

# فلسطين حرة free palestine

September/October 1981 Price 20p



## Iron fist of occupation is tighter than ever

**THE FIRST** weeks of Menachem Begin's new term of office as Israeli Prime Minister have seen a massive clamp-down on civil and political rights of the Palestinian population living under Israeli military occupation on the West Bank. Recent actions underline Israel's determination to suppress Palestinian opposition to the illegal occupation which they have endured since 1967, and the government's rejection of any moves which might lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

A report in *The Times* on 4th August stated, 'The new administration intends to press Israel's controversial claim to sovereignty over the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip after the envisaged five-year period of Palestinian autonomy. It will also declare that it will never tolerate a Palestinian state in these areas.'

The current clamp-down has led to restrictions on the movements of elected mayors, the blocking of essential funds for municipalities, and arrests and harassment of journalists, all in violation of the Geneva Conventions.

On 9th July, the mayor of occupied Dahiriya, Muhammad Mashrafi, was dismissed by the military authorities. Accused of aiding resistance operations, the mayor insists that his 'crime' is the closeness of his political views to the PLO.

On 10th July, the occupation forces tried to arrest Amin Al Nasser, Mayor of Qalqilya, on the pretext that he had thrown a petrol bomb at Israeli troops. Like most prominent Palestinians in the 1967-occupied territories, Mayor Nasser is restricted to his home town. When he applied, a month later, for permission to travel on his honeymoon, it was refused.

On 13th July, the military authorities began interrogating Palestinians connected with development projects financed by the joint Palestinian-Jordanian Committee, based in Amman. This channels money from the Arab world into projects and municipal budgets in the occupied territories. It was an indication of what was to come. On 28th July the military commander of the West Bank, General Danny Matt, banned all transfer of funds from the Joint Committee to West Bank projects.

The £35 million which Palestinian municipalities received last year

through the Joint Committee is vital for their basic operations. 'Our own income is not enough to pay rents and salaries and clean the streets. All our projects, including a sewerage scheme and a new vegetable market, are frozen. The contractors are demanding their money,' says Ramallah mayor Karim Khalaf. The occupation authorities are irked by the small degree of autonomy which Arab funds give to the municipalities; by ending their economic independence, they intend to stamp out popular political defiance of the occupation.

At the same time, the military authorities banned elected Palestinian officials from expressing support for the PLO, and from meeting PLO members while abroad. Mayor Khalaf was arrested on 3rd August and accused of expressing support for the PLO in a newspaper interview. When he protested that he had been misquoted, the military released him on bail and arrested the reporter and the editor of the newspaper *Al Fajr* for questioning.

On 4th August, Beigin formed his government, after reaching an agreement with the right wing religious parties. The Defence Minister, res-

ponsible for governing the occupied territories, is General Ariel Sharon, who as Agriculture Minister in the 1977-81 Beigin government controlled settlement activity in the territories.

Sharon told the press on 12th August that he would instruct troops of the occupation army to treat the Palestinians with more respect.

Sharon also said that he wanted a 'dialogue' with leaders of the people of the occupied territory. Elected Palestinian mayors, including Bassam Shaka of Nablus, Elias Freij of Bethlehem and Halmi Hanoun of Tulkarm made it clear at their meeting with Sharon that only the PLO represented the Palestinian people. 'Any solution accepted by the PLO will be accepted by us. If Israel agrees to negotiate with the PLO, we may be willing to be a medium between the PLO and Israel,' Mayor Hanoun told the *Financial Times* on 25th August.

Meanwhile, there are no signs of any relaxation of harassment by the occupation authorities. Residents of El Bireh told reporters that townspeople were being woken each night by Israeli troops and forced to line the main road through the town. They had to stand there all night; the

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### Conflict Reports

**WITHIN** A few weeks Beirut was the target of a massive Israeli bombing raid, while in the Gulf of Sirte the United States shot down two Libyan reconnaissance planes. In a special report on pages 6 and 7, Louis Ecks examines the background to these events.

### Europe

A RECENT meeting of EEC foreign ministers failed to agree on any decisive moves which might push their promised Middle East initiative into reality, while the PLO is facing a new terror campaign to discredit its cause in Europe. Reports on page 5.

### Belgin's victory

THE SUCCESS of Menachem Begin at the Israeli polls points to an intensification of the Zionist settlement programme in the 1967 occupied Arab territories. Dr Alan George examines the voting trends in Israel which highlight the hawkish mood of the Zionists, and Phil Kelly examines the record of Israel's new defence minister. See page 8.

### Occupation

ISRAEL IS now disclosing plans based on a further twenty years control of the 1967 occupied territories. However, the Zionists are facing renewed resistance from the Palestinians. Reports on page 4.

village was being punished because, the Israelis claimed, stones had been thrown at vehicles belonging to settlers and the army.

On the same day as he called for a dialogue, Sharon extended the restriction orders on the editors of the three leading Arab dailies, keeping them out of their offices for another six months.

On 9th August, Karim Khalaf was refused permission to speak to the press to clarify the remarks which led to his arrest. The military government announced on the same day that 125,000 acres of Arab land, to the north-east of occupied Jerusalem, stretching from Ramallah to the settlements of Ma'ale Adumim in the east, Gush Ezion in the south and Bet Ur in the west, was designated as a 'planning area'. This means that Palestinians will be prohibited from building in the area, so that new Jewish settlements can be established there.

*Newsweek* summed up the situation for the Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories in its 24th August issue: 'The iron fist is tighter than ever.'

□ See profile of Sharon on page 8.

## Israeli help for UNITA

THE ISRAELIS have provided military specialists to help the South African Army train guerrillas of the UNITA movement in Angola, according to Sam Nujoma, President of the South West African People's Organisation, SWAPO.

Nujoma, whose organisation has been fighting since 1966 to liberate Namibia (South West Africa) from South African rule, said that the training was taking place in the port of Walvis Bay, on the Namibian coast.

UNITA, which receives most of its arms and finance from the South African government, operates with South African support against the Angolan government in the south east of the country, and was closely involved in the South African offensive in late August against Angolan towns and SWAPO units in Angola. The movement is now an important weapon in the Reagan administration's plans to destabilise radical nationalist governments in Africa and the Third World.

## Arab communities threaten strike over discrimination

ISRAEL IS facing a growing revolt from its Arab community, those Palestinians who remained in their homeland when the Zionist state was created in Palestine in 1948. After years of discrimination which has been reflected in financial allocations to municipalities of predominantly Arab communities, the situation is now acute. More recently it appears that central government funds are being delayed to those councils where support for the PLO is being voiced.

On 29th July 54 Arab local authorities in the state of Israel held a one-day warning strike to protest the Finance and Interior ministries' 'footdragging' in transferring funds to the authorities.

According to the *Jerusalem Post* on 29th July, 'Arab local authority heads say they are being financially discriminated against. They note that the interior minister last year gave Arab towns grants of IS300 to IS700 a person, while the national average was about IS3,000.'

The report continued, 'Officials of the Union of Local Authorities confirmed yesterday that the Arab authorities get 'the short end of the stick' when it comes to government funds. Arab authorities are on the verge of total collapse.'

And on 5th August the paper reported, 'The Nazareth municipality may be forced to close down unless it receives the funds it is owed for June. Nazareth municipality workers have not yet received their June salaries. According to municipality officials, the Interior Ministry has still not transferred the IS3.2 million it owes the municipality for June.'

The effects of discrimination in housing and allocations of municipal budgets have reduced the once proud Palestinian Arab city of Jaffa to a situation where 'hundreds of Arab families in Jaffa live below the poverty line' in sub-human housing conditions.

The Chairman of the Muslim Board of Trustees, Abed Kabub told *The Jerusalem Post* in a report on 10th July that the Israeli authorities were guilty of 'decades of neglect and contempt for Jaffa's Arabs'.

The *Jerusalem* daily reported, 'In 1948 some 5,000 Arabs were concentrated in what is known as Jaffa's Ajami quarter. Today, the same

space is occupied by some 25,000 people. The Ajami quarter has no roads. Its ramshackle houses are built up of wooden boards, asbestos, tin and concrete, dotted among demolished or collapsed buildings. Garbage piles lie untouched.'

One resident is quoted as saying, 'They don't collect garbage here, to try and torture us until we leave.'

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Kabub charges, not one building permit was granted by the Tel Aviv municipality to Jaffa's Arab residents. He says houses left by Jewish families are immediately torn down or blocked up by the authorities, which are eager to clear up the entire area and rebuild it into a commercial centre.

The aim of the Zionists is to force the Jaffa Arabs to leave their homes by deliberately restricting development permits and funds for services. Compensation is offered to the Arab residents, but Kabub says the offers are a fraction of the houses' real worth. 'The crumbling Arab houses are dwarfed by huge, modern Jewish apartment buildings, a stone's throw away,' the *Jerusalem Post* reported.



Overcrowded conditions at the Zionists' Nafha jail where Palestinian political prisoners recently staged a hunger strike in protest.

## Israeli jails 'overcrowded and subhuman'

AN OFFICIAL committee has reported that Israeli jails are 'overcrowded and sub-human', and has called for urgent action to improve the matter from the Interior Minister, National Religious Party leader Yosef Burg. The report has come from a committee appointed by an Israeli Supreme Court Justice, Yoel Sussman, following criticisms of the system from Palestinians and their supporters, and from concerned Israelis.

The report said that 2,700 people (almost all are Palestinians) were serving sentences for 'security offences', compared with 3,100 prisoners who had committed 'criminal offences'. These figures do not include those in 'administrative detention', that is, jailed without trial.

The *Jewish Chronicle* reported on 7th August that 'It was stressed by the committee that despite periodic

## PLO-Vatican link strengthened

THE VATICAN is now in regular contact with the Palestina Liberation Organisation, with an attitude towards the recent stages of the Middle East conflict that is 'without doubt a positive one', PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat told the Milan daily *Il Giorno* on 23rd July.

'There is a constant exchange of correspondence between ourselves and responsible people at the Vatican,' Arafat was quoted as saying. He praised the Vatican's stance on the recent fighting in Lebanon, because 'it has condemned the aggressive acts to which the Palestinian and Lebanese people have been subjected, [as it] condemns the violations which are perpetrated in Jerusalem.'

An editorial in the official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano* on 18th June, at the height of the fighting, strongly criticised the massive Israeli air attacks on Beirut the previous day, in which several hundred people were killed and wounded.

*Catholic News*, a news agency which has close links with the Vatican, reported on 26th August that the Arab states had agreed to strengthen their ties with the Holy See.

## Diplomatic status for PLO

THE PALESTINE Liberation Organisation's Representative in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur has been given full diplomatic status by the Malaysian government, the *Financial Times* reported on 22nd August.

## Punishment for Druze rebels

BEHIND THE propaganda façade of the Israeli information services, there is evidence that, contrary to the claim that Arabs of the Druze religious sect welcome the Israeli occupation, quite the reverse is true. Recent reports in the Zionist press tell of teachers being sacked or banished to remote areas, and of the authorities exerting strong pressure on Druze residents in the occupied Syrian

territories on the Golan to opt for Israeli identity cards.

On 29th June the *Jerusalem Post* reported 'The Military Government and Education ministry will punish Druze teachers in the Golan Heights, who allegedly incited their pupils to take part in an illegal strike several weeks ago. A reliable source said yesterday that several teachers will be sacked immediately and others will be transferred to remote schools next year.'

Apart from these arbitrary measures, the report says, 'Legal steps are also expected to be taken against those who have incited against the state. The planned measures are apparently a reaction to continuing agitation against those Golan Heights Druze who have already opted for Israeli citizenship.'

However, the rebel Druze claim that Israeli ID cards have been accepted only because strong pressure has been exerted on them by the Israeli military authorities. They assert that their stand is 'an expression of the feeling of all Druze on the Golan'.

Five Druze charged with inciting opposition to the use of Israeli ID cards by residents of the Arab territory occupied by Israel in 1967 have been sentenced to three months detention by a military court on 31st May. According to the *Jerusalem Post* on 4th August, the detainees are Sheikh Kamal Kanj, Sheikh Mahmud Safdi, Ahmed Kadmani, Ha'el Abu Jabel and Mahana Safdi.

## Churches force withdrawal of tour guide plan

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES in Jerusalem have forced Israeli tourist authorities to withdraw a plan that all organised tour parties to the Holy Places should be accompanied by official state-employed tourist guides. The churches claimed that the guides invariably included political comments in their explanations to the tourists.

Since the seventh century of the Christian era, under a guarantee first made by Moslem rulers of Jerusalem, pilgrims of all religions have had the right to be guided by those of their own faith.

## More settlements on Arab lands

TWO NEW settlements have been set up in territory occupied in the 1967 war, one near Hebron in the West Bank, and the other in Golan.

The fundamentalist Gush Emunim has initiated one south east of Hebron, as part of a plan eventually to encircle the historic Palestinian town by Jewish settlements. Settlers from the already well-established town of Kiryat Arba have also taken over a former hospital building in Hebron itself, and have evicted several Palestinian families from their homes in the town.

The Israeli Liberal Party, a component of Menachem Beigin's Likud bloc, opened a new settlement in occupied Golan at the beginning of August. To be called Har Odem, it is the twenty-ninth settlement to be established on Israeli-occupied Syrian territory, according to Zionist sources.

