influential leadership, not in unleashing more inter-cine fighting. The Lebanese progressive forces know this very well. They themselves have called for an end to the Tripoli battles. It would be a great disservice to our Lebanese allies to bring the fighting into the heart of their city, at a time when all nationalist energies should be concentrated on defeating the imperialist-Zionist-fascist plans. Our alliance with the Lebanese nationalist forces demands that the ceasefire that has been decided on in Tripoli be respected. The interests of the Palestinian masses and the continuity of our revolution demand the same. A ceasefire on the internal front is also necessary for strengthening the alliance with Syria, in order to face the threat of a new, broader Zionist-imperialist aggression.

From Beirut to Grenada

The October 23rd explosion of the headquarters of the US and French Multinational Forces (MNF) in Beirut was an act of war. It was a logical response to these forces' direct military intervention in Lebanon's civil war in September, expressing the popular outrage at this blatant imperialist aggression. This is what the imperialists with all their clamor about "terrorism" and "despicable acts" want most of all to hide, for it is they themselves with their interventionist policy, who are directly responsible for the

death of 230 Americans and 58 French in Beirut.

Besides dealing a heavy military blow, the explosions also served to expose imperialism politically. The operation reminded that imperialist forces, no matter their technical/military superiority, remain vulnerable, and especially so when injected into the sea of a hostile population. This evidenced the fallacy of the increasingly aggressive policy spearheaded by the Reagan Administration, that military build-up and "shows of strength" can prevail. Moreover

the operation forced the Reagan Administration to state its aims more clearly. When faced with the task of accounting for such a tremendous loss of life, the US in effect admitted that the Marines were not just to "keep peace", but to protect US "national interests", i.e., imperialist control of the region.

The aftermath of the explosions affirmed that imperialism does not easily learn its lesson; the prescribed remedy is more of the same. As US and French warships closed in on Beirut's coast, French General Cann predicted a more aggressive role for his paratroopers while US officials spoke of retaliation. Leaping at the chance to heap blame on pre-



Marine headquarters in ruins

determined targets: Syria, Iran, and the Soviet Union, US imperialism has other reasons than the Beirut explosion. The reasons of Reagan, Schultz and Weinberger for insinuating Soviet responsibility merit no other comment than that they were part of the psychological preparations for the US invasion of Grenada. Iran, for its part, recently touched on imperialism's most sensitive nerve - the oil supply - by threatening to close the Hormez Straits in view of escalated imperialist support to Iraq.

The most dangerous of these threats is the one to Syria, for there are concrete indications that the US is taking steps to place the MNF mission firmly in the NATO framework, and draw 'Israel' more closely into this coordination. The reason for attributing responsibility for the explosions to Syria could be the preparation of a new enemy aggression, in view of the fact that Syria constitutes a formidable obstacle to the enemy plans for Lebanon and the area. Soon after the explosions in Beirut, a high-level US mission was dispatched to the Zionist state to review the situation in Lebanon and "broader issues of Middle East security". The claim of the Israeli Minister of War, Arens, that Syria was behind the blasts, indicates Zionist readiness to enter into a coordinated imperialist military venture against the

nationalist forces and Syria in particular.

MNF OUT OF LEBANON!

The logical response to the Beirut explosions would be withdrawal of the MNF. The imperialist leaders' decision to the contrary reaffirms that their concern for human life is but a sham. This includes most of the US Congress, where despite continuing debate, there was a consensus against withdrawing the Marines in line with Reagan's assertion that any sign of weakness would be to Soviet advantage.

This highlights the importance of the progressive and democratic forces agitating for MNF withdrawal, and eliciting broader support for this demand based on the clear proof that imperialist aggression not only harms the people of the three continents, but also boomerangs on the popula-



tion of the capitalist countries. Significantly, the Beirut bombs coincided with the protest by millions in the US and western Europe against the stationing of new nuclear missiles. Simultaneously, the US invasion of Grenada can only add momentum to the struggle against militarism and intervention.

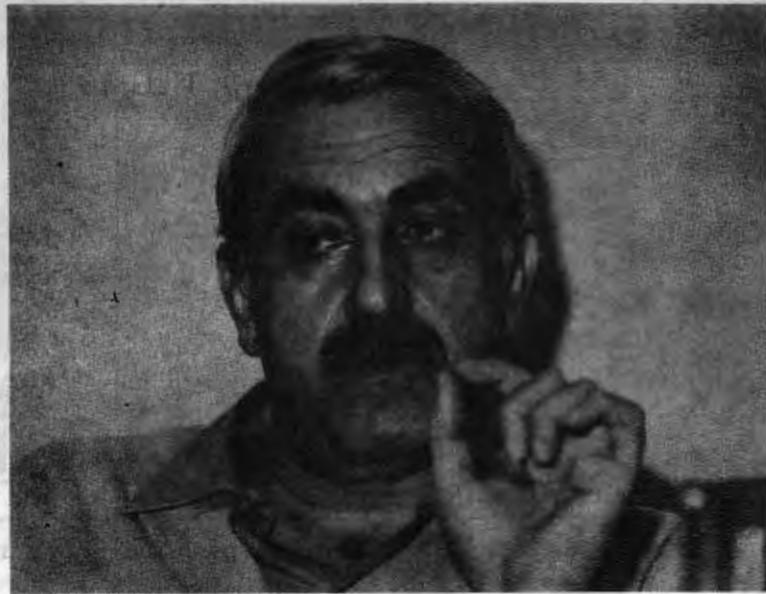
US OUT OF GRENADA!

The Beirut bombings were enough to make Schultz postpone his trip to El Salvador. Instead the US sent the Rapid Deployment Force to Grenada. The Reagan Administration needed a quick, effective military performance in order to bolster confidence in the armed forces.

Actually, the invasion had long been in Reagan's top drawer as part of the overall US counterrevolutionary efforts focused on Central America. The real aim was to threaten Cuba and Nicaragua, where the US dares not invade. Instead, the internal power shift in Grenada provided an excuse for the Reagan Administration to make the 110,000 people of the island serve as testing specimens for the prowess of the Marines and the 82nd airborne division (part of the RDF).

However, the ultimate outcome in Grenada will most probably point in the same direction as US involvement in Lebanon. The US had to commit 6,000 troops with numerous warships and more troops offshore, yet it took longer than expected to "restore law and order" on the island. More important, the battle for Grenada does not end when the Marines succeed in pacifying the island. Troops will remain to install a pro-imperialist government, and then the US will have to protect this government. US imperialism's experience in protecting the Amin Gemayel government in Lebanon stands as a warning of the consequences.

Comrade Habash:



The Crisis Roots and Solutions

On October 31, Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, delivered a lecture to a group of Palestinian and Arab cadres and intellectuals assembled in the building of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists in Damascus. This was part of a series of lectures, delivered by a number of leaders of the Palestinian revolution, sponsored by the Union with the theme: THE CRISIS IN THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION: ROOTS AND SOLUTIONS.

First of all I want to thank the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists - not because they gave me the opportunity to speak today, but because of the subject they specified for discussion at this critical time. Regardless of the controversy about the primacy of the word or of matter, I believe all of us are in agreement about the role of the word - the role of theory and analysis, the role of determining programs based on this analysis.

In this critical period of the revolution, the task shouldered by the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists is that of the word. The role of the word is to find a way out of the crisis we are currently facing in the Palestinian revolution, in the PLO, in Fatah and, if I am not mistaken, in all the organizations of the Palestinian revolution. Afterwards, I hope that my talk will be viewed as a humble contribution to the subject we are discussing. I don't say this out of modesty, but based on my understanding of the size and importance of this question, which requires the collective Palestinian mind and consciousness to find answers to the subject at hand: The Crisis of the Palestinian Revolution - Roots and Solutions.

Before dealing with the essence of the question, I emphasize that there are no rapid, magical solutions to the crisis. After providing the clear vision and analysis, and determining the roots and solutions, the Palestinian revolution will not be able to find its way out of

this crisis without a long process of accumulative struggle. The outcome of this would be a change in the class structure of the leadership of the Palestinian revolution, a correction of its political line and in its organizational and military programs.

I know very well that all the diseases in the Palestinian arena - in the fields of finance, administration and discipline - are now the subject of intense discussions among our people. But allow me to say that all these diseases will be corrected in the process of reform we are working on in the political, organizational and military programs.

Permit me to talk in the language of the concrete political situation we are living in, instead of speaking theoretically, without this being interpreted as an underestimation of the great importance of theory. I feel it is preferable to concentrate our talk on the political implications.

Historical achievements not subject to discussion

Before talking about the crisis, allow me to speak about the great achievements of the Palestinian revolution. I believe that we as Palestinian people, as Palestinian organizations, and as Palestinian and Arab intellectuals, commit a mistake if we don't see the other side of the march of the Palestinian revolution, i.e., its achievements. The Palestinian revolution

has made great and historical gains. I will mention the ones I believe are accepted without any discussion:

First: Crystallization of the militant, national identity of the Palestinian people, and their rallying their struggle around the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. Whoever experienced the history of the Palestinian question after 1948, realizes the significance of this point. The PLO represents the national entity, embodying the Palestinian national identity which encompasses all Palestinian nationalist classes, groups and personalities. Thus, the PLO constitutes a great historical achievement we must preserve. Is this fact open to discussion? Perhaps, but to me it is indisputable.

Second: The battle of Beirut, where the great steadfastness provided an example by bringing about the longest war in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This example must not be dismissed. The war in Lebanon revealed the deficiencies of all the Arab regimes. I say this based on our deep interest in serious Arab-Palestinian confrontation. The purpose of this is to make these regimes stand with full responsibility against the Zionist danger, and to make use of the lessons of the battle of Beirut. The battle of Beirut and its aftermath revealed not only the crisis of the Palestinian revolution; it also revealed very clearly the impotence of the Arab nationalist regimes - their inability to combat the enemy even after, with 90 days of fighting, the Palestinian revolution provided the opportunity to do so.

We in the PFLP endeavor to strengthen the alliance among the Palestinian revolution, the Lebanese National Movement, the Syrian regime, and all Arab nationalist regimes, based on our view that the conflict in the area is between the forces of Arab national liberation on the one hand, and imperialism, Zionism and reaction on the other.

I am not advocating a narrow Palestinian approach, saying: "This is what we did as Palestinians. Where were you as Syrians, Libyans or Egyptians?" I condemn this approach very seriously. What is required is an examination of all the lessons of the battle of Beirut. We are required to deal with the following: One - the crisis of the Arab nationalist regimes - roots and solutions; and two - the crisis of the Arab national liberation movement - roots and solutions. It is totally unacceptable to lose sight of this question, to lose the lessons of the battle of Beirut, which were a source of pride for all the Arab masses. I know how the masses, in every country without exception, welcomed the Palestinian fighters when they evacuated Beirut. This was not merely an emotional position; it had great significance. The battle of Beirut revealed the deficiencies of the Arab

governments first. Second, it revealed the deficiencies of the Palestinian revolution.

The crisis of the Palestinian revolution

Did the crisis of the Palestinian revolution begin after our departure from Beirut? No, the roots extend farther back. Knowing the Palestinian situation, with all its primary and secondary contradictions, I can say that after Beirut this crisis reached a qualitatively new stage. The major reason for this crisis is the rightist political line which emerged and reached a peak, especially after Beirut. At this time, it began to seriously threaten the Palestinian revolution with involvement in the US-reactionary plans proposed as solutions to the Palestinian problem. If we try to escape from this fact, we will not grasp the destructive effects of this political line. Let us take some examples to show what we mean...

Despite the great moral and political victory we achieved after Beirut, the great defect that had taken place in the balance of forces was apparent to any political observer or Palestinian leader. Accordingly, we can conclude that the Palestinian revolution is unable to achieve our national objectives by depending on forms of political struggle as the primary and basic method. Unfortunately, the influential elements in the PLO leadership laid down their answers to all the problems that confronted us after Beirut, and pointed out the real perils threatening the Palestinian people and vanguards. Based on their assumptions, these influential elements reached the following conviction: "We did everything possible; this is the outcome of 18 years of struggle; let's take what can be taken regardless of the size of our share." How can we otherwise explain the position towards the Reagan plan.

From when the Reagan plan was proposed on Sept. 1, until the Palestine National Council was held, all of you read statements saying: "There are positive points in the Reagan plan" and "The plan can be discussed". In spite of the dialogue that took place during the PNC session, and the emphasis on the importance of a clear political line, Brother Yasir Arafat went to the political committee meeting and said his famous word: "Say 'laam' to the Reagan plan", which means don't say 'yes' and don't say 'no'. After that, we said: Our masses cannot understand such a position; we cannot mobilize them on this basis in order to continue the revolution and overcome the difficult circumstances; therefore, such a position is rejected.

Yet some people registered their reservations on the text of the resolutions adopted by the PNC session, because these do not give them the freedom of political movement and maneuver they wanted.

We in the PFLP made our reservations from the other angle, because the text was not sufficient. We believe that it is better to totally reject the Reagan plan, instead of rejecting it only because it is not a sound basis for a solution to the Palestinian problem. You all know that the resolutions of the PNC did not deter those who think about dealing with imperialist schemes. All of you know of the negotiations that took place in Jordan after the PNC. As a result of the broad opposition, including the Central Committee of Fatah, a joint statement with the Jordanian regime was not issued. Still, isn't it our right to question what it means that the chairman of the PLO Executive Committee approved the proposed statement and said to King Hussein, "Give me the opportunity to consult my colleagues."

The examples are many. Everyone can ask himself: What is the meaning of the series of political positions taken by the influential forces in the PLO after our evacuation from Beirut? On the Reagan plan? On strengthening relations with the Jordanian regime? On continuing relations with the Camp David regime of Egypt? What is the meaning of the contacts with Zionist forces undertaken not only by Issam Sartawi, but by the Chairman of the Executive Committee? Does all this have a political content or not? Certainly, it exhibits a political line. I'll give a final example about this political line:

The relationship with the Syrian regime

I want to be courageous and clear on this subject. I hold the official leadership of the PLO responsible for a big part of the deterioration of the relations with the Syrian regime. There are some Arab nationalist regimes who are waiting for the opportunity to contain us, but this is one thing; how the official leadership of the PLO dealt with the relations with the Syrian regime is another. Prior to the battle of Beirut, there was a delegation from Fatah to discuss the strategic relations between Fatah and Syria. Why didn't this step succeed? The point lies in the leading circles. The delegation reached an agreement with Syria, but the individualist leadership put this agreement in the bottom drawer. Later the Israeli aggression took place.

During the war, all the Palestinian organizations, without exception, had a united view about the impotence of the Arab regimes, but we in the PFLP furthermore distinguished clearly between this fact and on the other hand opening a battle with the nationalist regimes, Syria in particular. In spite of the pain we suffered during the battle as a result of the nationalist regime's shortcomings, we did not lose sight of the constellation of contradictions, that there are nationalist regimes with short-

comings on one hand, and reactionary regimes directly or indirectly participating in the plot on the other.

How did the influential leadership in the PLO act on this question? It started to shun the Syrian regime and daily made contacts with Saudi leaders. Afterwards, the idea of all the leaders of the Palestinian revolution was to go to Damascus and discuss all issues, and intensify the alliance after reviewing the previous stage. On the contrary, the individualist leadership decided that Brother Arafat should be in Greece. This was a clear affront to the Syrian regime.

Thinking responsibly concerning the relation with Syria requires evaluating not only the geographic factor, but also the constellation of contradictions and the position and role of Syria in this context. In light of the importance of relations with Syria, the PFLP raised two main slogans after our evacuation from Beirut: To deepen national unity, and

To strengthen relations with Syria. Without this formula, we saw no possibility for finding a way out of the situation in the aftermath of the battle of Beirut. On this basis, we invested all our efforts for Brother Arafat to come back to Syria and make Syria his headquarters for leading the work.

Brother Arafat returned to Syria, but what happened then? A series of decisions were made, whereby Abu Zaim was appointed deputy commander and Abu Hajem responsible of the revolution's forces in Lebanon! Does this stem from responsibility towards a decisive point in the march of the revolution? Does this exhibit vigilance concerning the independent Palestinian national decision-making? We struggle for the independence of Palestinian decision-making based on our understanding of the dialectical relationship between our independent decision and the Arab nationalist and progressive forces and regimes.

Palestinian rightist policy entered a qualitatively new stage

We must now carefully determine how to classify these positions taken after Beirut: Do they signify the Palestinian right wing's definitive shift into the enemy camp? Are these positions merely a continuation of the unprincipled maneuvering we have known in the Palestinian arena since 1970?

My answer to the first question is no, the Palestinian right did not move to the enemy position. Why? For two reasons: First, due to the nature of the proposed US solution for the Palestinian problem; second, due to the extent of nationalist and popular opposition to the US solutions.

My answer to the second question is also no,

this is not a mere continuation of the unprincipled maneuvering we have seen in the past. For the first time, we are facing real willingness to cooperate with the US solution at the time when a share is offered the Palestinian bourgeoisie in these solutions. Therefore, we are facing a qualitatively new stage which began after our evacuation from Beirut, but with roots extending back to the seventies.

The Palestinian bourgeoisie took up arms, having ambitions and dreams which I believe were genuine. They began to face difficulties as well as becoming a politically recognized force on the Arab and international levels. Based on these conditions, the Palestinian bourgeoisie adopted the position that corresponds to its class nature, to accept a share in the settlement. The rightist approach is greatly responsible for the outcome of two main stages: Our experience in Jordan, and the stage of settlement.

One: The Jordan experience

For a period of time in Jordan, we experienced the phenomenon of dual power. For a while the power of the resistance was stronger than that of the Jordanian regime. Dual power is a temporary phenomenon, later to be decided in favor of the revolution or the Jordanian regime - Why was it settled in favor of the regime? Because of the political line adopted by the influential leadership. At the same time, the Palestinian left bears a share of the responsibility commensurate with its size, weight and participation in the leadership of the revolution.

Our experience in Jordan clarifies the necessity of defining the enemy camp and the camp of friends. Concretely, it disproved the possibility of neutralizing Arab reaction. I remember well that in Jordan, a number of Palestinian fighters refused to fight the regime, because they were not mobilized on this basis: that reaction is a part of the enemy camp.

Two: The stage of settlement

The settlement path is a destructive one in the Palestinian arena; we find it at the roots of the crisis.

This requires a few short words about the struggle between the Arab people and the Zionist movement. How do we view this conflict? What is its nature? Can it be settled without one of the parties to the conflict being eradicated? Will this area be a Zionist empire or a united, progressive society in which Arabs and Jews can live in peace? How do we view Zionism? Can we, if we wanted, coexist with Zionism?

At a time when the Soviet Union has formed a committee of scientists and representatives of

public opinion to expose Zionism, it is peculiar and to be condemned that the Palestinian right establishes contacts with Zionists.

Can we separate 'Israel' from the Zionist movement? Isn't 'Israel' the material, economic, military and political embodiment of the Zionist movement? Is it possible to defeat Zionism without defeating 'Israel'? Was Nazism defeated without the defeat of Hitler's regime?

These issues have been raised without receiving sufficient attention, but now we understand that they lie at the heart of the roots of the problem we are facing today.

Two approaches to fighting the Palestinian right

During this period, it has become clear that there are two approaches to fighting the Palestinian right. One approach is to wage this battle, while at the same time concentrating on the importance of the PLO's role and the necessity of adhering to it as a main weapon in the face of the enemy. The second approach shares with the first approach an awareness of the dangers of the right-wing and the necessity of confronting it. Beyond that, there are several points of difference on theoretical, political and organizational issues. Although we assign primary responsibility for the crisis to the Palestinian right, we will not make the mistake of being unable to correctly determine the constellation of contradictions in the Palestinian arena.

