

free palestine

May/June 1983 25p

REAGAN SUBVERTS PEACE EFFORTS

US credibility challenged by Israel

THE ABSENCE of any clear evidence that the United States is committed to securing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, has led to the suspension of talks between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Jordanian government over a formula for participation in the Reagan Plan announced by the American President last year.

News that Jordan and the PLO had broken off their dialogue brought an angry response from Washington, and new attempts by the Americans to get the Arab states to abandon their commitment to the PLO's role as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Reagan plan seeks to ignore the important role which the PLO has played since 1965 in mobilising the Palestinian nation against the Zionist settler regime which first occupied parts of Palestine in 1948, and later went on to seize the remaining West Bank and Gaza regions in 1967.

Despite recognition of the PLO by over 100 states (more than those which recognise the state of Israel in Palestine), the Reagan plan proposed that Jordan should act on the Palestinians' behalf in projected peace talks with the Zionists. America's clear call for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza prompted the PLO to examine the possibility of Jordanian representation of the Palestinians in the peace process, but by April this year it had become increasingly evident that Washington had no intention of exerting its influence on the Zionists to stop establishing new settlements on the West Bank, nor to force Israeli forces to evacuate southern Lebanon which the Zionists occupied during last year's bloody war.

Attempts by President Reagan and Secretary of State Schultz to claim the PLO had threatened the American plan are aimed at attempting to weaken Arab support for the PLO. Yet in contrast to Israel's immediate rejection of the Reagan Plan, the Palestine National Council accepted it earlier this year as a working plan

while pressing for revisions which would secure American backing for an independent Palestinian state, and Washington's acceptance of the PLO's role as representing the four million Palestinians, half of whom now live in exile from their homeland as refugees scattered throughout the world.

Voice of Palestine radio on 12th April pointed out that the suspension of the Jordanian-PLO talks could not be claimed as responsible for the collapse of the Reagan plan. The American proposals had been terminated by Israel's immediate rejection of the plan following its announcement in Washington last year, and America's failure to give any serious indications about its ability to fulfil its pledges whether concerning the freezing of settlements or securing even partial Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

'The Israelis,' continued the PLO commentary, 'who disgraced US credibility before the whole world, were not rushed by the United States to withdraw from Lebanon and freeze settlements or at least make a declaration of intention or even a settlement welcoming the Reagan plan.'

However, the PLO added, 'there are real signs for optimism'. It continued, 'There is another course which, if we agree on, would be a good step towards achieving our common interests. This course is convincing the world, and Washington in particular, that the ball is in the US and Israeli court, and that the time factor has to be decided by the Americans and Israel. As for us, Jordanians, Palestinians and Arabs, we can only hold to our rights and fight for their achievement by the same means.'

'If the Americans produce a solution which serves our interests, we will not hesitate to accept it. But if the Americans continue to make initiatives and statements and ask us to assume responsibility for their failure, that might deceive some simple people for some time, but it will never change the rules and traditions of politics and will not absolve the United States from the responsibility for the situation in the region.'

E.T.
THE ETERNAL TERROR



MOHAMMAD
ARAB NEWS - JERUSALEM

Zionists accused of gassing school girls

AS HUNDREDS of West Bank Palestinian schoolgirls lie hospitalised after a poison gas attack by Zionist settlers, there are fears that the Israelis might be preparing to spark a mass expulsion of Arabs from the 1967 occupied territories, to make way for an influx of colonists and permanent annexation.

The first gas attacks came in the Jenin area in late March, and left 350 secondary school girls suffering from nausea, partial blindness, vomiting and blueness of fingers and toes.

At first, the Zionists made no effort to deny that the cause was poisoning.

As the attacks continued, however, over an area stretching from Jenin in the north to Hebron in the south, the Israelis changed tack and launched a carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign whose key message was that the Palestinian girls were the victims merely of 'mass hysteria'. Journalists were barred from visiting the affected areas, and doctors were forbidden from discussing their cases with reporters.

To bolster their public relations exercise, the Zionists brought in the local Red Cross Representative, Dr Franz Altherr, who claimed that the affair was 'a mass phenomenon with no organic base'.

But the International Red Cross in Geneva bluntly dismissed Dr Altherr's statement, adding that his job was to ensure that patients received proper medical care.

Full report on page 8.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

West Bank Crisis

THE WEST Bank has become the scene of increasing tension as the Zionists escalate their settlement programme and enforce their military occupation with greater brutality. A special analysis by Dr Alan George examines Israeli tactics and concludes that the Zionist aim is the expulsion of the Palestinians from the West Bank. Report on page 8. The implications of Israel's colonisation programme are examined on page 9.



Israel in Lebanon

NINE MONTHS after Israeli forces invaded Lebanon the Zionist occupation continues. Observers believe that Israeli withdrawal could be years away, as the Zionists attempt to sabotage any peaceful solution to the Palestine question. Louis Faks reviews the situation in Lebanon on page 6.



The Zionist Bomb

THE DEVELOPMENT of Israel's nuclear weapons casts an ominous shadow over the future of the Middle East. With the Zionists believed to have some 200 nuclear warheads, American scientist Edward Teller, the 'father of the hydrogen bomb' is now advising the Israeli government. Report on page 3.



Palestine Council

THE PALESTINE National Council meeting in Algiers was faced with the task of reaching important decisions on the PLO's future strategy in the wake of the Lebanon war. The main conclusions and a review of speeches appears on page 4.



Village Leagues

IN ITS efforts to crush the influence of PLO supporters on the West Bank, Israel turned to boosting the concept of Village Leagues. However, much to the Zionists' alarm the Village Leagues have been spurned by the population and wracked with embarrassing controversy. See page 9.

PALESTINE BRIEFING

We are not
against Jews as
Jews, we are
against the
Zionist
movement. As
concerns Jews,
especially those
who struggled
against the Nazis,
we consider them
our comrades and
brothers.
— Fouad Yaseen,
PLO chief
representative in
Warsaw

Right: Fouad Yaseen at
the wreath-laying
ceremony in Warsaw on
19 April — the day of
ceremonies marking the
anniversary of the ghetto
uprising. Photo: UPI



Zionist to head BBC

GROUPS SYMPATHETIC to the Palestinians have complained at the appointment by Mrs Thatcher of a city accountant, Stuart Young, as Director General of the BBC. Mr Young is a committed Zionist with a history of active campaigning. He is a director of the Zionist weekly *Jewish Chronicle*, and a member of the British Overseas Group for Israel. He is also appeals treasurer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Responding to Young's appointment, David Watkins MP, who is Chairman of the Labour Middle East Council and Joint Chairman of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, said: 'We must ask whether the BBC's international standing as a reliable and impartial broadcasting organisation is likely to be damaged.'

While arguing that Young should be judged by his performance at the BBC, Mr Watkins added: 'If there is any sign of bias, we shall take our complaints to the Home Secretary.'

Similar concern has been expressed in Arab capitals. A commentary on Bahrain radio on 28th March expressed surprise at the appointment, asking: 'Would the British have nothing to say if President Reagan appointed a Sinn Fein charity worker to high office? To head, say, the Voice of America?'

Hot welcome for Carter

A VISIT by former US President Jimmy Carter to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip last month was greeted by angry demonstrations by Palestinians, who revile him for his sponsorship of the Camp David accords, and for

his refusal while in office to bring the PLO into peace negotiations. Camp David entailed a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in exchange for a sacrifice of Palestinian rights to return to their homeland and establish an independent state of their own.

The protests in Bethlehem, where Carter held talks with Mayor Elias Freij, were typical of those that met him throughout the 1967 occupied territories. On 9th March the *International Herald Tribune* said: 'Bethlehem University students boycotted classes to protest Mr Carter's visit and barricaded themselves inside the walled campus, throwing bottles and stones over the walls to keep Israeli troops away. The soldiers fired tear gas canisters onto the campus.'

The paper added: 'A student, masking his face with a headscarf, said the protests would show Mr Carter that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the only

representative of the Palestinian people.'

In a commentary on 8th March, *Voice of Palestine* radio said that during his visit, Carter would 'obtain first-hand knowledge of the outcome of the Camp David policy that he patronised. He will see for himself how the Zionist settlements are spread all over occupied Palestinian land, the confiscation of land, the demolition of houses and the military siege imposed on Palestinian towns, villages and camps.'

Carter might disagree with the Zionist colonisation programme, which was a point of friction between Washington and Tel Aviv during Carter's term of office, the radio said, but 'he will agree with them [the Israeli leaders] on the continued disavowal of the Palestinian people's right to self determination and the establishment of their own independent state on their own national soil.'

Eight years jail for Golan Arabs

THE ZIONIST district court in Nazareth in the 1948 occupied territories has sentenced four Syrians from the occupied Golan Heights to between three and eight years in prison on charges of espionage and 'illegally leaving the country'. Israel radio announced on 3rd March.

Six Palestinian homes demolished

ZIONIST OCCUPATION forces in the Gaza Strip last month bulldozed six Palestinian homes, in retaliation for the alleged involvement of members of the households in a grenade attack on an Israeli bus in Tel Aviv in January, in which the driver and eleven passengers were

wounded. The demolitions, which were a collective punishment prohibited under international law, left 55 people homeless. Observers point out that none of these detained had been found guilty before a court of law before the homes were destroyed. Moreover, the victims of the Zionist actions were not even accused of any crime under Israeli law.

Tribute to Zionist terrorists

A SET of twenty Israeli postage stamps commemorating Zionist terrorists and spies was launched in December at a ceremony attended by Menachem Beigin.

Amongst those commemorated are Eli Cohen, a Mossad (Israeli secret service) agent hanged in Damascus in 1965; Samuel Azaar, hanged in Egypt for spying in 1955; and Avshalom Haviv, who was sentenced to death by the British during their occupation of Palestine for his activities as a member of Irgun Zvei Leumi, the notorious terrorist group once commanded by Menachem Beigin. The Irgun played a key role in driving almost one million Arabs into permanent exile during the Palestine war in 1948.

'We know that each one commemorated has written a page in our country's history,' declared Beigin, at the launching ceremony.