## Israel condemned at UN Energy Conference

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT actions were subjected to strong criticism at the meeting of the United Nations Energy Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, during August.

Among resolutions adopted by the conference was one affirming the right of all countries to develop and control non-fossil sources of energy, while the recent Israeli air-attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor was denounced by delegates. The conference also issued a warning of the danger posed by collaboration between Israel and South Africa in the field of nuclear weapons research, besides condemning South Africa's plundering of Namibia's economic resources, and the adverse ecological impact of South African military activities in northern Namibia and southern Angola.

The conference also heard strong criticism of the Israeli proposal to build a canal across occupied Palestine to link the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, which would be a source of desalinated water and of electric power for the areas occupied in 1967, and the rest of Palestine.

Bahraini Development Minister Yussuf al Shirawi called for international condemnation of the project, which, he said, was intended to change 'the geo-political realities of the occupied land of Palestine, and prevent the Palestinian people achieving their legitimate rights of self-determination in their homeland.'

## Zionists obstruct freedom of movement as more Jews leave Palestine

OVER 100,000 more Jews left Israel than arrived between 1969 and 1979, according to a recent survey by the Israeli Ministry of Labour. During the period, 384,064 Jews arrived, compared with 510,528 who left, the survey showed. Reported in the *Financial Times* on 20th August, the survey added that more than half of the new immigrants left within three years of arriving. The survey does not include the many thousands of Israeli Jews who emigrate without officially declaring the fact, to avoid the administrative and other difficulties that face those considered by the Zionists as 'deserters'.

The failure of the well-financed schemes to encourage the world's Jews to emigrate to Israel is underlined by the fact that up to 80 per cent of Soviet Jews leaving the Soviet Union now choose to go to the United States or other Western countries rather than Israel. Moreover, according to the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* on 3rd August, the number of emigrants from the Soviet Union is, in itself, declining. During July, only 779 arrived in Vienna, the lowest figure since August 1980, when 770 arrived. The agency quoted Charlotte Jacobson, chairman of the Soviet Jewry Research Bureau of the (US) National Conference on Soviet Jewry as predicting a further decline. 'In the next few weeks, we may expect the number of Jews applying for exit visas to drop substantially, resulting in a continued decline in the number of emigration permissions.'

In a desperate attempt to persuade more Soviet Jews to choose Israel for their eventual destination, the Zionist Federation has refused to provide welfare payments to those who want to go elsewhere. The Jewish Agency is also to cease its

former practice of referring Jews without relatives in the United States, but who wish to emigrate there, to two American Jewish charities. The Chairman of the Zionist Federation Arye Dultzin, has claimed that while many Jews leaving the Soviet Union prefer to go to the United States, they would go to Israel if unable to go to America.

One of the two American Jewish Charities, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, says it has reached no agreement about stemming the flow of Soviet Jews to the United States, and has not been consulted on the decision.

## Ministers move to East Jerusalem

TWO ISRAELI ministers are to move their offices to Arab East Jerusalem, the Zionist authorities have announced. Yitzhak Mordechai, Minister without Portfolio, and Avraham Sharir, Minister of Tourism, are to occupy office space in the building designated as the new Prime Minister's office.

Two years ago, a major diplomatic storm broke over the announcement by the Israeli government that Beigin's office was to be moved to East Jerusalem, and under heavy pressure even from its usual allies, the government backed down on the issue. The announcement of the impending move by two relatively junior ministers in Beigin's Cabinet is an indication that, following its recent election victory, the government intends again to revive the move.

After the June War in 1967, when the Zionists occupied East Jerusalem in violation of international conventions, the Israeli government announced its 'annexation' of Arab East Jerusalem, a move that was condemned by the United Nations, and has failed to receive recognition even from the United States.

## Expanding Israeli arms exports

ISRAEL'S MILITARY exports during 1980 were worth 1.25 billion dollars, making the state the seventh largest arms exporter in the world, the Economy Minister, Yaakov Meridor, revealed in mid-August. He was quoted by the *International Herald Tribune* on 18th August as telling a meeting of the Israel Bonds Organisation in Jerusalem that an increase by a further two billion dollars was envisaged over the next four years.

Exports of arms, primarily from state-owned factories, rose from 250 million dollars in 1977 to 750 million dollars in 1979. Recent customers have included the United States, and Switzerland, which is to spend 75 million Swiss francs on Israeli armour-piercing anti-tank shells.

Of more political significance, however, has been the emergence of Israel as a major arms supplier to extreme right-wing governments in the Third World where even the United States feels some embarrassment about being identified as a source of weapons. Immediately prior to the collapse of the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, Israel was his largest source of weapons, and has also emerged as the top supplier of arms to the embattled dictatorship in El Salvador. Israel has also, of course, emerged as a major arms supplier to the apartheid regime in South Africa, and is currently involved in training, South African-supported UNITA guerrillas for their campaign against the Angolan government.

Meridor indicated that the Israeli government now plans an approach to the United States seeking an

agreement on dividing areas for arms sales. He said Washington will be asked to let Israel supply arms where the United States cannot do so directly. The US government will be told 'You sell the ammunition and equipment by proxy. Israel will be your proxy. This could be worked out with the US', according to the report. It added that Israel was also to ask the United States not to compete with it on arms sales to Taiwan, South Africa, and Caribbean and some other, unspecified, areas.

Much of Israel's more sophisticated military equipment, particularly her military aircraft, is dependent on parts manufactured under licence from American companies. The *Jewish Chronicle* reported on 21st August that Israeli exports of aircraft and aircraft parts had risen to around 180 million dollars in the first seven months of 1981, an increase of 80 per cent over the same period in 1980. It gave no indication of the directions of trade.

In an interview with an Israeli newspaper a year ago, former Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Zipori said Israel increased its arms exports from \$250 million in 1977 to \$750 million in 1979.

According to a report in the *Los Angeles Times* on 18th August, 'While Israel has found no buyers for the Kfir jet to date, its sales in sophisticated arms include the Shafir air-to-air missile, the Gabriel sea-to-sea missile, high-velocity artillery shells and cluster bombs, targeting radar and small arms.'

## American missile gives Israeli navy longer reach

THE ISRAELI Navy has disclosed that it has been employing for some time the American-made 'Harpoon' surface-to-surface missile which is far superior to the Israeli-made 'Gabriel' missile, the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported on 6th July. It has extended greatly the range of Israel's attack capability at sea.

The Harpoon, which can hit targets beyond the horizon, is manufactured by the McDonnell Douglas Company. Its range is considerably greater than the Gabriel, and unlike the Israeli-made weapon, it does not have to be directed at a target but seeks out automatically. It is known in naval circles as a 'fire-and-forget' missile. It travels close to the sea surface and is therefore difficult to detect with radar.

## Settlers to stay in Sinai?

THIRTEEN FAMILIES belonging to the fundamentalist 'Gush Emunim' movement have moved into vacant flats in the settlement of Yamit, in occupied Sinai, in what appears to be a preparation for opposition to returning the area to Egypt next year. Yamit, and the remainder of occupied Sinai, are due to be returned to Egypt in April 1982, under the last stage of the implementation of the territorial clauses of the Camp David accords.

The families are led by Rabbi Yosef Anteman, 'Gush Emunim's' second-in-command, while the flats belong to the Israeli Ministry of Housing, which has so far made no move to evict them. They were vacant as a result of other settlers moving back to occupied Palestine in advance of next April's hand-over date. While it is unclear how the families gained access to the flats, one report suggested that police stood by and watched as they moved in and changed the locks.

# U.S., PLO: 7 Years of Secret Contacts

## Despite Official Line, Reagan Regime Continues Behind-Scenes Relations

By DOYLE McMANUS, Times Staff Writer

## Two deaths linked to Israeli stand on US-PLO contacts

A LEADING member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and an American ambassador are dead because of the Zionists' determination to block any dialogue between the Palestinians and Washington, it has been disclosed in a report published earlier this year in the *Los Angeles Times*.

The report revealed the extent to which the United States has, over many years, maintained a secret and behind-the-scenes dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation because of Israel's rejection of such contacts.

In 1979, Ali Hassan Salameh, head of the PLO's intelligence service, was killed in Beirut by a remote controlled bomb. The Israelis had long declared their intentions to kill Salameh, who they claimed was responsible for the Black September group operation at the 1972 Olympics in Munich.

However, the *Los Angeles Times* report published on 5th July suggests that the alleged Black September connection may have been only a screen for Israel's real motives for killing Salameh. Contacts between the PLO intelligence service and the CIA developed, according to the report, out of PLO assistance in evacu-

ating American citizens from Beirut in 1976 at the height of the Lebanese civil war. This became a secret 'back channel' of communication between the CIA and the PLO intelligence organisation.

Salameh was killed in 1979, and, according to the *Los Angeles Times* report, 'the CIA lost a valuable source'.

The second death resulting from Israel's rejection of any dialogue or contact between the Palestinians and the Americans was that of the US Ambassador to Beirut, Francis Meloy Jnr, who was killed in the Lebanese capital after being ambushed and kidnapped in 1976.

The PLO was not involved in the incident, but as the report points out, 'The PLO is the only functioning police force in the once elegant seaside district of Beirut where the US Embassy is situated, and in many of the districts where the US Ambassador must travel as part of his job. The US Embassy had no direct contacts with the PLO at the time, and when American diplomats did finally talk to the Palestinians — through an intermediary at the British Embassy — Meloy had already been killed. 'Frank Meloy might not be dead if we had those contacts in 1976,' a State Department official said.'

for excavations to continue in the tunnel: Israel has been accused on numerous occasions of undermining the foundations of the Islamic holy places on the Temple Mount in the course of previous archaeological expeditions.

Chief Rabbi Dr Shlomo Goren went to the extent of performing a religious purification ceremony before entering the tunnel, which the Zionist Ministry of Religious Affairs said might lead to foundations of the second Jewish temple, under the present Temple Mount. But an Israeli archaeologist, Meir Ben-Doy, who has worked on excavations in Jerusalem for years, let the cat out of the bag to the *Daily Telegraph* on 28th August. The tunnel's existence had been documented for at least 110 years, he said, since a Briton — Captain Charles Warren — stumbled across it. It even has a number — 30 — because it was identified as part of the water supply system used since Crusader times.

Israeli radio said that the new excavations had been kept secret because the authorities were aware of the uproar which their new digging under the Islamic holy places would cause among Palestinians and in the Arab world generally.

Rabbi Goren's enthusiasm for the excavations under the Temple Mount contrast sharply with his attempts, reported the previous day by the *Telegraph* to have civilian excavations in Jerusalem on the grounds that they were interfering with Jewish burial grounds from biblical times.

## Secret Zionist excavations undermine Temple Mount

ISRAELI RELIGIOUS leaders are trying to claim that they have newly 'discovered' a tunnel under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem whose existence has been known of for at least a hundred years. The 'discovery' is intended to make it easier

# Military governor killed by Palestinian fighters



**THE MILITARY** Governor of the Rafiah area, in occupied Sinai adjacent to the Gaza Strip, was killed on 14th July while attempting to defuse a bomb placed by Palestinian guerrillas at a busy road junction. The governor, Major Eli Shahak, was killed instantly. Two soldiers and three policemen were wounded.

'Security forces have been conducting an extensive investigation to trace the source of sabotage equipment smuggled into the Rafiah region in large quantities,' the Jerusalem Post reported on 15th July, confirming the resurgence of resistance activity in an area where the Israelis claimed to have ended such actions by the rigorosity of the occupation regime.

Two soldiers were wounded after an attack on their jeep near Gaza

earlier in the month, and occupation forces have been conducting extensive operations against local Palestinians, including the destruction of homes of relatives of suspected resistance fighters.

Resistance operations continue also in the occupied West Bank and the 1948-occupied areas of Palestine. On 29th July, guerrillas attacked a bus near the settlement of Maale Hahamisha, ten miles from Jerusalem. 'Israelis regard the incident as particularly serious, because it took place close to the main highway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv,' the *Jewish Chronicle* reported.

On 8th August, a bomb exploded near a police post near the entrance to the Wailing Wall in occupied East Jerusalem. 'A senior Zionist explo-

sives expert detonated the time bomb after failing to dismantle it; the resulting explosion destroyed the post and damaged several vehicles nearby,' Voice of Palestine radio said. On the same day, the radio reported a successful operation against a Zionist security organisation operating from an apartment in Neve Ya'akov, an Israeli settlement to the north of occupied Jerusalem. The bomb was again detonated *in situ*, destroying the office. Voice of Palestine said that although road blocks were set up and a number of innocent Palestinians detained, the guerrillas returned safely to base. Both operations were also reported by Israeli media, which called for the public to be on the alert for further such incidents.

Subsequently, an Israeli Army

patrol in the occupied Jordan Valley, clashed with a resistance group on 11th August. Voice of Palestine radio said that the commandos were on a reconnaissance mission. The guerrillas ambushed the pursuing Zionist troops, and inflicted 20 casualties, destroying two vehicles and seizing weapons. Israeli media confirmed the incident, but claimed that the two vehicles had hit mines laid in the road. The Israelis claimed that only nine soldiers were injured.