Next we must examine these secondary contradictions, which I hope will not become primary contradictions, between the forces that want to save the Palestinian revolution through an organizational and political reform. The first point of disagreement, which I begin with because it is dangerous, is on using the method of armed force. We disagree totally with this method, because we see its destructive effects in the Palestinian arena. We cannot find any justification for it. Whatever the intentions and desires for reform, the effects of this method are destructive to all; this will lead, whether we like it or not, to divisions and containment. This error is comparable to a crime - whoever begins it is criminal; whoever thinks of it is criminal; whoever plans it is criminal; whoever fuels it is criminal.

There is no example of how another national democratic revolution solved its contradictions which applies to our revolution. The contradictions inside the Palestinian revolution must be solved through democratic dialogue and struggle on the political and mass levels. Others may give some examples to say that this is not an uncontested principle; the Algerian revolution may be mentioned in this context. But allow me to ask: In light of the particularity of the Palestinian problem, the presence of the Pales-

tinian people in the occupied territories, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the diaspora, is it possible in the present situation to solve contradictions through internal fighting?

Let us suppose for the sake of discussion that the situation in Tripoli ends in favor of the protest phenomenon (led by Abu Musa and Abu Saleh). Is this going to solve the question in the occupied territories or in Jordan, and in what way? It is preferable to deal with these questions now. This is the first question concerning the differences between the two approaches for confronting the right.

The downfall of the right or of its programs?

Then comes a theoretical question on the basis of which we can determine many issues: What is the position of the right in the Palestinian arena? Did it become non-nationalist? Is the non-nationalist right merely some individuals or strata of the bourgeoisie? What do we mean by the downfall of the right? Does it mean we are in the process of a complete political and class polarization? Or do we mean the downfall of the program of the right? Assuming the programs of the right are abolished, can the revolution continue with the same leading elements? Or must a change take place in the PLO institutions commensurate with the size of the national democratic forces? Can we dodge these questions? If we do so now, can we dodge them after one month, or one year?

I believe, for example, that there is a difference between a reform movement inside Fatah, which will automatically reflect itself on the PLO, and a movement that seeks to conquer Fatah. If the protest phenomenon faction says: We are Fatah, and there is no other Fatah but the traitors, this raises a series of questions. If they say: We want a radical change in Fatah, this would be another issue.

There are two factions in Fatah; this is the reality. The Central Council (August session that dealt with the internal crisis) distributed its document to both factions.

Recognizing the existence of another faction requires a dialogue; it requires stopping the fighting. If the answer is: We are Fatah, then we ask which Fatah? Nationalist Fatah? Or national democratic Fatah? Or national democratic revolutionary Fatah? For each of these cases, there would be a distinct political line.

If the other faction adopts the view that they are Fatah, then they must specify which Fatah. If they answer nationalist Fatah, then their alliance policy is understandable. (The reference here is primarily to alliances within the Palestinian revolution.) If they answer progressive nationalist Fatah, then their alliances are no longer understandable. If they answer national democratic revolutionary Fatah,

then they must radically deepen their alliances (with the left forces).

Therefore, despite our agreement on fighting the right, the other part of the problem remains: There are two approaches in dealing with the problem in Fatah, and two approaches to reforming the PLO. Concerning the crisis in Fatah our position excludes fighting and relies on democratic dialogue; it is necessary to recognize that there are two factions; the crisis could be solved on the basis of the Central Council's document. Concerning the PLO, I fear that the Palestinian arena will become even more complicated than it is now if the approach that says: We are the PLO, prevails. If the issue concerns the PLO, then we would become a party to the political battle taking place. How do we understand the PLO's crisis? How do we understand the solutions?

When one party or leader, outside the legal framework of the PLO, declares the downfall of this or that leader, we say this is a dangerous method and totally rejected. (This is a reference to statements such as those made by Tareq al Khudra, commander of the Palestine Liberation Army in Syria, that Arafat no longer represents him.)

Program of unity and democratic reform

How do we understand things in the PLO? Allow me in this context to emphasize the program for unity and democratic reform presented by the PFLP and DFLP. I hope the motives for presenting this program are understood. Our motives are deeply national and stem from a deep sense of responsibility. I fear that in the poisoned atmosphere now prevailing in the Palestinian arena, some might suspect other motives. It may be said that it is an attempt to inherit Fatah, or that the two fronts are trying to promote their own role. However, no one who feels the reality of the danger threatening the Palestinian revolution could have such intentions.

The program for unity and democratic reform has two aspects: political and organizational. I have spoken about the political aspect. Now I want to point out the importance of the organizational aspect.

Previous experience in political work in the Palestinian revolution has taught me that even if the political program is adopted unanimously by all bodies of the PLO, one cannot be sure it will be implemented if organizational guarantees are not provided. This requires deciding on the organizational program which is supposed to include collective leadership and the participation of all nationalist forces on the basis of relative representation. It also requires determining precise guidelines for the decision-making process and for how the program should be executed.

It is said that the Palestinian arena is an oasis of democracy. This is true in the field of talk. In the past, it was said to us (by the influential leadership): Say what you want, and we do what we want. This is freedom of speech, but not of democratic decision-making and participation. Whoever thinks that the organizational question is isolated from the political one is mistaken...

One more point remains: Whether the reform should take place through the legal institutions of the PLO. The following big question might be raised: What are the guarantees that this reform will take place through the legal institutions?

The guarantee will be by reviewing the leading institutions of the organizations...Our program includes this point, and on this a decisive battle should be waged to guarantee the process of reform. This program has no value unless it becomes the program of all nationalist groups, forces and individuals because it correctly poses the issues. This is the challenge that awaits us all.

We propose this program for discussion, and we shall listen carefully to all views. Then we can determine the points of agreement and differences without any detours or evasions. Then we begin by executing the points of agreement in the PLO. Without this, we will find ourselves facing a destructive right-wing and destructive inter-Palestinian fighting.

Someone might ask: What is the significance of this program at a time when the situation is worsening around Tripoli? The fighting there might reduce the weight of this position to that of a feather. Our duty is to make this position as weighty as possible by crystallizing a broad mass current with extensions in the occupied territories, Jordan and all places where the Palestinian people are present, in order to become a large force capable of cornering all deviations in the Palestinian arena.

The Arab national liberation movement's support

We will put this program to every group in the Arab national liberation movement. After we listen to their views, we will demand their support, because what is taking place in the Palestinian arena affects the entire Arab area. It is the duty of all Arab nationalists to participate in stopping it.

The course we are advocating is not the path of the PFLP-DFLP Joint Leadership, but the path of salvation for the Palestinian people. We are part of the Palestinian revolution. Our opinion was sought. We are presenting it in the program of unity and democratic reform.

The Arab national liberation movement and the socialist countries are torn over what is taking place in the Palestinian arena. If some-

one says, the socialist countries support the legitimacy (the present leading bodies) and nothing else, we say this is not true. If it is said that they support reform and nothing else, we also say, no. These countries see the importance of the PLO's role in confronting the US schemes, and also want unity and reform. Moreover, they think that any change should take place through the legal framework.

Whoever wants to oppose US imperialism to the end has to adhere to the PLO as a political weapon and defender of Palestinian national rights: the right of return, self-determination and establishing a Palestinian state on the national soil. The USA and 'Israel' say: No to the PLO, no to the Palestinian state. We want the united PLO which adheres to the national political line. Why unity? Because if one group can assemble 100 members of the Palestinian National Council, the next day the other group can assemble 200, for example. Somebody might say that this is blackmail in the name of unity but I say no.

Finally, let us assume for the sake of discussion that the subjective factor with respect to the Palestinian revolution is correct and strong. Let us go even farther and assume that the democratic forces in the PLO hold the leading positions, led by a person like Ho Chi Minh. Is this enough for implementing our national rights? The answer is no. Why? Because there is a particularity of the Palestinian cause in view of the Zionist settlement in Palestine and the organic relationship between the Zionist entity and imperialism. This means that the Palestinian revolution cannot achieve its objectives without a dialectical relationship to the Arab revolution. Palestinian land cannot be liberated without bases for the Palestinian revolution in the surrounding countries. If we want the occupied territories to be liberated, we must create a significant shift in the balance of forces militarily. Through diplomatic struggle, we have gained the support of 120 countries, but this is definitely not enough to liberate the occupied homeland.

Thus, the Palestinian revolution must concentrate on its relations with the forces of Arab national liberation, especially in the surrounding countries, in order to become a factor for change in these countries. In the case that this change takes place, these countries will become bases for the Palestinian revolution through which it can lead the struggle for liberation. On this basis, the inter-connection between the Palestinian crisis and the crisis of the Arab national liberation movement becomes clear, as does the relation between bringing about an advance in the Palestinian situation and for the Arab national liberation movement.

PFLP-DFLP

Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the PLO



The following is the full text of the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the Palestine Liberation Organization, presented by the Joint Leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine at a press conference in Damascus on October 16th, and addressed to all Palestinian resistance organizations, progressive forces and nationalist personalities.

Since its inception, the Palestinian revolution has been exposed to many dangers, which have taken different and various forms. These dangers grew and intensified with the growth and broadening of the Palestinian revolution and its increasing political, military and mass influence on the regional and international level.

Throughout the present phase of its struggle, the Palestinian revolution has faced different kinds of imperialist-Zionist-reactionary conspiracies - military and political - aimed to liquidate it, stop its development and growth, and hinder its militancy. However, despite these ongoing liquidationist attempts, the revolution was able to stand firm and preserve its ability to continue the struggle in its different forms against the Zionist - imperialist - reactionary enemy.

The peak of the military attacks launched by the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary alliance against the revolution, in order to liquidate it and thus remove the major obstacle to the implementation of the Camp David accords, was the Zionist invasion of June 1982, with the total support and coordination of US imperialism and the Arab reactionary forces.

However, the failure of the Zionist invasion to fully achieve its aims did not keep the enemy forces from continuing their efforts to drag the revolution into the US liquidationist settlement through the Reagan plan, in an attempt to capitalize on the results that followed, forcing the Palestinian revolution to leave Beirut.

The difficult objective and subjective conditions faced by the Palestinian revolution after its departure from Beirut placed it in a highly critical situation. This exposed the revolution to real, concrete dangers, threatening its entity, line and future, in a way never experienced before in the different stages of the conflict with the enemy forces. We can summa-

rize the dangers the Palestinian revolution is facing in the following points:

First: The danger of political liquidation, and the present attempts to draw the PLO into the US line, accepting to deal with the proposed US liquidationist settlement, first and foremost the Reagan plan. This danger grew with the emergence and growth of some right-wing Palestinian circles who, with the support and encouragement of the Arab right, are willing to converge with the US line and respond to its projects.

Second: The danger of a split in the ranks of the PLO, for political, organizational and disciplinary reasons, which has reached a peak since the Palestinian revolution was forced to leave Beirut. The internal crisis in the Fatah movement and the resulting divisions, followed by the fighting which brought more complications and interference, poses this danger powerfully.

Third: The danger of the PLO being contained or subjected to Arab (regime) tutelage, which would annul the independence of Palestinian national decision-making, and obliterate the national rights of the Palestinian people.

In light of the present circumstances and conditions surrounding the PLO, and the serious dangers threatening its political line, entity, and future, we believe that the responsibility for salvation falls on all the forces of the revolution, and on all Palestinian nationalist and progressive forces and elements. The process of salvation must be based on deep conviction, and on clear recognition of the necessity and importance of achieving democratic reforms in the institutions of the PLO, so as to preserve its unity, cohesiveness, independence and sole representation of the Palestinian people; to maintain the masses' adherence to the PLO, and its political gains on the regional and in-

ternational level, achieved through struggle.

In order to execute this program of reforms in constituting and organizing the leading bodies of the PLO, it is necessary to provide organizational guarantees, i.e., to have democratic relations on the basis of a front. Furthermore, agreement on this should be reached among all the organizations of the revolution and among all the progressive and nationalist forces and elements, in the framework of the legal bodies of the PLO.

In this framework, we believe that the correct introduction to presenting proposals for determining the required aspects of democratic reforms, is to pin-point the main defective phenomena in the PLO's conditions; the following are the most important aspects:

The political aspect:

Generally speaking, the positions of the PLO on the political level lack clarity and firmness. Though this phenomenon emerged clearly and sharply after the departure from Beirut, it has been present in form and content for several years. The implications of this are extremely serious, for a clear political line and positions on the part of the PLO, as a revolutionary popular movement, play a decisive role in rallying the masses, and broadening and strengthening their mobilization.

This lack of clarity and firmness in the positions exists in spite of the political programs that have been adopted in the consecutive National Council sessions, which constitute the minimum national platform. Without going into details, we can say that these programs were rarely respected and adhered to in determining the political moves and positions of the PLO.

The lack of clarity in political line and positions is evident in the excessive influence of tactics on strategy to the point that, in most cases, the tactics were transformed into maneuvers with a narrow perspective, causing damage to the struggle of the Palestinian revolution, its strategic interests and aims. This is manifest in the following symptoms:

First: Neglecting the anti-imperialist nature of the Palestinian revolution, which forms one of its major characteristics. This is expressed in willingness to cooperate with US imperialist plans, including making principle compromises on our national rights in exchange for a dialog with the United States.

Second: Relinquishing the strategic truth that coexistence between our Palestinian people and Arab nation on the one hand, and Zionism on the other, is impossible. This was evidenced in willingness to recognize the right of the Zionist entity to exist, and in the series of meetings with forces who declare their belief in

Zionism - meetings which were in violation of the National Council's resolutions.

Third: Belittling the fact of the struggle, that the PLO is part of the Arab national liberation movement and one of its vanguards. Contrary to this truth, the practice and relations of the influential leadership in the PLO give priority to relations with the Arab reactionary regimes at the expense of relations with the forces of the Arab national liberation movement.

Fourth: Non-differentiation of relations with the Arab regimes. It is natural for the PLO to have relations with all Arab regimes, but at the same time it is natural to make a distinction between the reactionary and the nationalist regimes when determining the level of the relations. The influential leadership in the PLO is extremely mindful of its relations with the reactionary regimes, including the Camp David regime of Egypt, while inflating differences with the nationalist regimes. This contributes to weakening the alliance with these nationalist regimes in the confrontation with imperialism and Zionism. The vanguard role of the Palestinian revolution in the framework of the Arab national liberation movement requires that the priority be to consolidate the positions of the nationalist regimes and strengthen their unity on the basis of a more solid policy against imperialism.

The organizational aspect:

The general phenomenon on the organizational level is that of the excessive influence of individualism, as opposed to the role of the collective leadership and institutions in the PLO. It has been noticed that the individualist tendency has been increasing tremendously in the last few years, affecting all political, organizational, cultural, informational, military and financial levels. This ranges from making political decisions singlehandedly to the appointments in the PLO's institutions and departments. Furthermore, it impedes the collective decisions and voids them of their contents.

This individualism is combined with the domination of one group, which provides fertile soil for individualistic decision-making. Indeed, this leads to weakening national unity based on democratic front relations among the various Palestinian organizations, and deprives them of participation in the decision-making process. All this has led to the emergence of a bureaucratic bourgeois group within the PLO's institutions, where opportunists, retrogressive elements, and those who are only concerned about personal benefits found a place for themselves.

It is natural that individualistic policies and the domination of one group leads to weakening the principles of democratic front work in the framework of the PLO and its bodies and institutions. It is also natural that corrupt financial policies go hand in hand with unilateralism and one group domination. Obviously, this also leads to phenomena of financial and administrative abuse within the PLO's institutions and departments; the choice of personnel relies heavily on group affiliation, rather than on the qualifications, experience and history of struggle of those appointed to responsible positions. All this leads to almost total absence of needed evaluations and accountability for mistakes.

This situation can no longer be tolerated or ignored. Though we confine our review of the defects within the PLO to the political and organizational levels, this does not mean that there are no problems on other levels, such as the military, information, conduct, relations with the masses, etc. However, the defects on the political and organizational levels stand as the major ones, from which the other defects stem.

We emphasize that although these defects are quite harmful, yet they are not the dominant characteristic of the Palestinian revolution. Nor have they undermined the great national gains of the PLO in reviving the Palestinian people's national identity, solidifying their independence, reaffirming and protecting their national rights from impediments, and insuring Arab and international recognition of the PLO.

This affirms the error of those who try to undermine the importance of all these gains achieved by the PLO, and who fall into the trap of desperation, losing hope of the possibility of reform.

The defects and mistakes are a result of the class nature of the political forces that make decisions within the leadership of the PLO, and who bear the primary responsibility.

The left and democratic forces do not overlook their share of responsibility because of the lack of coordination and joint efforts among them, which weakened their role and effectivity within the PLO. However, we are confident that the struggle of the left and the democratic, progressive forces and all the radical nationalist elements is quite capable of putting an end to the crisis and overcoming all defects and achieving democratic reform in a way that insures the unity and independence of the PLO.

In light of this, we emphasize that fulfilling the demands for democratic reform must be based on the following principles:

First: Adherence to the Palestinian National Charter and the consecutive Palestinian Nation-

al Councils' resolutions, in particular the political program adopted in its 14th session, which constitutes the basis for defining the PLO's policies and positions.

Second: Totally ruling out any tendency to bet on the capitulationist political settlement; total confrontation of the liquidationist schemes by all means; completely dispelling any illusions about the possibilities of fulfilling the rights of the Palestinian people through these schemes.

Third: Absolute affirmation that imperialism, in particular US imperialism, is our enemy; translating this position in declared public positions and implementing it in our alliance policy, as well as in our way of dealing with imperialist plans and initiatives, i.e., to clearly and decisively reject them.

Fourth: Affirmation of our affiliation to the Arab national liberation movement; implementing this by developing the relations of militant solidarity with the organizations of the movement, giving them priority based on equality and mutual solidarity.

Fifth: Defining the level of relations with the Arab regimes on the basis of their position towards US imperialism and its plans; and their position on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and their commitment to supporting the Palestinian national struggle and goals, and the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Sixth: Affirmation that the alliance with the Soviet Union and the rest of the socialist community, with the national liberation movements, and with the forces of progress, democracy and peace in the world, is a strategic matter, not subject to compromises or maneuvers. Efforts should be made to further develop this alliance on a principled basis and on the basis of joint struggle against imperialism and its puppets.

On the basis of these principles, there are some essential matters at this time that demand a clear position from the PLO, mainly the following:

On the political level:

1. To decisively reject and oppose the Reagan plan as it is the central point in the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary schemes at this stage, and aims to totally liquidate the Palestinian national cause.

2. To reject the Jordanian regime's project which calls for establishing a Palestinian - Jordanian federal or confederal union, in order to facilitate negotiations with the enemy on the basis of the Reagan plan; to reject all forms of participation, authorization or mandate

(to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people), which the Jordanian regime is trying to achieve. The relations between the PLO and the Jordanian regime should be reviewed on the basis of the PLO's sole representation of our people everywhere, the right of the PLO - with all its organizations - to work in Jordan, including the right to political, organizational and mass work, and the use of the Jordanian front to intensify armed struggle against the Zionist enemy.

3. To resist any relations with the Egyptian regime, and to fight all attempts to break its isolation as long as it continues to adhere to the Camp David accords; to support the struggle of the Egyptian nationalist forces in their opposition to the capitulationist policies of the regime; to condemn and take measures against the circles that establish contacts with this regime.

4. To struggle against the rightist and reactionary attempts that aim to transform the resolutions of the Fez Summit into a bridge towards the US solution; to reject the reactionary conception which attempts to use these resolutions as an avenue to recognition of the Zionist enemy.

5. To adhere to the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council concerning relations with Jewish forces, limiting these to relations with those democratic forces that oppose Zionism as an ideology and practice, and that support the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state in their homeland, led by the PLO.