Canadian trade unions back PLO

THE FEDERATION of Ontario Trade Unions (FOTU), which with over 800,000 members is one of Canada's largest trade union bodies, on 23rd November extended formal recognition to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. FOTU

ZAIRE BECOMES 'ISRAEL'S OPEN DOOR TO AFRICA'

A MAJOR military agreement between Israel and the Mobutu regime in Zaire has been greeted with alarm in neighbouring African countries, who see it as a threat to their security. The deal, concluded at the end of a five-day visit in January to the Zairean capital Kinshasa by the Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon, provides for Israel to train and develop the 12,000-man Kamanyola Division, based in the south eastern province of Shaba.

The Zionists will also send military advisers to Kelemie, on Lake Tanganyika, where the Zaire navy has its third military region command, and to Mbanza-Agungu, south east of Kinshasa, to set up a new artillery battalion. In addition, President Mobutu Sese Seko has disclosed that the Israelis will supervise the expansion of his praetorial guard, the Special Presidential Brigade, from 3,000 to 7,500 men.

Israel will supply communications equipment, artillery, mortars and, possibly, patrol boats for the navy. There are credible reports that the weapons will come from stockpiles captured from the PLO during the invasion of Lebanon. On 23rd January the Observer quoted Nguzu Karl-I-Bond, President Mobutu's former Prime Minister, as saying that he 'knows for sure from contacts in Kinshasa' that the arms would come from this source.

The military deal with Zaire is the most important gain so far in Israel's campaign to re-establish its influence in sub-



Sharon (left) with Mobutu (right)

Saharan countries, most of whom broke ties with the Zionists after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Tel Aviv's only long standing ally in Africa is the apartheid regime in Pretoria, with which close military and economic links are maintained.

Relations between Kinshasa and Tel Aviv showed a marked improvement in late 1981, when Sharon flew from Zaire to arrange for the setting-up of Mobutu's Special Presidential Brigade. Full diplomatic relations were restored in May last year.

Zaire's move has seriously upset neighbouring countries, and particularly Angola. The Observer said on 23rd January: 'The Israeli-run force (the Kamanyola Division) will create new tensions in the region. It will fuel the high level of insecurity which grips the left-wing government in Luanda, capital of Angola.'

The paper added: 'President Eduardo dos Santos claims that Angola is being subjected to a strategy of destabilisation and encirclement devised in Washington. Despite having the help of 25,000 Cubans, his regime is being pressed by South African troops to the south and by the [South African-backed] rebel UNITA guerrillas of Dr Jonas Savimbi in the east.'

It continued: 'The sole declared aim of the hundreds of Israeli experts who will be moving shortly into Zaire is to step up internal security. But Angolans remember how Israel once gave covert support to the anti-government guerrillas of Holden Roberto — a brother in law of Mobutu — operating from Zaire.'

On the Zionists' own admission, however, it is not only Angola that will be under threat. An AFP news agency despatch from Kinshasa on 21st January cited Ariel Sharon's aides in Zaire as saying that, in Israel's view, Zaire 'is an open door to Africa'. It added: 'Secret talks with government representatives from Tanzania, Kenya, Chad and the Central African Republic' were on Sharon's schedule.

PALESTINE BRIEFING

also affirmed the Palestinians' right to a homeland of their own, adding that Israel should withdraw to its pre-1967 frontiers.

FOTU is an umbrella organisation for 38 different trade unions in the Ontario region, and the move in support of Palestinian rights was spearheaded by the electrical, postal and steel workers. The only significant opposition came from the defence workers.

The meeting was attended by Mr Abdullah Abdullah, the PLO Representative in Canada, who was given a standing ovation.

Jericho councillor arrested

JAMIL OTHMAN, an elected member of the Jericho municipal council, was placed under town arrest for six months in March. During the restriction period, he is required to sign in at the local police station every day. No reason was given for the action.

The imposition of restriction orders is a tactic frequently used by the Zionists to curb the political activities of Palestinian nationalists. On 9th March *Al Fajr* disclosed that the anti-Zionist Israeli lawyer Felicia Langer had sent a letter to the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International, asking them to adopt Wahid Hamdallah, Mayor of the West Bank town of Anabta, as a prisoner of conscience. Mr Hamdallah has been under town arrest since 1980, and on 3rd March the restriction order was renewed for the sixth time.

Jailed for distributing magazine

AN ISRAELI military court has sentenced Fawzi Shweiki, the Hebron correspondent of the East Jerusalem Palestinian daily *Al Fajr*, to one month's imprisonment and a fine of 40,000 Israeli shekels for distributing copies of *Al Bayader al Siyassi*, a political journal published in Jerusalem.

A military officer entered Mr Shweiki's bookshop in Hebron on 19th February, confiscated one hundred copies of the bi-weekly, and arrested the man on charges of distributing outlawed material.

Al Bayader does not have a licence for distribution in the 1967 occupied territories, although it is legally distributed inside pre-1967 Israel and in occupied Arab Jerusalem.

Al Fajr, for whom Fawzi Shweiki has been Hebron correspondent for ten years, takes an openly Palestinian nationalist editorial stance,

'Father of hydrogen bomb' advising Israel

THE ZIONIST state has announced plans to build another nuclear facility, and there are indications that it will be used to manufacture nuclear warheads. Reliable reports suggest that the reactor might be sited in the occupied West Bank, in a move to bolster Israel's domination of the Palestinian region.

On 9th December Israeli energy minister Yitzhak Modai said that a nuclear reactor 'for producing electricity' would be built in 1983. But he made the announcement shortly after a meeting with the American scientist Edward Teller, the 'father of the hydrogen bomb', who was touring Israel as a guest of Zionist science minister Yuval Ne'eman.

Teller, who is 74, worked during World War II on the secret Manhattan project which entailed the development of the atom bombs used to destroy the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He played a key role in perfecting the technology of the hydrogen bomb in 1952.

Last November, science minister Ne'eman confirmed that Israel had tried without success to buy a nuclear reactor from France and the United States, and said that he would present to the Begin government a plan to build a reactor. It was a project, he declared, for which Israel had the technology.

In January, a spokesman for Ne'eman confirmed that Edward Teller was advising Israel on its nuclear programme, saying: 'He is here to work out a short-term or long-term agenda.'

Israel already has a French-built reactor at Dimona, in the Negev desert, where nuclear warheads are produced. It also operates a smaller research facility at Nahal Sorek, on the Mediterranean coast near Ashdod, to the south of Tel Aviv.

The Zionist state has consistently refused to sign the 1963 nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and does not permit international inspection of its Dimona reactor. The Zionists are believed to have as many as 200 nuclear warheads.

During his visit, Edward Teller made an address at the Israeli colony of Kadumim, near the Palestinian city of Nablus, in which he warmly praised the Zionists' West Bank colonisation programme. And on 11th December, in a despatch from Washington, quoting reliable diplomatic sources, the Kuwaiti daily *Al Qabas* disclosed that the site for Israel's new nuclear facility would be in the occupied West Bank, in a move to bolster the occupation.

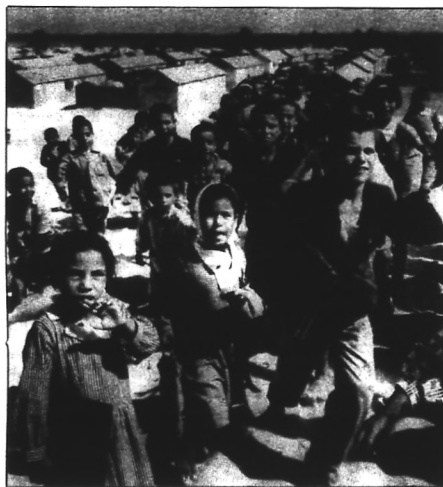
and is subjected to extensive censorship and other harassment by the occupation authorities.

Zionist alarm at Arab population increase

RECENT STATISTICS show that Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories are increasing their numbers dramatically, prompting alarm amongst the Zionists, for whom a Jewish majority in Israel has always been a key objective.

Israel's population at the end of last year stood at 4,055,000, including 12,000 Zionist settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, who for the first time were included in the total. But of the 67,500 increase in Israel's population during 1982, 20,000 were Palestinians, who have a much higher birth rate than Israeli Jews. At the end of the year, the Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories numbered 689,000, accounting for 17 per cent of the total.

The Zionists are particularly alarmed at the rapid increase in the numbers of Palestinians in the Negev desert and in Galilee. In January it was disclosed that the growth rate amongst Palestinian bedouins in the



Palestinian schoolchildren in the occupied territories

Negev was 5.5 per cent per annum, and that in less than 30 years this would create an Arab majority in the region. At the time of Israel's proclamation in 1948, there were only 11,000 bedouins in the Negev. Today there are more than 60,000.

In December Israel radio announced that during 1981 there was a 1.5 per cent drop in the proportion of Jews in the total population of Galilee. The Jewish population had

increased by only 10,000, while the Palestinians increased their numbers by 17,000.

Tourists must sign anti-PLO pledge

IN A new effort to block development funds to authentic Palestinian organisations in the 1967 occupied terri-

ories, the Israelis are now requiring tourists arriving across the Jordan River bridges to declare whatever money they are carrying, and to sign an undertaking that it is neither from the PLO nor intended for 'PLO support organisations in the occupied territories'.

Confirming the new rule, the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz* said that the purpose was to stop 'Arabs carrying European or American passports from carrying money to individuals or organisations supporting the PLO'.

An Israeli tourism ministry spokesman denied any knowledge of the regulation, which affects only tourists entering from Jordan, but Israel's West Bank 'civilian administration' has confirmed that the procedure is in force.

New taxes will pay for occupation

THE ISRAELI occupation forces have imposed new property taxes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in a further move to reinforce their grip on the Palestinian regions, the Palestine news agency Wafa disclosed on 20th January.

Wafa said that new tax forms had been distributed

in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank town of Jenin, similar to standard finance ministry documents used in the 1948 occupied territories.

The news agency added that copies of the forms were sent to the tax department of the Israeli military government.

1,000 Israelis maimed in Lebanon

1,100 ISRAELI soldiers have so far been permanently maimed in the Zionists' 'peace of Galilee' war, the army monthly *Ba-mahaneh* has disclosed. The journal was quoting from an address by Mr Yacov Maoz, Chairman of the Association of IDF Invalids, at the inaugural screening of a film, entitled 'The war after the war', which reviews rehabilitation of war invalids. Mr Maoz's association now has 37,000 members.