The following day, incendiary devices placed in a military equipment factory in Jerusalem by Palestinian commandos exploded at about 8pm, starting a fire which raged for several hours. The fire destroyed the factory and adjoining warehouses. The Israeli authorities said that the fire

had been accidental, and was confined to a shoe shop. Nevertheless, road blocks were set up and several Palestinians were arrested in the unsuccessful hunt for the guerrillas, who returned to their base.

On 23rd August, a bomb exploded in the Israeli Military Academy in Beersheba, injuring several trainee soldiers, and an explosion in a factory in Netanya caused a fire and damage estimated at scores of millions of shekels. On the following day, two explosions at Israeli military transport stations, where soldiers gather for transport to their units, injured dozens of Israeli military personnel. The two attacks took place at the Ra'anna-Herziya crossroads, and at the French Hill settlement in occupied Jerusalem, Voice of Palestine radio said.

## Gaza plan: twenty years more occupation

**THE ZIONIST** occupation authorities in Gaza have drawn up a master plan for the development of the area until the year 2000. The Guardian reported on 10th July. 'Masterplan', as the document is entitled, lays down details of the area's future development, including housing, roads, electricity supply and sewerage. 'It appears to repudiate any possibility of Palestinian autonomy in the area,' The Guardian said.

The paper added that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which provides health and welfare services for the 200,000 out of 452,000 Gaza Palestinians who are refugees, had not been permitted to see the plan. UNRWA wants to build two schools and a health centre, but fears that the necessary approval by the occupation authorities may be refused on the pretext that the buildings are not in conformity with the secret plan.

In June, the occupation forces stopped local residents from constructing three extra classrooms at an UNRWA school because permission had not been granted. On 17th June, the Zionist daily *Al Hamishmar* reported that work on a sewerage installation at the Gaza refugee camp of Khan Younis was stopped by the intervention of settlers from the

nearby encampment of Ganei Tel. They claimed that the sewerage works was being built on land which had been earmarked for an olive grove for the settlement.

The settlers first held up construction by planting a landmine on the site, and then approached the Israeli government. The settlement of Ganei Tel is sponsored by the National Religious Party, which now occupies an important place in the Belgian Coalition government. Although all the necessary permits for the sewerage plant had been granted, it has now been stopped officially.

The treatment plant was vital for the health of Palestinians in Gaza. None of the Gaza refugee camps have sewerage disposal facilities; waste simply runs away through drains. Such insanitary conditions contribute to an infant mortality rate of 88 per 1,000 births, which compares with the rate of 14 per 1,000 among Israeli Jews.

UNRWA has protested strongly to the occupation authorities that 76 relatives of people arrested for alleged participation in resistance operations — including women and babies — have been living under canvas since the destruction of their homes in Jabalia and Bureij Camps in May and June respectively.

## Dead Sea canal project 'unlawful' says Britain

**ISRAEL HAS** already raised the first \$100 million towards the cost of constructing a canal between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, despite widespread international condemnation of the project. At the end of July, Foreign Office junior minister Douglas Hurd, in reply to a parliamentary question from Tory MP Richard Needham, said that 'the project as planned is contrary to international law as it involves unlawful works in occupied territory and infringes Jordan's legal rights in the Dead Sea and neighbouring regions.' For this reason, Mr Hurd said, the British government would give the project no support.

Mr Hurd's sentiments were echoed by delegates to the recent UN Energy Conference, where the main intention

of the plan was described as the alteration of the geo-political reality of the occupied land of Palestine.

The canal project was conceived last year, and presented to the Israeli Cabinet for approval in August 1980. The canal is intended to start at Qatif, on the coast of occupied Gaza, and to run in the open for about 20 km, and then into an 80 km tunnel to the Dead Sea. At the end of the tunnel, the water will be used to power a hydro-electric plant, as it drops some 400 metres from the level of the Mediterranean to that of the Dead Sea. The 570 Megawatt plant would supply one quarter of Israel's current energy needs.

The level of the Dead Sea would rise — by some 17 metres within twenty years after the canal enters service, which is projected for 1990.

The Israelis say that this will merely compensate for the steady drop in the level of the Dead Sea, caused both by natural evaporation and Israeli and Jordanian exploitation of the Sea's salt for potassium fertiliser. The Jordanians needness to say, have not been consulted, and they oppose the plan. When the scheme was first mooted, Jordan's then minister of trade and industry stressed that the plan 'violates international agreements' about the Dead Sea, and international water body. The London based magazine *8 Days* reported on 25th October 1980.

The Mayor of Gaza, Rashad Shawwa, has pointed out that Israel has no right to the Gaza Strip, and that it could not take action to site the works connected with the Mediterranean end of the Canal in Gaza

without consulting the Palestinians. It has been estimated that changing the route of the Canal to avoid the Gaza region would cost only \$40 million; in the year since the project was mooted, estimated costs have risen by \$200 million in any case.

A Committee of the Israeli Parliament chaired by former Labour Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said that the alternative route avoiding Gaza 'had not been examined with adequate thoroughness,' the *Jerusalem Post* reported on 1st April this year. The decision to opt for the route through Gaza had 'degraded this project to the level of an election stunt'.

The question of the Canal's route reflects divisions among Israelis as to the merits or otherwise of holding on to the 1967 occupied territories. But

the construction of the Canal, along any route, is another example of Israel's unilateral interference with water resources in a region where they are delicately balanced. Jordan's Ambassador to the UN summed up the project as 'aggression' by Israel. It would, he wrote to Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, 'jeopardise the ancient Christian monasteries and holy places along the banks of the River Jordan in addition to inundating at whim the entire region of the Jordan Valley by raising the water level of the Dead Sea to a height which would breach its banks and threaten the irrigated area in the Jordan Valley and the tourist resorts as well as the vast industrial chemical projects which are nearing completion along the southern tip of the Dead Sea.'

FOREIGN MINISTERS from the ten Common Market countries have again failed to develop any positive initiative on the Palestine question following a weekend summit on the 5th and 6th September. The outcome of the meeting held in England underlines the continuing inability of the European Community to act independently of the United States on foreign affairs issues, and adds to the feeling in Palestinian circles that the so-called European Initiative will not materialise.

Commenting on the European stand in an interview published in the September issue of *The Middle East* magazine, PLO leader Yasser Arafat said, 'First of all let me say there is nothing that could be called an initiative. There was the Venice Declaration in which we have noticed a relative and positive change, but it must be further developed. In my opinion there is a European desire to play a role, but they don't have the capacity yet to translate this into reality.'

The Palestinians have stated that a European initiative must include a commitment to the Palestinians' rights to return to their homeland and to establish an independent sovereign state, along with EEC recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. These principles are already endorsed by the UN General Assembly, and any European stand which fails to match the international community's view can hardly be seen as providing the basis for dialogue by the Palestinians.

'The initiative has been stalled for nearly a year partly because of the hostility of the Reagan administration to any independent European moves in the Middle East, and partly by the obdurate opposition of the Israeli government,' *The Guardian* commented on 5th September. The paper added that one stimulus for the move was the possibility that the Soviet Union may be about to revive its own peace plan, which centres on an international conference of all interested parties. (See story on this page.)

However, despite President Reagan's opposition, among European Foreign Ministers there is general agreement that the Palestine Liberation Organisation must be associated with any future peace moves. French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson has already paid two visits to the Arab world, and met PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Beirut at the end of August. In Algiers on 9th August, he declared that the Palestinians had a right not only to a homeland, but also 'rights to a state structure'. This form of words, M Cheysson said, represented an advance by France from the support for a Palestinian homeland set out in the Common Market leaders' Venice Declaration of July 1980.

Cheysson repeated France's support for Palestinian rights later in the month during a visit to Beirut, when he met with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. 'This right [to a homeland] must be accepted and recognised as quickly as possible,' *The Times* of 31st August reported him as saying. In what was viewed by observers as an implicit criticism of Israeli policy Cheysson also said it would be 'criminal' to question 'the principle of Lebanese unity.'

#### Only the PLO

M Cheysson was unwilling to go beyond the Venice formulation, which described the PLO as a representative, rather than the representative of the Palestinian people. But British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington was much more positive when interviewed on 17th July on NBC Television's *Today* programme. He told US viewers: 'The PLO does represent

# Europe shelves Palestine initiative



the Palestinians. If you look at who represents the Palestinian people and try to find anybody but the PLO you will be absolutely unsuccessful. If you go to the West Bank, if you go anywhere, they are all people who belong to the PLO. Therefore, there's no one to talk to but the PLO,' he said.

Lord Carrington added that the EEC initiative was based on securing from the Arabs recognition of Israel's right to exist within secure borders, and 'in exactly equal measure' Israeli recognition of Palestinian rights. But one of his deputies, Douglas Hurd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office went further when he implied that Israeli recognition of Palestinian rights ought to precede any possible recognition of Israel by the PLO. 'If the Israelis accept the right of self-determination for the Palestinians, then in those circumstances — and only those circumstances — the PLO has to accept that there is an Israeli state which has the right to exist,' the Minister said in an interview with the London-based *The Middle East* magazine (July 1980).

#### UN moves

Both Foreign Ministers — Carrington and Cheysson — face the task of convincing their respective heads of government, Mrs Thatcher and President Mitterrand, who are considerably less enthusiastic about Palestinian rights. Moves which are possible include European action at the UN to add the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination to UN resolution 242 of 1967, which calls for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in war, and is recognised by the Common Market — but not by



Lord Carrington

the Palestinians — as providing the basis of a solution.

The Common Market countries will also consider publishing their own



Foreign Minister Cheysson

Middle East peace plan. This would be well-received among pro-western Arab governments, but would provoke considerable hostility from the Israelis

## Soviets support international conference

THE SOVIET Union supports the holding of an international conference on Palestine at which negotiations with the participation of the PLO and Israel would take place. Oleg Troyanovsky, the USSR's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, said in an interview with the London-based *Middle East* magazine (August 1981) that conditions for such talks would be Israeli withdrawal to its 1967 frontiers, guarantees for the security of all states in the region, and recognition of the rights of the Palestinians, including 'the possibility of setting up an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.'

Mr Troyanovsky said that the US had failed in its attempts to persuade the Arabs that the Soviet Union presented a threat to their security. 'I think the Arabs realise full well that their main preoccupation is the aggressive policies and tactics of Israel,' he told the interviewer.

'The Middle East is very close to our frontiers, far closer than to the frontiers of the US. It is natural that we are concerned about the situation. Any attempt to push the Soviet Union completely out of the picture will end in failure, as I think it has,' he concluded.

and probably from the Reagan administration. The EEC countries do not wish to seem to be undermining the Egyptian-Israeli talks within the framework of the Camp David agreement, but they are 'sceptical whether these negotiations have much of a future,' *The Guardian* said on 5th September.

Israel has deliberately worsened its relationships with the EEC countries, in part to reduce the weight of Common Market pressure for real concessions as part of the peace process. No date has yet been arranged for President Mitterrand's visit to Israel, pledged during his election campaign, and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has refused to accept an official invitation to Israel while Menachem Begin remains Prime Minister, the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported on 2nd August.

It quoted sources close to the Chancellor as saying that while he wished to visit, 'he will only do so if the political situation in Israel changes. This has been taken to mean that he will not visit the country while Menachem Begin is Premier'. The agency said that Schmidt had indicated his position in meetings with Israel's former Defence Minister, Ezer Weizmann, and Labour Party chairman, Shimon Peres.

The West German leader's decision follows an attack on him by Begin during the Israeli election campaign, in which the Likud leader and campaigning Premier insinuated that Schmidt had done the work of the Nazis while serving as a Wehrmacht officer during the Second World War.

The Common Market countries had all set their hopes on the election of a Labour government in Israel. They are aware that Labour would have made no more real concessions than Likud, but the hysteria generated by Menachem Begin during his election campaign, of which the insult to Chancellor Schmidt is a good example, makes relations inevitably rather strained. Mr Hurd expressed the hope that the new chapter in relations with Israel could be 'more reasonable in tone'.

## Kreisky defends Palestinians against extremists

AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR Dr Bruno Kreisky has reaffirmed his own and his country's support of the Palestinian cause despite a bomb attack on a Vienna synagogue on 29th August which left two people dead. Israel claims that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat had prior knowledge of the attack, and that the PLO is behind renewed violence in Europe. But the Austrian Chancellor told *The Times* on 31st August that those responsible were 'extremists who wish to sabotage a growing understanding in democratic countries' for the Palestinian cause.

The PLO denounced the synagogue attack as 'criminal and cowardly', and emphasised that it respects all places of worship. It is generally believed that a renegade Palestinian, Abu Nidal, was behind the attack and a number of other incidents, including bomb explosions in Rome and Athens, which have damaged the property of Israeli or Jewish

organisations. In Vienna, other incidents which have strained the relationship between Austria and the PLO have been the murder in May of Heinz Nittel, Chairman of Austria's Israel Friendship Society, and the departure, under a cloud, of Ghazi Hussein, the PLO's representative in Austria.

Hussein was arrested on 29th July at Vienna airport in the company of two men, one of whom was later convicted of trying to smuggle arms into the country.

His action was 'a very severe mistake', PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said in an interview with Austrian TV on 21st August. The PLO official was immediately withdrawn from the Austrian capital and was being questioned about the incident, Arafat said.