6. To revive and activate the Palestinian National Front in the Occupied Territories, as the arm of the PLO inside; to extend its activities and structure to include all cities, villages and camps in the territories, as a framework for uniting all the national forces in the struggle against settlements, Judaization, expulsion and other plans of the occupation, and in order to confront all suspicious attempts to create alternatives to the PLO as the sole representative of our people.

7. To strengthen and develop the Palestinian-Syrian-Lebanese alliance in confronting the imperialist-Zionist schemes in the area.

8. To strengthen and develop the militant relations with the National Salvation Front and Amal movement; to provide them with all political and material support in their struggle to banish the occupation and sectarian hegemony, and to abort the Zionist-Phalangist-US agreement in order to preserve Lebanon's unity, sovereignty, Arab identity and all the democratic gains achieved by the masses and their national and progressive forces.

9. To protect the security of our masses and camps in Lebanon; to preserve the civil and social rights of our people, and to uphold

their national rights to be organized and engage in political work, to carry arms and join the revolution; to guarantee the rights of the PLO and its institutions in Lebanon according to the agreements and commitments previously reached; to work to deter the terror practiced against our masses, and those responsible for this, whether the heads of the regime, the fascist isolationist forces, or others.

10. To reinforce and progressively transform the relations with Syria on the platform of joint cooperation on the patriotic and national question, in order to counter the Zionist enemy and the plans and proposals of imperialism, Zionism and reaction in the area, first and foremost the Camp David accords, the Reagan plan and the recent Zionist-Phalangist-US agreement.

On the organizational level:

1. To emphasize commitment to the organizational program that was adopted at the 14th session of the Palestinian National Council; to promote positive work on the part of the PLO leadership and all the Palestinian organizations to implement this program.

2. To solidify the functional systems of the PLO's institutions and guarantee the upgrading of their role; to redetermine the basis, necessary regulations and program of the PLO's central organs in particular, first and foremost the Executive Committee.

3. To implement the principle of collective leadership in all bodies and structures of the PLO, starting with the Executive Committee; to adhere to the organizational rules and regulations in order to apply this principle; to fight against any violations or individual practice on the part of any party; and furthermore, to adopt and apply the principle of taking measures against any departure from collectivism.

4. To put an end to the domination of the one group and open the opportunity for all Palestinian nationalist forces to participate in the leading bodies of the PLO and its other departments and institutions.

5. To limit the role of reporting and declaring the PLO's political positions, and its relations with other forces, to the Executive Committee and the appropriate parties involved, on the basis of democratic, collective decision-making. Any departure from this principle should be condemned, and measures taken against this.

6. To review the formation of the higher councils, departments and offices of the PLO, whereby: (A) They should be formed of committed, qualified and capable persons, meanwhile purging bad and unqualified elements. (B) All na-

tionalist groups should participate on the basis of correct front relations.

7. To consolidate democracy in the structures of the PLO; to preserve democratic principles in internal relations and adopt the principle of democratic dialog as the sole method for solving all problems and differences. Any departure from this, particularly resorting to the use of armed force, is absolutely condemned and to be considered as a criminal act on the part of the offending party.

8. To adopt the principle of taking measures in the bodies of the PLO against any political, military or disciplinary violation, or any shortcomings in the execution of duties.

9. To develop the institutions of the occupied territories inside and outside, giving them the required efforts and the necessary means and capabilities; to preserve the unity of the popular and trade unions, especially the workers union.

10. To preserve the independence of the popular unions based on commitment to the PLO and the principles of democratic work in these unions; to adopt the principle of relative representation in the process of electing their bodies, since this is the best principle for preserving and strengthening democracy and for enlarging the mass base of these unions.

On the military level:

1. To emphasize that armed struggle constitutes the main option of the Palestinian revolution; therefore, to intensify and develop the military work against the Zionist enemy in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Lebanon.

2. To execute the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council concerning uniting the forces of the Palestinian revolution in one Palestinian liberation army; to establish principle rules and regulations to guarantee the freedom of all its members to adhere to different ideological tendencies and organizations, and to guarantee democratic life along with military discipline in its ranks.

3. To adopt the criteria of national commitment, military qualifications and experience in appointing the leading bodies and making promotions in the united Palestinian national liberation army; to adopt the principle of taking measures against any mistakes that occur.

4. To form a special body to investigate all forms of dereliction of duty and misconduct that occurred during the confrontation of the Zionist invasion of Lebanon; to bring to trial all those against whom there is evidence of involvement in these wrongdoings.

5. To return all the forces of the Palestinian revolution to concentrate in areas from which they are able to practice their military activities against the Zionist enemy.

On the financial level:

First: To unite all financial collections and donations in the Palestinian National Fund. All the PLO's finances should be the responsibility of the Palestinian National Fund and supervised by the Executive Committee.

Second: To limit expenditures to those decided by the Executive Committee in accordance with the adopted principles, regulations and budgets.

Third: To make sure that the Palestinian National Fund pays the expenditures on all groups within the PLO: fighters, full-time revolutionaries, the injured, the families of the martyrs, etc. as well as the Liberation Army and all bodies and institutions of the Palestinian revolution.

Fourth: To fight against all forms of waste and misuse of funds, and the corruption (of cadres through excess benefits) in the PLO institutions and the organizations of the revolution.

The Joint Leadership of the PFLP and DFLP submits this program to all Palestinian national groups, forces and personalities in order to achieve democratic reform, meanwhile protecting the unity of the PLO, so as to strengthen its vanguard role and preserve its achievements and independence.

Considering that this program meets the requirements of the present state of our struggle we are confident that it can be implemented through the unity and solidarity of all these forces.

The experience of our people proved that through national unity in the framework of the PLO, we were able to overcome all the obstacles and critical stages through which we have passed... Relying on this, we will be able to overcome this difficult stage as well.

The self-criticism from which this program proceeds is not aimed to slander or spread desperation, but rather to illuminate the path towards correcting and reforming the conditions of the PLO and the Palestinian revolution.

The Joint Leadership of the two fronts expresses its total readiness for an immediate dialog, with the participation of all groups of the revolution and Palestinian nationalist forces and personalities, on this program, as it is considered the path to salvation.

The Joint Leadership

The Democratic Front
for the Liberation
of Palestine

The Popular Front
for the Liberation
of Palestine

October 16, 1983

Old-New Zionist Tactics

Refurbishing an old tactic, the Zionist leadership is searching for new alternatives to the PLO in a vain attempt to weave a political cover for their de facto annexation of the 1967 occupied territories.

Since coming to power, the Likud coalition has exercised its iron fist policy in the occupied territories in an attempt to strike our masses and thereby break their full support to the PLO. This policy goes hand-in-hand with the Israeli efforts to find alternatives to the PLO, who are willing to collaborate within the Camp David framework.

One of these alternatives was the village leagues. These leagues were founded by a group of traitors, financed and armed by the Zionist state and given the power to terrorize our masses. The relation-

ship between the village leagues and the civil administration plan, proposed by the Israeli government for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has been clear from the start.

To prepare for imposing the leadership of the village leagues, the occupation authorities waged a massive attack against the nationalist forces in the occupied territories. A key element in this attack was deporting, firing and trying to assassinate the nationalist mayors, in order to leave the Palestinian municipalities of the 1967 occupied territories without any leading bodies.

This was intended to open the door for the leagues to replace them.

In practice, this policy did not succeed in light of the massive support given to the nationalist mayors by our people and their total rejection of the village leagues, as was expressed in their sustained uprising against the occupation and its various plans and tools.

In recent months this policy reached a deadend. The Israelis are no longer able to ignore the fact that the village leagues have been unable to establish a social base. Due

Judaization - Al Khalil (Hebron) municipality with newly added Hebrew sign



to their collaboration with the occupation authorities, they were boycotted by our masses. Most recently, the village leagues were beset by internal conflicts among the leading elements: Mustafa Duden, chairman of the federation of the leagues; Mohammed Nasser, head of the leagues in the Al Khalil (Hebron) area, who was fired from his post after attempting to launch a political party; and Jamil al Amleh. As a result, Duden and his deputy, Jamil Khatib, submitted their resignations.

Over the last two years, most of the municipal councils in the West Bank were dissolved and Israeli committees appointed to administer the municipalities in order to continue Zionist control over the occupied territories. This was imposed by the occupation authorities in light of the position adopted by the nationalist mayors and municipal councils against the implementation of the so-called civil administration plan, which they subsequently boycotted. Like the attempt to use the village leagues, this Israeli policy also reached a deadend, for our masses have boycotted the Israeli committees, knowing them to be an extension of the civil administration plan.

The Zionists reassess

This total failure of both the village leagues and the Israeli committees has led the occupation authorities to reassess their policy. While the Israeli government publicly insists that the village leagues still have a role to play, Israeli sources reveal that the new Zionist Minister of War, Moshe Arens, has recognized that they will never command the respect of the urban Palestinians from whom the political leadership has to come. Therefore, the Israeli authorities downplayed the importance of the leagues and reduced their financial allot-



Towards annexation - West Bank olive groves charted for settlement

ments in early 1983, as Arens succeeded Sharon.

In conjunction with their reassessment, the occupation authorities made contacts with bourgeois, vacillating and so-called pragmatic figures in the occupied territories who are historically tied with the Jordanian regime's policies. In so doing, their objective was to break the current deadlock for their plans by finding viable alternatives to the PLO. The appointment of General Binyamin Ben Elezer this summer as coordinator of the military governorate's activities in the occupied territories, fits into this plan. According to Israeli sources, he is to find more potential mayors in the mould of Elias Freij (Bethlehem), who could command genuine respect in their local community, while conducting municipal business in a way that does not hamper Zionist plans.

Furthermore, for the first time since taking office, Arens met with such figures. On Aug. 22nd, in Tel Aviv, he met separately with Freij; Salman As-tal, mayor of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip; and Hikmat Masri, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Najah University in Nablus. Municipal and political issues were discus-

sed. According to Arens' spokesman: "These meetings represented the beginning of a dialogue with Arab leaders in the territories, other than the village league officials who regularly met with former Defense Minister Sharon."

Despite this difference in approach between Sharon and Arens, there is no change in the determination of the Israeli government to perpetuate and tighten its control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Arens told Herut activists that any sort of settlement that would return these areas to Jordan, or create a Palestinian state, is out of the question. "We are approaching the point where the facts are irreversible, and our control over Judea and Samaria is assured," he told his fellow party members.

Apparently Arens has decided that the Israelis' best bet for a stable West Bank is to cultivate the pro-Jordanian elements in the territories. These are to be found among the conservative strata of the well-established rich families and business-oriented elements. In accordance with this, the staff of the civil administration is working directly under Arens' supervision to find Palestinians that can be trusted

to run the municipal councils. Two months ago, Shlomo Eliya, the head of the civil administration, held a meeting with Israeli experts on the affairs of the occupied territories - people such as David Ahimov and Isaac Dayer, where this question was discussed. The meeting focused on finding a plan that would guarantee the civil administration's control over the municipalities indirectly and through appointing Palestinians who have ties with the occupation as well as with the Jordanian regime, to administer the councils.

These new moves are part of the long-standing Zionist attempt to jump over the existing realities, especially the reality of the nationalist mayors and municipal councils elected in 1976, that became one of the bastions of the national movement in the occupied territories, able to rally the broadest popular sectors in the confrontation against the policies of the occupation authorities. This attempt on the part of the Israeli authorities aims at replacing the dismissed nationalist mayors and the dissolved councils by appointing Palestinians, as opposed to Israelis, to run the municipalities. In this way, the Israelis want to appear to be making a compromise, but in reality their objective is to break the mass boycott of the civil administration, split Palestinian unity in the occupied territories, and assert their own unilateral control by appointing collaborationist notables.

To execute this plan, Shlomo Eliya met a number of such notables: Zafer Masri, head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce and deputy mayor of the municipality; Basel Kanan, who is from one of the richest old families of Nablus; and Mahmoud Abu Zolof from Jerusalem, in order to discuss such a proposition. At these meetings, these figures responded positively to the Israeli idea

but expressed dislike for the idea of appointing at the present time for fear of the anticipated mass reaction. They also asked for time to make more consultations. Other elements, who are also close to the Jordanian regime, expressed willingness to participate in such a plan.

The election ploy

In line with searching for new alternatives, the occupation authorities are now hinting about the possibility of holding new municipal council elections. The Jordanian regime declared its willingness to participate in the election game through its agents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, whereby King Hussein hopes to be authorized to find a political solution of the Palestinian problem. Taking advantage of the internal rift preoccupying the PLO, the Israeli government will try to choose mayors who are pro-Jordanian regime, to replace the mayors who are loyal to the PLO. King Hussein, for his part, is keen to boost his authority in the occupied territories while the PLO is in difficulties. He is expected to encourage his sympathizers to assume this new role.

At this point, it is obvious how Israeli interests converge with those of the Jordanian regime. For both, the aim is to weaken and obliterate the nationalist forces who are the real leadership of our people in the occupied territories, and who adhere to the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of our people.

Our Palestinian masses have rejected the trick that is hidden behind the Israeli authorities' talk of elections. They have used the occasion to re-focus attention on the distorted "democracy" of the Zionist entity which talks of elections while aiming to cancel the legitimacy of the elected mayors and municipal

councils. Our people continue to adhere to the nationalist municipalities and reject cooperation with the Israeli-appointed officers, as well as any other alternative to the elected officials. This is, in essence, what caused the real dilemma for the Zionist policy in the occupied territories.

Needed: Cover for annexation

In stepping up its contacts with the above-mentioned type of Palestinians, the extreme right-wing Israeli government is trying to devise a political cover to legitimize its de facto annexation of the 1967 occupied territories. Like the Zionists' political moves, the daily policies of the occupation attest to the drive for final annexation: Land confiscation and settlement-building continue, as does an economic policy that increasingly aims to throw the burdens of the Israeli crisis on the backs of the Palestinians.

As of now, more than 60% of the land of the West Bank is confiscated. More than 150 settlements are established. These play an especially dangerous role, for they provide a base for terror acts aimed at driving our people out of Palestine, and thus securing another essential condition for final annexation. This was very clear in the July massacre at Al Khalil University, where Zionist settlers opened fire on students, killing or wounding forty persons. Even though the identity of the perpetrators is known, the occupation authorities have taken no measures against them.

Despite all this, the position of our masses has remained solid. They have reemphasized their adherence to the PLO as their sole, legitimate representative; they have rejected any alternatives and boycotted moves fabricated by the Israeli authorities to replace the PLO. All such alternatives will be defeated.

54 Years of Struggle

Comrade Abu Saleh has been active in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine since the age of eleven. So far, he has given the revolution 54 years of unselfish sacrifice. He has participated militantly in most of the historical and all of the present stages of Palestinian national struggle: the 1936-39 revolt against the British Mandate and Zionist immigration; the 1948 war; the battles of Black September in Jordan, 1970; and most recently, the 1982 Zionist invasion of Lebanon, during which he was imprisoned in Ansar concentration camp.

Abu Saleh was the first to organize women in the military struggle against the Zionists. His progressive attitude was also reflected in the special relationship he has with his wife, who was left behind in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948. Up until 1967, he recurrently infiltrated across Zionist lines, risking his life to see her and his children in the village of Deir al Assad. Some of his children were born after his expulsion from Palestine. A man once asked Abu Saleh "Why don't you marry another woman?" as is common according to Arab traditions when a man is unable to have his wife by his side. He replied, "I don't expect my wife to remarry, so why should I?"

People have come to know Abu Saleh by the constant smile on his face, accompanied by his enduring optimism - the optimism of a true revolutionary who is able to see in the future, the inevitable victory of our people's revolution. Abu Saleh is widely respected among the Palestinian masses, especially those in South Lebanon. Whenever he left his temporary home in Ain al Hilweh camp, to visit in other camps and towns, people were always eager to provide food and shelter for him. To them, he became a sort of legend, a symbol of their determination, sacrifice and ability to stand firm against all odds in order to continue the struggle until the total liberation of Palestine.

The following is a recent interview with Abu Saleh in which he discusses his past experiences and his most recent ones in Ansar.

Comrade Abu Saleh

"I was born in 1918, in the Palestinian village of Shaab, Acre District. I remember that when I was eleven years old, I used to annoy the British soldiers and police as my enemies. At that age, I didn't know what a word like 'homeland' meant, yet I regarded them as foes, and we tried to make problems for them. We used to take to the streets with slogans against King George. When the 1936 revolt broke out, I asked my father to buy me a rifle. My father was a poor, religious man, and I threatened to commit suicide if he didn't grant my request. Faced with my determination, he sold a plot of his land and bought me a rifle. It was at that moment that I started fighting the British Mandate soldiers, and they began to hunt me and demolish the houses where I rested.

"My father managed to get me married. He actually sold his remaining plot of land and gave me the money, but instead of that, I fled to Sasa and bought ammunition.

"I didn't meet Al Qassem(1), but I heard about him and his orations in Abdullah mosque in Haifa. I began going to the mosque and joined the revolution, not even perceiving completely the way the Qassemites fought their battles. I was the youngest among the rebels;



only two were known to be younger than me: a bedouin called Awad and Sobli Yasin, who was later killed in Zirka, Jordan.

"In the 1948 war, when the Zionists occupied some villages, such as Shafamr and Sasa, and

committed acts of murder there, we immediately lost all confidence in the Arab Salvation Army. I started to devise a plan to defend my village Shaab. I and other youth in the village formed a small armed unit to fight the Zionist invaders. Our women also participated in the battle by giving water, food and rounds of ammunition to those who were fighting. They even helped in collecting the arms of the Zionists who were killed. Some of the fighters thus drew up a list of 86 women willing to help, and we organized them in groups of six. Every group had one person in charge and a specific task. There was even a folksong group.

"We refused to abide by the truce agreements - When any mediator came asking us to observe a ceasefire, saying that seven Arab governments had accepted it, we said 'no'; we said that the 'government of Shaab' had not accepted it. Then we heard that the Arab Salvation Army commanding officers had decided to arrest three of us: myself, Abu Saad and Al Tayar. We were informed by Daif Allah Ruaisan, an Arab Salvation Army officer, that they sought to arrest the three of us to be shot; Ruaisan was one of our sympathizers; he was later killed by the gunmen of King Abdullah (of Jordan). Wasfi Atal (2) was in Sakhnin, and he also arrested one of our officers who was acting as our link to the Arab Salvation Army, but we stormed his headquarters in Sakhnin and succeeded in liberating our comrade. We also took arms and ammunition.

"I also remember that when Fawzi Kawakje (an officer in the Arab Salvation Army) learned that we controlled the village of Shaab, he asked us to receive salaries from the Arab Salvation Army, but we refused this money, because taking it meant that we had to abide by their orders. We preferred to depend on ourselves in matters of supplies and ammunition."

Abu Saleh then recounted the facts of the battle at Al Kasayer, after the Arab Salvation Army had withdrawn from this village, and the large quantity of Zionist arms captured by the fighters. He talked about the battle of Ma'ar, which lasted for 97 days and ended with the storming of the Ma'ar Heights, where the Zionists had their strongholds. He told how Shakib Wahab, who was commander-in-chief of the Arab Salvation Army, asked them to attack Birweh and occupy it, to make it easy for the Salvation Army to continue straight to Acre: "We organized a commando group: 'Living Martyrs'. Regardless of the difficulties, we managed to arrive there to attack the enemy at Birweh. They suffered many casualties in that battle. I think that Ghassan Kanafani, in his study about the 1936-39 revolt, estimated that as many as 400 of the Zionist troops were killed. At last we liberated the village of Birweh. We handed it over to two Iraqi officers of the Arab Salvation Army, but half an hour after our departure, it had

been once again given over to the enemy without any fight worthy of mention."