Pylons torn up at Hebron

IN A further demonstration of the tactics employed by the Zionists in their colonisation of Palestinian lands, Israelis from the Kiryat Arba settlement on the edge of the West Bank city of Hebron on 6th January uprooted four high tension pylons belonging to the Hebron municipality, cutting electricity supplies to 25 Palestinian families living nearby.

The Kiryat Arba local council sent tractors to uproot the pylons, which is said to stand on land earmarked for the Zionist settlement of Givat Harsina, which is being built as an extension to Kiryat Arba.

Draft resisters imprisoned

THREE MORE Israeli soldiers have been jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon, underscoring the continuing opposition to the invasion of Lebanon from some sections of the Israeli public and army. The three, whose convictions were disclosed in March, are Private Eli Biton, who was given 14 days, Sergeant Yoel Greenberg (28 days) and Private Yosef Kish (28 days).

The *Yesh Gvul* (There is a Limit) movement of soldiers opposed to service in Lebanon, said that the sentences brought to nine the number of their members currently in jail.

The Israeli army has recently intensified penalties against soldiers who refuse to take part in the occupation of Lebanon. One officer, who recently completed a 28-day long jail term, has been given a second, fourteen-day sentence.

Land Day: Israeli Arabs declare support for PLO

PALESTINIANS in the 1948 occupied territories staged angry protest demonstrations on 30th March to mark Land Day, the seventh anniversary of the day in 1976 when Zionist security forces in Galilee shot dead six Arabs who were protesting against the seizure of the land by the Israelis.

Western reporters on the scene said that the protests were much fiercer than in previous years, and that there was a clear upsurge of support for the PLO, and a growing identification by 'Israeli Arabs' with their brothers in the 1967 occupied territories.

'An hour before the main, officially-sanctioned, protest march was due to set out from the Arab village of Sakhnin, Israeli troops began firing tear gas grenades to repel crowds of youths screaming Palestinian slogans and hurling large stones,' said Christopher Walker in the Times.

He added: 'I took cover in a nearby building as crowds of the choking gas billowed over the houses. Outside, I saw dozens of near-hysterical teenagers being restrained by marshals from charging Israeli vehicles blocking a junction.'

Despite Israeli warnings, the protesters displayed posters declaring solidarity with the PLO. And despite their designation by the Zionists as 'Israeli Arabs', the marchers shouted: 'With blood and fire we will redeem you, Oh Palestine', a popular nationalist slogan amongst Palestinians living in exile from their homeland.

Christopher Walker concluded: 'The ferocity of the demonstration and the repeated cries of solidarity with the 1,200,000 Palestinians in the [1967] occupied territories were a clear indication that the Begin government may be facing a growing protest movement inside the Israeli Arab sector, which represents some 20 per cent of Israel's population.'

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

PNC DEFINES STAND ON PEACE PLANS

THE JOINT Arab position on the Palestinian question, agreed at September's Fez summit, represents the minimum acceptable to the Palestinian people, and the 'peace' plan put forward by President Reagan in September, calling for Palestinian self-government 'in association with Jordan', is unacceptable as a basis for a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian conflict.

These were two of the key decisions of the 360-member Palestine National

Council (PNC), the Palestinian 'parliament', meeting for its Sixteenth Session in Algiers in February. Confounding predictions that the Palestinian movement would split disastrously into 'rejectionist' and 'moderate' camps, the meeting displayed unparalleled unanimity in defining the tasks and priorities for the coming months.

The PNC stressed that the Fez plan, which provides for the establishment of an independent Pales-

tinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip regions of Palestine, represented the bare minimum that was acceptable to the Palestinians, adding that the plan was not a substitute for Arab military action.

The PLO has repeatedly made clear its substantial reservations concerning the Reagan plan and, while not rejecting it outright, has stressed that it does not meet the internationally-endorsed rights of the Palestinian people.

The PNC confirmed this position, saying: 'Reagan's plan, in manner and content, does not meet the established national rights of the Palestinian people, since it denies the right of return and self-determination, and the setting up of the independent Palestinian state, and also does not recognise the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.'

The PNC concluded: 'Since it contradicts international legality, the PNC rejects consideration of this plan as a suitable basis for the just and lasting solution of the cause of Palestine and the Arab-Zionist conflict.'

The door was nevertheless kept open for movement on the more positive aspects of Reagan's proposals. In its decisions on relations with Jordan, the PNC resolved that 'emphasis should be put on the special and distinctive relations that link the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples', and agreed that 'future relations with Jordan should be founded on the basis of a confederation between two independent states'.

In Lebanon, the PNC affirmed that the most pressing task was an end to the Zionist occupation, and that full backing should be extended to the Lebanese people in their resistance to the Israelis. The PNC also recommended that the PLO Executive Committee should initiate talks with the Lebanese government aimed at 'ensuring the security and safety of the Palestinian nationals residing in Lebanon, and to guarantee their rights to residence, movement, work and freedom of political and social action'.

The PNC stressed that 'there

should be action to end the politically-motivated mass and individual arrests (of Palestinians), and to release the detainees in Lebanese jails'.

In 1978 the PLO joined with Algeria, Syria, Libya and south Yemen, in the Arab Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, set up to counter the US-sponsored Camp David accords and to maintain a credible Arab military option. During the Lebanon war, however, there was considerable criticism in Palestinian circles of the failure of Arab countries to give effective assistance to the Palestinian and Lebanese forces resisting the Zionist blitzkrieg.

The PNC called for discussions on 'how the front should be revived anew on sound, clear and effective foundations, starting from the premise

that the front was not up to the tasks requested of it during the Zionist invasion of Lebanon'.

The PNC also affirmed that relations between the Palestinians and other Arab countries should be based on 'respect for the national and independent Palestinian decision'.

While reaffirming its rejection of the Camp David accords, the PNC resolved to strengthen links with Egyptians opposed to the Cairo-Tel Aviv peace treaty and to the normalisation of relations between Egypt and Israel.

As part of the Palestinian movement's overall political efforts, the PNC endorsed contacts between Israeli 'doves' and PLO officials, provided such meetings were 'in line with the interests of the cause of Palestine'.



Inside Ashkelon prison

PLO to launch prisoners campaign

A CALL for an intensive international campaign to draw attention to the plight of Palestinian prisoners' rights inside and outside occupied Palestine was one of the key recommendations of the PNC in the social and cultural sphere.

The PNC also called for greater efforts to protect Palestinian social and cultural institutions in Lebanon, and to facilitate the continuation of the services provided by the UN's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

As part of the overall effort to enhance international understanding of the Palestinian case, the PNC resolved to set up a Central Council for Information and a Central Council for Culture. A publishing house will also be established, to produce works of art and literature pertaining to the Palestine question, and translate them into foreign languages, including Hebrew.

It was also agreed to expand the Palestinian news agency Wafa, and to develop further the PLO monthly magazine *Filastin al Thawra* (Revolutionary Palestine).

In related decisions, the PNC decided to approach the Arab countries with a view to introducing courses on the Palestine question in schools, and writing reference books to accompany the new lessons.

PLO Executive Committee elected

Yasser Arafat, *Chairman (Fatah)*
Farouk Qaddoumi (*Fatah*)
Mahmoud Abbas (*Fatah*)
Yasser Abd Rabuh (*Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine*)
Ahmad al Yamani (*Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*)
Muhammad Khalifa (*Saighah*)
Talat Naji (*Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command*)
Abd ar-Rahim Ahmad (*Arab Liberation Front*)
Abd al Muhsin Abu Maizar (*Independent*)
Hanna Nasser (*Independent*)
Muhammad Nashashibi (*Independent*)
Jamal Surani (*Independent*)
Hamid Abu Sittah (*Independent*)
Ahmad Sidqi Dajani (*Independent*)

□ The PLO Executive now has fourteen members, one less than before, following the resignation for health reasons of Salah Dabagh, formerly Chairman of the Palestine National Fund, the PLO's 'treasury'.

Arafat hails 'Palestinian miracles'

IN A powerful speech to the Palestine National Council, following his re-election as Chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat hailed the Palestinians' military performance against the Israelis during the Lebanon war, and applauded the speed with which Palestinian forces and institutions had been reorganised following the evacuation from Beirut. Both, he declared, were 'miracles', bearing in mind the circumstances.

The Lebanon war had been a failure for the Zionists, said Chairman Arafat. It had been 'extremely long and bloody' for the Israeli army, for whom 'tactical freedom had come to an end: it never found it in that war'.

Declaring that the Palestinian Revolution was 'not an easy nut to crack', Chairman Arafat said: 'The PLO has not been crushed, and it will not be crushed. It cannot be destroyed by force of arms.'

A second miracle, he continued, was the way that the Palestinians had reorganised their forces and institutions in only six months, for example by unifying the various guerrilla groups into a single army.

The Palestinian leader affirmed that the war had not shaken his commitment to a negotiated settlement of the Palestine question 'that takes account of international legality and the established national rights of our people, including their right to return, their right to self-determination and their right to set up the independent state with Jerusalem as the capital.'

Unlike the Zionists, he concluded, the Palestinians took a long-term and humane view. 'We do not share the narrow vision of Sharon, Beigun and Shamir,' he declared, adding: 'I just want to ask them: where are the tyrants in history? Where is Hitler? Where is Mussolini? Where is Attila? All the tyrants have gone.'

PALESTINIAN COMMENT

'The desire for unity has won the day, and this in itself is a victory for the Palestinian people and the PLO after the Lebanon war' — PNC spokesman Ahmad Abdel Rahman

'We cannot ignore the special relationship between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples, and therefore a confederation between us is natural. But such a formula could only be implemented once an independent Palestinian state is established' — Bassam Abu Sherif, of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

'I see the United States as responsible for all the years of our people's suffering. The United States is responsible for every child that has been killed inside Palestine and outside Palestine; the United States is the one that mobilised all its weapons against us' — Abu Iyad, Deputy Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee.

'If any confederal base is established, it must be on the basis of an independent Palestinian state. Frankly, any confederation without a Palestinian state means Reagan, and means annexation to Jordan' — Abu Iyad, Deputy Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee.

'Is it every Arab country's destiny to await its turn under occupation? At the last PNC session we talked about the need to secure an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the Golan. Today we are talking about the withdrawal of invading forces from Lebanon,

and we do not know what will happen tomorrow' — PNC Chairman, Khalid al Fuhm.