'The incident is being exaggerated,' Mr Arafat said. 'Certain sources are trying to spoil the very good relationship between us and

Austria and especially Chancellor Kreisky.' The former PLO official had been withdrawn by agreement with the Austrian government, said the PLO leader, and added that Austria was to be consulted over the question of a successor.

The embarrassment caused by the airport incident evidently failed to do enough damage to satisfy the extremists — hence the synagogue attack. But none of this has shaken the 70-year-old Austrian leader's support for Palestine.

In an interview with Simon Winchester of *The Sunday Times* on 6th September, Dr Kreisky said that the US would one day come to understand the centrality of the Palestinian question to Middle East affairs; 'President Reagan is Israel's closest friend,' the Austrian Chancellor said. 'But the day will come when he will be confronted by the fact that the only way to make real friends with the Arab people is by settling the

Palestinian problem. The latest excess has not changed my mind about that.'

Dr Kreisky supports the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and the removal of all Jewish settlements from the territories seized in 1967. He expressed pessimism about the 'old men of Israel, Begin and Peres', who, he said, 'will never settle'. He urged that young Israelis and young Palestinians should get together and try to understand each other.

'People have got to realise that they will never liquidate the PLO,' Dr Kreisky said. 'The Americans are learning to live with their negro problem and with their Puerto Rican problem. But these are minorities. The Palestinian issue is not the same, because behind the Palestinians are hundreds of millions of Arabs. The problem will never, never go away. Never will the Arabs give up,' he concluded.

# Hundreds die as Israel bombs Beirut

MORE THAN 300 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, many of them women and children, were killed in Beirut on 17th July, when Israeli jets bombed the Lebanese capital. Although the Israelis claimed the attack was directed at PLO and other resistance groups' headquarters in Beirut, the heavy toll of civilian lives was a natural consequence of timing and the targets. A heavily populated city centre district was struck during a busy shopping period.

The Daily Telegraph reporter filed an eye-witness account published on 18th July: 'Five storey buildings occupied by poor and bewildered Arabs crumbled one after another as the planes few in from over the Mediterranean Sea in a cloudless sky. When the raid was over, the scene was horrifying in the extent of destruction. It looked as though an earthquake had hit the area.'

The report continued, 'Everywhere people were crying, shouting, running about dementedly in a desperate search for family and friends. Bloody limbs stuck out starkly from the piles of pulped brick that had been their home. Cars had been tossed on top of other buildings that survived. Twisted metal was everywhere as shops, tin shanty houses and offices lay in ruins.'

The incident came after several days of Israeli attacks on Lebanon, launched by the Israelis after weeks of calm in the southern regions of Lebanon. The Observer report on 19th July noted, 'Until last week there had been a lull in Israeli air activity over Lebanon for more than a month. On 6th July the Israelis resumed their attacks on Palestinian bases in the south, although there had been no specific provocation.'

The Palestinian response was swift. For days Palestinian commandos rained salvos of rockets on to Zionist settlements in northern areas of occupied Palestine. The effect within the Zionist state helped to weaken the belligerent stand of Menachim Beigin. Settlers fled their homes, and public opposition to Beigin's blitzkrieg policy became evident.

The Beirut raid also raised questions about the level of American military strength for Israel on an unprecedented level. The Sunday Telegraph on 19th July reflected international opinion in its editorial which said, 'Mr Beigin clearly believes that nothing he does will ever upset the United States to the point where it will cease to supply his country with arms. Surely it is time that some American president summoned up the courage to say, "Enough is enough"?' President Reagan did, in fact, announce a halt to shipments of new F-16 fighter jets to Israel, but clearly he lacked any serious intention to taking the Zionists to task or

limiting their terrorist attacks on civilians. By the end of August the ban was lifted, and Washington announced that shipments of the planes would resume.

In London, the Representative of the PLO, Mr Nabil Ramlawi, commenting on the response of the international community said: 'It is an insult to humanity that Britain, Europe, and the United States can offer nothing more than "regret" and "concern".'

'What is needed is action not words. Britain and her Western allies, including the United States, should respond with firm sanctions to be imposed against Israel. Our people are dying from attacks from weapons manufactured and supplied by the United States. The weapons are American, the strategy is American, and Israel's actions have been approved and incited by the Americans.'

'We do not wish to hear anything more from Europe about political concessions from the Palestinian people,' Mr Ramlawi continued. 'It is an insult to ask the Palestinians to recognise Israel, while the Zionists resolutely reject the rights of our people, deprive us of our right to live in our homeland, and daily embark on a campaign of murder and genocide against Palestinian and Lebanese civilians.'

In Beirut Yasser Arafat referred to the Palestinians' military response when speaking to newsmen on 20th July. He said, 'It is known that we kept silent and did not reply to these barbaric and inhuman raids for two days. But we have our moral and national responsibility to defend our women, children and people, Lebanese and Palestinians. The Israelis have to remember that the blood of our women and children is precious too.'

The Palestine News Agency put the number of dead and wounded after five days of Israeli attacks at 2,000. The agency commented, 'Beigin has probably achieved the opposite of his objective, which was to turn the PLO into a battered and weakened outpost in the international community. Instead, he has given it new stature as an opponent with the same military capabilities as Israel, one which behaves in a logical manner and which is clearly far more responsible than Israel in its actions.'

The Israeli attacks appear to have been prompted by a number of developments to which the Zionists have no positive political response.

Firstly, the Israeli government is becoming increasingly alarmed by the growing recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the political force which represents Palestinian opinion. This movement of international opinion has been most heavily under-scored in recent weeks



An injured child is carried from the site of the Israeli bombing in Beirut (top), in which hundreds died and a whole district was destroyed.

by the surprising declaration of the former US National Security Advisor in the Carter administration that the United States should open talks with the PLO. At the time of the incident, however, the Israelis were already angered by the moves within the European Community to formulate a Middle East initiative which includes the PLO, and the clear and open support for the PLO from elected municipal leaders within the 1967 occupied territories of Palestine.

The political influence and power of the PLO is now concerning the Zionists as much as the military capabilities of the Palestinian liberation movement. The bombing of Beirut failed, however, in its intention to deal a severe blow to the leadership of the PLO. Not a single resistance movement official was killed.

Secondly, the timing of the raid came shortly after the Lebanese Phalangist movement had made pledges to Arab mediators seeking to resolve the internal Lebanese conflict, that they would break all ties with the Israelis. In recent months the Israelis have been increasingly active in providing arms and advisors inside Lebanon to assist the Phalan-

gists in their confrontation with the Palestinians and the Arab Peace-keeping Force, composed of Syrian troops.

Since the early 1970s, Lebanon has been the target of a deliberate Israeli campaign to destabilise the country, and to Arabise the Palestinian conflict, much as the Americans sought to Vietnamise the South-East Asian conflict in the decade before. Unable to undermine the Palestinian resistance movement on either the political or military levels, the Zionists have resorted to a scheme in which Lebanese Arabs will confront Palestinians.

Major General Yehoshua Sarguy, director of Israeli military intelligence, admitted that contrary to Mr Beigin's claim that the raid had been directed at Palestinian resistance offices and the PLO leadership, the real intention had been to drive a wedge between the Lebanese and Palestinians. He accepted that the raid would cause little disruption to the Palestinian resistance because the PLO could soon reactivate their headquarters.

The International Herald Tribune noted on 20th July: 'It was the first

time that a senior Israeli military official publicly has said that an expected benefit of the Beirut raids was to turn the Lebanese civilians there against the presence of the Palestinian guerrilla headquarters.'

The raid also coincided with the efforts of the American envoy Philip Habib to ease tensions in the region, while at the same time Menachim Beigin, the Israeli Premier, was locked in efforts to form a government in the wake of the Israeli elections which gave no single party a clear overall majority in the Israeli parliament.

The confrontation ended with severe humiliation for the Israelis. Premier Beigin announced that he had accepted a ceasefire, and since the Israelis were only fighting PLO forces, the implication that this could only be interpreted as *de facto* recognition of the PLO was not lost on western observers. If there was any face-saving for Mr Beigin, it was that he was able to dispute recognition of the PLO, and argue that he had accepted the US ceasefire formula, while the PLO had accepted the same formula presented to it through the United Nations.

TWO LIBYAN reconnaissance planes were shot down over the Gulf of Sirte on 19th August during manoeuvres by the US Sixth Fleet in Libyan waters. All the signs indicate that the American exercises off the coast of Libya were a deliberate challenge in which Washington expected some action. President Reagan has admitted he ordered the fleet to sail into Libyan claimed waters; commanders of the Sixth Fleet were ordered to Washington prior to the manoeuvres for briefing, which included the procedures for engagement; on duty at the National Military Command Centre in Washington at the time of the incident was Lt Gen Philip Gast, which prompted Newsweek (31st August) to comment, 'Gast's presence at the centre in the middle of the night, plus that of a special alert team, indicates that the Administration may have anticipated trouble.'

The incident occurred over the Gulf of Sirte, which Libya has claimed as 'historical waters' since 1973. Contrary to American reports, Libya otherwise claims only a 12 mile limit to her territorial waters.

## Reagan's crude assertion of power in the Gulf of Sirte

The Gulf of Sirte is of great strategic importance to Libya. It penetrates some 200 miles into Libya, with the country's oil fields located not far inland. If the US were to carry out its threats to occupy these oil fields, American troops would undoubtedly sail into the Gulf.

The Libyan planes were intercepted less than 30 miles off the Libyan coast and subsequently shot down. 'The Americans have been manoeuvring in our territorial waters for some time. American behaviour has been provocative, including statements by US officials that they want to get rid of Qadhafi and destabilise the regime in Libya. They have said they will give military support to anyone who will carry out military action against Libya.'

Addressing a rally in Beirut, Mr Yasser Arafat 'saw the American manoeuvres as part of 'a decision to subjugate this Arab region', and proclaimed the Libyan confrontation with the Americans as an expression of 'the new Arab determination in this region'.

Washington's intentions have been strongly questioned by the western press, with *The Observer* editorial on 23rd August headlined, 'A Second-hand Suez'. The paper commented, 'President Reagan has now confirmed that he was prepared to risk a confrontation when he ordered the naval exercise. If his aim was not to provoke an incident, it was at least to put on a demonstration of strength that would humiliate Colonel Qadhafi and weaken his position as Libya's ruler.'

The paper continued, 'But doubt about whether the clash was accidental remain, and there hangs around the whole affair an oddly familiar odour from the past — the faint smell of a second-hand Suez.'

'There is a clash ostensibly over control of a waterway, but with the ultimate aim of destroying the local ruler. There are the same accusations of expansionist empire-building with Soviet backing. There is a similar over-simplified diagnosis of the problem and similar crude treatment. Above all there is the same antique imperial tone and lack of proportion.'

Reagan's plan was amply explained by the *International Herald Tribune* in its editorial on 21st August:

'It was an open secret in Washington for example, that the Reagan administration was looking for ways to get rid of Colonel Qadhafi. The first big inter-departmental foreign policy study ordered was on how to neutralise Libya. Several reporters were told on background by responsible high-level officials that various approaches were being explored, including a joint effort with Egypt and Israel, and that assassination would not be ruled out.'

The American-owned newspaper continued to disclose the conspiracy: 'The United States has asked other countries to condemn and isolate the Qadhafi regime. Oil companies were advised to evacuate their US employees from Libya. "The companies won't get another warning," an unnamed official told the *Wall Street Journal*. "We're playing confrontation politics and we want them out, whether there is a coup in the works or not..."

The paper concluded, 'It can't help make an observer curious about whether there wasn't more to the incident than is apparent.'

## WHY LIBYA IS WASHINGTON'S TARGET

THE SHOOTING down of two Libyan reconnaissance planes over the Gulf of Sirte on 19th August marks the latest in a series of developments by which the United States is seeking to assert its influence and control over the Middle East and the developing nations of the Third World. The incident occurred only hours after the American *Journal Newsweek* appeared with a report that the US Sixth Fleet exercises in the Gulf were intended by the Reagan administration as a direct challenge to the leadership of the Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi. Taken against the background of authoritative reports from Washington that the Americans have drawn up contingency plans for the overthrow of the Qadhafi regime in Libya, the incident is seen by many as a deliberate provocation in the overall campaign now being waged by the Americans to destabilise Libya.

For more than a year the Americans, through the CIA and 'confidential off-the-record briefings' given to journalists and newspaper publishers by the State Department, have made Libya the target of a sustained and bitter propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the Libyan leader. Although the Libyan campaign against citizens thought to be collaborating with the Americans and other western powers, has done nothing to strengthen Libya's image amongst public opinion in the West, there is little evidence to substantiate Washington's numerous other claims concerning Libyan foreign policy. Indeed, the destabilisation campaign against Qadhafi widely reported in the American press, includes a deliberate effort to discredit Libya through the planting of stories aimed at undermining Libya's position both in the Arab world and international opinion. The strategy is that once Libya is totally discredited and unable to depend on international support, the Americans can more easily take action to overthrow Qadhafi.

Enmity between Washington and Tripoli dates from the earliest days of the Libyan Revolution in 1969, when the pro-Western monarchy was overthrown and a new Arab nationalist regime seized power. Qadhafi's firm rejection of foreign military bases on Arab territory led to the early evacuation of British and American military bases in Libya, which in

the 1967 June War the United States had used to airlift supplies from Arab territory into Israel.