He told about his departure to Lebanon, and how he joined the Arab Nationalist Movement in 1956: "I had known all movements and parties, but finally I chose the Arab Nationalist Movement."

The 1982 Zionist invasion

"When the war in Lebanon started in June '82 I was in Ain al Hilweh camp. I was sent on a mission to Sour. I went there by ambulance, but the road was dangerous; near Abbassieh, it was cut off by air bombardment. After that, we left Sour, after it had been evacuated, and went back to Saida. When we arrived at Zahrani, half-way to Saida, my friends said I should lead the way because I knew the local roads best. I left them there to go and collect news of what was going on. When I returned, after three days, I found nobody at the place I had left them. Maybe they were afraid to stay there, or they had heard the planes roar in the sky. I stayed in a secret place and contacted one of the doctors of the resistance to give me some medicine for my eyes, for they had swollen from the heat and smoke of the burning trees.

"One night some of my host's relatives came from Beirut on a visit. This drew the attention of the enemy soldiers. They encircled the place and entered where I was hiding. At first, they hesitated to arrest me, because of my health, but finally they did. They took me to Safa citrus factory, where they were detaining people, to be interrogated by an Israeli captain. They asked my name, and I gave it, then what organization I was affiliated with. I said, I am a member of the PFLP. I had ruled out any false information, since I am known in the South; they would anyway find out about me in the end through their masked informers. When the captain found out who I was, he said he would have nothing to do with me and brought me to another who identified himself as an intelligence officer. Again, they started with a tough interrogation. At the beginning, he tried to get information out of me by way of reassuring me. When he failed to get any important things, he disappeared suddenly. In his place came another captain and three soldiers who dragged me down to a factory cellar. They striped off my clothes and started beating me until I became unconscious. Only after I awoke did I know that I was out of the cellar and in a room. The beating from the night before started hurting me everywhere on my body, for they had dragged me with my back on the floor.

"Next I was asked to stand in front of two Israeli majors. A soldier with a M16 machinegun was standing behind. They told me to stand against the wall and asked me to lead them to hidden arms. I said to them, 'You can ask a mi-

litary man, because I have not been involved in military actions since the 1970 September massacre in Jordan.' After that they acted impatient and put a red circle on my chest, which for me meant that I must pray for my soul. There was also a photographer there who was ready to take pictures of the execution. I stood defiantly, so that it could be seen in the picture. The soldier shot at me, but I didn't fall. The major took the machinegun out of his hand. I started to think that the whole thing was only a threat. I looked at the barrel of the gun, and the major shot at me once again. At that very moment, another major came, shouting as if he was reproaching his follow officer. At last, they took me to another room for another round of interrogation. Here I was told about Magincov camp where the Israelis were taking captives, and the way they treated the prisoners there, before sending them to Ansar concentration camp.

chiefs, whom we called the mukhtars, and succeeded in replacing them with representatives chosen by the prisoners themselves. We chose three representatives in every camp: one to talk with the Israelis, a second to manage the camp, and a third for communications with the Red Cross. These were accorded no privileges.

"We managed our communications by way of small pieces of paper, using numbers or symbols. At last, we got some pens and paper. Then we established a committee to issue "Al Hadaf" and another paper distributed strictly among our members. We asked comrades in other organizations if they needed help in doing such things.

"To summarize what we did in the prison: We tried our best to have all resistance organizations represented in the leadership of every camp. We managed to obtain a copy of the Red Cross Charter (Geneva Convention) and asked a committee, constituted from among the prisoners, to translate to Arabic the provisions we needed in order to draw support from international law when making our demands. We struggled for the right of sick persons to get health care. We struggled for the children, the old men and for our Lebanese comrades to be released. Our daily program started with our national anthem.

"We celebrated the 15th anniversary of the PFLP's establishment; all the prisoners cheered the celebration. It was an occasion to strengthen national unity. We wrote our slogans on cardboard taken from boxes; a rally was held, and we raised both the Palestinian and Lebanese flags. We got messages saluting us from all the nearby prisoners. It took us thirteen days to read all of them. We also celebrated Fatah's anniversary, which is the anniversary of the revolution, and I was presented with the general commander emblem at the celebration. We used to discuss all matters, concerning all difficulties in the camps. We also celebrated the Day of the Land on March 31st.

"Finally, I was released. They took me by bus to Saida, where I found a crowd of people waiting for me. I felt insecure there and decided to go to Beirut, and from there, to Tripoli. In Tripoli, another celebration was to be held in my honor. However, I accepted only on the condition that it be for all those who lived through the experience of Ansar."

(1) Sheikh Izz al Din al Qassem began organizing secret armed groups in the twenties. While preparing to call for armed revolt in November 1935, he and 25 of his men were discovered by the British. They fought until being martyred and are widely regarded as the heralds of the 1936-39 revolt.

(2) Later the Foreign Minister of Jordan who was assassinated by Palestinian freedom fighters in Cairo in 1971 after Black September.



Struggle in Ansar

"In Ansar, there are as many as 5,000 prisoners detained in twenty camps. Among the prisoners, there were about 25 women. The first thing we did was to communicate with all camps to know how many PFLP members we had there. After that, we decided to practice national unity in the prison. To start with, we decided to rid ourselves of the chiefs who had been imposed on us by the Israelis, because we considered them to be the representatives of the enemy among us. For better resistance, our comrades and cadres in all parts of the prison coordinated. We asked the help of all resistance and Lebanese nationalist cadre, and we agreed to unite our struggle. We began resisting the

The South Resists

As the Zionists tighten their stranglehold on southern Lebanon, repression becomes even more a part of the masses' daily lives. The occupiers' iron fist policy gives the masses two choices: either to surrender all their rights and demands for justice, or to resist. The people of the South have clearly chosen the latter. In mid-October, the celebration of ashura (Shiite Moslem day of atonement) in Nabatiyeh became a vocal anti-occupation demonstration, after the Zionists, enraged by an attack on their troops, opened fire on the crowd of thousands assembled in the town, wounding numerous civilians.

On October 23rd, the people of Sarafand went to the streets to express their rejection of the occupation, after the Zionists had raided a citizen's home and made arrests. They took out their rage on the Zionist patrols, attacking them with bare hands, while other villagers barricaded the entrance to the town to prevent reinforcements from entering. The people raised patriotic banners and demanded the total withdrawal of the Zionist invaders. Their outpour of anger shows the world that the Lebanese people reject the occupation. Also in Sarafand, the Zionist forces responded with their usual barbarism, by shooting into the crowd, killing three people and wounding scores of others. The following day, the masses again defied the occupiers by calling a general strike throughout the South in protest of the occupation and the brutal methods used to put down demonstrations.

Just as this uprising confirms the determination of the Lebanese masses to continue their just struggle until every inch of Lebanon is liberated, so does the continuation of armed struggle, which is the only way to obtain this liberation. Despite the reformation which accompanied the Zionists' redeployment along the Awali River, in an attempt to cut down their losses, the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF) continues its operations, inflicting heavy losses on the invaders.

On November 3rd, a militant sacrificed his life for freedom by driving a truck laden with explosives into the Israeli military headquarters in Sour, completely demolishing it and killing over 40 Zionists and wounding dozens of others. The Israelis immediately imposed a curfew on the town. They closed off the area to prevent reporters from entering, in order to hide the exact amount of their losses from the Israeli public, for this would only increase the strength of the demand for withdrawal. Moreover, the Israelis have interests in trying to cover up the effectiveness of the LNRF, because this raises the morale of the Lebanese masses.

The same day, the Zionist air force bombed nationalist positions at Bhandoun and Mansuria, in the Lebanese mountains, and all roads and bridges to the South were closed. In response to the Zionist attempt to isolate them, the Lebanese of the South observed a general

Nabatiyeh: Israeli convoy that opened fire on the masses set ablaze



strike. Also, West Beirut closed down in solidarity with the southerners.

The November 3rd operation was the largest of many attacks on the Zionist forces in the recent period. Below is a chronology of some of the other anti-occupation operations:

Sept. 4: To hamper the Israeli redeployment, guerrillas blew up part of the coastal highway, south of Saida.

Sept. 12: As reported by the Israeli military command, 3 soldiers were wounded when their patrol was attacked near Nabatiyeh.

Sept. 15: One Israeli soldier was killed and 7 wounded in a bazooka attack east of Sour.

Sept. 19: Five Israeli soldiers were wounded by an explosion as their convoy passed near Nabatiyeh.

Sept. 21: One Israeli soldier was wounded by a roadside bomb as the patrol crossed the Litani.

Oct. 6: Two Israeli soldiers were wounded when a car bomb exploded by a roadside east of Sour. In Adloun, the commander of an Israeli-backed militia was killed when his car exploded.

Oct. 10: Resistance fighters ambushed an Israeli convoy near Saida. Eyewitnesses reported seeing 3 Israeli soldiers lying on the ground, and Beirut radio reported 2 killed. The Israeli military denied this, admitting only 1 injured.

Oct. 11: Wafa reported a Joint Forces ambush on an Israeli patrol near Sour, in which the enemy suffered several casualties.

Oct. 16: Explosion against a Zionist patrol in Nabatiyeh causes 8 casualties and destroys five enemy vehicles.

Oct. 25: Two Israeli soldiers killed in ambush north of Sour.

Oct. 26: The ambush of a patrol in the Zahrani district left about 7 Israeli casualties.

Nov. 7: LNRF attacked the Israeli military headquarters in Saida. The Zionists sealed off the area, preventing the confirmation of casualty figures. LNRF frogmen attacked an Israeli position on the coast at Zahrani, killing and wounding several Israeli soldiers. An enemy patrol was attacked by the LNRF in Qabiya; two Israeli soldiers were injured.

Why Imperialism Intervened Directly

For imperialism and the Lebanese right, the Israeli redeployment created a vacuum in the Shouf and Aley mountain districts. The reality of this 'vacuum' was the probability that the nationalist forces, in this area chiefly the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the Druze community, would materially assert their refusal of the fascists' army, central government and treaty with 'Israel'. The enemy's immediate contingency for dealing with this was the Lebanese Forces, mainly the Phalangist militias, who had installed themselves in the mountains in the wake of the Zionist occupation. However, employed alone, this option was untenable. Their role was simply to light the fuse from the enemy side, to provide footholds for the Lebanese Army's advance and thus create a situation where more imperialist involvement could be solicited. Even the combined fascist forces, within and outside the army, were not deemed sufficient to face the nationalist fighters and people of the mountains. Thus, repeated, direct imperialist intervention was forthcoming and became the most salient feature of the September 1982 round of the Lebanese civil war.

In the battles that erupted Sept. 4th, when 'Israel' drew its occupation army behind the Awali line, the nationalist forces made quick advances in key areas of the mountains, and also reached a juncture on the coastal highway, near Khaldeh. Already this first day, the Lebanese Army was needed and made a beach landing to recover the juncture. Also, the Israeli forces took time out from their redeployment to stop the PSP at the coastal road, meanwhile transporting Phalangist militiamen to strategic

hills in the Shouf, to insure a fascist-controlled buffer zone north of the Awali.

While the Lebanese Army was sent southwards along the coast towards Damour, the regime seemed reluctant to inject its troops in the mountains, knowing the depth of popular opposition to this move. However, with the cushion of Zionist occupation removed, the fascist militia were unable to sustain any meaningful positions even though they had received a headstart from the Israelis who informed them of the exact

hour of their departure, while telling the nationalist side a later time.

Then, on Sept. 6th, the nationalist forces took Bhamdoun, which is vital for control of the strategic Beirut-Damascus highway, and linked up with the areas of Syrian and Palestinian resistance presence. If they had continued their advance, they could have controlled Souq al Gharb. At this point, the US issued a stern warning to Syria, and the Lebanese Army reinforced itself in Souq al Gharb, which was to become the 'red line' drawn by the enemy forces.

Within a week of the Zionists' partial withdrawal, the nationalists controlled most of the Aley and Shouf districts. The following two weeks of battle focused on Souq al Gharb, though fighting was by no means confined to this area. Artillery enveloped all parts of Beirut and reached north to Jbail (Byblos), where the Lebanese Air Force's landing strip was hit.

To hold on to Souq al Gharb in the face of successive attacks by the nationalist forces, all five operational jets of the Lebanese Air Force went into action for the first time since the bombing of the Palestinian camps in Beirut in May 1973. On three successive days in mid-September, these Hawk Hunters blasted nationalist positions in the mountains. Climaxing three previous direct military interventions, US warships pelted nationalist positions in direct support of the Lebanese Army in the biggest US naval action since the Vietnam war.

Souq al Gharb became the crucial intersection for two main reasons: First, the course of the battle showed that the local balance of forces between the nationalist forces and the Phalangist-Lebanese Army prohibited the latter from deploying in the mountains at the present time. The Amin Gemayel regime desperately needs to extend its domain if it is to fulfill its own ambitions and US imperialism's formula for a strong central government and powerful controller of the masses. Souq al Gharb was the only beachhead the army could obtain in the mountains at the time, and this was sorely needed - militarily for future attempted entry, and politically to have a fact on the ground for influencing the conditions of ceasefire and negotiations.

Even more critically, if the nationalist forces control Souq al Gharb, they could link up with their counterparts in West Beirut. This was especially ominous to the enemy, because the Amal movement has retained control throughout much of the southern outskirts of the city, despite the army's mopping-up operation in late August. Also, out of fear of the convergence of the popular opposition, the regime had, on Sept. 8th, refurbished a defunct decree from 1977 to impose censorship on all publications and media, issued, broadcast or distributed in Lebanon. Later, and for the same reason, an in-

definite curfew was announced: "Violators will be fired on without notice", according to Beirut radio, Sept. 19th.

Political results

The September battle reaffirmed the enemy alliance's failure to achieve the aims of last year's Zionist invasion. Israeli Defense Minister Arens' visit to Beirut in August was intended to insure a smooth take-over of IDF positions in the mountains by the fascist forces. Afterwards attempting to cover the Israelis' own failure, Arens could only say that they had expected the Phalangists to do better.

However, the Lebanese fascist forces and regime did not suffer a strategic defeat, though their ambition to control all of Lebanon encountered a significant set-back. The battle of the mountains proved the ability of the nationalist forces to powerfully express the will and interests of the majority of Lebanese. Thus, the National Salvation Front emerged stronger, having imposed itself as a party to be reckoned with in deciding the future of Lebanon. This in turn was a gain for the NSF's allies, the Amal movement, Syria and the Palestinian revolution in particular, and all those struggling against Lebanon's becoming a US-Zionist protectorate.

Conversely, the reputation of the Lebanese Army and regime suffered a blow, militarily and politically. Notwithstanding the care of US officials to praise the performance of their proteges, the army's performance was not commensurate with its tasks, despite its having expanded from 21,000 to 33,000 since Amin Gemayel came to power, and despite extensive training and equipment from the US and France. The main combat force of the army, the US-trained 8th brigade, carefully selected and mostly Maronite, was unable to continue fighting as a unit in the last week of the battle, due to losses.

The political repercussions of the battle on the army are even more significant in long-range terms. The parallel interests and action of the regime, army and fascist militias were clear to all, disrupting the army's desired image as representing all the Lebanese. Coming after its operations against the people of West Beirut, the army's aggressive entry into the mountains, its fighting alongside the Phalangists and its reliance on foreign intervention materially demonstrated that it is the army of a single party - the Phalangist - and shares this party's sectarian, fascist, pro-imperialist nature. This greatly added to the mass mood against the army which has been steadily growing in the last half year. The nationalist forces' success raised the morale of the people in the occupied South and especially in West Beirut, where army presence decreased to a minimum during and after the mountain war.

The army also paid in concrete terms: During the battle, 600 deserted, starting with 120 soldiers in the Hammana garrison who joined the forces of the PSP. These desertions reflected a real political choice, not fear or avoidance of combat, for the Lebanese Army was under orders to shoot deserters, and in the heat of battle, it was very difficult to change sides and come out alive. This phenomenon could have been greatly accelerated had the battles lasted longer and had the nationalist forces mounted a real campaign to this effect. For good reason, the regime wanted to halt the battle before desertion spread to the army ranks in other areas. Especially threatening was the possibility that widespread desertion would begin in the base, where Shiites make up almost half of the common soldiers.

Echos of Vietnam

Concurrent to exposing the army's limitations, the nationalist forces' battle performance ripped off US and French imperialism's peace-keeping mask. Imperialism prefers to fight by proxy, but the importance of Lebanon in the plans to expand Camp David and control the region led the US and French forces to unleash their firepower on the mountains. The US especially had three aims: (1) to make sure that the Lebanese Army could hold Souq al Gharb; (2) to try and frighten the nationalist forces into



US soldier with the Lebanese Army at Souq al Gharb

submitting to the regime's authority; (3) to threaten Syria, which stands as a major obstacle to the imperialist plans for Lebanon and the region. The escalated imperialist involvement concretely confirmed our political analysis that the struggle of the nationalist and democratic forces in Lebanon constitutes a forward position for the regional anti-imperialist front.

MNF-NATO Extended

US imperialism's rationale for military intervention in Lebanon echoes the "security" logic of Zionist aggression and expansionism. Commenting on US warships' bombardment of the mountains (as occurred on Sept. 8, 16, 19, 20, 21, 23), Colonel Timothy Geraghty, commander of the Marine contingent of the MNF, said: "This particular action is deemed defensive in the light of the success of the Lebanese Armed Forces' operation in the Souq al Gharb area, which is considered important to the security and protection of the US Multinational Forces ashore here."

Actually, the US intervened militarily to make sure that Lebanon could remain as its newest gateway for expanding imperialist control in the region. While protecting the Le-

bane Army and regime, which play a key role in this plan, increased US involvement also serves to shield continuing Zionist occupation of South Lebanon and divert attention from the de facto annexation of the West Bank.

There are many indications that the intervention was part of long-standing contingency plans. The day of the Israeli redeployment, the Marines went on top alert, and a decision had already been taken to send 2,000 more to "protect" those ashore and "serve as a reserve force". The Eisenhower aircraft carrier had already moved into naked eye view on Aug. 30, as the Lebanese Army swept through West Beirut. By Sept. 9, the US had begun a massive air and sea lift of ammunition to the Lebanese Army in its largest re-

supply operation in the area since the October 1973 war. A few days later, the US National Security Council gave the Marines the right to call in air and sea strikes if necessary to "defend the MNF and Lebanese Army". Only a fool could believe that such extensive military preparations were suddenly concocted in response to the death of two Marines on Sept. 6, or the two earlier on Aug. 29.

Confirming US imperialism's long-standing aggressive intent vis-a-vis Lebanon are the recent statements of Richard Parker. While discussing the pros and cons of the Reagan Administration's deepening involvement, he recalled from the time of his 1977-78 stint as US ambassador to Lebanon: "We calculated that if we really wanted to get in and straighten things out in Lebanon, the only way we could do it was with military force, and it would take



Girl injured in the US warships' barrage against the mountains.

solution in Lebanon hinders the maneuvers of the US's Arab friends, especially the Saudi and Jordanian rulers, to fulfill the Reagan plan. As a result of the above factors, the Reagan Administration truly wanted a ceasefire, and the Saudis were assigned a special role in obtaining this.

Ceasefire?

Overall, the ceasefire reflects the results of the battle and the balance of forces which it revealed. For example, the second week of the mountain battle, Saudi mediator Prince Bander bin Sultan was shuttling around with a draft that called for deploying the Lebanese Army throughout the Shouf and Aley, at a time when PSP's condition for a ceasefire was that the army and Lebanese Forces get out of the mountains. By the third week, when the nationalist fighters' performance had posed questions to the army's capacity and unity, the Gemayel regime wanted a ceasefire enough to be content with the army remaining in Souq al Gharb alone prior to national reconciliation talks.