'The answer is 'no' to Reagan, 'no' to the US and 'no' to your plans. We did not pay the price of blood in Beirut for the US to record a diplomatic victory' — PFLP Secretary General George Habash.

'The major lesson we learned was that when we face up to our enemy in one united front, that would be the strongest weapon in the hands of our people. Hence, our anxiety to preserve national Palestinian unity within the framework of the PLO, whatever the differences among Palestinians. We must look always for a common ground between us all, and must struggle on the basis of this common ground. All other differences can be tackled through continuous dialogue' — Naif Hawatmeh, Secretary General of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

'Palestinian political action should be concentrated on the American people, in the sense that we should enter America through the American people as the Vietnamese did. The Vietnamese did not achieve victory by force of arms alone, but they triumphed when an important section of the American people began to support the justice of their cause. We should move in two directions: to the peoples of Western Europe and to the American people, and convince them of the justice of our cause. We must not leave the arena empty, and let the Zionists and imperialists have their say' — Mahmud Rida Abbas (Abu Mazin), Member of the PLO Executive Committee.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

THE ISRAELIS are chasing an illusion if they imagine that their savage invasion of Lebanon last summer had crushed the morale of the Palestinian people, who are now more united and determined than ever. This was the central message of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in his address on 9th March to the Seventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, convened in the Indian capital New Delhi.

The Palestinian leader told the 101 heads of state and government — the largest such gathering in the movement's 27-year history — that in addition to the enormous material losses, 72,000 Palestinians and Lebanese had been killed or wounded during the invasion, and 500,000 had been made homeless. The assault had 'completely destroyed eighteen Palestinian refugee camps, and destroyed or damaged 37 Lebanese villages and three major towns — Tyre, Sidon and Nabatiyeh — as well as the capital Beirut.'

The Zionists had unleashed the full horrors of their US-supplied war machine, the PLO Chairman continued, but the onslaught had been stopped in its tracks by the humbly-armed Palestinian and Lebanese resistance fighters. 'Sharon, the murderer of women and children, stood outside the walls of resistance in Beirut for 79 days, despite all his US-Israeli war machine,' Chairman Arafat declared.

The Palestinian-Lebanese joint forces were able 'by their simple and modest weapons to foil seventeen attempts to storm the city, despite the siege which deprived them of practically everything — medicines, water, food, electricity and fuel — and the continuous, insane bombardment'.

The invasion of Lebanon was the longest Arab-Israeli war, and had prompted a radical re-think of the principles of modern warfare. In particular, said Chairman Arafat, 'it showed the possibility of resistance and steadfastness against aggressive forces, despite their superiority in destructive weapons and advanced technology'. This was 'a fact that our countries, with their limited resources, should ponder'.

Calling for an 'immediate end to this odious Israeli occupation' of Lebanon, Chairman Arafat declared that Israel's real objective had not been to safeguard its northern frontier, as the Zionists claimed, but 'to

'We are more determined than ever'

Arafat welcomed at Non-Aligned summit

IN HIS first address to a major international summit since the siege of Beirut, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat told the Non-Aligned summit in Delhi that after the Lebanon invasion, the Palestinians were more confident and determined than ever.

liquidate the PLO, strike at our people's aspirations and just struggle, and occupy Lebanon'.

Moreover, the invasion was aimed at creating an entrée into the region for US forces, as part of Washington's wider objective of extending its influence in the Middle East. Lebanon, the Palestinian leader warned, was becoming 'a new base for America's Rapid Deployment Force'.

He added that Washington's hostility to Palestinian and Arab independence had been underlined by US diplomatic moves: 'It is no coincidence that the Reagan plan should appear after the war, a plan which shows the US administration's insistence on continuing to ignore our people's inalienable rights, including our right to return, determine our own destiny and establish our independent state.'

Activity resumed

Chairman Arafat strongly affirmed that the Zionists had failed in their objective of 'destroying the PLO', revealing that, despite adverse cir-

cumstances, the Palestinian movement had since the evacuation of Beirut, been able to 'rebuild and double its armed forces and reactivate its various institutions to 90 per cent of their pre-war capacity'. Moreover, the PLO had maintained and extended its diplomatic and political activities, as evidenced by the recent meeting in Algiers of the Palestine National Council. The meeting, he added, highlighted the Israelis' failure to undermine the unity of the Palestinian people, and their ability to 'take action and exert influence'.

On a defiant note, Mr Arafat declared that the Lebanese war had left the Palestinian people and their national movement 'more united, dynamic, experienced and determined'.

Noting that last year's Arab summit in Fez had endorsed proposals for a just and peaceful resolution of the Palestine conflict, he expressed the hope that the plan would receive the backing of the Non-Aligned Movement, and he called for the creation of a Non-Aligned committee,



chaired by Indian Premier Indira Gandhi, the Movement's new Chairperson, to work with the seven-member Arab League committee at the Fez summit to explain the Arab peace proposals to the international community.

Addressing the UN General Assembly in 1974, Chairman Arafat insisted that he had come bearing 'an olive branch and a freedom-fighter's gun', and in an appeal for a peaceful settlement, declared: 'Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand'. Recalling the UN speech, the Pales-

tinian leader told the Non-Aligned summit that it had been made in the full knowledge that the Zionists had rejected all efforts aimed at a negotiated resolution of the conflict.

After the bitter experience of the Lebanon war, he concluded, 'We believe now more than ever before that there can be no peace for the weak and subservient, and that a just peace can only be achieved by the strong, who are determined to struggle for their inalienable national rights.'

NON-ALIGNED SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

THE NON-ALIGNED summit ended with a communique giving strong support for the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination and independent statehood, and strongly endorsing the status of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The declaration also:

☐ Stressed that no lasting peace in the Middle East can be attained without Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

☐ Supported the Arab peace proposals agreed last year at Fez.

☐ Urged the international community to take effective measures against countries supporting Israeli aggression, particularly the United States.

☐ Strongly condemned the Zionist invasion of Lebanon, and the 'acts of genocide' against the Palestinian people.

☐ Called for the setting-up of an international war crimes tribunal to examine Israel's atrocities during the war.

EUROPE DEMANDS PLO VOICE IN NEGOTIATIONS

IN ITS latest joint communiqué on the Palestine conflict, issued on 22nd March at the end of a two-day meeting in Brussels of Foreign Ministers and heads of government, the EEC has renewed its call for PLO participation in Middle East peace talks, and strongly condemned Israeli obduracy, particularly over the colonisation of the 1967 occupied territories. But there was no evidence that the Community plans to adopt any firm measures against Israel's persistent violations of intervention laws, and its contempt for UN resolutions.

In a reiteration of the position first agreed at the Venice summit in 1980, the Ten affirmed that 'negotiations will have to embrace all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian people, and the PLO will have to be associated with them'.

For the first time, the Ten publicly questioned Israel's claimed commitment to UN Resolution 242, passed after the 1967 June war, and demanding Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. In the Brussels statement, the EEC declared: 'Above all, the time has come for Israel to show that it stands ready for genuine negotiations on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (passed after the 1973 Middle East war, and incorporating Resolution 242), in the first place by refraining from enlarging existing settlements or creating new ones'.

Contradicting President Reagan's strange assertion that Zionist colonisation of the 1967 occupied territories is 'legal', the Ten affirmed: 'These settlements are contrary to international

law and a major obstacle to peace efforts.'

Europe evidently views the positions of the Arab countries and the PLO as being much more constructive than that of the Zionists. Referring to February's meeting in Algiers of the Palestine National Council, the Ten declared: 'The conclusions of the recent meeting of the PNC can and should contribute to the peace process.'

The EEC declared that last year's Arab summit in Fez, at which a joint Arab position on the Palestine conflict was approved, had 'demonstrated a readiness for peace'.

Last September, Ronald Reagan put forward a plan for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, and for Palestinian self-determination 'in association with Jordan'. The PLO saw the US

proposals as falling short of their internationally-endorsed right to full self-determination in an independent state of their own in Palestine, but they nevertheless acknowledged that it was 'a basis for negotiations'. Evidently the Europeans take the same view. Instead of giving whole-hearted backing to the Reagan plan, the Ten commented mildly that it 'indicated a way to peace'.

The Brussels statement nevertheless represented an attempt to reconcile Reagan's proposals with the Palestinian and Arab positions, and at times the effort leads to confusion. The Ten asserted that 'the Palestinian people and the PLO should seize the present opportunity by declaring themselves in favour of peace negotiations'.

In fact, the Palestinians have been on record for many years as

favouring a peaceful resolution of the conflict. What the EEC appears to be saying is that the PLO should have given a warmer welcome to Reagan's ideas. But it is disingenuous for Europe to imply that Palestinian reservations about a plan that does not take full account of their rights constitutes a coolness towards 'peace negotiations' in general, especially when Europe itself is reluctant to give full endorsement to the US position.

Overall, there was little in the Brussels declarations that was new, but its tone did reflect Europe's growing impatience with Israel's intransigence, and this frustration was spelled out in the Ten's insistence that: 'The task now is to move beyond statements of principle and find a means to reconcile and implement the various peace proposals.'

☐ Editorial comment on page 11.

ANALYSIS

NINE MONTHS after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Zionist occupation forces remain in control of the country from its southern border with Palestine northwards to the outskirts of the capital, Beirut. In the intervening period, Israel has deliberately fanned communal tensions in Lebanon, openly challenged the authority of the international peace-keeping forces, overseen a running campaign of terror against Palestinian refugees in the south, and blocked all moves to secure a withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon. As the weeks roll into months, even optimistic observers who believed that an early negotiated Israeli withdrawal was on the cards last autumn must now be concerned that the Zionist presence in Lebanon is set to become a long-term reality.