Although Libya under Qadhafi was, and still is, committed to a non-aligned position between the United States and the Soviet Union, the early efforts of Libya to liberate itself from western influence and control were seen in Washington as a direct challenge to American influence in the Middle East. Not least, the Americans feared Libya's new alignment against Israel, and considered Qadhafi's efforts to unite the Arab world around a nationalist consensus as not only dangerous to American intentions but also to its surrogate regimes in the region.

Libya's combination of economic strength from its oil revenues coupled with its strong rejection of foreign influence in the Arab world has given it the ability to withstand American pressures. Moreover, Libya has the funds to provide support to liberation movements and countries struggling against superpower interference and domination. Moreover, its Arab nationalist voice has a following in the Arab world which the Americans at one and the same time deny and perceive as an obstacle to their efforts to bring other Arab regimes into accepting the Zionist presence in Palestine. Libya, in its efforts to undermine the power of the giant American based multinationals, and its belief that the Arab world should be free from all foreign military influence, is seen in Washington as leading a dangerous trend towards Arab independence, and influence in world affairs.

The American penetration of the Middle East is now both political and military. On the political level, the Americans hope to undermine Arab resolve on the issue of Palestinian rights, and strengthen the United States influence in the region. The initial approach of the new Reagan-Haig administration was to assert a Soviet threat to the Arabs' independence, which may have been sympathetically received by Washington's western allies, but amongst the Arabs it sounded hardly credible, even to those countries traditionally close to the Americans. As the Arabs perceived the situation, and this view has been substantially strengthened in the wake of Israel's attacks on Baghdad and Beirut earlier this year, the main aggress-



Yasser Arafat and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi confer during a recent meeting.

sive thrust against the Arabs is coming from Israel and the arms and political immunity which it receives from the Americans.

Yet there has been some success for America in the Middle East. First the Sadat regime in Egypt broke with Arab consensus and reached a peace treaty with Israel, and in recent months the Americans have succeeded in weaning the Sudan and Somalia away from the Arab camp into an American axis which geographically divides the Arab world. Coupled with this has been the American military build-up in the region and the establishment of a chain of military bases on Arab territory. The Americans claim these bases are to ensure political stability in the region — radicals like Libya's Qadhafi challenge this and assert that the real motive is to suppress popular movements intent on democratisation and asserting Arab rights. Certainly it is true that the Americans do not wish to see the emergence of more nationalist Arab regimes which might direct their economic and military capabilities to the confrontation against the Zionists in Palestine.

### New power bloc

The Libyans argue convincingly that what the Americans really fear is the emergence of the Arab world as a united power bloc in world affairs. Such a development would undoubtedly herald for the first time a powerful economic and political community able to stand independently

from both the Soviets and the Americans. It would add much momentum to the efforts of the developing nations to achieve a more equitable new world economic order, and give greater significance to the non-aligned movement.

And it is the prospect of a new world economic order which the Americans fear most — one which would greatly diminish the hold which the United States and its multinational companies are able to exercise over the desperately weak economies of the developing countries — weak because of the continuing exploitation of Third World resources. The Americans look at Libya, and Qadhafi in particular, and recall the traumatic effect which this one man's determination to free his country's economy from the oil companies had a decade ago.

US military spending under the Reagan administration is expected to jump from \$171 billion in 1981 to \$365 billion in 1986, with a sixteen per cent rise next year. A substantial part of this will go towards the establishment of military bases in Egypt, Somalia, Oman and Kenya, and now possibly the Sudan.

Such developments are not necessarily supported by the peoples of these countries, and Washington recognises this weakness in her strategy. Far from securing the regimes in the host countries, it merely encourages opposition movements to look to countries like

Libya for support in thwarting American plans. Conversely, if the Americans can engineer the overthrow of Qadhafi in Libya, they know their presence in the region will be greatly strengthened. This message has not been lost on Israeli leaders. Earlier this year plans were made for a joint Israeli-Egyptian invasion of Libya. Israel's Defence Minister, then Agricultural Minister in the last Beigin government, Ariel Sharon held high level talks with Sadat and subsequently flew to the Western desert along the border with Libya to prepare the plans. These were to have involved the use of Israeli planes, covered with Egyptian markings, and Israeli pilots fluent in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic. Details of the plan were leaked, it would appear from sources close to Sadat and possibly involved in the joint Israeli-Egyptian meetings. The coincidence has not been lost on the Libyans that Sadat met with President Reagan only days before the Gulf of Sirte incident, and that according to sources in Washington the Sixth Fleet exercises were timed to coincide with Egyptian manoeuvres along the Libyan border.

Last year the Egyptians and the Americans attempted to overthrow the Chadian government to secure a territorial base on Libya's southern flank from which to attack northwards. But the Chad government turned to Qadhafi for support, and called in Libyan troops to put down the uprising. Their plan failed, the Americans then accused Libya of invading Chad.

The foreign policy priorities of the Reagan administration are clearly set on a collision course with the trend of events in the Third World. To justify its bullying tactics against the small nations of the Third World, the Americans have deliberately sought to cover their actions by claiming to confront the Soviet Union. Initially Reagan planned to take this proclaimed 'stand' in El Salvador, only to face strong criticism from within the United States from liberal politicians and church leaders. With the inherent anti-Arab feelings in America, and the support of a persistent propaganda campaign against Libya, the administration has clearly set Libya and Qadhafi as its No 1 target.

Louis Eaks



No end in sight to Zionist occupation

AS WESTERN Zionists ponder the dilemma of supporting an Israeli leader who in a matter of weeks can offend international opinion with the bombing raids on Baghdad and Beirut to such an extent that Washington's relationship with Israel is now being openly questioned, a study of Israeli election results indicates that Mr Beigin is far from the exception which liberal Zionists in the West now claim.

Israel's general election earlier this year confirmed a voting pattern which dates back to the 1973 election, rather than Beigin's first victory as leader of the Likud Party in 1977. Set in the context of political develop-

ments during the 1970s, Israel's Labour Party has been shown to be wholly ill-equipped to deal with the mood of the Zionist electorate.

Beigin's 1977 victory was, according to Zionist apologists in the West who had long aligned with the ruling Labour Party, due to a series of factors, including financial scandals which rocked Labour in the run-up to the '77 election, and the role of the Democratic Movement for Change in splitting the Labour vote (and then joining Beigin's coalition). Moreover, the argument goes, Israel's oriental (Sephardic) Jews were more united in supporting Beigin as the candi-

## Beigin victory for the real face of Zionism

date fighting the predominantly east European (Ashkenazi) Jewish Labour Party.

Yet while western Zionists justified their continued support for Israel on the basis that the '77 poll had been an exception, which suggested that Beigin would not win the 1981 election, voting patterns from the early 1970s suggest a more profound change in Israeli opinion.

The first evidence of a marked shake-up in political allegiances came in the 1973 election, shortly after the traumatic October War in which Egyptian troops pushed Israel back from the Suez Canal. Beigin's Herut Party and allies won 43 seats, 13 more than in previous elections in 1969. However, the Labour Alignment and associate parties took only 51 seats, a five seat drop from 1969. In each of the seven elections between 1949 and 1969, the Labour Alignment and similar parties had taken between 56 and 65 seats, with the right-wing parties securing only 26 to 34 seats. The other major force in Israeli politics, the religious parties, have consistently taken between 15 and 18 seats.

In the wake of the 1973 war, although Labour won the election in that year, the trend which was to put

Beigin in power in 1977 had already begun. The Labour Party was still committed to the UN resolutions referring to Israel's responsibility to hand back the Arab territories seized in the 1967 war, even though on the ground Labour had set the pattern of Zionist settlement on the West Bank and Gaza which Beigin later claimed as exclusively his own achievement.

Beigin, on the other hand, represented the view widely held amongst Zionist settlers in Palestine, that any land seized from the Palestinians was automatically and irrevocably part of the Zionist state. Given his fundamentalist Zionist approach, Beigin and the Likud were far better equipped to deal with, and refute, Palestinian claims to their legitimate rights. Increasing recognition of these rights by the international community, and calls for a settlement based on the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state, forced the Israeli electorate to look to the party most capable of rejecting such solutions. Beigin was the man, and Likud was the party.

Beigin's success in winning the oriental Jewish vote has brought forth some extraordinary explanations in Western Zionist circles. Yoram

Kessel, reporting from Jerusalem in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 10th July, said: 'The Likud's world outlook, and more particularly its attitude in Middle East politics, suits the temperament of the people whose background has been largely shaped in Arab and Muslim countries.' It is not spelled out, but the inference is clear: Israel's oriental Jews came from societies that were not parliamentary democracies, and therefore lean towards demagogues such as Beigin. But there is a fatal flaw in the logic. Most of Israel's western Jews came from East Europe and Russia, which the *Jewish Chronicle* hardly hails as democratic, but most of them lean to the Israeli Labour Party. The truth is that Zionist propagandists in the west are still scrambling to reassert the 'liberal' image Israel once boasted. They will clutch at any straw to discredit any suggestion that there really is a large body of opinion in Israel that finds Beigin and his naked brand of Zionism attractive.

In short, the 1981 Israeli election has confirmed the trend of overt extremist nationalism that first appeared in the 1973 election, but at the time went almost unnoticed. Israel's 'liberal' pretensions — false as they were — have finally evaporated. And the election has accentuated the deep rift between the two main Jewish communities in Israel. For an assessment of the outlook for a political settlement of the Palestinian question by Beigin's new government, one need only look back and ponder his destructive policies over the past four years.

Dr Alan George

## SHARON: Israeli democracy's nemesis?

GENERAL ARIEL Sharon, Menachem Beigin's Defence Minister, is regarded with almost as much concern by fellow Israelis as by Palestinians. Former Israeli Army Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur told the Washington Post on 5th August: 'Sharon could use the defence establishment to threaten democratic values; now that we are in the midst of peace negotiations and the delicate situation with Syria, I dread to think what he is capable of doing.'

Sharon has wanted the Defence Ministry since the resignation of Ezer Weizman in March last year. Beigin was reluctant to appoint him, telling Cabinet colleagues that Sharon's solution to a problem within the Cabinet would probably be 'to send his tanks to surround the Prime Minister's office.'

Sharon has been closely involved in the use of terrorist tactics against Palestinians and other Arabs. In 1953, he led a plainclothes Israeli Army terror squad, designated Unit 101, across the Jordan border to the town of Qibya, which was virtually destroyed. 45 homes were blown up, and 69 people, half of them women and children, were murdered. The raid was said to be a 'reprisal' for the deaths of an Israeli woman and two children in a settlement near Tel Aviv.

During the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt in October 1956, Sharon demonstrated that he cared as little for the lives of his own men as for those of the enemy. 38 of his men were killed, and 120 wounded, after a Sharon miscalculation sent paratroopers straight into Egyptian positions in Sinai's Mitla Pass. The

Israeli Army covered up the incident, claiming that the attack had been a bold gesture which misfired. Sharon avoided court martial; his commanding officer, Moshe Dayan, later wrote in his memoirs that the Army had a doctrine which punished commanders only for 'doing too little, not too much'.

After Israel seized Sinai and the Gaza Strip again in 1967, Sharon was appointed Governor and military commander. By 1971, in his report to the General Assembly, the Chief Representative of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Sir John Rennie, said that the Israelis had demolished over 6,000 homes in Gaza refugee camps in five weeks during August, 1971. Sharon claimed that the resulting wide swathes of empty land through the refugee camps made security tighter; his patrols could move quickly, resistance fighters were more exposed. But the real reason was to cow the local people into submission. A general strike supported by the whole population was broken when Sharon sent troops to seal permanently the shops which had closed to support the strike; taxi drivers on strike had the licence plates removed from their cars. Under the guise of 'interrogation', Sharon's troops arrested and ill-treated Palestinians at random.

### Final solution

The Bedouin population of Sinai, the other part of Sharon's fiefdom, were subjected to even greater cruelty. Sharon's final solution for the Bedouin started with the evacuation of all nomadic people from their lands, the destruction of their

pastures, and the blocking of their wells. The lands thus ruined would be fenced, and eventually handed over for settlement. Israeli journalist Maxim Ghilan estimated that 4,800 people were driven off their lands in this way.

In 1973, Sharon was elected to the Israeli Knesset on Menachem Beigin's Likud party list, capitalising on the popularity he had won as a frontline commander in the 1973 war. He resigned in 1975; in 1976 he appeared on the other side of Israeli politics as Special Advisor on Defence to Labour Premier Yitzhak Rabin. It was in this capacity that Sharon strengthened links with the semi-clandestine paramilitary right wing groups which enjoy most of their support from settlers in the 1967-occupied territories.

The links ran through one Rafi Eytan, a former agent in Mossad, Israel's secret service — not the Rafel Eytan who is Israeli Army Chief of Staff. Eytan, along with Sharon, Avraham Mintz, treasurer of Gush Emunim's Elon Moreh Settlement, and former journalist Eli Landau, arranged private deals in which they forced the sale of Arab land in the occupied West Bank which was then handed over to Gush Emunim supporters for settlement.