From the nationalist side, a ceasefire on these conditions was consistent with the NSF's premise that, ultimately, the Lebanese conflict should not be solved by military means. The battle served the aim of enforcing the repre-

While striking the popular forces is obviously in line with imperialist intent, the US has equal interest in making gains without evoking a new Vietnam on itself. In addition to the internal public reaction to deepening involvement in Lebanon and the resulting quibbling over the War Powers Act in the Congress, prolonged fighting in Lebanon diverts from imperialism's political efforts. The lack of a

at least two divisions (about 30,000 troops) and full commitment of naval and air capacity."

Due to domestic considerations, the Reagan Administration would prefer to have its military might remain as a threat to Syria and the Lebanese nationalists, yet the sending of the New Jersey - the world's only active battleship capable of hurling one ton shells 32 km and equipped for nuclear weapons - shows US preparedness to use massive force. This brought to 15 the number of US war vessels off Lebanese shores, with 12,000 men and over 90 planes, to supplement the 1,600 Marines and 100 US Army advisors now ashore.

In late September, when polls were showing that the majority of Americans favor withdrawal of the Marines in six months or less, Secretary of State Schultz refused to say

that more would not be sent; he also said that they may eventually establish presence beyond Beirut as the Lebanese Army extends its control (i.e., so that it can extend control.)

New battlefield for NATO

The refusal of Greece and Turkey to allow planes with military supplies, bound for Lebanon, to land exposed the US plans to conduct their intervention relying on NATO structures. However, close imperialist coordination was forthcoming from other quarters: Despite the French government trying to divorce itself from the first US bombardments, French Super-Etendards initiated air strikes on the mountains Sept. 22nd. Speaking for conservative French, "Le Figaro" daily disclosed the real intention of this intervention by linking French commitment to the MNF to the despatch of 2,000 troops to

Chad in August, claiming that France was willing to take the risks involved. This was in direct contradiction to polls published showing that a majority of French oppose military presence in Lebanon and Chad.

Thatcher's Britain was also a willing partner, sending its Buccaneer fighters on the reconnaissance flights also conducted by the US and France, and to this purpose using its bases on Cyprus, despite the broad protest led by AXEL, the Cypriot communist party. Most important was British naval cooperation. Besides sending three warships to the Mediterranean, within striking distance of Lebanon, for NATO exercises (i.e. the de facto NATO operation vis-a-vis Lebanon), Britain despatched a carrier to the Indian Ocean where the US could not patrol after having concentrated its naval power off the Lebanese and Nicaraguan coasts.

sensation of the broad spectrum of anti-fascist Lebanese in talks on Lebanon's future: NSF leaders, Jumblatt, Karami, Franjeh; Amal leader Nabih Berri, rather than Kamal Assad, Speaker of the House of the unrepresentative parliament whom the regime wanted to speak for the Shiite community; and the prominent anti-fascist Maronite politician, Raymond Edde. It was also a gain for the nationalist side that Syria is to be an observer at the talks.

The nationalist forces' policy is correctly based on the possibilities for coordination with Syria, for both share a position against Phalangist hegemony and the treaty with the Zionist enemy. Moreover, the possibility for a strategic victory for the nationalist forces is at present impeded by the 'red lines' drawn by the enemy forces around developments in Lebanon. In addition to the line drawn by the regime and violently underscored by imperialism at Souq al Gharb, there is the one drawn by the Zionist occupation forces across the southern tip of the Shouf. The Sept. 4th strafing of nationalist tanks by Israeli warplanes, and daily Zionist patrols far north of the Awali line, remind that Zionism is always ready to use aggression to impose its control, even if at present the Zionist leadership has internal reasons for limiting its military involvement in Lebanon.

Fascists for internationalization

The ceasefire remains in question if only because it was not really wanted by the Phalangist Party, which prefers to keep violence going in order to solicit even more imperialist involvement. Today it is more than ever clear that the enemy's 'red lines' are the fascists' only protection, and their only hope for overturning the internal balance of forces against them in favor of the regional balance of power, where their natural allies - imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction - have the upper hand. In this context, one sees the importance of preventing a Cyprus-like situation in Lebanon, whereby UN troops would monitor the ceasefire, for this would only legitimize increased internationalization of the conflict.

In line with their fascist leanings, Lebanese government officials have also been busy arguing for increased imperialist involvement. In this effort, they assert their importance in the context of the Reagan Administration's aggressive anti-communism. In late September, President Gemayel said, "We are fighting the Warsaw pact." A few days later, the Foreign Minister Salem said, "We know, and the US knows that if the US fails in Lebanon, American policy in the Middle East will have collapsed for the rest of the century." Lebanon's ambassador to Washington and member of the Phalangist Par-

ty, Abdullah Bouhabib, told a US audience that Lebanon was the first line of defense against domination of the Gulf by pro-Soviet forces such as Syria and Iran: "The Gulf is going to be in danger. You're going to need probably over 50,000 Marines to save the Gulf."

Nationalist opposition remains

The fragility of the ceasefire is also seen in the recurring violations: the sporadic fighting on the edges of the mountains, and the frequent clashes between the Lebanese Army and the Amal movement in the southern districts of Beirut. The latter in particular prove the difficulty of reconciling the dispossessed masses to the repressive, sectarian army.

The scheduled national reconciliation conference stands little chance of resolving the conflict in a way that prevents the recurrence of fighting, whether in an all-out battle, or a prolonged undeclared civil war. The same contradictions that erupted in the mountains will be present at the negotiations table, no matter where it is situated. The NSF is firm in its demand for abrogation of the accord with the Zionist enemy and for affirmation of Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and Arab alignment. These demands are antithetical to the project of the fascists and regime.

Bearing in mind that the Lebanese civil war is interrupted but not finished, it is important to glean the lessons of the September battle. Chief among these is material clarification that the main enemy of the Lebanese masses is imperialism, headed by the US. In view of the extent of the enemy alliance, and imperialism's demonstrated willingness to resort to direct intervention, the strengthening of the nationalist front becomes ever more imperative. The negative factors that affected the September battles must be corrected, among them the absence of a clearly defined, united stand on the part of the PLO, due to the internal problems which originated in Fatah, and the strained Palestinian-Syrian relationship. The PLO is required to give all possible support to the NSF and Amal movement, based on restoring Lebanon's unity, sovereignty, democracy and Arab identity. In this context, there should also be more coordinated efforts to escalate the battle against continuing Zionist occupation. Moreover we respect and support the establishment of a popular committee to administer the mountain areas, as announced by Walid Jumblatt on Oct. 1, "until the return of the central government institutions". This is a necessary step for meeting the needs of the masses and preserving the broad-based support which is the NSF's strongest card against Phalangist hegemony.

dateline: October 15th.

War Scars on the Zionist Entity

Study Part II

This is the second and concluding part of the study we began in our last issue. We remind that it was written in May and thus does not cover recent developments. Nonetheless, we feel it provides a useful background for evaluating Begin's resignation and the internal problems still faced by the Likud government now under the leadership of Shamir.

In light of the difficulties encountered by the Zionist invasion of Lebanon, it was predictable that negative effects would appear among the Israeli population, who were used to rapid, costfree military victories. War has always represented a vital sphere for the existence and continuity of the Zionist entity. This was best expressed by Menachem Begin when he said: "I fight, thus I exist." The Zionist movement has constantly worked to deepen the militarist tendency among the population of 'Israel' and gave war a holy character in order to achieve and preserve unity among the different factions and groups that form the Zionist entity, in order to confront the external enemy. The success of the Zionist movement in this respect has been apparent in the public consensus that prevailed during all the aggressive wars waged by the Israeli army.

In the first days of the 1982 invasion, the situation was no exception. One clear-cut evidence was the absence of any form of popular condemnation of the attack. In the first week of the war, the Peace Now movement declared its decision "not to take any steps until the operation is over" ("Al Hamishmar", June 11, 1982). Professional and trade union organizations, mainly the Histadrut, were mindful to support the government ("Davar", June 8, 1982). The official spokesman for Histadrut said, "It is not proper to make our political differences clear at a moment when the Israeli military forces are experiencing the peak of their activity." Moreover, there was a consensus among the parties and coalitions, excluding the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, on approving and supporting the attack. This was clear in the overwhelming support received by the government when the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality raised a no-confidence motion in the Knesset. The motion was rejected by 94 Knesset members, while only three supported it.

In turn, the government was careful to maintain this total support, based on its knowledge of the weak points in this coalition backing it. The government worked to spread illusions about the Israeli army's ability to execute a rapid, decisive, costfree battle. Later, it attempted to cover up the facts in the battlefield, which

were then exposed by the Israeli media. Naturally, it was beyond the capacity of the government to continue deceiving its population indefinitely. The heroic steadfastness of the Joint Forces imposed a series of events which the planners of the attack were unable to hide. The first fact to appear was that the Israeli army was incapable of achieving the wishes of its leaders for a rapid, decisive, costfree battle. This was reinforced by the information that leaked out about the extent of losses inflicted on the Israeli army by the Joint Forces, despite official silence on this matter. This destroyed the myth woven by the Zionist state about the invincibility of its army. The issue of human losses is a very sensitive one in the Zionist entity, and in this war, the Israeli population did not celebrate having been able to conquer extensive territory, as they had done in past wars.

The economic burden of aggression

The second fact which played a major role in influencing the attitude of the Israeli public concerning the invasion was the high economic cost of the operation. The Zionist entity has grown accustomed to the cancerous inflation of the military institution. As pointed out by the Israeli professor, Uram Bairy in his book, "Who Rules Israel", this occurs through (1) armament expenditures, whereby 20% of overall resources are allotted to defense expenses; (2) the size of the work force employed in the defense field whereby the Israeli Army has recruited over 90% of eligible Israeli males since 1974; and (3) the extension of the period of military service which has happened three times during the last 30 years.

The foreign aid on which 'Israel' depends has softened the pressure of this exceptional situation on the Israeli population; successive governments have been able to provide both "guns and butter" at the same time. However, during the attack on Lebanon, the costs were higher than all previous expectations. Official Israeli sources point to this fact, despite the discrepancies between the figures cited. According to the Israeli army spokesman, the direct cost

of the war in Lebanon will hit 48.2 billion shekels (over 1.5 billion dollars) by the end of March 1983 ("Jerusalem Post", Jan. 29, 1982). This figure, according to the newspaper's commentary, does not include indirect costs, such as the effect on the economy of calling up the reserves. According to the estimates of the Assistant Director of the Bank of Israel, the direct and indirect costs of the attack amount to 2.5 billion dollars, while the head of the Knesset finance committee estimated them to be 3.5 billion dollars.

Peace Now demonstrates against settlements:
 "Where has all the money gone? The West Bank swallowed it up!"



These costs, which were not clear in the calculations of those who planned the attack, went beyond what could be covered by outside aid. This forced the Israeli government to, for the first time, take a decision on Aug. 5, 1982 putting part of the economic burden of the attack directly on the Israeli population. This decision was executed through a series of austerity measures, most importantly: (1) raising taxes on stocks, loans and travel; (2) cutting subsidies on some major goods and other areas related to services, amounting to 5 billion shekels; (3) imposing a compulsory loan on all wage earners (3-4% of their wages) from July 1982 to April 1983; (4) an agreement with His-

tadrut on dividing 25 billion shekels needed to cover the war costs between the government, Histadrut and the employers.

Compounded with these economic burdens, the news of the difficulties facing the Israeli forces in Lebanon came as a shock to the population. This was reflected in the attitude of the average Israeli towards the war, which changed gradually. This in turn opened the way for a spontaneous protest movement, which demanded an end to the attack, resignation of the government, and the unclear call for a peaceful solution to the conflict in the area.

Anti-war protest

Public anger and protest found expression in petitions submitted to the Prime Minister, letters to the editor published in the Israeli press, and most notably the demonstrations against Israeli involvement in Lebanon. This reached a peak in the Sept. 25th demonstration, where 400,000 people participated with banners condemning government policy, the Defense and Prime Ministers in particular, and demanding immediate withdrawal from Lebanon.

As was the case with protest in the army, the Israeli media dealt with the phenomenon of public protest and anger in a way that tried to show the Zionist entity's innocence of the barbarism that characterized the invasion of Lebanon. The public protest was used as evidence of the "awakening of Israeli conscience" in an attempt to extricate 'Israel' from the international isolation with which it was threatened after the cruel attack on Lebanon.

In the first part of this study dealing with the spread of the protest phenomenon in the military, we argued against the validity of this "awakening of conscience" thesis. We questioned why it arose at this particular time, after decades of Zionist aggression. We pointed out that the protest phenomenon spread only after it became clear that the Israeli army could not achieve the stated aims of the war rapidly, and was on the contrary, facing difficulties and unprecedented casualties. We thus concluded that it was not a question of moral awakening, but a reaction imposed by the resistance of the Joint Forces which precipitated the broad protest in the military. In general, the same considerations apply when examining the public protest in 'Israel'. In addition, there are 3 other characteristics of the protest which reveal its limitations:

1. The limited extent of these protests - Though far greater than previously witnessed in the Zionist entity, the protests remained as islands amid a population that continued to support the leadership of the attack.
2. The vagueness of the slogans raised - Some of the slogans of the protest movement

called for the necessity of searching for a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict without crystallizing this position into a political program or coherent view of the solution. Moreover, with few exceptions, the advocates of these views still deny the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state. The vast majority of the new dissenters have not departed from basic Zionist premises.

3. The spontaneous character of the protest greatly limited its role in influencing political decision-making, which is monopolized by the major parties in 'Israel'. Generally, it was not party organizations leading the broad protest or developing its positions. The only exception is Rakah, which opposed the war from the beginning and organized a series of activities. The major one was the demonstration in Nazareth with thousands of participants, mostly Arabs. The position of the other opposition parties and organizations varied from complete silence (as with Peace Now's original position) to support to the invasion, which later changed into tactical opposition to widening the scope of the attack. The latter position was typical of most of the Labor Alignment and must be

30,000 in Nazareth demonstrated against the war in Lebanon.



viewed in the context of competition with the Likud vis-a-vis future elections. The small parties, such as Sheli and Shinui, that expressed their opposition at a later stage, did not have a noteworthy impact on the Israeli public.

From the above, we can conclude that the bulk of the Israeli parties and population continue to rely on the policy of force, regarding this as the ideal method of preserving the existence of their state. The phenomena of dissent which began to appear could point to the beginning of a change in the fascist outlook that has prevailed in the Zionist entity, in spite of the limits and vague character of the protests. It would be naive to deny these phenome-

na in favor of a simplistic view that the Israeli state is a static and cohesive mass. However, the vagueness and limitations of the phenomena in question, and the concrete conditions in which they emerged, support the thesis that it would also be naive to await a solution through the natural, internal development of the contradictions in the Zionist entity. What we can conclude from these changes is that the heroic steadfastness of the Joint Forces, despite the war's final results, imposed the beginning of a compulsory awakening in the Zionist entity by calling into question the myth of the invulnerable "garrison state". Accordingly, serious Palestinian and Arab confrontation of Zionist intransigence is the sure way to destroy the bases of the fascist direction in which the Zionist state is moving.

Will Labor reap what the Likud sowed?

It is well-known how sensitive the Israeli political institutions are to what takes place on the military front. The so-called shortcomings of the Labor Alignment in the 1973 war played a major role in placing it in the opposition after 30 years of leading the government. Also the success of Begin's adventure, the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, was an important factor in returning the Likud to power in 1981, despite expectations that the Likud's role was finished due to the Egyptian-Israeli deadlock in the 'autonomy' negotiations and the US administration's desire to have "softer" faces at the fore of the Zionist state.

Yet, despite its election success, the Likud's position remained shaky as seen in its slim majority in the Knesset. The Likud began the invasion while suffering challenges in the Knesset, especially after two of its members pulled out and joined the Alignment, threatening the government's parliamentary majority. From this angle, the Likud was successful in capitalizing on the invasion to improve its position in the Knesset. The aggression served to attract the Tehiya and Telem parties to the government coalition, giving it a 64 to 56 majority. At the same time, the attack initially raised the esteem of the Likud among Israeli voters as evidenced by opinion polls. Still, the Likud's base is not solid, and the possibility of its downfall continues to exist.

While the Likud succeeded in regaining a parliamentary cover for its government, this was accompanied by increased dependency on the small parties. One Likud member expressed his concern about this as follows: "In spite of increasing the members of the coalition during the war, by adding the two Telem members and the three members of Tehiya, the coalition became more fragile, whereby any small group on any pretext can break the coalition."

The attack on Lebanon publicly displayed the weakness of the unity between the parties of the coalition. There was a split in the Liberal Party, after Minister Berman withdrew due to the delay in forming the committee to investigate the Sabra-Shatila massacre. Moreover, a struggle began in Herut, the main party of the coalition, which reflected the disarray in the positions of Herut ministers. This struggle focused on who is to be Begin's heir: Sharon, Shamir, Levi or Aridor?

In light of this situation, a central question is posed concerning the ability of the coalition to avoid the time bomb that is ticking inside it, and about Begin's ability to continue "satisfying everyone in the coalition". Moreover, the Likud cannot rely on its superiority which is still being reflected in opinion polls, for the present challenge facing it is in the Knesset. Here, despite waving the stick of early elections, the Likud is impotent to carry out this threat, because its partners in the coalition fear a deterioration of their position in a new election. This applies in particular to the National Religious Party, whose support Begin needs to get approval for holding early elections.

On this basis, we can examine the attempts of the Labor Alignment, the Likud's main competitor, to return to power. Though the Labor Alignment is hardly in a better situation than the Likud, its being in the opposition has given it opportunities to maneuver...During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Labor attempted to take advantage of the rift that arose in the ruling coalition, in order to bring down the government through the Knesset. Though it has so far failed to do so, all possibilities are not exhausted. When the government coalition's candidate for the presidency lost to the Labor candidate in the March 22nd elections, this was a warning to the ruling coalition. The future holds new developments which could penetrate the weak points in the Likud's positions.

Regarding the possibility of Labor returning to power in the future, what concerns us is the thinking in some Arab circles, who harbor illusions that this could signal positive changes. Faced with this strange optimism, it is not necessary to repeat the known facts about Labor's position on the rights of the Palestinian people, the question of economic and political hegemony in the Arab world, etc. However, we find it useful to remind that the Labor leaders declared their share of responsibility for the decision to attack in 1982, at the start of the invasion. Labor's return to power would only mean that the decision-makers, whether in or outside 'Israel', are convinced that Labor's approach is more capable of reaping the fruits of the attack which the Likud led.



How do you evaluate the progress made in the twenty years since the October 14th revolution?

We obviously can't evaluate all the political, economic and social progress made in an interview. Yet we can point out that in the past period of our revolution, we were able to solve the most important and complicated issues related to the national democratic revolution. The primary issue was that of state power, then the question of the land, and of ownership and distribution.

Solving these essential issues brought about changes in the class structure of our society, enhancing the position of the working class, which solidified its alliance with the peasants and all the working people. We developed a new economic system under the leadership of the state, which gave rise to the strata of agricultural laborers, and broadened the base of the intellectuals from working class origins. The principle of planned development became the major principle for our economic and social development, through the instatement of economic plans and devoting all our energies to their implementation.

Our success in instating a solid base for revolutionary development with a socialist perspective has helped to deepen the ties between the revolutionary process in our country and that of the world. Hence, this strengthened our country's and party's positions in the Arab and international revolutionary movement. Certainly our country plays an important role in the struggle of the Arab national movement against

Democratic Yemen

The 20th anniversary of the start of the Yemeni people's armed liberation struggle in the south of the country has a special significance for all progressive forces. The outcome of this liberation struggle was the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the first state in the Arab world to undertake a national democratic revolution with the ultimate goal of building socialism, based on an alliance of workers, peasants and the oppressed masses. Thus, the 20th anniversary of the October 14th revolution was an occasion to celebrate the many achievements made in Democratic Yemen in the economic, agricultural, educational, cultural and defense fields.