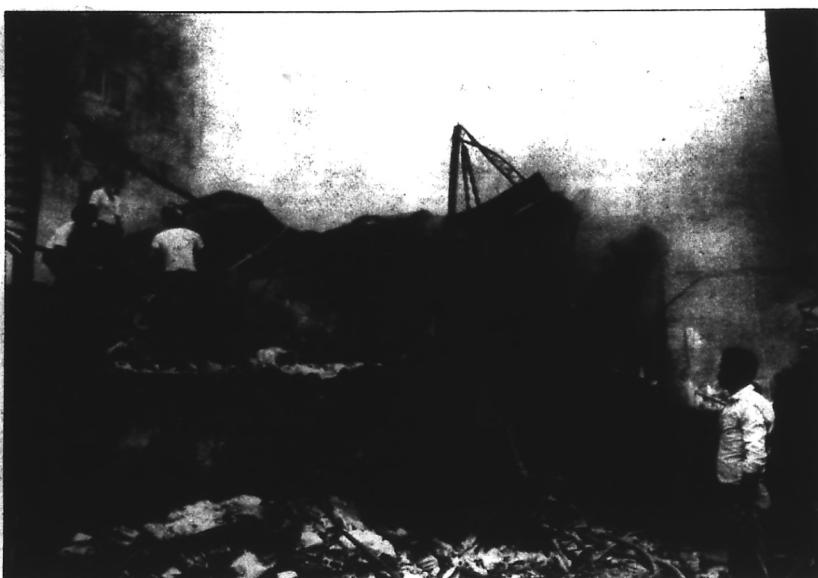
The Lebanon war of 1982 shocked the world by Israel's wanton brutality towards civilian communities: the inhumanity of the siege of Beirut, the tragedy of the Palestinian refugee communities whose lives and homes were shattered by Israeli bombs, the mass detention of refugee menfolk, and the final brutality of dividing long deprived refugee families of their sons and fathers in the PLO evacuation of Beirut, all compounded an awareness of the savagery of Zionism towards mankind that the world had rarely been allowed to glimpse in the four decades of Zionist military dominance in the region. The Palestinian tragedy assumed a sudden human dimension that the press had long concealed from world attention.

The response was a clear mood, internationally, that only an independent Palestinian state could ease the immediate plight of the Palestinian people. And the ability of the PLO to withstand the Israeli assault, and force the Israelis to fight a long war has enhanced the reputation and credibility of the PLO. The consequences of the Lebanon invasion, from the Zionist standpoint, were the exact opposite to the objectives of the Begin-Sharon regime. The Palestinians had been transformed from the widely perceived image of 'terrorists' to a people with a noble cause, who are themselves the victims of terrorism, and worthy of international support in their struggle and for their objectives.

Within the Arab world the bitterness towards the United States was clear. Not only had the war been fought by Israel with armaments provided by the Americans, but it was equally obvious that the invasion plan had been discussed with, and approved by, the Reagan administration. Washington, like the Begin government, believed that the fighting would be over in a matter of a few days, and that by the time the world community had got round to issuing condemnation of the invasion the Israelis would be able to declare a ceasefire had been agreed. In Washington's eyes, invasions by military force into other sovereign states are totally abhorrent, unless they can be launched and achieve their total objectives before criticism in the UN and from western governments becomes too strong.

Political carnage

If the Israelis wreaked havoc on Lebanon, they also succeeded in making carnage of American influence in the Arab world. Out of this panorama of political and diplomatic devastation, Washington had to move quickly to re-establish its credibility. Its task was made easier by the fact that although the US had done nothing to end the fighting, no one else had made much of an effort to come to the assistance of the Pales-



Devastation in Beirut following an Israeli bombing raid

Israel in Lebanon

NINE months after Israeli forces invaded Lebanon the Zionist occupation continues, and Lebanese observers believe that withdrawal could be years away, if it comes at all. Israel's main objective is to block the Reagan plan's proposals for the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip regions of Palestine, as LOUIS EAKS explains.

tinians. The main challenge to America's strategy in the area was international opinion concerning a Palestinian state.

In Washington, the State Department was under new management following the removal of Alexander Haig, and the way open for the latest US 'initiative'.

Sensing the mood concerning Palestinian rights, and aware of the urgent need to assert American influence in the area and undermine the prevailing hostility towards the United States for its role in the Lebanon war against the Palestinians, President Reagan presented his peace-plan package. It proposed an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, and limited Palestinian autonomy not under Israeli rule as Begin interprets the Camp David Accords, but under Jordanian Arab sovereignty.

Although the Reagan plan has some constructive points which could be the basis for negotiation, as the PLO has officially acknowledged, the scheme is not without its critics, both within the Palestinian community, and in the wider Arab world. They point out that the President's plan fails to involve the PLO in the peace process, calling instead for King Hussein to speak for the Palestinians. Moreover, they point out, the plan falls short of securing the UN General Assembly's definition of Palestinian rights, namely an independent sovereign Palestinian state.

In short, the critics feel that the Reagan plan, far from a positive response, was intended to deflect sympathy for the PLO and the Palestinians which could have been translated into a firm international

response to adopt political and economic sanctions against Israel in support of securing Palestinian rights in Palestine. It also aimed to undermine the PLO's status as sole representative of the four million Palestinians.

However, the most intransigent response to the Reagan plan came from Israelis themselves. Without much ado, the Begin government rejected the Reagan proposals. And to divert the US State Department's efforts the Israelis moved to exploit their occupation of Lebanese territory. If the Americans could be tied down in negotiations in Lebanon, Washington would not be able to move to asserting its influence to achieve its goals on the West Bank. Prolonged Israeli occupation of Lebanon would also undermine Washington's claim in the Arab world that it had the ability to influence Israel towards a settlement with the Arabs on the West Bank question.

Presidential elections

The Israelis hope that by discrediting the Reagan administration in the Arabs' minds, they will force the Arabs to act more militantly and alienate support for the Arab cause in the West. Moreover, if Israel can tie down the negotiations in Lebanon, as the weeks pass by the American leadership will be moving into the first rounds of the next presidential election campaign: the American Zionist lobby will then be ready to limit any action which the President can take to pressure the Israeli government. By dragging out the talks on the Lebanon withdrawal, Israel aims to ensure that no radical proposals to change the status quo on the

West Bank ever reach the top of America's Middle East agenda.

At the same time, Israel finds that it has failed to secure any of the objectives of its invasion of Lebanon.

- It has not crushed the Palestinian Liberation Organisation; the recent Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers, and the EEC communiqué calling for the PLO to be involved in the peace process deny Israel any claim to success on this point.

- It has not secured a peace treaty with the Lebanese government; any Lebanese government which signs such a treaty under existing circumstances would be unable to claim the support of the Lebanese people, and would find itself politically and economically isolated from the Arab world.

- It has not secured the withdrawal of Syrian and Palestinian forces from Lebanon, and there will be no move by either until Israeli forces are out of Lebanon.

- If it has secured security for Zionist settlers in Galilee, this has been achieved at the cost of a military occupation in Lebanon and the regular casualties amongst the occupation forces confronted by Palestinian and Lebanese resistance groups.

- It has not subdued the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip — those who Israel claimed were intimidated by the PLO into adopting anti-Israeli positions; indeed PLO support in the 1967 occupied territories appears more vocal and determined.

The Palestinian and Lebanese resistance to the Israeli invasion foiled Israel's expectations of a quick victory, and the objectives of the

aggression appeared to have eluded the Zionists. A serious misunderstanding of Lebanon's internal politics, and the belief that the kind of settlement Israel wanted could be wrought from a surrogate President in Beirut, also deprived the Zionists of success.

Nevertheless, Israel's hand has remained relatively strong as a consequence of the invasion (it still holds much of Lebanon under military occupation), although casualties at the hands of resistance groups are making the price high.

Weak government

Unable to impose a strong government in Beirut which is at peace with the Zionist state in Palestine, Israel's strategy has turned to ensuring a weak government in the Lebanon which is unable to force an Israeli withdrawal. Through the Haddad militia in the south, which the Israelis have permitted to expand their sphere of influence throughout southern Lebanon, and by inciting, even arming, rival Christian, Druze and Muslim militias into conflict against each other, Israel hopes to present itself as the last hope for a country sliding into Israel's specially created chaos.

At the same time Israel sees its Lebanon card as vital for blocking the Reagan plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. So long as Lebanon dominates the diplomatic scene, the Americans are unable, or unwilling, to turn their attention to the 1967 occupied territories.

The trend of future events seems likely to hinge on a series of step-by-step withdrawals, perhaps involving nothing more than a few hundred metres here and there. This would give the illusion of progress; from the Zionist point of view this would help their image in the United States, while the Americans would be able to claim to a very glib audience of American supporters both in the region and in Europe that the US was notching up some achievements.

Anyone who has experience of Zionist strategy and tactics must find it difficult to accept the possibility of an early Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. America still shows no inclination to adopt a tough stand with the Zionists, and there is really no credible military force to challenge the Israelis.

But Lebanese observers believe that Israel could agree to a complete pull-out from Lebanon. The price would be an American assurance that it will not pressure Israel to give up the occupied territories on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For Zionist votes that could be an attractive package to aspiring presidential candidates in America.

The longer the Israelis stay in Lebanon the greater the prospect that they will come to believe it is their own territory. Southern Lebanon has long been claimed an historical part of Eretz Israel, and in the Zionist mind it could soon become as fundamental a point of principle to hold the territory as did the West Bank and Gaza. After all, in 1967 Israel accepted Resolution 242, which required an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in the June War. Within a very short period of months Resolution 242 was condemned by Israel to the wastepaper basket except for propaganda purposes. Any Israeli declaration that a prolonged occupation of Lebanon is contrary to Zionist intentions rings very hollow against the background of the past forty years of conflict, territorial expansion and annexation which has been the hallmark of Israeli strategy since the 1940s.

LEBANON UNDER OCCUPATION



Israeli soldiers in south Lebanon: resistance operations take a heavy toll

'Endless war' faces Israeli troops

WHEN THE Zionist army invaded Lebanon last year, it was widely predicted that Israel had made a serious tactical blunder, exposing its forces to a sustained guerrilla campaign in terrain ideal for hit-and-run attacks. A spate of ambushes of Israeli military targets in occupied Lebanon since the invasion has confirmed the prognosis, and there is every sign that the resistance war is escalating sharply.

Resistance operations are being staged throughout the Israeli occupied region, and are taking a heavy toll. In the second week of March alone, the Zionists admitted to suffering eleven casualties, including two dead, in just three incidents. On 16th March, two officers, a major and a captain, died when their jeep struck a land mine freshly dug into a dirt

road frequently used by the Israeli army, at Kahale, five kilometres east of Beirut.

Two days earlier, it was announced that seven occupation soldiers had been wounded when rocket propelled grenades were fired at a patrol north of Sidon. Later the same day, two soldiers were wounded in an ambush near the south Lebanese coastal town of Tyre.