The private schemes were overtaken by government sponsored land seizures. But when Sharon ran for the Knesset in 1977, this time on his own party list, Eytan was his chief of staff. Sharon joined Menachem Beigin's coalition. Though Beigin refused him the defence portfolio he was made Agriculture Minister,

with responsibility for settlement in the 1967-occupied territories. Eytan became Beigin's Special Advisor on Terrorism, and Landau, Sharon's press spokesman.

Sharon's supporters are fond of boasting about his contribution to the annexation of the West Bank: when he took office in 1977, there were thirty settlements; soon there will be 108. But Sharon's main contribution to a permanent Israeli hold on the 1967-occupied territories has been the creation of the virtually autonomous units of armed settlers which 'defend' the encampments there. These 'regional defence squads' were created in the wake of the problems caused by civilian settlements in 1973 — those in the occupied Golan Heights were easily overrun by Syrian troops, and had to be 'rescued' by the Israeli Army.

'Since the West Bank and most of the Golan Heights are settled by zealots and right wing nationalists mostly belonging to Gush Emunim, a semi-autonomous military command has been set up, trained and armed by the IDF but able to operate independently... in early 1980, the settlers... set up parallel defence and security committees, quite independently from... the military government... This means that while logistics, training and military help are marshalled through the IDF, any independent operation the settlers may decide on may be carried out through their own commands,' *Israel and Palestine* magazine revealed in September 1980. From among these state-sponsored private armies came the assassination squads which struck against Palestinian mayors Bassam Shaka, Karim Khalaf and Ibrahim Tawil, in June 1980.

### Jordan

Sharon has made no secret of his wish to see the remaining Palestinians driven from their land. Last year, in an interview with Australia's leading daily *The Australian*, he disclosed that in September 1970, he had

argued that Israel should not intervene in Jordan to save King Hussein from Syrian troops. Syria had invaded in support of the Palestinians who were being pounded by Jordanian artillery, planes and tanks. Sharon said: 'I argued that we should not save King Hussein... my view is that the Palestinians should be allowed to take over Jordan... to give them a political expression... Palestinians do have their own state in Jordan.'

With his appointment as Defence Minister, Sharon has consolidated his powers. His links with the settlers' paramilitary units, his official control of Israel's military, and the support he enjoys among the settlers have one principle objective. 'Maps and a guide from his office disclose some startling "facts" — new Jewish townships — in stone, metal and cement, which are clearly designed to defy uprooting by President Reagan or anyone else,' Gavin Young reported in *The Observer* on 9th August.

One liberal Israeli expressed the view to Young that 'Total and unshiftable Israeli domination over the West Bank is now a political fact.' 'A fact,' Young commented, 'that probably means war in our time.'

Liberal Israelis fear that any deal which involved the evacuation of the West Bank and Golan settlements would be opposed by the Israeli military. One told Young: 'The burgeoning Israeli military infrastructure — bases, depots, training, testing areas — cannot make do with pre-1967 Israel. After the Sinai withdrawal, the generals need the new space we occupy here.' Sharon agrees.

The spectre of 'tanks round the Premier's office' is very real. Some Israelis even fear that Sharon as Defence Minister might even go so far as to prevent the election of a moderate government by military force.

Phil Kelly

# Ziad Abu Eain: POLITICAL PRISONER

THE ARAB American Anti-Discrimination Committee organised meetings and protest vigils in several US cities on 21st August to mark the second anniversary of the imprisonment in Chicago of Ziad Abu Eain, a Palestinian from Ramallah who is fighting extradition to Israel.

Abu Eain and his supporters claim that he is the victim of Israeli harassment of Palestinians and of the double standards of American law enforcement agencies and courts on the issue of politically-motivated violence — 'terrorism', in official US language.

His lawyers have petitioned the Supreme Court, contending that Abu Eain has not had a fair hearing in the US. He has been held in custody since his arrest by the FBI on 21st August 1979; bail has been refused although ten families have offered homes worth about \$1 million as sureties. The FBI admit that they arrested Abu Eain at the request of the Israeli police. He is accused by the Israelis of being responsible for a bomb attack in Tiberias, in 1948-occupied Palestine, in May 1979, in which two people were killed and 36 others wounded.

The allegation that Abu Eain was involved in the bombing is based solely on a confession made to Israeli interrogators by Jamal Yasin, an acquaintance. The confession is in Hebrew, a language which Yasin neither speaks, nor reads, nor understands. He has since repudiated it twice, in sworn statements. In the confession, Yasin claimed to have driven those who placed the bomb to Tiberias, and identified one of them as Ziad Abu Eain. He has said that one reason why he implicated Abu Eain is that he thought that his acquaintance, who had left for the US in early June 1979, was beyond the reach of the Israeli authorities.

The extradition treaty was signed between Israel and the United States in 1963, and this is the first time that Israel has used it. It provides that evidence presented to secure an extradition should be at least enough to secure a conviction if the alleged offence had occurred in the country where the offender actually is. A twice-denied confession would not be enough to secure conviction in most US courts. But the magistrate hearing Ziad Abu Eain's case found that there was 'probable cause' that he had committed the crime, and ordered his extradition.

Defence lawyers were not allowed to lay before the courts the affidavits from eleven people who swear that Ziad Abu Eain did not leave Ramallah, 120 miles from Tiberias, on the day of the bomb explosion, 14th May 1979. Abu Eain's sister-in-law gave birth to a child on that day; he was working in the family's shop until three in the afternoon, and then joined in the celebrations, when relatives and friends came to offer their congratulations.

American columnist Jack Anderson sent a reporter to interview those who had sworn affidavits. He wrote in the *Washington Post* on 6th August: 'They would make persuasive witnesses that Abu Eain could not have planted the bomb in Tiberias.' Anderson recounted the interviews given to his reporter, Peter Grant: 'His mother Mahmoud said he left Ziad in charge of the store at 9.30am, and a store employee, Shaker Al-Shaker Samsor, said he worked with Ziad



Ziad Abu Eain: Political prisoner who waits for justice

all day. Several employees of the family's kitchenware factory said they telephoned Abu Eain several times during the day with questions about orders.'

Ziad Abu Eain's sister-in-law recounted how she had telephoned him at 1pm to say that she was going into hospital to have her baby, which was born at 3pm, and Anderson

added, 'Several residents of Ramallah swore to my reporter that they stopped by the family store during the afternoon to congratulate Abu Eain on the birth of his nephew.'

'Many Arab groups feel the State Department and the Justice Department are manipulating US immigration laws and extradition treaties to harass Arabs, especially Pales-

tinians. They say there is evidence that the FBI and the immigration authorities have collaborated with Mossad, the Israeli intelligence organisation, in a politically motivated crack-down against Palestinians residing in the US,' the *Detroit Free Press* commented on 25th July.

The paper continued: 'Although the State Department and the Justice Department deny that Arabs have been singled out because of domestic political considerations, FBI sources admit privately the Bureau does have a keen interest in all Palestinians coming to the US. "There is always a potential for [Palestinian] terrorism in this country. We would be remiss if we didn't try to stay on top of it," said an agent.'

'But why is it,' one US Palestinian asked the reporter, 'that we can be deported or imprisoned on the flimsiest evidence while right-wing Cubans or Nicaraguans are allowed to take target practice in Miami?' Scenes of such paramilitary training have even been shown on US and British television.

'At present, Ziad Abu Eain's lawyers are appealing to the US Supreme Court. But the ultimate decision is in the hands of Secretary of State Alexander Haig. The Appeals Court has already ruled that 'an accused in an extradition hearing has no right to contradict the demanding country's proof or to pose questions of credibility, but only to offer evidence which explains or clarifies that proof.'

The second contention of the defence is that even if Abu Eain did plant the bomb, his motives were undoubtedly political, and extradition is thus specifically ruled out under the treaty. Peter McMullen, an Irishman who was sought by the British authorities in connection with a bomb attack on a British Army post in northern Ireland was said by a San Francisco federal judge in 1979

to be beyond deportation. But the Appeal Court virtually reversed this ruling in Abu Eain's case: 'We recognise the validity and usefulness of the political offence exception,' they ruled, 'but it should be applied with great care lest our country become a social judge and an encouragement to terrorists everywhere...'

The United States, most western countries, and Israel, have been trying for several years to end the concept of political asylum for those alleged to have been involved in politically motivated violence. This found concrete expression in the 1978 European Convention on Terrorism, which the United States, though not a signatory, supports. The exemptions are directed solely at left wing parties and national liberation movements fighting right wing and pro-western governments, of which the Palestinians are a prime example.

State Department witnesses at the extradition hearings have simply asserted that the political term 'terrorism' in the treaty does not cover what they term 'terrorism'. The defence has not been allowed to challenge the State Department's opinion on where protest against illegal occupation ends and 'terrorism' begins.

US human rights campaigners including Noam Chomsky, David Dellinger, Ralph Abernathy and I F Stone have appealed to Secretary of State Haig not to allow Ziad Abu Eain's extradition. They say that the case has ominous implications when coupled with the Reagan administration's growing support of authoritarian regimes which back US policies.

Seventeen Arab Ambassadors in Washington have also asked the State Department not to send Abu Eain back to Israel; such action, they say, would result in 'a profound sense of injustice' in the Arab world. The decision — in which politics is clearly more a factor than justice — is now in the hands of Mr Haig.

## US opinion shifts to PLO

**PRESIDENT CARTER'S** former Adviser on National Security, Mr Zbigniew Brzezinski told journalists in Washington on 12th August that the Palestine Liberation Organisation should be involved in 'some form of dialogue which would encourage it to be more moderate and which leads to the engagement of the PLO in solving the West Bank and Gaza Strip issues.'

The remarks represent a reversal of opinion by Mr Brzezinski, who is renowned for his comment in 1977 that the PLO's refusal to be associated with the separate Egyptian-Israeli peace reached at Camp David meant that the US were no longer in a position to influence matters in the Middle East.

'Liberal' opinion in the United States now realises that the influence of the PLO over events has not diminished at all. Events since the signing of the Camp David agreement have shown that the future of Palestine is still the central issue in the region, and that the PLO remains the only organisation which is representative of Palestinians. In addition, Mr Brzezinski and others among the Democratic Party's former office holders are now free from the electoral constraints imposed by the Israeli lobby in Washington. When asked why he had not advocated such a policy while in power, Mr Brzezinski replied: 'The question answers itself.' 'He seemed to be suggestive,

the *International Herald Tribune* commented on 14th August, 'that such a policy was easier to espouse by someone no longer in high office.'

The US policy of not talking with the PLO was formulated only as recently as 1975 by the then Secretary of State, Dr Henry Kissinger in return for Israeli agreement to disengagement in Sinai. American opinion is divided between those who believe, like many European governments, that the best way to save the Zionists is by making token concessions to the PLO, and those who back the Zionist state in its drive to achieve what the Palestine Congress of North America described as 'the genocide of the Palestinians'.

President Reagan told cheering Zionists on 3rd September 1980, during his campaign: 'I have no hesitation in branding the PLO as a terrorist organisation... dedicated to the establishment of a Soviet satellite in the Middle East.' On 6th August 1981, his Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, told reporters that he preferred 'not to classify' the PLO as a 'Soviet surrogate', and added: 'When you talk about the PLO, you are talking about a very diverse organisation.'

'In keeping with the diversity theme, State Department spokesmen were later instructed to say... that the PLO contained some "elements" which engaged in terrorism. But the organisation as a whole was not to



Brzezinski: New tune

be given the terrorist stamp,' the *Christian Science Monitor* said on 11th August.

A similar reversal has taken place on the issue of Zionist settlements in 1967-occupied Arab territory. 'In contrast with previous administrations, which considered such settlements illegal under international law, President Reagan started out by declaring that they were not illegal,' the paper pointed out. Then, the administration said that the matter was under review; the settlements, it was being said early in August, were a 'problem'.

Disenchantment with the Beigin government after the murderous July bombing of Beirut has also emboldened some US legislators to criticise, albeit in mild terms, the strength of

the Israeli lobby in the US Congress. It is '... not just lobbying persuasion of Congress; it is lobbying control of Congress,' wrote Republican Representative Paul McCloskey in the *Los Angeles Times* on 2nd August. He suggested that America's interests lay in the recognition of the PLO as a negotiating party to the Middle East problem; the establishment of a Palestinian homeland in the West Bank and Gaza; and the sale of AWACS planes and other advanced equipment to Saudi Arabia. All these measures were nearly impossible, Representative McCloskey said, because they were opposed by the Israelis and therefore by the Israeli lobby, regardless of whether they served American interests.

'Because one-third of all US foreign aid — \$1.4 billion in military assistance and \$800 million in economic aid — goes to Israel, a cut-off of this aid might well constitute the required force' to persuade Israel to agree, wrote Mr McCloskey, adding: 'Similarly, if forcing Israel to the bargaining table entails abolishing tax exemption on US citizens' private gifts to the Jewish state, then Congress should take that step.'

Representative McCloskey is a candidate for next year's elections for the California Senate seat presently held by right-wing Democrat S I Hayakawa, a staunch backer of Israel. His views have already brought letters from Jewish constituents withdrawing their support for him. But the activities of Beigin have made it easier for him to air his views — something which critics of Israel in US public life have, until recently, found dangerous in terms of votes, finance and media support.