Many leaders of the Arab national liberation movement assembled in Aden to celebrate this anniversary along with the Yemeni masses. Among them were Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP; Naef Hawatmeh, General Secretary of the DFLP; George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party; Mohsen Ibrahim, General Secretary of the Communist Action Organization in Lebanon; and Khaled Muheidin, General Secretary of the National Progressive Unionist Party of Egypt. Their presence signified the great importance which Democratic Yemen has as a strong base for progressive forces in all the area, especially for the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national and democratic forces.

Interview: Comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad

While attending the anniversary celebration, our comrades had the opportunity to interview Comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad, President of PDRY, General Secretary of the Yemeni Socialist Party, and Chairman of the Supreme Peoples Council.

the imperialist-Zionist-Arab reactionary alliance. Further, our relations with the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries have been strengthened and solidified.

Along with the anniversary of the revolution, you are also celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Yemeni Socialist Party. How do you evaluate the progress made in relation to (a) the level of transformation to the position of the working class; (b) the role of the party among the masses; (c) the role of the party in relation to the overall life in your country?

Our party documents and programs outlined the basis for the leadership and guidance of the revolutionary process, guided by the great scientific socialism. A program was drawn up for the stage of the national democratic revolution, defining the essential goals of this transitional period towards socialism, as well

Comrade from "Al Hadaf" interviewing Ali Nasser



as the dynamic class forces, the tasks and the content of state power and its developmental perspectives.

We also wrote the internal bylaws for the party, emphasizing the highest revolutionary practices we have acquired from our past and developing them, using the experience of other working class parties in other parts of the world. This helped us to link the party and the political work with the economic work on the mass level, by establishing party and mass-based organizations at all levels of work and production, in schools and in the military and security institutions in all provinces. This played a major role in strengthening the party leadership in the society, as well as in rallying the people around the party.

Our party's program also outlined the concrete tasks of the present stage. The second five-year plan for economic and social development, which was adopted in our extraordinary general congress, can be considered a second program for the party. Also, the party defined the main direction of work for the mass organizations to insure a sound political and ideological relation with the masses, and to make the best use of our revolutionary experience. Also we work to establish the new democratic practices that have evolved through the process of economic and social transformation. We also encourage a spirit of initiative and sound competition among the workers in all branches of our national economy. The party also plays an influential role among the masses through a variety of political and ideological work, as well

as instilling the principles of scientific socialism in its political and technical cadres.

In both the first and extraordinary congress of your party, you raised the slogan of the unity of the two Yemens. What has been achieved by your efforts in this direction, especially after the first session of the higher council of the two Yemens?

We are pleased with the progress made in strengthening the contacts, sound dialogue and coordination with our brothers in the northern part of our homeland in line with the unity agreements signed by the two leaderships. The first session of the Yemeni higher council had vital results which will help in furthering the basis for strengthening and solidifying total political and economic coordination and commercial exchange between the two Yemens. Of course implementation of the results and continued efforts to increase the steps of unity will add a new and strong base for this unity.

The Ethiopian President, Mengistu Haile Mariam, is considered one of the most distinguished persons participating in your anniversary celebrations. Can you describe the Ethiopian - Yemeni relations?

Our relationship with socialist Ethiopia is a strategic, militant relationship, baptized by Yemeni and Ethiopian blood, and based on common principles, goals and destiny...The relations have been strengthened more and more, and continue to develop in the revolutionary path of Arab and African national liberation against imperialism and its racist and reactionary allies.

How do you evaluate the relations between your country and the nearby Gulf states?

The main direction of our sound foreign policy in the region is to establish relations with all neighboring states based on peaceful coexistence, good neighborliness, fruitful cooperation, mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. We will continue this practice that serves the vital interests of the peoples in the region and contributes to security and stability.

In view of Democratic Yemen's membership in the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, how do you view the possibilities for reviving this front?

We hope that all the causes and conditions that led to the paralysis of the role of this front can be removed. We feel that there is



1964: Comrade Ali Nasser as a fighter in the struggle for independence

still a chance to revive this front. This vital task lies with the progressive and nationalist Arab regimes and the Palestinian revolution that confront the dangerous imperialist-Zionist threats. Democratic Yemen has invested great efforts to activate the front's economic, political and military institutions. However, we have faced many difficulties due to secondary differences between some members of the front.

How do you view developments in Lebanon?

What is taking place in Lebanon is the implementation of one link in the overall imperialist-reactionary attacks on the Arab liberation movement. Events in Lebanon, especially the Zionist invasion and the direct US military intervention, in addition to the presence of the multinational forces, all reveal the true goals of the imperialist-Zionist attacks that aim to return the Arab region to colonial domination and strike a blow to the Arab liberation movement. This situation gives our Arab peoples and their nationalist and progressive forces great tasks, demanding unity on all levels in order to stop the enemy attacks and confront US- Israeli domination in the region. Also, the situation calls for all Arab nationalists and progressives to support the struggle of the Lebanese people to bring an end to the Israeli occupation, and for an independent, united, Arab Lebanon.

How do you view the current difficulties in the Palestinian revolution?

The greatest difficulty facing the Palestinian revolution today is the threat to Palestinian national unity - the unity of the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people. We cannot underestimate these dangers at all. We feel that the main beneficiaries of the escalation of the secondary differences is the imperialist-Zionist alliance. The

basic contradictions with the enemy must take precedence over the secondary contradictions in the Palestinian revolution.

We have made and continue to make efforts to resolve the conflicts in order to protect Palestinian national unity. We do so based on the fact that what unites the Palestinian revolutionary forces is much greater than their differences. Palestinian national unity is one of the required conditions for facing all conspiracies that aim to liquidate the Palestinian cause and revolution.

Would you evaluate your recent visit to the Soviet Union and Soviet-Yemeni relations in general?

Our relationship with the USSR is firm and developed. It is constantly being strengthened based on the friendship and cooperation agreement between the two countries. It is also

based on the socialist principles and goals for which we both struggle, so that we can advance liberation, progress, socialism and peace throughout the world.

The recent visit had vital results regarding our bilateral relations, and regarding developments in the Arab region. We felt there was great concern on the part of the Soviet leaders about the situation in the Arab region after the escalation of the attacks and plots of the US-Israeli alliance. The Soviet leaders confirmed their support and solidarity with the struggle of the Arab peoples and their nationalist and progressive forces against all attempts at colonization and domination of the region. They reaffirmed their continuing support for the struggle of the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights to return and establish an independent state. This visit had positive results that will serve the just Arab causes.

Comrade Habash in Algeria

In the interests of furthering the militant ties that bind the Palestinian revolution and the Algerian National Liberation Front, Doctor George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, visited Algeria in the middle of September.

Comrade Habash met with a number of Algerian officials, and in particular had a long meeting with President Chadli Benjedid, where they discussed current developments in the Palestinian and Algerian arenas, as well as the crisis facing the Arab world.

Comrade Habash focused on the current crisis in the Palestinian revolution, explaining its causes and the obstacles to a solution. He assured President Benjedid that the PFLP will continue to exert maximum efforts to solve the crisis in a way that protects the unity of the PLO and ensures the continuity of the revolution. Comrade Habash emphasized the need for political and organizational reform in Fatah and the PLO. To this end, he called for an immediate stop to internal fighting and hostile propaganda, so as to start a democratic dialogue and preserve the PLO's unity and independence.

Concerning Lebanon, Comrade Habash analyzed the attempt to

impose Phalangist hegemony by massive US support, which has reached the point of direct military intervention. He spoke of the significance of the Lebanese National Salvation Front, and the role of Syria and the Palestinian revolution in supporting the Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces. He emphasized the need for strong Arab support to the Salvation Front, because the war in Lebanon deeply affects the entire Arab liberation movement. Comrade Habash spoke of the dangers of the US-Zionist plans for all the Arab region, stressing that the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front should play its role in confronting the conspiracies, and that Syria should be supported in its rejection of the Israeli-Lebanese-US treaty.

President Benjedid gave the Algerian point of view on the current political situation, paying special attention to solving the crisis in the Palestinian revolution, because

the current situation adversely affects the future of Palestinian national struggle. He spoke of the need for unity in the PLO, the independence of its national decision, and for support to the PLO, especially now as the enemy is trying to liquidate its role as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He stressed that democratic dialogue is the only way to resolve the differences. In addition, he highly praised the distinctive role played by the PFLP in the Palestinian arena, especially in the efforts to solve the internal crisis. President Benjedid also stressed the importance of furthering the Syrian-PLO relations, and directing all efforts to resolve the differences to mutual benefit. He also emphasized the need for the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front to play its role in confronting the imperialist plans for the Middle East.

First Official Visit to Hungary



A PFLP delegation headed by General Secretary, Dr. George Habash, visited the People's Republic of Hungary the last week of September. The delegation's official meeting was with the Secretary of the Hungarian Workers Party, responsible for international relations, who spoke on current developments in the world, and especially the critical situation in the Middle East.

Comrade Habash also met with the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee to discuss current political matters. They focused on the situation in Lebanon, after the direct US intervention in the war, the crisis in Fatah and the dangers facing the Palestinian revolution on all levels.

For their part, the Hungarian comrades presented an idea of the progress made in their country, emphasizing that the primary aim of the party and government is to build a socialist society, and that they have made concrete advances in this direction. They also explained the economic difficulties facing Hungary.

The PFLP delegation also met with Hungary's Deputy Fo-

reign Minister. Both parties concurred in their view of the dangers posed globally by the aggressive US policies. They also agreed on the need for broad support to the Palestinian revolution and on its right to struggle on all levels - political, diplomatic and military. Both sides examined the internal crisis in Fatah and spoke of the need to resolve this in favor of the Palestinian national struggle and the unity of the PLO, as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Hungarian De-

Press Conference

Concluding the visit, Comrade Habash held a press conference where he praised the role of the Hungarian media in supporting the Palestinian cause, and exposing the true face of the racist Zionist movement. He thanked the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee for inviting the delegation and said: "This is our first official visit to Hungary, and if you ask me about the results, I can answer without hesitation that it has been very successful. We will work to further

our bilateral relations in order to confront the imperialist enemy. I wish to extend my utmost gratitude to the socialist Hungarian people, government and party for all the support you are giving the PLO. The Palestinian people will always remember our true friends." Comrade Habash then went on to discuss the situation in the Middle East. He was also interviewed by Hungarian television, and spoke in a program on current political affairs in Hungarian radio.

puty Foreign Minister also emphasized the need for independent Palestinian national decision-making. The PFLP delegation also met with the General Secretary of the Hungarian National Front and with the Deputy of the Union of Hungarian Associations. They also had the opportunity to visit a number of different provinces and factories. At one factory, Comrade Habash addressed a meeting of workers and explained the Palestinian cause and the aggressiveness of Zionist policy.

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Geneva

International Conference on the Question of Palestine

On August 29th, the United Nations International Conference on the Question of Palestine convened in Geneva, Switzerland. Four regional preparatory meetings, held in Tanzania, Nicaragua, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia, had preceded the conference.

The very holding of this conference was significant in view of the many obstacles that had to be overcome. The French government had declined to host the conference in Paris, citing ostensibly security reasons, but the real reason was political as was later clear in the official French statement that the conference "will not lead to a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East".

The UN General Assembly eventually decided to hold the conference in Geneva. The Swiss government reluctantly agreed, but joined most other western European governments in limiting their participation to observer status. The US, Canada and 'Israel', the only states to officially boycott the conference, led a campaign to discredit it, predicting it would be nothing more than a forum for attacks on 'Israel'.

Nevertheless, 133 governments sent official delegations to participate. In an unprecedented move by a UN body, the conference admitted the PLO to full participation alongside the other member governments. The conference was also attended by many UN and intergovernmental organizations, and more than 100 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including solidarity committees from western Europe and North America, church, peace and anti-war groups. Prominent personalities from a number of countries were invited to address the conference.

The conference consisted of a plenary, where general debate on the question of Palestine was heard, and a main committee

which discussed the obstacles to the achievement of Palestinian rights and formulated the final declaration and a program of action.

Overwhelming support for Palestinian rights

UN Secretary General Perez Cuellar opened the conference, followed by Lucille Mair, Secretary General of the conference, who emphasized the importance of its having convened despite the many difficulties. During the nine days that followed, heads of delegations, including a large number of ministers, reiterated their countries' commitment to Palestinian rights and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The highlight of the conference was an appearance by Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, in which he strongly condemned the US for continuing to defy the conscience of the world community. He also criticized western European states for failing to recognize the rights of the Palestinians to an independent state. He expressed the hope that the conference could advance the search for peace, based on securing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The conference was also addressed by a number of prominent persons, including Romesh Chandra, President of the World Peace Council; Felicia Langer, progressive Israeli lawyer; Sean McBride, who chaired the International Commission to enquire into Israeli violations of International Law

in Lebanon; and Rabbi Elmer Berger, a long-time anti-Zionist. Also participating in the debate were representatives of national liberation movements, including ANC (South Africa), FDR-Farabundo Marti and SWAPO (Namibia).

NGO participation

Over 200 representatives of 104 international and national non-governmental organizations, with headquarters in 24 different countries, attended. They represented groups working with a broad spectrum of political and social issues, and included parliamentarians, lawyers, doctors, jurists and educators.

A large quantity of informative materials relevant to the question of Palestine was disseminated. Written statements were submitted to the conference, while a large number of representatives spoke at both the plenary and main committee. In parallel activities, NGOs organized a number of panel discussions on topics such as Zionist manipulation of the holocaust, the implications of the Sabra-Shatila massacre, and on a strategy for further cooperation among NGOs.

Significantly, the NGOs also rejected the efforts by Uri Avneri and Matti Peled to exclude anti-Zionist Jews from participating in a panel discussion on the "Potential of Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue". Both Avneri and Peled eventually boycotted this panel.

In a final declaration read at the closing plenary meeting, NGOs called on the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalien-

able Rights of the Palestinian People to oversee the creation of special NGO committees that would initiate and coordinate NGO activities.

A number of Palestine solidarity committees from Europe and North America held a separate meeting at which they agreed on joint observation of international solidarity days.

Approved by acclamation

Drafts of the final declaration and program of action were submitted by the main committee to the closing session of the plenary on September 7th, and adopted by acclamation.

The declaration reiterated the concern of all member nations over the international tensions that persisted for several decades in the Middle East, "the principle cause of which is the denial by Israel, and those supporting its expansionist policies, of the inalienable rights of the Pales-

tinian people"...A settlement of the conflict "must be based on the attainment of those rights...including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent state in Palestine". The declaration called for the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

The conference also adopted a 26-point program of action, which among other things called for the universal recognition of the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine; a review by the member states of their "economic, cultural, technical and other relations with Israel"; and according Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel "the status of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention..." The program encouraged the observance of November 29th as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian

People, and requested that the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly designate a Year of Palestine, to be observed at the earliest possible time.

The Palestinian role

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine reaffirmed the solidarity of the peoples of the world with our struggle; it contributed to further isolation of 'Israel' and its imperialist backers. The burden is on us in the Palestinian revolution to eventually succeed in redressing the existing balance of forces in our region, so as to enable the implementation of the many resolutions in our favor that were adopted at the conference. Chief among our immediate tasks is to strengthen our national unity in the framework of the PLO, and to preserve our ability to wage the struggle against the Zionist enemy.

Nicaragua: US Intervention?

In Geneva, we had the honor of interviewing the Deputy Foreign Minister of revolutionary Nicaragua, Victor H. Tinoco. The following is excerpts of the interview.

Do you expect an escalation of tension by Honduras, inspired by the US, that could lead to all-out war with your country?

Many in the US Congress, Democrats and Republicans, agree that the Reagan Administration because of its ideological nature, wants to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. If the Reagan Administration had a way to do so, it would. The problem (for them) is that the Nicaraguan revolution is a popular revolution, a very strong revolution with which the people work very closely. The only way they can destroy our revolution is to send the Marines, and the Reagan Administration is finding many, many problems in sending the Marines to Nicaragua.

Because of their ideology, the Reagan Administration is trying all they can to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution: They are supporting the counterrevolutionaries based in Honduras - economically, militarily and by training. They are giving sophisticated arms, radar and planes to the Honduran army. They are engaging in military maneuvers with the Honduran army on our northern border. Moreover, the US has sent a naval fleet to our coasts - 20 warships with two aircraft carriers. All these military measures have a single purpose, and that is to heighten tension in the area and pressure revolutionary Nicaragua and counter the efforts of the countries of the area that try to reduce the tension...

We think that if the Reagan Administration had the right conditions, it would push the Honduran army to participate in a military conflict with Nicaragua, but this is not easy. As I said, the administration has encountered many criticisms and difficulties in the Congress. Only five days after the announcement by the administration that they were sending the fleet to Central America, the House of Representatives passed an amendment calling for stopping aid to the counterrevolutionary army. Of course, this amendment is not going to become law, because the Republicans control the Senate, but it has a very, very important political significance. It means that if the Senate does not approve the bill, the US would

become involved in a direct war with Central America - a war that could mean, if the US decided to send in the Marines, maybe they would try to take Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. Maybe they could take Managua - I don't know in how many days or weeks, or at what costs, but they will never solve the situation. That would not be the end, but the beginning of a long revolution, a long war where the US alone would be facing the response of the Central American peoples.

This would be a situation worse than Vietnam, not only militarily, but because of the political implications inside the US. The war in Vietnam, despite all the opposition, was very far away and had no social or cultural consequences in the US, but a war against Central America, when there are millions of Latin Americans living in the US, would have very, very complicated consequences domestically. In addition, it would damage the US's relations with Latin American countries.

So, it is not easy, but they are trying to make their move by arming the Honduran army. We have no intention of attacking Honduras. We have no border problems with Honduras. We have been proposing to establish a non-aggression pact with Honduras... So, the US has no pretext



Honduran soldiers with US advisers

for arming the Honduran army so heavily or for establishing military bases in Honduras, as the one in Porto Castios. They are, for example, now extending the runways of many private airports in Honduras. They are installing at least two new radars. We haven't a single radar in Nicaragua, because we don't need this. We don't have airplanes.

To conclude, I can say that world opinion and opinion in the US should in the future, as it has in the past, play a very important role in helping to stop the aggressiveness of the Reagan Administration.

Would you comment on the similarities of the US role in Central America and the Middle East?

I think that the phenomenon of imperialism is the same all over the world. The effort to try to stop the liberation struggles of the people all over the world is one precise characteristic of imperialism.

It is very interesting, for example, that recently even in the US press, they were publishing that almost half of the US military forces are not in the US, but all over the world - in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America - in different military bases; in different conflicts. For example, of the 30 AWACS built so far, 60% are engaged in missions abroad... Another example: Half of the US Navy is moving around to different places and not at the coasts of the US...

This prowling of the military will in the long run prove fruitless in the US administration's efforts to deter the determination of the people to change their conditions.

I don't believe there is any difference between the aspirations of the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean people to have an independent country and the political system they choose, and the aspirations of the Palestinian people to have a state, to have their nation living in a geographically concrete place, the right of self-determination and so on. Really, there is no difference; it is the same struggle of the peoples for independence, sovereignty and self-determination.