After the attacks, Israel radio announced that the occupation army had been put 'on alert' in order to confront the increased wave of military attacks.

It was to little avail. On 22nd March five more Israeli soldiers were wounded when anti-personnel mines were detonated in an abandoned house in central Lebanon.

Another soldier was killed and two wounded on 29th March in a guerrilla ambush near Kahale, in central Lebanon. The *Times*' Robert Fisk was at a military post nearby, and he confirmed that the resistance fighters had attacked an Israeli armoured patrol with rocket propelled grenades, destroying one vehicle, and that none of the attackers was apprehended.

With the bitter Lebanese winter drawing to an end, the Israelis are alarmed that the coming months will see a sharp rise in operations by resistance units.

The persistent guerrilla attacks are sapping the morale of the occupation forces. In his report from Kahale, Robert Fisk quoted an Israeli first lieutenant as saying, wearily, 'This war is endless'.

Peacekeeping troops targets for Zionist terror

FEARFUL THAT its occupation army might eventually be replaced by international peacekeeping forces, Israel is acting to discredit the US and European troops already stationed in Beirut by launching a series of terror raids on their positions. The aim is to 'demonstrate' that the peacekeepers are incapable of maintaining law and order.

The peacekeeping troops have sustained a number of attacks since they took up position in Beirut at the end of the siege of the Lebanese capital. But in recent weeks, as Israeli foot-dragging in the withdrawal talks has become ever plainer, the assaults have escalated sharply.

On 15th March nine Italian soldiers were wounded, three of them seriously, in two separate attacks along Beirut's airport road. One officer lost part of his foot when he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade, and two soldiers were taken, temporarily paralysed, to the Italian field hospital in south Beirut.

Two days later, a grenade was hurled at a unit of American marines, just north of the base at Beirut airport, slightly injuring five of them.

On 18th March grenades were thrown at a checkpoint manned by French troops. There were no injuries.

Following an earlier spate of similar raids on the peacekeeping forces, the *Guardian* on 3rd January

quoted French diplomats in Beirut as saying that 'the attacks were by the Israelis or by their Lebanese agents'. The paper added: 'It is well known that the Phalangist militia is deeply penetrated by Israeli intelligence.'

In their armed assaults on the international troops, the Zionists have acted through their Lebanese proxies. But the Israeli occupation army has played a direct role in provoking a number of incidents with US marines, involving such acts as driving tanks at battle-speed through American checkpoints.

In March, the Pentagon released a letter to Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert Barrow, who complained: 'It is evident to me that the incidents are timed, orchestrated and executed for obtuse Israeli political purposes.'

Those purposes are clear. In a despatch from Beirut on 22nd March, the *Times* commented: 'The Israelis have refused to withdraw from southern Lebanon in favour of an international force, and if the American, French, Italian and British troops in Beirut were discredited, the Israelis would be able to claim that they could not trust such an army. If "terrorists" can move at ease through West Beirut under international control, would they not be able to do the same in southern Lebanon?'

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ISRAELIS GUN DOWN SIDON WOMEN

FIVE PALESTINIAN women were wounded on 16th March when Israeli occupation troops opened fire into a demonstration by women in Sidon demanding the release of their relatives from the Ansar concentration camp.

The atrocity was consistent with Zionist 'crowd-control' techniques used in the 1967 occupied territories, where troops frequently gun down unarmed civilian protesters.

Eyewitnesses in Sidon said that soldiers attacked the women with tear gas as they tried to cross a barbed-wire barrier and march on the Zionist military headquarters in the town. The protesters replied by throwing stones at the

soldiers, who opened fire indiscriminately.

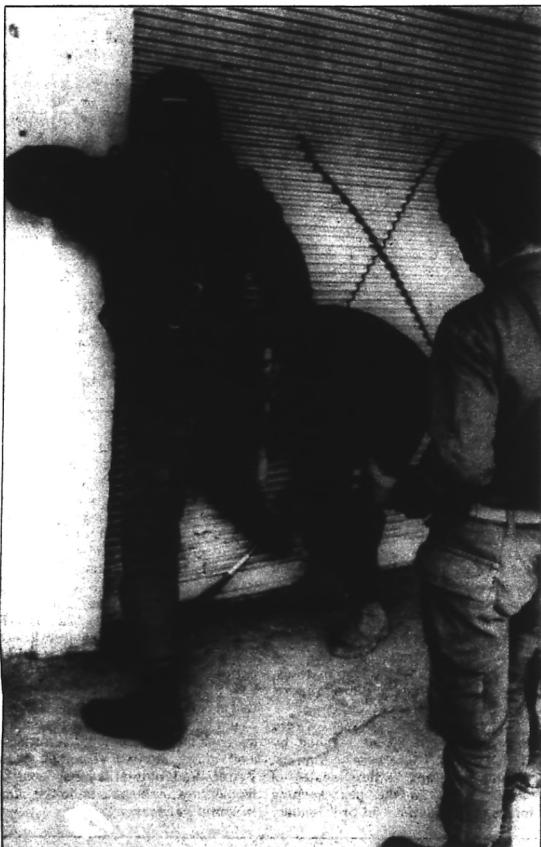
The Ansar concentration camp was set up near Nabatiyah after the invasion last June. The number of internees has remained at around 6-7,000. Groups of detainees are periodically released, but are replaced by newly-arrested men. The Israelis allege that all the Ansar prisoners are 'terrorists'. In fact most of them are Palestinian civilians who worked for such organisations as the Palestine Red Crescent Society — the Palestinians' 'Red Cross'. The Zionists have refused to grant the detainees POW status, which would give them protection under international conventions.

The assault on the Sidon women

came amid a continuing terror campaign directed at Palestinians in south Lebanon by the Israeli army and its rightist Lebanese allies, raising fears of a second massacre of civilians. On 13th March a Palestinian resident of the Ain al Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon was killed in a car bomb blast. At least twelve other Palestinians have been murdered in recent weeks.

Death threat leaflets have been pushed through doors by the militia of Sa'ad Haddad, the right wing Israeli protégé who before the invasion controlled a small border enclave, but who has since expanded his area of operations to cover much of the territory under Zionist occupation.

WEST BANK CRISIS AS ZIONISTS TURN TO EXPULSION STRATEGY



Palestinian shops forcibly closed and marked with a black cross

FRUSTRATED BY the failure of the Lebanon invasion to break the will to resist of the Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories, the Zionists have turned to a terror campaign in the West Bank aimed at forcing a mass exodus of Arabs, to clear the way for permanent Israeli absorption of the region. Dr Alan George reviews the pattern of Zionist terrorism, and the firm Palestinian response.

'WE HAD the means in 1967 to make sure that two or three hundred thousand would move to the other side, as was done in Lod, Ramle and Galilee in 1948, but we made a calamitous mistake. Things would have been simpler today: no Palestine problem, no stones, no demonstrations. We could have brought in 100,000 settlers and there would have been no trouble.'

With these words to the Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee in March, Knesset Member Meir Cohen, who is deputy speaker of the Zionist parliament and a member of Beigun's Herut Party, let slip the thinking behind a wave of terrorist attacks by Zionist settlers against Palestinian civilians that is sweeping the 1967 occupied territories.

A poison gas attack in the Jenin area on 27th March in which 370

Palestinian schoolgirls were wounded was only the most horrific in a string of attacks on Arab civilians — often children — by armed settlers, acting with the full connivance of the occupation forces.

Prior to the invasion of Lebanon last summer, the Israelis believed that they could crush civilian resistance to the West Bank occupation by repression alone. Since the beginning of the year, however, as the protests continued, Israeli strategy has changed. The aim now is to expel the Palestinians.

Settler terrorism is not new. In 1980, for example, the Mayors of Nablus and Ramallah were maimed in car bomb outrages that came amid a spate of attacks by Zionist settlers on Palestinian civilians. But this year's assaults show a coherence and persistence that marks them out as part of a concerted strategy.

Kindergarten

The wave of settler terrorism started early in the new year. On 11th January the *Times* disclosed that 'the director of an Arab kindergarten (in Nablus) filed a complaint to police alleging that Jewish settlers had fired shots from a passing ambulance'.

On 14th February about sixty armed Zionist settlers from the colony of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, tried to storm the Palestinian town, a *Reuters* report said: 'The army held them up for several hours, but let them enter at daybreak, with the approval of a high ranking officer.'

Reuters quoted a Kiryat Arba leader as saying that the settlers were not satisfied with the army's treatment of Palestinian protesters. 'They should throw them out to Jordan with their families and blow up their houses,' he said.

The settlers escalated their campaign on 25th February by exploding a bomb outside a mosque in the centre of Hebron, injuring two Palestinians and causing extensive damage.

Two days later, settlers went on a shooting spree in Hebron. Four bullets smashed through the front window of the home of Muhammad Nasser Jaabari, who lives near the Kiryat Arba settlement, injuring his four-year-old daughter. The next day, settler gunfire struck a Palestinian car on the outskirts of the town.

The poison gas attack in Jenin was not the first assault directed against schoolchildren. On 3rd March Zionist settlers hauled Palestinian students out of their classrooms at gunpoint in the West Bank village of Yatta, south of Hebron, and held them in the schoolyard for an hour. The *Irish Times* disclosed that the attack had been 'organised by the Kiryat Arba town council'. Two days earlier, the Zionists had fired shots over the same pupils' heads, and kidnapped two students, whom they handed over to Israeli military police.

Ferocity

Such terror attacks have prompted a wave of angry Palestinian protest demonstrations, to which the occupation forces have responded with their customary ferocity, using batons and tear gas, firing live ammunition and imposing tight curfews. Palestinian anger reached a new pitch, however, after 41 heavily-armed Zionists were apprehended on 11th March after attempting to set up a colony on the Temple Mount in occupied Jerusalem, the site of Islam's third holiest shrine, the Dome of the Rock. On 14th March the *Times* reported widespread protests in the West Bank, and added that similar demonstrations had been staged in Gaza: 'At the Islamic University in Gaza, shots were fired in the air by Israeli troops as Arab students chanted and raised illegal Palestinian flags.'