# WHO ARE THE PALESTINIANS?

THE PALESTINIAN people now number 4,390,000, according to statistics released by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Palestine National Fund. And despite Zionist attempts to 'cleanse' (their own word) Palestine of Arabs, the figures show that the largest single concentration of Palestinians is still within the borders of Palestine, writes Dr Alan George.

1,825,600 — 42 per cent of the total — live in Palestine. Of these, 1,295,000 (71 per cent) live in the 1967 occupied territories and the other 530,000 in the areas seized by the Zionists in 1948. The Arab states with the highest numbers of Palestinians are Jordan, with 1,160,800 (26.4 per cent of the total), Lebanon, with 347,100 (8 per cent), and Kuwait, with 278,800 (6.3 per cent). The Arab Gulf states other than Kuwait between them have 232,400 Palestinians, about 5 per cent of the total Palestinian population.

The figures are contained in the Palestine National Fund's *Palestinian Statistical Abstract 1980*, just published in Damascus. Zionists like to depict the PLO as having only a military function. In fact, it includes a range of departments equivalent to ministries in a state, responsible for such areas as health, education, and information. The PNF, an integral part of the PLO, has many of the responsibilities of a Palestinian Treasury Department.

The data in the abstract underlines one of the principal features of the Palestinian people — their youthfulness. In 1978, for example, 46 per cent of the West Bank Palestinians were under fourteen. A further 28 per cent were between 15 and 29, and only 26 per cent were aged 30 or over.

With such an age structure, it is no surprise that the Palestinian people have a high natural growth rate. This is nowhere better illustrated than the West Bank, which has witnessed a steady increase in population, despite considerable emigration stemming from Israel's efforts to restrict job opportunities by stifling productive economic activity in the 1967 occupied territories. In 1968, a year after the start of the occupation, the West Bank population stood at 649,800. By 1978 it had reached 794,200, a 2.2 per cent increase in ten years. This was in spite of emigration of between 2,500 and 15,700 in eight of those ten years.

The Zionists have always been terrified at the high growth rate of the Palestinian population. On the one hand the growth of the Arab population of the Zionist state threatens the 'racial purity' of Israel, which was founded specifically as a Jewish state — a fact reflected in the discrimination directed against Arabs in every sphere. On the other hand, the Zionist attempts to decimate the Palestinians are rendered much more difficult when each Palestinian killed is at once replaced by numerous others. The Zionists' anguish over the Palestinian birth rate was expressed succinctly in an openly racist

remark of the late Israeli premier Golda Meir. On 25th October 1972 the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz* reported her admission that she had difficulty sleeping at night because of 'the thought of all the Arab babies who were being born at that moment'.

The new statistics also reveal the high educational level attained by the Palestinians — even those living in the most dismal conditions in overcrowded refugee camps. A sample survey at the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria, for example, revealed that about 3.5 per cent of those in the 20-49 age group had university degrees, or even higher qualifications. Of those aged above 15, the proportion who had completed secondary school was 8 per cent, a figure that rises to 11 per cent when only those between 15 and 39 years of age are considered. The younger — and more numerous — sections of the population have had better access to education than their elders, and perceive it as one of the few routes out of the squalor of the camps. Of the Yarmouk sample, 21 per cent were illiterate, but illiteracy was largely confined to the older camp dwellers. In the 10-29 age group, comprising 63.5 per cent of the total sample, only 4 per cent were illiterate.

The extent to which Zionist policies have made the 1967 occupied territories economically dependent on Israel is underlined in the trade data for the regions. In 1971 the West Bank had a trade deficit of 247.9 million Israeli pounds (£1) with Israel. By 1978 this had risen to £12,300 million. In the case of the Gaza Strip, the trade deficit rose from £1120 million in 1971 to £11,624.1 in 1978.

The new statistical abstract, the second to be produced by the Palestinian National Fund, contains a wealth of data on the Palestinians, but also contains many gaps, which the publishers say they hope to fill in future editions. The shortcomings, however, are hardly the fault of the Palestine National Fund's Central Bureau of Statistics. For example, it is not difficult to understand why there is scant data on the Palestinians in Lebanon, given the turmoil into which that country has been thrown by Israeli intervention. The conflict in Lebanon is only the latest source of danger for the Palestinian people. Because of all they have suffered at the hands of the Zionists, the Palestinians, while they retain a strong sense of national unity, remain physically scattered, and this immeasurably complicates the task of recording their numbers and analysing the socio-economic structures of their communities. The difficulties faced by census-takers in any part of the Third World are legion, but those who would document the Palestinians face daunting obstacles. Bearing all this in mind, the new statistical abstract is something of which the PNF can be proud. It demonstrates that even the collection of statistics can be an act of solidarity and national duty.



## MAHJOOB'S LONDON DEBUT

THE JERUSALEM-based Palestinian theatre company Al Hakawati will present their latest production, *Mahjoob, Mahjoob at the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith from 22nd September to 4th October*. The play, which has already been performed in Palestine, Holland, France, Switzerland and other European countries, is a powerful satire on the social, political and economic condition of the Palestinian people, expressed through scenes in the life of the tragicomic hero, Mahjoob. It will be the first time that the Palestinian troupe has performed in Britain.

The Al Hakawati company was formed in 1977 and is in the forefront of the movement to create a contemporary Palestinian theatre. The troupe comprises actors from a number of different theatre groups, including Balalin and Sandouk al Ajab, and works under the direction of François Abou Salem. One of the actors, Daoud Kuttab, is also a journalist on the East Jerusalem daily *Al Fair*, which has been a particular target for the Israeli censors because of its strong nationalist stance.

Al Hakawati's past productions have included *In the Name of the Father*, *the Mother and the Son* (1978) and the film *Life and Salt* (1979). Next year the company will collaborate on a new production with Jerome Savory's internationally renowned Le Grand Magic Circus in France.

The *Jewish Chronicle*, the leading British Zionist weekly, has sought to denigrate the play as simply 'anti-Israeli', but while the production is certainly not kind to the Zionist state, the Riverside Studios are emphatic that it was chosen purely for its artistic merits. That these are considerable has been openly acknowledged even by the Israeli press.

'The distress of the Palestinian people is staged with such creativity that it belittles the whole of Israeli theatre which has forgotten the role of theatre in social processes,' was the comment of *Haolem Hazei*, on 8th March 1981.

Al Hamishmar, on 17th March

1981 also praised the production: 'The latest play of Al Hakawati, *'Mahjoob, Mahjoob'*, is an important theatrical event. The artistic value of the play is not less than its political value. The directing by F. Abou Salem is innovative, rhythmic, penetrating and precise.'

'Their theatrical approach is far more developed than is usually the case in the Arab theatre,' said *Ha'aretz* on 17th February. 'This is our evaluation not only for the artistic but also for the political and

social propositions. The structure is striking, particularly the flashback scenes and the use of the central symbol: the coffin.'

While *Mahjoob, Mahjoob* is performed in Arabic, the production makes a strong visual impression and in any event comprehensive English language guides to the play are available to audiences. This production can be most strongly recommended.

## Make sure you receive Free Palestine

**FREE PALESTINE** is a wholly independent information office and campaign newspaper, committed to supporting the Palestine liberation struggle and exposing Zionist violations of human and national rights in Palestine.

**The survival of the newspaper depends on your support. Please complete the form below and send us your subscription and donation.**

To: Free Palestine, PO Box 492, London SW19 4PJ

- ☐ I enclose £..... subscription for 12 issues of *Free Palestine*  
☐ This is a new /renewal subscription  
☐ I enclose £..... donation to support your work

Name .....

Address .....

☐ delete /complete as applicable

Subscription rates: UK /Eire £4.00 / Europe £5.00 / Elsewhere airmail £7.00

# editorial

## AMERICA AND PALESTINE

VISITS BY Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat to Washington in recent weeks have underlined the extent to which the United States is deeply embedded in the future of the Middle East. US troops have exercised in Egypt, and President Reagan seems to have accepted offers from Israel for closer military collaboration.

This increased involvement by the world's most powerful military nation on the side of the occupiers of their country strengthens Palestinian determination. Many in the West genuinely believe that America's attachment to Israel is an aberration, and not in America's own interests. They point with some justification to the reliance of America on Arab oil, to the importance of the Arab market for its exports. Sooner or later, they say, America will wake

up to where its real interests lie. The main object of the PLO, they say, should be to encourage this by being as 'moderate' as possible.

American policy may become a little more even handed. But it would be wrong to suppose that present policies are based on simple economics. Ambassador Robert Neumann, dismissed by Secretary of State Alexander Haig because he put the Arab case too strongly, argued recently that 'While America's strong support of Israel remains an unchanging moral and strategic perspective of this or any other administration, there's a parallel need for close relations with the Arab world, and particularly with the Saudis.'

The acceptance of Zionism from a man widely and rightly regarded as a friend of the Arabs indicates the depth to which Zionism has its hold

in the US. It is true that many Americans are appalled by this; sometimes they are even appalled at the positions which they have themselves espoused in the past as a result of it. President Carter's former National Security Advisor, Mr Brzezinski, for example has now recanted his dismissive remarks about the PLO, like a man waking from a nightmare.

But Americans are victims of a demonology in foreign affairs, one largely of their own making. When they send their troops or military advisors against a small country or a liberation movement, they really believe that they are not attacking a tiny adversary, but confronting one part of a world conspiracy backed and inspired by the Soviet Union.

That is the rationale for insane incidents such as the attack on Libyan planes in that country's airspace.

President Reagan really believes that he is teaching a super power a lesson.

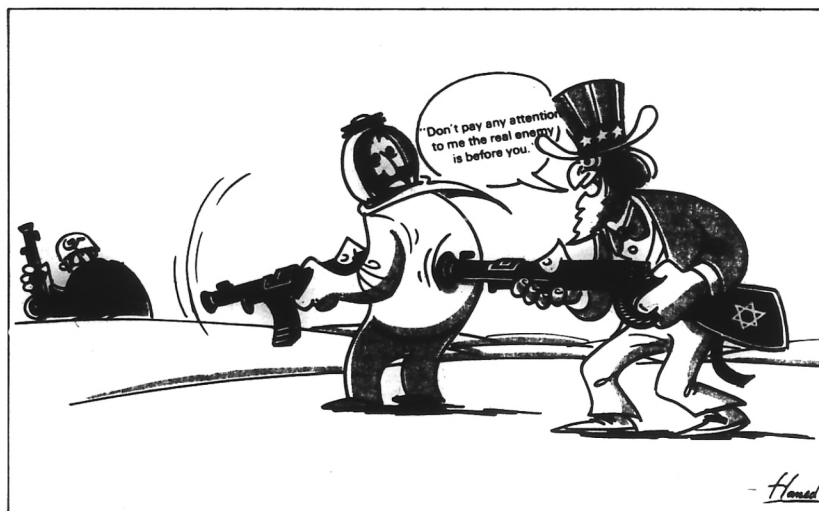
Ambassador Neumann put his finger on it when he spoke of the differing perceptions of Israel in the US and in the Middle East. In the US, he said, 'Israel is regarded as a small country surrounded by deadly enemies.' That perception is outdated and the Middle East perception is exactly the opposite. The strength of Israel is mind-boggling. The Middle East sees Israel as a military giant, unassailable. The raids (on Iraq and Lebanon) reinforce that perception, he insists.

In general, Palestinians set little store by the twists and turns of US policy. The basis of the liberation of Palestine must always be the resistance of the Palestinian people themselves. The armed struggle for Palestine has now been under way for nearly seventeen years, but that is not long by the standards of other national liberation wars.

If the United States were to change its attitudes in the Middle East, it would certainly help to shorten the war and to minimise the bloodshed. But it would be wrong for the Pales-

tinians to base their entire strategy on hoping for a change on the part of the US. Indeed, such U-turns as that executed by Mr Brzezinski happen precisely because of recognition that the Palestinians, and the PLO as their sole representative, are a permanent feature of the Middle East. Palestinian steadfastness, rather than willingness to compromise on basic principles, has brought results.

But this is not to say that the PLO is unwilling to discuss the future of Palestine. Chairman Yasser Arafat gave a warm welcome to the peace plan recently advanced by Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia. There is a lesson for European politicians, no doubt concerned over the lack of progress for the European initiative on the Middle East. A fresh start must base itself on the realities of the region, not on outdated or distorted perceptions such as those which underlie Camp David. The PLO is very willing to talk; the Palestinians will not be bought or badgered into submission. The Europeans would be best advised to start their Middle East initiative by persuading Reagan to accept what some of his fellow countrymen realise already.



### Israel's Man at the Beeb

ONE OF Israel's major banks now has a voice in the running of the BBC, a position which many a British banker would envy. Stuart Young, a Director of Bank Leumi, has been appointed a Governor of the BBC by Home Secretary William Whitelaw, a member of Conservative Friends of Israel. Mr Young is a member of the British Overseas Trade Group for Israel, and President of the Joint Israel Appeal, which raises money to finance settlement activity.