US demonstration against Reagan's Central America policy



Interviews with Anti-Zionists

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine was a landmark in terms of the opportunities it afforded for Palestinians working in the PLO to meet with anti-Zionist Jews, both Israelis and those from other countries. Our comrades had the chance to interview a number of persons, including Rabbi Elmer Berger, who has a long history of fighting Zionist hegemony in the US Jewish community; Uri Davis, a Palestinian Jew known for his consistent anti-Zionist stands; Dr. Alfred Lilienthal, famous for his books such as "The Zionist Connection"; Ralph Schoenman who is a progressive human rights activist in the US; and members of Women Against Zionism, a new organization in 'Israel'. In this issue, we are printing two of these interviews and hope to include the others in future issues.



Women Against Occupation

The following interview is with two Israeli women from the organization: Women Against Occupation. Note: A new paragraph in the answer denotes change of speaker.

Will you give us an idea about Women Against Occupation - when it was founded, its purpose and membership?

This organization was formed at the beginning of the war. The first day it was called Women Against the Invasion of Lebanon. Most of the women that first took part in the group are feminists from many left groups in Israel - Marxist, Trotskyist, etc., and

then some women who did not belong to any of those groups. About three months ago, we changed our name to Women Against Occupation, because we wanted to talk about occupation in general, including the occupation of Lebanon.

Is it an anti-Zionist group?

The group doesn't call itself anti-Zionist, although some women in the group are

anti-Zionist, but some are not. Although most of us believe that Zionism means discrimination and so on, we wanted to leave the group without the title anti-Zionist, because we want Zionist women to come to the group and discuss Zionism if they have questions about it. If we call the group anti-Zionist, then many women who might be convinced by discussion will not come, and we want as many women as possible



October 7th demonstration, called by Women Against Occupation and other democratic womens groups, to protest against the maltreatment of Palestinian prisoners at Neve Tertza prison for women.

to come to the group, so we can discuss Zionism with them.

You told me that you yourself are anti-Zionist; Can you say why you became anti-Zionist?

Because I see Zionism as a discriminating force. It speaks of a Jewish state; that means that all the Palestinians living inside Israel now and all the Palestinians who lived there before cannot be people with equal rights in such a country. In definition Zionism means a country for the Jews, so other religions cannot live on an equal basis. The other thing, of course, is that I think that all the refugees who left in 1948 must come back if they want to. It is somehow very ridiculous that Israel belongs to the Jewish people in America, Canada, wherever; they can come to Israel whenever they like, while people who lived there for many years and left in 1948, cannot come back and live in their country.

I can only add one thing: You can see what happened with the Zionist movement - how it deteriorated to real racism, and this is what is really going on with the Palestinian population in Israel and in the occupied territories. So I think anybody who cares for

human rights has to immediately question the whole issue of Zionism.

How do you view a final solution for the Palestinian problem?

I think that we should fight together for a Palestinian state and, after that, for the return of the refugees. Then we should go on fighting for a democratic state in which Jews and Palestinians, Muslims and Christians, can live together.

On the whole I agree. I am not sure about the Palestinian state. I think the right to return should be applied to all Palestinians, and we should recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians, only because the Palestinians have chosen the PLO to be their representative, and they should do whatever they think is correct in order to fulfill their human rights in whichever way they think is right.

How do you view the PLO?

We view the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We talk to Palestinians, and I must say that inside Israel and in the West Bank, every-

body sees the PLO as his or her representative.

There are now many peace groups active in Israel; how do you view this phenomenon?

Since the war in Lebanon, many more people in Israel realize that Israel is not fighting a defensive war any longer, and it has been aggressive, maybe even colonialist, towards the Middle East at large. Many people started to object in many forms; there are different groups that have formed since the beginning of the war.

Do you think there are conducive grounds for increasing or consolidating the anti-Zionist movement on the basis of these peace forces?

Within the peace movement, we can and I think we do this with people who are now Zionist. It always comes to talking about Zionism, and we can argue with them, and some can be convinced, and some not. We do this in the peace movement. But for the moment, the peace movement in general is only talking about the two-state solution, although there are people within the peace movement who are anti-Zionist, and

they are trying to spread this idea.

What about your connections with other anti-Zionist groups that deal with the Israeli government's policies, the government's aggression in Lebanon, or elsewhere?

A lot of our members are also members of the anti-Zionist left-wing groups. Most of the organized women are in anti-Zionist groups. As a group, we take part in any activity that any peace movement is holding, whether it is a demonstration or any other activity in Israel or the West Bank...

Have you any connections with Palestinians in the West Bank or Gaza Strip?

We have now started to try to establish contacts with women's groups in the West Bank. We were once in Duheisha camp and talked to people, interviewed them and so on. I hope we make more connection in the future, but we have only now started, and it is kind of difficult because they are under very great pressure from the government; they are suspicious, justly so, and we always have to think if connections with us could harm them or not.

What difficulties do you face in your activities, especially from the Israeli government?

At the moment, the Israeli government is being fairly careful with the left, although they are not defending the left in demonstrations for instance. You have the left, and then all the right comes to provoke the demonstrators. There are usually remarks made by the police that if you dare to hit somebody from the right they'll arrest you. But if anybody from the right is hitting you, you are not allowed to hit back, because they'll

say you were provoking them, and they'll arrest you. Lately it happened, two or three times, that when the left went to demonstrate in the West Bank, they have been tear-gassed, which was not common before. The authorities were tear-gassing the Palestinians of course, but they have never before done this to Jewish demonstrators...

Concerning the right-wing Zionists' bloody attacks on Palestinians, especially in the West Bank, do you think there is cooperation between these extremist organizations and the government?

Yes, I think there is because the government doesn't really do anything to stop them. The weapons they have are from the government. Really, every day or two, they are killing Palestinians in the West Bank. Some of the settlers - this extreme right you are talking about - are doing it, and the government never found them. It is easy to find them if the government wanted to, because there are not so many in the area. All the time, the government says, we are investigating, but never has one person from the extreme right come to trial because of killing Palestinians, or beating or harassing them. So I think the government is really supporting them. It doesn't want to take the responsibility on itself, but is happy that this is happening, and that someone is doing the job for them.

What purpose does the Israeli government have with these aggressive acts committed by the extremist organizations?

The Israeli government has been oppressing the Palestinians for a long time; it is not a new phenomenon. I think for them it is just another tool - they use Jewish civilians in the West Bank and close their eyes as if they don't know

anything has happened. This serves their purpose to go on oppressing the Palestinian people.

I think that they want the Palestinian people to leave Palestine, because now they can't say the West Bank is Israel; they can't make it legitimate that the West Bank is Israel, because there are too many people in the West Bank. They don't want it to be an undemocratic state...they won't let them vote, so they are trying to really harass them; this is what they tried to do in Lebanon. They don't want the Palestinians; they don't want to see them. They want the land, but they don't want the people.

At this conference, you have met Palestinians who are members of the PLO and the different Palestinian organizations - How do you feel about this?

I was very glad to meet them. I mean, I feel much more solidarity with Palestinian people than I do with Israelis. I have a lot in common with them, because we think the same way. It was a good experience to meet and talk together. I think we have to solve this problem together - Palestinians and Israeli Jews that are living in Israel.

I was very excited to meet Palestinians and discuss the Palestinian issue with them. I find this much easier to do here on neutral ground than back in Israel, where they are suspicious because they are not sure who I am, and I don't want to push them and ask difficult questions, because I don't want them to think I'm from the authorities...So, always discussions with Palestinians in Israel are on a much more superficial level...Here nobody suspects anybody, or at least it is neutral ground. They go away, so they are not afraid of me, and I am not afraid of them, so we can talk more freely and in more detail.

Ralph Schoenman

«No Amnesty for Israel»

In Geneva, we interviewed Ralph Schoenman, a well-known US human rights activist. In the past year, he has testified before both the Oslo Tribunal and the commission headed by Sean McBride concerning Israeli war crimes in Lebanon. After participating in the UN conference, he had planned to travel to Palestine, as one of a number of international personalities invited to join the march commemorating the first anniversary of the Sabra-Shatila massacre. However, he was detained for several hours in Tel Aviv airport and then denied entry by the Zionist authorities. The following is excerpts from the interview with him.

As a Jew, how do you view the Palestinian people's struggle for their national rights?

First of all, I rarely identify myself that way, as I don't have religious convictions. My convictions are political. But, of course, any person of Jewish origin must feel particular anguish at the incredible crimes inflicted upon the Palestinian people by the Zionist movement, which comes out of the most backward, right-wing, pro-imperialist strands of Jewish political life in the last century and the beginning of this century. Of course, any Jew has to feel that if ever a people ought to know what it means to create refugees and destroy the homeland of another, it ought to be the Jews in the light of their historical experience in Europe. It is treachery, painful to witness this unparalleled crime inflicted upon the Palestinian people by the Zionist movement and state.

How do you view the strategic solution for the Palestinian problem? by making two states? or by a democratic state in all Palestine where all Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians, can live together?

The first point is this: Zionism is not merely a colonial movement. The 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were characterized by colonial and imperial movements, which aimed at the conquest of peoples, the exploitation of their natural resources, and the use of their cheap labor. Zionism does something fundamentally different. It seeks to substitute the labor of one people for another - not merely to colonize, but to eliminate the national existence of the Palestinian people. That is the meaning of the Zionist conception of a land without a people to the people without a land. It corresponds to the European idea of colonizing North and South America, whereby the indigenous peoples were regarded as impediments to be removed.

This means that the crux of the Palestinian problem is struggling for survival, for nation-

al existence. In my view that can never be achieved as long as there is a state based on principles, logic and a set of institutions which require the elimination of the Palestinians as a nation, as a people present as an identity on the territory over which the Israeli state now has power.

Here is the basic point: A state is not an abstraction. It is a specific set of social institutions. When we talk about the South African state, the state in Chile or Argentina, the Nazi state or any state which is repressive, which is racist, which exploits its people, no one would think to say we must recognize the right of such a state to be in existence. Nobody says the South African state has the right to exist and the Black population of South Africa must accept that state in order to be entitled to have their minimal national rights. I believe that the same basic democratic principle applies in the case of Israel.

The question is the de-Zionization of the state of Israel - the democratization of the state in what is Palestine and which is ruled over by specific institutions that are Zionist. As you surely know, 92% of the land in the state of Israel is administered by the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Agency. The rules of that agency require that you prove that you have a Jewish mother and grandmother, and a great grandmother in order to be entitled to live on land, to own, lease or rent land - not to have it confiscated... If this were the case in the US, it would be considered classic racist legislation. We cannot accept Israel, from the same assessment one would make of any other state, that it would use such racist, repressive and colonial laws, regulations and institutions.

The problem with the formulation of one state or two states is that it evades the basic issue: What kind of state and for whom? In my judgement, the question is: Do we favor a principle which is pluralistic, which says that the people have rights because of their existence in an area, not because they have one race or one religion, or one set of convictions or ano-

ther? Do we believe that people are entitled to live in Palestine with full rights whoever they are? Or do we say that only if they are Jews do they have these rights? Does the state and its institutions benefit only one people - as the Zionists always say, "creating a Jewish state"? If we favor the latter, then we believe in exclusiveness and racism.

I believe that the problem with the formula of two states is that basically it calls for what I would describe as amnesty for Israel. I don't believe that this is a practical proposition, because there is no evidence that any single part or wing of the Zionist movement - from its left to its right - intends to permit any Palestinian autonomy or state in the occupied territories. This applies even to the so-called left Zionists; which I consider to be a contradiction in terms, because in my judgement you cannot call a colonial movement left, even when it tries (making) concessions in order to preserve its essential colonial nature; that has nothing to do with a left critique or strategy or set of ideas. Even those people say that there must be permanent military positions in that territory for 20-25 years. They don't accept that Al Quds (Jerusalem) be Palestinian - there where Palestinians outnumber Jews eleven to one in East Jerusalem...It is not realistic to imagine that any part of the Zionist political spectrum will permit a Palestinian presence with full self-determination in the West Bank or Gaza, in the Golan Heights, or any part of that area. Why? Because if you acknowledge that the Palestinian people have the right to self-determination, you cannot confine that principle to one area.

This so-called lunatic, Meir Kahane, wrote an article in "The New York Times" about one

month ago, which made this very explicit. Speaking to leaders of Peace Now, to Abba Eban and to the leaders of the Labor Party, Kahane wrote to the following effect: "If you people are sincere when you say you want to give up Judea and Samaria because you wish to preserve the Jewish character of the state, and you don't want to contaminate it with 1.3 million Arabs - if you are really sincere and not traitors as I believe you are, if you believe that the best way to preserve the Jewish state is to give up Judea and Samaria, then you are facing the following problem: You must choose between the form of a democratic state or a Jewish state, because otherwise you are just postponing the question. Look at the Galilee - Look at the Triangle - There you have close to one million Palestinian Arabs. The rate of Jewish emigration is increasing, while the rate of Jewish immigration is falling. The Palestinian birth rate is higher than the Jewish one. So, in 15 or 20 years, will you permit 51% (the Palestinian majority) to change the name of Israel to Palestine and to have control of the Knesset. The issue is not Judea and Samaria; the issue is getting rid of the Palestinians in Eretz Israel."

I believe that Kahane is stating explicitly what is implicit in the entire structure of the Zionist institutions and the state apparatus itself. Thus, we only fight on the terrain of our enemy if we accept the premise, because once you say: We want to accept a Palestinian state side-by-side with the state of Israel, then the Zionists will always say: Are you truly going to protect the security of the state of Israel? Are you truly in defense of the right of an exclusive Jewish state from Haifa to Beersheva to Galilee?.....

Slaughter

by Yvonne Lubov Rusiniak

The rivers run red,
spill onto the land
in a red tide for all time.
The bulldozers try to hide
hundreds of massacred bodies
of men, women, children,
the babies whose last cry
will never leave this air.
Piles of cold flesh
are covered with
the cold and stony dust
of smashed shelters, but
the stretch will not leave
the heated air.
When dust may not return to dust
but is buried beneath the rubble,
it will reconstruct itself
into indomitable rock
Long live Sabra Camp,
long live Shatila Camp!



Athens

Never Again Sabra-Shatila

The International Symposium "One Year after the Sabra-Shatila Massacres" was held in Athens, Sept. 16-18th, convened by the International Secretariat for Solidarity with the Arab People and their Central Cause, Palestine. Participating were 130 delegates representing progressive parties, socialist countries, national liberation movements and solidarity organizations from 65 countries, as well as 24 jurists concerned with pursuing the issue of responsibility for crimes committed during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, including the Sabra-Shatila massacres.

The symposium was hosted by the Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity; a number of Greek progressive and democratic parties and trade unions addressed the symposium, as did persons who had investigated Israeli war crimes in Lebanon. Documentary films were shown of the siege of West Beirut and the massacres, and a photo exhibition was displayed.

The intent of the symposium was not only to commemorate the martyrs and reemphasize the role of those responsible, but also to seek ways of warding off repetition of the crime. Being held at the same time as the explosive situation in Lebanon reached a peak, due to escalated imperialist intervention, a clear link was drawn from the US-sponsored Israeli invasion, the continuation of this genocidal policy in Sabra and Shatila, and today the US's direct military intervention on behalf of the Gemayel government and Phalangists against the Lebanese nationalists.

The symposium was opened by Omar Hamdi, Chairman of the International Secretariat. Impetus for discussion was provided by speeches and working papers, especially those presented by the PLO and the Lebanese National Salvation Front (NSF). The presentations of Taysir Quba from the PLO placed the massacre in the context of Zionism's historical endeavor

to eradicate the Palestinian national identity on the one hand, and US imperialism's increasingly aggressive global policy on the other. Albert Farhat, representing the NSF, pointed out that the Israeli-Phalangist forces, who executed the Sabra-Shatila massacre, are the same who with full US support are continuing to try to destroy Lebanon, its democracy, and the unity of its land and people: "The massacre of Sabra and Shatila was a consequence of the Israeli occupation and a first step towards the reign of the fascist Phalangist authorities over Lebanon. All this was achieved under the American

cover called the multinational forces, which facilitated the killing of surviving Palestinians. These same forces then returned to Lebanon, first, to witness the arrest of thousands of Lebanese and then to participate on the side of the aggressor."

The plenary meetings were open to statements from all; a main theme of those who spoke was overwhelming condemnation of Israeli aggression and US policy in the area, coupled with full support to the common struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese people. A broad unity of views concerning the implication of the Sabra-Shatila massacre and its consequences was reflected in the documents adopted by the symposium (see following the declaration and program of action). The symposium also addressed messages of solidarity to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, to the leaders of the NSF (Jumblatt, Karami and Franjeh), to President Assad of Syria, and to Brother Moammer Qaddafi of Libya. Cables were sent to the UN, requesting immediate action to stop the killing of Lebanese civilians, to end the US intervention and to work for fulfillment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.



Political Declaration

The International Symposium "One Year After the Sabra and Shatila Massacre", after discussing the current situation in the Middle East and specifically in Lebanon, declares that the US military intervention in this country could lead to a dangerous war threatening peace the world over. This intervention is complementing the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and both aim at realising the Zionist and imperialist plans in the entire region.

The US military units which returned to Lebanon together with the other units of the multinational force, after the perpetration of the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila camps, with the ostensible purpose of protecting the safety and security of the people, are now committing aggression against the same people. ...Already the fire power of the 6th Fleet is used in operations against the Lebanese people, killing innocent women, children and men, while thousands of Marines are waiting on US warships off the coast of Lebanon to join these operations. Similarly, the British bases in Cyprus are used to the same end, contrary to the will of the Cypriot people.

The symposium notes with grave concern that the US administration, after supporting the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, is extending every military assistance to the reactionary Phalangists...under the pretext of supporting the legal government which was imposed under Israeli aggression in order to entrench Phalangist authority against the will of the majority of the Lebanese people, Muslims and Christians.

In order to continue the policy of Camp David, the US administration is making every effort to liquidate the Lebanese patriotic and progressive forces and to pose a direct military threat to the Arab Republic of Syria.

These actions are taking place while Israel continues to occupy southern Lebanon and part of the Beqaa Valley, escalates its repression against the Lebanese and Palestinian masses, and furthers the implementation of its plans to annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip by establishing Israeli settlements.

The symposium declares that the US military operations and political designs are being implemented to impose the agreement concluded between Israel and the Phalangist authority in Lebanon, which deprives the Lebanese people of their rights to sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; to impose the so-called Reagan project which denies the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their inde-

pendent state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative; and to entrench the US military build-up and political hegemony over the Middle East, the Gulf area and the eastern Mediterranean.

The recent US military threats against the Libyan Jamahirya, aggravated since the imperialist intervention in Chad, and the maneuvers of the US rapid deployment force in North Africa, the African Horn and the Gulf were other manifestations of the same policy.

The symposium stresses that the current US strategy in these areas is part and parcel of the American global military plans, particularly those implemented in southern Africa, the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Central America. It is also connected to the deployment of US medium-range missiles in western Europe, thus pushing mankind to the brink of nuclear annihilation.

The symposium hails the struggle of the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian peoples against Israeli expansionism and the US policies, and calls for the further cementing of their unity in the struggle against the common enemy.

It fully supports the consistent effort made by the Lebanese people under the leadership of the National Salvation Front to exclude the military option for the solution of the Lebanese question, to achieve national conciliation among all Lebanese people, to safeguard the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of their country, and to put an end to the US military intervention.

It expresses its solidarity with their struggle to abrogate the agreement concluded between Israel and the Phalangist authority which entrenches Israeli hegemony over Lebanon, and to solve the Lebanese question through the implementation of Security Council resolutions no. 508 and 509 and the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Lebanese territories.

It strongly supports the struggle of the Palestinian people against the implementation of the Reagan project and for the realisation of their inalienable national rights, to return to their homeland, to self-determination, and to establish their independent state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative, in conformity with the relevant UN resolutions....

The symposium urgently calls for the immediate ending of the US military intervention in Lebanon and the withdrawal of the multinational force from this country.