Tensions in the 1967 occupied territories had earlier been raised by the arrival of former US President Jimmy Carter, one of the architects of the Camp David accords, which were aimed at securing an Israeli-Egyptian peace at the expense of Palestinian rights. On 11th March the *Daily Telegraph* said that when Carter arrived in Gaza, 'Rocks were thrown and the air carried the acrid

smell of burned rubber. Arabic-speaking soldiers kept guard while Israeli jets screeched low over the ancient city'.

Israel's efforts to quell the wave of protests failed. 'Dozens of Arab shops in the occupied West Bank have been welded shut by Israeli troops over the past 48 hours in a so far vain effort to quell the new wave of Palestinian violence which has led to riots in every sizeable town,' said the *Times* on 15th March, adding: 'Despite the harshness of the measures, the twin Arab towns of Ramallah and El Bireh, which between them house more than 40,000 Palestinians, still had the appearance yesterday of an area under siege.'

The paper added: 'The shops which had been forcibly closed (with all their stock stranded inside) were marked with a large, 2ft high black cross painted by the army on their folded metal shutters.'

The Zionist terrorist campaign against the Palestinians of the 1967 occupied territories reached a new pitch at the end of March, when more than 300 Palestinian schoolgirls in the West Bank town of Jenin were subjected to a poison gas attack. A highly toxic powder with high sulphur content, had been sprayed into their classrooms, causing dizziness, vomiting, watery eyes and headaches. On 28th March the *Times* said: 'As the epidemic continued to sweep through the town's girls' schools yesterday, the Israeli army imposed a strict curfew on the area. The security measures were ordered after protestors demonstrating against the poisoning attacked Israeli vehicles with sticks and stones.'

The paper revealed that local residents were describing the assault as 'the Sabra and Shatila of the West Bank', in reference to the massacres in the Beirut refugee camps last year.

Routine brutality inflicted on Arab youths

THE CASUAL and routine savagery of Zionist occupation forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been highlighted during a Tel Aviv court martial of seven soldiers accused of maltreating Palestinians. The trial resulted from allegations by Peace Now activists who witnessed maltreatment of Arabs during their tours of duty in the West Bank in March last year, when a wave of protest demonstrations swept the region following the dismissal by Israel of a number of elected Palestinian mayors and other municipal officials.

One of the accused, Major David Morpaz, a former Deputy Military Governor of Hebron, told the court that he had personally been ordered to beat up Arabs by the West Bank military commander, Brigadier Yaacov Hartawi, but he stressed that the orders had originated from the Chief of Staff, General Rafael Eitan.

Major Morpaz described how on one occasion: 'It was dark. The Arab students were shouting, cursing, and crying. There were many soldiers and they had got completely out of control', viciously kicking and beating the detainees.

Major Morpaz testified that Brig Hartawi had told him to send soldiers into the Daheisha refugee camp near Bethlehem on 15th March 1982. 'He told me to order the soldiers to arrest all the males aged 18-25, bring them to a nearby school and put six to eight in each classroom. Soldiers with batons were then to go in and beat them up.'

The major was accused of standing and watching while soldiers punched, slapped, and kicked Palestinians as hard as they could. A prosecution witness alleged that some of them were tied by the wrists to the crossbar of a soccer goal, where the soldiers kicked and beat them.

He was also accused of ordering identification numbers inscribed on the arm of a Palestinian detainee.

Successive defence witnesses, however, confirmed that there had been nothing unusual about the behaviour of the accused. On 5th January Captain Mordechai Artzi, and professional soldier who served in the West Bank for five years, told the court that he had personally beaten Palestinian detainees. 'It was nothing special,' he stressed. 'Anyone who served there can tell the same stories. It has been going on for years. All the officers knew about it, and kept their mouths shut.'

Captain Artzi confirmed that soldiers had been ordered to arrest local residents arbitrarily as a collective punishment to deter anti-Israeli demonstrations. 'We were told to collect them, 150 or 200 at a time, whoever happened to be around. It didn't matter if they had demonstrated or not. We brought them back to headquarters for questioning.'

During the trial, the defence produced documents, issued by Israeli Chief of Staff Eitan that called for the punishment of the parents of students who participated in demonstrations, expulsion from the West Bank of Palestinians considered to be 'troublemakers', and 'economic punishment' of whole villages by such measures as denying them the right to purchase cement, gasoline and cigarettes.

General Eitan added that 'instigators' should be imprisoned for interrogation, without formal charges, for up to 18 days as allowed by Israeli law in the occupied territories, then released for a few days prior to re-arrest.

He also urged the creation of a special 'detention-exile' camp in the West Bank.

On 17th February the Tel Aviv court found four of the soldiers guilty, but acquitted the others, including Major Morpaz. Sentencing — certain to be nominal — was postponed.

PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS

THE ZIONISTS are intensifying their efforts to expand the activities of their collaborationist village leagues in the occupied West Bank, but are facing unexpected difficulties. The village leagues have been shunned by the vast majority of Palestinians under occupation, and those prepared to co-operate have included criminals and gangsters who are now proving a severe embarrassment to the Zionists' efforts to project the leagues as 'responsible' bodies, writes Alan George.

The village leagues were the brain-child of Colonel Menachem Milson, who was appointed in 1981 as Israel's 'civilian administrator' in the West Bank. Milson's objective was to create an alternative Palestinian leadership in the region that the Zionists could offer as a candidate for 'peace' negotiations, within the framework of Camp David.

The strategy entailed the neutralisation of the elected nationalist Palestinian leadership, centred in the municipalities. Mayors have been dismissed and deported, while urban development funds have been blocked, as the Zionists show their real contempt for democracy.

At the same time, funds have been pumped by the Israelis into the village leagues, which are based in the rural areas, and many of the former functions of the municipalities — for example the issue of travel permits — have been transferred to the leagues. The village leagues have also been encouraged to recruit armed militias, whose function is to bully and intimidate the Palestinians into co-operating.

Assault

Col Milson resigned at the time of last year's Israeli invasion of Lebanon. He accepted that the assault on Palestinians in Lebanon would merely stiffen the determination of West Bankers to resist the Zionist occupation and shun the collaborationist



Menachem Milson with Na'abne tribesmen



Mustafa Dudin

The ugly face of the Village Leagues

village leagues. But his scheme lives on, under the guidance of the new head of Israel's 'civilian' administration, General Shlomo Ilyia.

All is not well with the leagues, however. In December a federation was announced of the seven West Bank leagues, with Mustafa Dudin, former head of the Hebron league and a key figure in the whole system, at its head. Dudin's successor in Hebron, Muhammad Nasser, was fired by Gen Ilyia on 28th February, reportedly for financial irregularities and the 'misuse' of weapons issued to the local league militia.

In late January, Nasser had been arrested after a Palestinian youth from

the village of Ain Kahil had been shot dead by Hebron village league militiamen.

That killing followed the murder last June of Daoud Attawneh, a Palestinian teacher who had stopped Hebron village league militiamen from beating up a woman. The police enquiry into the affair was curtailed after the Israeli military authorities took over the investigation.

The true colours of the village league members is also proving an embarrassment to the Israeli occupation authorities in Ramallah. On 4th March the Palestinian English-language weekly *Al Fajr* disclosed: Following an investigation by an

Israeli TV reporter, leaders of the Ramallah village league are going to be charged with aggravated assault, illegal arrest and illegal interrogation.

The charges arise from incidents last August in the villages of Qatanah and Biddo. Six residents had filed complaints to the police alleging that village league members had detained, severely beaten and interrogated them.

Beaten

One of the six, Fahmi Ata Khader from Biddo, said that he was taken from his home at 11pm one August night in a military jeep. After being beaten for two hours, he was released

suffering from several injuries, and required eight days in hospital.

Another of the villagers, Musa al Sus, had his teeth knocked out when he and his neighbour from Qatanah were taken at night to the house of the Ramallah village league head, Jamil Khatib.

An original police enquiry into this case too was closed after intervention by the Israeli 'civilian' administration.

Such scandals, however, have not deterred the Zionists from pressing ahead with the village league enterprise. On 17th February a bizarre ceremony took place in the village of Halba to mark the inauguration of a village league in the district of Tulkarm. Guest of honour was General Ilyia himself. A crowd of 4,000 village league supporters were in attendance — they are the only group in the West Bank allowed to stage public meetings, since expression of political opinion critical of the Zionists and supporting the PLO is banned.

The Zionists made strenuous efforts to swell the audience. On 9th February nine lorries carrying agricultural produce from Qalqilya to Jordan were stopped at an army checkpoint and ordered to Halba. Residents of the nearby villages of Kufr Sur and Kufr Jamal were forbidden to travel for the week leading up to the meeting.

Occupation authorities personally addressed invitations to the ceremony to all the employees in the Agriculture and Education Departments of the Qalqilya and Tulkarm municipalities. Residents of Tulkarm said that the invitation cards carried the clear threat of dismissal in the event of non-attendance.

To underline the message, the day before the event, Fayad Fayad, a member of the Tulkarm dentists' union, was sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment and a heavy fine after being found guilty on a charge of 'opposing the village leagues'.

COLONIALISM: BEIGIN'S ANSWER TO PEACE PLANS

AS THE Palestinians in the Israeli occupied town of Nablus look out from their town, an emerging Zionist settlement provides stark evidence that their future is under threat. The same experience can be found in virtually every major Arab town and village.

The escalation of the Zionist settlement programme, which first got under way during successive Labour governments in Israel, has been brought about by President Reagan's proposals that Israel should withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza territories occupied since 1967. American failure to deal firmly with Israel in the face of this clear challenge raises questions over the seriousness of the Reagan proposals, and the willingness of Washington to confront the Beigin regime over the matter. US arms and economic aid continues to flow into the Zionist state, contributing towards the funding of the new settlements and ensuring effective suppression of the Palestinian population.

The US plan, announced on 1st September, calls for an Israeli with-

drawal to its pre-1967 frontiers, and for Palestinian self-government 'in association with Jordan'. Although the US President has on several occasions referred to the Israeli settlements as 'legal', his proposals provide for a freeze on Zionist colonisation. The PLO said the plan contained some constructive points. The Reiein government, however, rejected it out of hand, and has responded on the ground by stepped-up colonisation.

The extent of the current settlement drive was underlined on 2nd March, when Mikhail Dekel, the deputy agriculture minister who spend most of his time overseeing the colonisation programme, disclosed that 'between twenty and thirty private companies are involved in building. Public demand for houses in the settlements is very high, and if everything continues in this way, there will be 100,000 Israelis living there by 1985.' However, to encourage a good response from potential settlers, the Israeli government schemes include subsidised prices, low interest long term loans,



Expanding colonisation: new blocks of flats reserved for Jewish settlers

and various other financial incentives for Jews. Arabs, of course, do not qualify for such schemes.