Shadow Home Affairs spokesman Roy Hattersley recently attacked the unrepresentative composition and establishment bias of the BBC Board of Governors. The official BBC line is that Governors 'represent the public interest', but only by appointing senior staff and determining the 'broad pattern of expenditure'. In fact, the Governors act as a group of censors of last resort, weeding out what is not removed by self-censorship among the BBC's staff. The BBC Governors recently withdrew an invitation to the nuclear disarmament campaigner, Edward Thompson, to give the 1981 Dimbleby Lecture. What chance a fair hearing for the Palestinian cause now?

### West Bank does not exist

AN INDICATION that we are fast approaching 1984 comes from a *Jewish Telegraph Agency* report on 22nd July which discloses that Israel's Supreme Court will hear an application after the summer recess to ban Israeli radio and TV from referring to the 'West Bank' and will insist that it be called 'Judea and Samaria'. Those seeking the ban feel that continued reference to the West Bank reinforces the point that the territories are under military occupation, as they have been since 1967. By reinforcing the use of biblical terms for the West Bank territory the Zionists believe they can succeed in convincing others that the territory has been part of Israel all along.

### Point taken

ISRAEL HAS come up with a solution to what it terms 'illegal building' by Israeli Arabs, a consequence of Israel's reluctance to provide building permits and funds to predominantly Arab municipalities. The *Jerusalem Post* on 13th July noted that 'illegal building in the Arab and Druze sector has virtually disappeared.'

It quotes Israel Koenig, the Interior Ministry's northern district representative as saying that only three houses were built in 1980 without permits, compared with dozens and sometimes hundreds in previous years.

The *Post* continued, 'He attributed the change to the authority given to planning commissions to demolish illegally built houses within 30 days after construction — without waiting for a court order.'

### Equal Opportunities unknown

UNTIL RECENTLY 140 Palestinian Arabs were working alongside 240 Israeli Jews at the Op-Ar textile factory in the north-west Negev. However, the debt-ridden company has been ordered to cut back its labour force by the Israeli government. The company was forced to sack 240 workers 'including all 140 Arab workers and another 100 Israeli employees', according to a report in the *Jerusalem Post* on 10th July.

It quoted Barukh Haklai, head of the government employment service as saying, 'If they now want to re-

employ 60 workers they must give priority to Israeli citizens', the euphemism for Jewish as opposed to Christian or Muslim Arab workers.

### 'Have you spoken to any Arabs?'

ISRAEL'S CLAIM to be running 'a benign occupation' is not nearly as widely accepted in the West as formerly. This report, by a British journalist who visited Israel and the occupied territories on behalf of a major British news organisation, indicates how thin is the Zionist pretence.

A FOREIGN journalist working in Israel has in many ways little to complain about. The press office is efficient and most requests are met promptly. Even now when they have become more wary of the attitudes of the foreign press they insist that in their democratic country you can 'go where you like and speak to whom you like'. You are only forbidden access to security areas and military establishments and even these restrictions can be lifted.

Out of the orbit of the press officer however it is a different story. Ideals of democracy have not filtered down to those who in the occupied territories at least are in the immediate positions of power — the soldiers on guard duty.

Since he had his legs blown off last year Bassam Shaka, the mayor of Nablus, has had a constant military presence outside his house. Invited guests are harassed as are members of the Shaka family. Our treatment was typical.

The soldiers lounging in the back of a jeep on our arrival were probably bored. They scrambled to the alert, demanding identification and insisting we remained in our car. We explained that we were expected, that we did not have cameras. . . . One young soldier remained position- ed against the driver's door while the other tried to make contact with the military governor.

Ten minutes later we were still waiting. Shaka appeared; slowly, supported by two sticks he walked down to the gate. He came towards us, stiff on his artificial legs but smiling a welcome. It is impossible to stand still when a man with no legs walks towards you. Ignoring instructions we went up and shook hands. The soldiers continued to shout orders at us: 'Back in the car.'

It took 25 minutes of unpleasantness for two invited guests to get into the house. This apparently was normal procedure. Who were they protecting? We were eventually allowed in unsearched. If we had come to harm the mayor they had done nothing to stop us.

The careful courtesy of Israeli officials is undone when this sort of scene occurs. It is not as infrequent as it should be in a democracy. At Ben Gurion Airport the final question from the woman searching our cases was: 'Have you spoken to any Arabs?' She was as unimpressed as the soldiers by the information that we were journalists, allowed to 'go where we like and speak to whom we like'.

### Not quite Ambridge

THOSE UNFAMILIAR with Zionist politics might suppose that the Agriculture Ministry occupies its time worrying about plant diseases and writing the Israeli version of the propaganda plugs which feature so regularly in 'The Archers' in this country. Not so. The new deputy minister for agriculture in the Beigin government was asked on his appointment to define his responsibilities for the benefit of listeners to Israeli military radio. Racing breathlessly through a perfunctory sentence or two about agriculture, Mikhael Degel came to the main part of his functions: 'My direct responsibility will pertain to Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights: establishing observation posts; also the whole issue of establishing new settlements on that side of the former Green Line.'

# فلسطين حرة free palestine

## Washington's strategy could make Palestine an international crisis

**THE CURRENT** United States strategy towards the Palestinians and the Arab region has dangerous implications on an international scale. This was the stern warning given by PLO leader Yasser Arafat to delegates attending an International Conference of Solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinian People, held in Beirut from 10th to 12th September.

Referring to the Reagan administration's determination to secure control and influence over the Arab region, Mr Arafat told the conference, 'We are currently living in a world where tension is spreading and its explosive dimensions are unknown. Where in the world is there not the ghost of a threat, the danger of fire? We here in the Middle East, because of its location, see that the coming phase will be extremely hot and dangerous. Our region is surrounded by US fleets in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, not to mention the Israeli expansionist schemes.'

Speaking in a city ravaged by bitter warfare set in motion by Phalangist forces armed by the United States and Israel, the Palestinian leader hardly needed to emphasise the human suffering which has been the result of the common US-Israeli strategy to destabilise the Lebanon and crush the Palestinian movement.

'It is not an exaggeration to say that we are living on top of a powder keg, whose fuse is in the hands of the US administration and their Israeli military instruments, and whose explosion will not affect this region alone, but the whole world,' the Palestinian leader warned. He appealed to conference delegates and the countries they represented, 'Let us all work together to confront this coming phase with greater solidarity among the peace-loving peoples of the world, looking forward to a better world.'

The PLO leader spoke of 'the framework of an overall American offensive in our region, aimed at subjugating the region and its peoples and imposing a *fait accompli*, which completely contradicts the interests of these peoples, their aspirations and their national independence.'

For years Israel had been implementing in Lebanon 'a scorched earth policy', directed at crushing the Palestinian movement. The result in south Lebanon had been the 'destruction of its villages, towns and the Palestinian camps there, the fall of thousands of martyrs and wounded, and the dispersal of hundreds of thousands driven from their homes.'

The new Reagan administration 'gave a green light to Israel, which they describe in the US as "a strat-



### A new war soon predicts Arafat

**THE PALESTINIAN** and Lebanese people are bracing themselves for a new round of American backed Israeli attacks. PLO leader Yasser Arafat said in Beirut on 10th September, 'We know of a new large-scale operation being planned, and we must be ready for it. The details of this operation were taken by Beigin, Sharon and Shamir to the United States, and that is why the situation is currently passing through a dangerous phase.'

The next stage, like earlier ones, would see the most sophisticated and modern American warfare technology pitted against the Lebanese and Palestinian forces armed with simple conventional weapons with which to protect their civilian communities.

In July's fifteen days war, during which more than 400 civilians died in Beirut alone, Israel had relied 'on force and superiority of the enormous war machine provided by the US,' Mr Arafat said. He referred to the bombing of Beirut as 'this mad, barbaric air raid' carried out with 'American F-15 and F-16 planes and modern equipment and technology'. The July confrontation was 'unequal in both military and technical terms', but 'man stood up to the American-Israeli war machine, and the will for justice overcame the resolution to execute a war of annihilation.'

egic asset', to continue its vicious war against the Palestinian people, the PLO and its allies'. Referring to a statement by Reagan's National Security Advisor Richard Allen, that Israel has the right to military hot pursuit of the Palestinians, Mr Arafat said, 'The meaning of this is very clear: it constitutes a blessing and encouragement of aggression and an incitement for more murder and destruction visited on the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.'

Under American protection and with US support, Israel was accused by the Palestinian leader of 'carrying out a carefully studied war of attrition against the Joint Forces (ie Lebanese and Palestinian) in preparation for an overall military strike.'

Mr Arafat pointed to the series of Israeli provoked crises in recent months: the so-called Syrian missile crisis in the Bekaa Valley, the bombing of Baghdad, the attacks on Beirut and the Lebanon during July, and the US attack on Libya in the Gulf of Sirte. Referring to the Baghdad raid, Mr Arafat said, 'We should view this matter in its proper strategic context, as a clear translation of the myth of Israeli security, which is merely a cover for Israeli military operations. The Israelis say that their borders are based on the Old Testament, or are geographical, historical or defensive frontiers.'

'The latest Israeli invention is hydraulic borders,' declared the Palestinian leader.

The attack on Baghdad, like other Israeli aggressions against the Arabs, was intended 'to impose a protectorate over the Arab nation, to deprive it of the right to the sciences or to enter the atomic age, and what this implies in terms of a threat to the security, sovereignty and future of the Arab nation.'

Arafat added, 'The attack on the Iraqi reactor has a deeper strategic meaning. It showed that the US and Israel aim to prevent any progress in the region, which is supposed to remain a prisoner of underdevelopment.'

#### High morale

Turning to the recent fifteen days war between Israel and the joint Palestinian-Lebanese forces, Arafat paid tribute to the people of Beirut who had 'confronted the cowardly raid with high morale'. He added, 'They absorbed the shock with dignity, they carried out a speedy evacuation of the target area, and were able to resume normal activity there less than an hour after the raid.'

The PLO leader also spoke of the war waged by the Israelis against the people in southern Lebanon. He told the conference, 'The south was



Vanessa Redgrave



Jack Shabun

### 'We will never leave your side' says Vanessa Redgrave

**I PLEDGE** that we will never leave your side until victory,' the British actress Vanessa Redgrave told the Palestinians during a speech given to the International Conference of Solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinian people.

Ms Redgrave was one of a number of British and Irish political and trade union delegates attending the conference in Beirut, which included Cllr Colin Rennie whose city Dundee has been under Zionist criticism for its recent action in twinning with the Palestinian city of Nablus in the Israeli occupied West Bank. The British delegation included eight trade unionists. Two delegates attended from the Irish Republic.

'Peace can only be achieved if we are prepared to struggle and sacrifice everything for it,' Vanessa Redgrave added. 'The way to peace is through the liberation of Palestine. We have seen the Rogers Plan, the Kissinger Plan, the

Vance Plan, and now the Carrington Plan. But there is only one plan for peace, and that is the Yasser Arafat plan for a free Palestine.'

Jack Shabun, leader of the British delegation of trade unionists, and a member of Trade Union Friends of Palestine, also pledged support for the Palestinians in their struggle for their legitimate rights.

A final declaration approved by the conference stressed that peace in the Middle East could only be based on respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to return to their homeland, and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state. It recognised the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and called for 'public opinion in the United States and West European countries to bring pressure to bear on their governments to stop all support and aid to Israel.'

turned into a hell, with non-stop waves of aerial, naval and artillery bombardment. In addition, five major landing attempts were made along the combat axis, the clear aim of which was to consolidate bridgeheads for occupation. This would have been followed by a full-scale invasion into the Tyre-Sidon-Hasbaya triangle.'

Giving figures to show the intensity of the Israeli operation, Arafat continued, 'It was a full-scale war, during which the enemy used all its weapons. According to their communiques, over 60 per cent of their air force was in action during those fifteen days.'

The Americans, said Mr Arafat, 'bear responsibility for destroying the chances of peace in this region. It supplies Israel with the instruments of force, it denies our people their legitimate rights to return, self-determination and establishment of an independent Palestinian state over their national soil, and it holds fast to the Camp David framework imposed on the Arab nation despite the Arab rejection of this framework.'

Camp David, he added, 'serves to consecrate Israeli occupation and presents a very real challenge to a just peace — all this despite an almost unanimous worldwide conviction that

this framework is futile and incapable of realising a true and just peace in the region.'

'If we look at the series of events which followed Camp David, we can see that it clearly carried the beginnings of a full-scale Middle East war. The Camp David accords were not simply wrong interpretations based on fragile foundations, but also a dangerous turning point towards more wars and greater regional and international instability,' Arafat said.

'The Camp David accords gave birth to a feeble plan, described by its authors as a radical solution to the Palestinian problem: the "self-rule" scheme, which in fact constitutes a conspiracy against our people and our national aspirations, and a consecration of Israeli occupation of our homeland.'

The Palestinian leader declared, 'There can be no stability, no peace, and no settlement which ignores the Palestinian people's rights. War begins in Palestine and there can likewise be no peace unless it passes through Palestine. These are the most important givens in the region, and all must be aware of them.'

**Report by Louis Eaks in Beirut**

**FREE PALESTINE**  
PO Box 492, London SW19 4PJ. Tel: 01-947 7679  
Editor: Louis Eaks  
Associate Editors: Alan George and Phil Kelly  
Publisher: Petra Publishing Company Limited  
Print: Astmoor Litho Ltd, Runcorn, Cheshire