All peace-loving, democratic and liberation forces are requested to take immediate action to promote peace in this strategic area by achieving a just settlement to the Middle East crisis and turning the region into a peace zone free from nuclear weapons and foreign military presence.

Program of Action

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRS OF SABRA AND SHATILA

September 16-18 marks the first anniversary of one of the most grotesque crimes in modern history: the carefully planned massacre, by the Zionist forces and the Phalangist militias, of hundreds of defenseless men, women and children in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon. A worldwide movement of protest and moral indignation that transcended national, social and ideological barriers, unanimously condemned this crime...

The martyrs of Sabra and Shatila have not been forgotten, and they shall not be forgotten. The symposium has met to keep alive the moral conscience of humanity aroused by this crime, so that there shall be no more Sabra-Shatilas. The symposium proposes to all concerned organizations and individuals a program of action to mobilize concrete moral, humanitarian, political and material support to those who suffer the consequences of the massacre, and to the just struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

The Sabra-Shatila massacre, as a direct result of the US-supported Israeli invasion of Lebanon, aimed to induce a final exodus of the Palestinian people from their place of refuge. This massacre continues a terrorist policy that earlier led to carnage at Deir Yassin, Quiba, Kafr Qassem, Sammu and elsewhere. Following Sabra and Shatila, the aggravated repression against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples raises the spectre of future massacres. The massacre at Sabra and Shatila also paved the way for the current situation, where some of the powers engaged in the Multinational Forces are, in contradiction of the alleged aims of these forces, mounting daily foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Lebanon. The presence of US military forces, including the 6th Fleet, has escalated dramatically.

In consideration of the ever-widening and increasingly dangerous consequences and subsequent developments of the Sabra-Shatila massacre, the symposium proposes to national and international democratic and solidarity organizations, the following program of action:

1. Commemoration of September 17th each year as the International Day of Remembrance of the Sabra and Shatila Martyrs.

2. Increased and coordinated informational activities in order to enlighten international public opinion and encourage understanding of the significance of the Sabra-Shatila massacre and ensuing developments.

3. Issuing statements and texts that clearly analyze the causes of the massacre, the motives of those responsible, and those who have benefited politically from it - first and foremost the US administration with its plans to control the region.

4. Disseminating to the international public the conclusions and documents of the international commissions of inquiry and tribunals concerning the 1982 war and massacre.

5. Promoting the organization of an International Tribunal which will function as a Court of World Opinion to determine the international legal liability as well as human and political responsibility for the crimes committed during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and to render judgement on all those responsible for the Sabra and Shatila massacre.

6. Establishing an international committee to campaign for the reconstruction of the Sabra and Shatila camps. The committee should initiate an international fund for this purpose and campaign in other ways to protect the survivors of the massacre.

7. Intensifying actions and campaigns of solidarity with all the victims, Lebanese and Palestinian, of political, racist and factional persecution in Lebanon and occupied Palestine:

- defending the Palestinian and Lebanese detainees from torture and ill-treatment;
- demanding the right of the prisoners of the Ansar and other camps to be recognized as prisoners of war as required by the Geneva Conventions;

- supporting the struggle of the Lebanese national democratic forces for democratic freedoms and the national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon;
- campaigning for the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of war now held by Israel and the Phalangists.

8. Acting for the dissemination of the Geneva Declaration of the 1983 UN Conference on the Question of Palestine, and the implementation of all relevant UN resolutions on the Palestinian question and on the situation in Lebanon.

9. The Athens Symposium mandates the International Secretariat for Solidarity with the Arab People and their Central Cause, Palestine, to contact all concerned national and international organizations to achieve the timely implementation of this program of action.

The program of action concluded with an appeal.

Sri Lanka

Tamil Nation Attacked

The attacks against Tamil - speaking people, which started July 25th and continued for two weeks, focused new attention on the national question in the island of Ceylon, since 1972, called Sri Lanka. The problem, however, is not new. Since the British granted nominal independence to Ceylon, 3 million Tamils have been treated as an unwanted minority in their own homeland, oppressed by the neo-colonial regime which relies heavily on drumming up chauvinism among the Sinhalese population, in order to stay in power.

Like in Sabra-Shatila, the latest massacre against Tamils was carried out under the banner of rooting out "terrorism", while the victims were mainly the unarmed masses. Tamils were indiscriminately attacked or shot in the streets. More brutal methods were also employed: People were stoned, burned or knifed to death.

Signs of the regime's responsibility were rampant. One of the worst killings occurred in the confines of a maximum security prison in the capital, Colombo, where guards assisted Sinhalese prisoners who clubbed 35 Tamil detainees to death. Two days later, the same scene was repeated, making a joke of the authorities' claim that they were powerless to stop the killings.

More proof of the regime's intentions came on July 30th, when widespread unrest provided an excuse for banning the three largest Sinhalese left parties: the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, the People's Liberation Front and the New Socialist Party - with President Jayawardene referring to the alleged role of "foreign agents" in the riots. Since then, the parliament has passed a new law bann-



Looting and burning of Tamil homes.

ing all "separatist" organizations, a euphemism for those fighting for the Tamil people's right to self-determination and independence.

Just as Sabra-Shatila was the latest in a chain of bloody Zionist attempts to wipe out the Palestinian national identity, so this massive pogrom against the Tamils is the extension of years of national oppression. In 1948, the United National Party (created by the British to assume state power after their departure) passed a law revoking the citizenship of over 1/2 million Tamils. These are workers on the tea plantations who had lived on the island since the last century and remain disenfranchised until this day.

In 1949 began the policy of settling Sinhalese on land expropriated from Tamils, as a way for the regime to absorb discontent among the Sinhalese masses whose needs were not met by its neocolonial policy. At the same time, Sinhalese chauvinism was cultivated, based on reactionary manipulation of Buddhism and on the pretext that the Tamils enjoyed special privileges, when in fact this was only the case with a small feudal strata drawn by the British into the administration. In 1956, Sinhalese was proclaimed the sole official language, leading to drastic reduction in the number of Tamil-speakers in official, military and professional positions.

Since the early 70s, the northern region of the island, where Tamils are concentrated and have traditionally lived, has been under virtual occupation by the army. The constitution enacted in 1979, drawn up with an eye for getting International Monetary Fund aid, enabled the imposition of a set of emergency laws that were applied in the north. Political affiliation is forbidden for trade and student unions, and arrests and torture are commonplace in an attempt to suppress the Tamils' struggle for their legitimate rights. The combination of state policy and deliberately cultivated chauvinism has culminated in pogroms against Tamils in 1956, '58, '77, '79, '81 and now '83.

Yet while national oppression has remain a constant, the response of the Tamil people has developed, qualitatively and quantitatively. After failed attempts at passive resistance and spontaneous uprising, the mass struggle is now being mobilized through the coherent strategy of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam. In October, we had the opportunity to interview the General Secretary of this organization, Comrade Uma Maheswaran (see following).

Note: For more background on the Tamil national question and struggle, our long-time readers can refer to PFLP Bulletin 41.)

Tamil Liberation is the Only Way to Socialism

The following is an interview with Comrade Uma Maheswaran, General Secretary of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam.

What is the background for the recent pogroms against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka?

The background for these has to be looked at from various angles. The first is related to the Tamil people's demand for exercising the right of self-determination, i.e., the demand for the independence of the Tamil nation. This struggle, which started in 1970, has become very intensive in the past four or five years. The regime's attempt to suppress this struggle by brutal armed methods failed, because of the Tamil people's support to the armed resistance. Thus, this massacre was planned by the state as a method for teaching a lesson to the Tamils.

Secondly, there is the economic crisis in the whole of the island, which has been aggravated. After 1977 (when Jayawardene came to power), Sri Lanka was opened to the plunder of the multinationals and foreign capital. This has failed to in any way alleviate the suffering of the common masses. Rather, the price of food staples and other commodities rose, while the luxury goods available due to the open door policy are not accessible to them. Especially with the economic crisis in the capitalist countries as a whole, the export-oriented policy did not work, and the aid which the regime had expected was not forthcoming. The discontent of the masses had to be turned in another direction; the regime needed scapegoats, and the Tamil people became the scapegoat.

Yet explaining the pogroms only in terms of the economic crisis would be mechanical, for it would not have worked if not for the deep-rooted chauvinism in which the Sinhalese masses have been indoctrinated for the past 30 years. The regime was just waiting for the right opportunity to unleash the state's terror on a larger scale. About two weeks before the pogrom started, the President, in an interview with the British "Daily Telegraph", said: "I'm not concerned about the lives of the Tamil people; nor am I concerned about the opinion of the Tamil-speaking people. I want to get rid of terrorism in the Tamil regions." This shows that the regime was preparing to unleash the pogroms.

Three days before the pogroms started in Jafne, three Tamil women were kidnapped and raped by the army of occupation in this city; one of them committed suicide. Three days later

the army was ambushed outside Jafne; 13 soldiers were executed immediately, and two died later from the injuries they sustained. Since mid-July, martial law had been declared in the northern province; there was new censorship, but the regime orchestrated this very well. They lifted the censorship so this news could reach the Sinhalese people, and it was presented as an attack on Sinhalese as such, rather than on the occupation army. They brought the bodies of the 13 soldiers to Colombo, instead of sending them to their own towns or villages as is customary. They then delayed the funeral until all relatives and friends had arrived. By this time the state-controlled media had spread the news to the rest of the island. After two days, the funeral took place; afterwards there were attacks on Tamil shops and homes in the capital, but these were isolated incidents.

However, the following day, the state organized gangs of hooligans. The thugs of the ruling United National Party went around in the state corporation's buses, and burned and looted Tamil homes, chasing the people out. For two days in Colombo, Tamil shops and homes were methodically selected and burned; 20 Tamils were killed. This was part of the regime's policy to teach the Tamils a lesson. Even foreign visitors and journalists who were in Colombo at the time have reported that the police and army were cheering and encouraging the thugs.

On the third day, the wholesale killing started. Objectively speaking, the whole genocide was not planned by the state. The state had intended to teach a lesson, but it got out of hand because the army, police and hooligans, supported by other racist elements, went amok, and the killing started in Colombo. In Jafne, on the other hand, the army went on a rampage the day after the attack on the soldiers. We believe this was strictly on orders. They killed 40-50 Tamils; 15 were children coming from school on a bus. They were ordered out, lined up and shot. Other innocent people were chosen at random and killed, including an 80 year old man.

Soon after the Jafne massacre, our organization decided we must defend the masses. Our commandos went out and patrolled the streets of Jafne, even though we knew this put us in a bad position militarily. The government was afraid and withdrew the armed forces to their Jafne

barracks, where they stayed for two weeks. They knew we would confront them, and with mass support, barricades had been put up at all the junctions.

However, in the south and west of the island the pogroms continued. On the fourth day, the President appeared on television and delivered a very chauvinist speech, saying that the pride of the Sinhalese had been hurt, and that he understood why such things were happening; he did not in any way condemn the killings. Then, on the fifth day, the pogroms took a qualitatively different turn: The police and army began opening fire on the Tamils, who resisted. At the end of the second week, there were 2,000 Tamils dead; the regime's figures are 380, but we can account for 2,000. The statement of the opposition leader in parliament, which is well substantiated, was 2,000 dead and 135,000 rendered homeless. This is those in official refugee camps, but there are many unofficial camps, so it may amount to 200,000 homeless. It is indicative that this time, even the businesses and homes of pro-government Tamils were not spared.

Would you characterize the Sri Lanka regime's overall policy towards the Tamil question?

In 1958, when some minimal demands of the Tamils were to be met, Jayawardene marched from Colombo to Kandy, which is one of the holiest sites for Buddhism, saying that the country was being sold to the Tamils. He was instrumental in the 1958 pogroms to make sure that the agreement granting these minimal demands was not implemented. Now, as head of state, he has been vested with almost dictatorial powers and is in effect a constitutional dictator.

Since taking power, he has been very closely aligned with US imperialism and actively supported by the regional reactionary powers. The intelligence service is being trained by the MOSSAD, though Sri Lanka has no official diplomatic relations with Israel. Also Singapore's secret service, which acquired a lot of experience with the repression of the communists in Malaysia, is training Sri Lanka's intelligence service.

Since the beginning, Jayawardene's policy has been to crush the Tamil masses' struggle. In 1977, there was a pogrom to this end; in 1979, there were selective killings of freedom fighters and activists. In 1981, half of Jaffna was burned, including the public library which was one of the best in South Asia and contained irreplaceable Tamil documents and literature. Now, having defeated the traditional left in Sri Lanka, it is important for him to crush the Tamil resistance, so that he can present a picture of a stable country in order to invite more foreign investment...



One of the few survivors of an arson attack provoked by government troops

What are the immediate and long-term aims of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam?

Our immediate aim is to liberate the Tamil-speaking people from national oppression. This is not an empty slogan: We will soon be in a position to begin an all-out confrontation, so it means seizing power in the Tamil nation. Logically, the immediate aim is to form an independent state in the Tamil nation.

Our struggle takes place mainly in the countryside. This is not because we have adopted the experience of some other struggle, but rather it suits our conditions. The concentration of the army is in the cities; we are not in a position to confront them there; we can ambush or adopt hit-and-run tactics. We believe, however, in protracted people's war, because this allows the masses to participate and to develop adequate patriotic and social consciousness. Also, militarily it is easier for us to operate in the countryside. There we are establishing semi-liberated areas - the army cannot come and stay there for long; they can only pass, or they can come and burn houses and crops, then leave. We have free movement in these areas, and this must be expanded to all the countryside. When we are ready, politically and militarily, we will attack the concentration of the police and army in the cities. Then we will declare independence and establish a state.

Concerning our long-term policy, national liberation is not the object of our politics; it is only the subject; the object is socialism. Therefore, even in the immediate situation, in the liberated areas, we are distributing land and trying to raise consciousness. We say to the masses that we are not against the Sinhalese, but should support the struggle of the Sinhalese working class. We are also trying to develop international consciousness by explaining and arranging discussions among our people regarding the struggles of others. We are fighting for the liberation of the Tamil-speakers.

ing people, because there is national oppression, but also because this is the only way we can achieve socialism in at least part of the island. Also, we leave our options open: If our fellow Sinhalese revolutionaries should rise up we are ready to join with them for a revolution in the whole country.

What is the relationship between national and class struggle in terms of the actual class composition of the Tamil people?

The class struggle is more pronounced in the Tamil nation than in the rest of the island, because of the existence of almost one million Tamil plantation workers. This is a solid proletariat which almost literally fits the Marxist description: They have nothing to lose - no citizenship, owning nothing, etc. It is one of the most terribly exploited working classes in any part of Asia.

Because of this plantation proletariat and also a large-scale rural proletariat in the Tamil nation and the poor peasants, it is obvious that the struggle for national liberation is also a struggle for the oppressed classes - the working class and peasantry - to seize power in the Tamil nation. Our mass support at this juncture is drawn from the peasantry and rural proletariat. Also, for the first time, the plantation proletariat is being organized along revolutionary lines. Until now, the leadership of the plantation proletariat has followed a reformist line, due to the peculiar conditions. But now, during the last two pogroms, they support more than any others; it is easy to mobilize them. We believe that it is the plantation proletariat which will lead the struggle.

What is your alliance policy regionally and internationally?

We have very good relations with the revolutionary forces in our immediate neighbors, especially India, with the Communist Party of India. Also, we do not view the government of India as an appendage of international monopoly capital. The Indian national bourgeoisie is independent; it has its own productive base. The government is truly non-aligned. In view of the struggle launched by the revolutionary forces, and the independent nature of the national bourgeoisie, the democratic revolution is possible in India. With this in mind, we have good relations with the Communist Party and with the Congress Party. We have no open conflict with the ruling Congress Party. However, we think that India will go towards socialism, and it is the communist forces that will lead the masses.

Internationally, we would like to have very good relations with the socialist countries led by the Soviet Union, with all anti-imperialist

countries and liberation movements, and with the democratic and progressive forces in the capitalist countries.

What is your organization's position on the Palestinian revolution?

Since the inception of our organization, we have always expressed our militant solidarity with the Palestinian revolution in general and with the Popular Front in particular. We see many similarities to our people's situation; for example there are the Zionist settlements on occupied Palestinian land; one of our main problems is the settlement of Sinhalese in the traditional Tamil homeland.

Also, we draw inspiration from the Palestinian armed resistance, the fact that it has continued in spite of long oppression and imperialism's great concern about defeating the Palestinian revolution. Also, the massacres suffered by the Palestinians in Shatila and Sabra and before, since the 1930s, are similar to what has happened to our people. Our masses see the Palestinian revolution and the Eelam revolution as one and the same. Our feelings for the Palestinian revolution are perhaps stronger than for any other, first because of the plight of the Palestinian people, and also because of the internationalism displayed by the progressive Palestinian organizations.

Last year during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, we - through our front organizations - arranged an exhibition and mass meeting in solidarity with the Palestinians, in Jafne. Actually, there were events like this throughout the island. This is something we have not witnessed since the Vietnam war; there is a broad, popular, nonpartisan support to the Palestinian people.



New Diaspora, 1982

There's No Place Like Home

Palestine's broad-limbed trunk
deep-rooted in scorched soil
though attacked and torn
growing still tougher
knows no place like home

from Sharon's brutal storm
convoyed freedom fighters
depart for kindred shores
to tell their story
like pods in the wind
spreading wider
the will to survive

seeds to continue the struggle
sprout forests of protest
in lands soaked
by deperate lying might
washing clean all confusion:
the invader has outdone himself

Lebanon's lashing a last stroke
new reinforced settlements
shall yet be reduced
by the watching world
awakened to reason and truth
no state secure against
the battering ram of righteousness:
There's no place like home
There's no place like home

Nancy du Plessis, 1982

Back Issues

The six previous issues of the PFLP Bulletin published since the June 1982 Zionist invasion of Lebanon are available on request from our present address: Bulletin, P.O. Box 12144, Damascus, Syria.

PFLP Bulletin, Summer 1982, No. 63: Covering the political, military and social aspects of the 1982 war up to the Sabra-Shatila massacre.

PFLP Bulletin, Fall 1982, also mistakenly numbered 63: Covering the enemy alliance's political offensive aimed at expanding Camp David in the wake of the Israeli invasion, with a special article on Jordan's role in this context. An evaluation of the role of Amin Gemayel's regime in imperialist strategy. PFLP's view of the principles necessary for ensuring the continuity of the Palestinian revolution. Gulf Cooperation Council proposal for a security pact.

PFLP Bulletin, Winter 1983, No. 64-65: Highlighting the 16th session of the Palestinian National Council (including the text of the adopted resolutions), and PFLP's 15th anniversary. Political statement from the PFLP Central Committee.

PFLP Bulletin, Spring 1983, No. 66: Focusing on the breakdown of the Jordanian-PLO talks. The Sword of Settlement in Occupied Palestine. Imperialism's Nuclear Threat. Tokyo Tribunal: Comrade Bassam Abu Sharif's intervention on the 1982 war.

PFLP Bulletin, Summer 1983, No. 67: Editorial on the internal conflict in Fatah. PFLP-DFLP Communique on Joint Political-Military Leadership. Analysis and reactions to the Israeli-Lebanese accord. "One Year After" - analysis of the results of the 1982 war. Book review: "Zionism in the Age of the Dictators". Tribute to Ghassan Kanafani.

PFLP Bulletin, Fall 1983, No. 68: Lebanon - popular resistance and the formation of the National Salvation Front. Section on Ansar. Background and perspectives of the PFLP-DFLP unity agreement. "War Scars on the Zionist entity" - study of the dissent in the Israeli army. Bright Star 1983 and a historical study of US military presence in the Gulf.