The Zionist settlements minister said that private and government construction companies should finish 6,500 homes on the West Bank this year. This would increase the settler population from less than 30,000 to about 55,000, excluding those in occupied Arab Jerusalem and a large surrounding area which have been formally annexed by Israel.

New settlements

The colonisation programme was boosted further on 20th March when

Beigin's cabinet approved plans to build eight new settlements immediately and another 15 during the coming year. One of them, Maachaz Boacha, will be built on the hills above Nablus, the largest Palestinian city in the West Bank. The plan is to develop the new colony into a town which will overshadow the Arab city, in the same way as Upper Nazareth was expanded in the 1950s to dwarf Nazareth, the largest Palestinian town in the 1948 occupied territories.

The implications are alarming. A similar project is already under way at Hebron, the second largest Palestinian town in the West Bank, where the Zionist settlement of Kiryat

Arba has been set up as a suburb and a base for encroachment into the Arab town. Many of the recent terrorist attacks against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank have been traced back to the armed settlers at Kiryat Arba. Doubtless Upper Nablus will have a similar function as a terrorists' lair.

The eight new settlements announced by the Israeli cabinet are in addition to the twenty civilian colonies planned for construction during the fiscal year 1983-84 and seven paramilitary colonies on which work started in January. Thousands of new housing units are also being added to the 121 Zionist settlements built in the West Bank, excluding the Israeli suburbs of east Jerusalem, since the start of the occupation in 1967. On 27th February the Jewish Agency disclosed plans to build a further 17,000 housing units in the occupied West Bank, to be attached to thirteen existing settlements.

In January, 2,000 members of the Peace Now movement, which supports an Israeli withdrawal from at least part of the West Bank, staged a protest at the Zionist settlement of Ffari. The full import of Israel's settlement drive was spelled out by Mikhail Dekel. He said that the Zionist state needed two years more at the current rate of colonisation to ensure perpetual domination of the West Bank. The projected number of settlers in place by 1985, he said, would 'make it politically impossible for any Israeli government to agree to return the area to Arab rule'.

WAR CHRONICLES

IF LAST summer's invasion of Lebanon attracted greater attention from the international news media than any other aggression in the history of Zionism, it was not because it was any more unjust or savage than the earlier assaults on the Palestinians. It was simply because the international press — and particularly television — were on the receiving end from start to finish in a way that they had never been in 1948 and 1967. Day by day, for weeks on end, newspaper readers and television viewers had the stark realities of Zionism thrust before them in a way that had Israelis howling about an 'international media conspiracy' prompted (like everything else they don't like) by 'rampant antisemitism'.

This sustained media attention poses problems for the authors of 'instant' books on the war, demanding a stimulating new approach to a conflict whose broad outlines, horrors and outcome are already common knowledge. Three 'instant' works

have already appeared, but only one succeeds.

First off the mark was Michael Jansen's *The Battle of Beirut*, which appeared last year. It was a disappointment, offering very little that had not been chronicled during the fighting itself, except for some background on the Israelis' motives for launching the assault. At best, it provides a competent and concise reference for the chronology of the war.

What left a gaping hole in Ms Jansen's book was the absence of any personal dimension: of the impact of the invasion on individuals rather than on 'Lebanon' or 'the Palestinians'. And it is an emphasis on this dimension that provides the key to the success of Caroline Tisdall and Selim Nassib's just-published *Beirut: Frontline Story*. It provides a gripping and moving account of the invasion that skillfully sets out the broad strategy of the Zionists and their American backers, and also conveys forcefully the impact of the 'grand design' on ordinary individuals

— fighters and civilians alike. The authors — both of whom are journalists — intrude as little as possible on the experiences related to them by Beigin's victims.

The focus on ordinary people is not pursued to the point of ignoring their leaders, however. There are short and snappy interviews with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, with Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Lebanese Druse community and a key figure in the Lebanese National Movement, which backs the PLO; with Ibrahim Kollieiat, who heads the leftist-Mourabitoun organisation, a constituent of the LNM; and with PLO military commander Abu Jihad.

The book is arranged in three parts. An initial section by Ms Tisdall examines the background to the conflict. This leads on to the main text, comprising a selection of despatches by Selim Nassib, a Lebanese journalist who was in Beirut as correspondent for the French daily *Libération*. A concluding chapter by Caroline Tisdall covers the massacres

in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, though again the horrors unfold through the eyes of witnesses. Complementing, and giving added immediacy to the text, are a selection of photographs by Chris Steele-Perkins, a freelance photographer with the Magnum agency.

Throughout the book, the authors and their interviewees argue eloquently that behind the invasion was a determination to crush the very idea of Palestinian nationhood. Equally, it is stressed that in this objective the Zionists failed. In a despatch dated 13th August, just before Palestinian forces began their evacuation of Beirut, Selim Nassib comments: 'By refusing to evacuate Beirut until now, the Palestinians have shown that they are not about to disappear. On the contrary, Beirut may be worn out, bled dry, and subjected to a daily pounding, but its Lebanese and Palestinian population is still holding out. From tomorrow, who will dare say that the Palestinian people is not a reality?'

The least successful of the three 'instant' books on the invasion of Lebanon is *Surviving the Siege of Beirut* by Lina Mikdadi, a Lebanese writer who stayed in her Beirut home throughout the fighting. The book is billed as 'a personal document', raising hopes that it might go even further than the Nassib/Tisdall book in exploring the attitudes and experiences of ordinary victims of the invasion. The book comes to grief, however, on Ms Mikdadi's prose

style, that teeters perilously near to melodrama.

One problem is her over-reliance on hollow rhetorical questions. For example, her description of the impact of the siege on her nervous system lacks force: 'My hands shake all the time; vodka is like water to me now; four packets of cigarettes a day are barely enough. Is there more to come? I can't bear to think of the humiliation of it all. I don't know anything anymore; days and nights are one long nightmare. What day are we? What month?'

There was 'more to come' — the massacres in Sabra-Chatila — and they leave Ms Mikdadi even more confused, asking now: 'Am I human? Are those outside human or beasts? Will I ever stop crying?' None of this is to question the sincerity of her emotions. The problem is her failure to convey them convincingly in words. The result is a book lacking substance and which quite unintentionally trivialises the horrors of the siege and massacres.

□ *The Battle of Beirut* by Michael Jansen, Zed Press, London. Price £4.50. (All royalties from the book will be donated to the Education Fund of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).)

□ *Beirut: Frontline Story* by Selim Nassib with Caroline Tisdall, Pluto Press, London. Price £3.95.

□ *Surviving the Siege of Beirut: A Personal Account* by Lina Mikdadi, Onyx Press, London. Price £10.95 (hardback), £3.95 (paperback).

LONDON NOTES

Making capital out of Sartawi's death

AS BRITISH television viewers sat stunned at the sight of Issam Sartawi's bloodstained body in the lobby of the Portuguese hotel where he had been gunned down, the voice of Shimon Peres was heard paying tribute to the PLO envoy. It was evident that the Zionists are ready to exploit the body of a dead man, who during his life they vilified, in order to make political capital.

What viewers did not know, and were not told, was that Sartawi had been denied a platform at the Socialist International Congress because of objections from Peres and the Israeli Labour Party. Perhaps if he had been inside the Congress, instead of outside in the lobby, Issam Sartawi would be alive today.

Dr Sartawi, whose image has been moulded by the press to suit their own political purposes rather than to provide an accurate portrayal of the man and his views, had no illusions about the Israeli Labour Party. He never believed that a switch of government by the Zionists from Beigin to Peres would advance the Palestinian cause. In fact, it was Dr Sartawi who toured European capitals at the time of the last Israeli General Election drawing attention of politicians and pressmen alike to the policies of the Israeli Labour Party, which he viewed as more dangerous and threatening to the Palestinians than those of Beigin and the Likud.

His death has been shamefully exploited by the press in Britain, including by some journalists that Sartawi believed were his friends, by suggesting that he was in some

way ready to accept a settlement with the Zionists. In fact, it was such projections of his work that contributed to his death. Sartawi believed that it was necessary to establish a working dialogue with Israelis who rejected Zionism in its political form, and who recognise the internationally defined rights of the Palestinian people. He had no illusions about Zionists like Beigin and Peres.

The Conspirator: Lassie goes home

THE ZIONISTS are really having to scrape the barrel in their efforts to keep up the morale of their supporters in the west. In January they paid for the ageing film actress Elizabeth Taylor to tour occupied Lebanon, so that she could tell everyone how nice it was there.

But the trip was a complete disaster. Shortly after she arrived in Israel, Ms Taylor lost her voice after suffering a throat infection. Then she injured her ankle in a car accident. And in the event she couldn't visit Lebanon because the Zionists were unable to guarantee her safety from resistance attacks.

Readers will recall some of Ms Taylor's film successes include *Lassie Come Home* (1942), *The Conspirator* (1949), *A Place in the Sun* (1950), and appropriately for her Zionist sponsors 'The Mirror Cracked' made in 1980.

Whatever next?

THERE ARE persistent reports that India and Israel have held secret discussions centring on Pakistan's

nuclear progress. No love is lost between India and Pakistan, while the Zionists apparently fear that Pakistan, as an Islamic country, might be well-disposed to passing on nuclear secrets to Arab states.

Unbelievably, one possibility that has been raised is that Israel should launch an air strike against Pakistan's reactor, à la Baghdad. Last November, Subramaniam Swamy, a leading right winger in the Indian Parliament, visited Israel for talks, and asked Zionist military chiefs point-blank: 'Would you consider a pre-emptive strike against Pakistani targets, just as you did in Baghdad?' To which came the reply: 'Yes, if you give us refuelling facilities at your forward air base in Jamnagar' (south of the Pakistan border)!

A muzzled hound

READERS OF the *Guardian* on 10th March were doubtless relieved to learn that, at last, a high-powered human rights group is being set up in Israel.

'A group of experts on international law is setting up a new organisation to take governments to court for breaches of human rights,' the paper said, under the headline, 'Rights watchdog to have legal teeth'.

The new body, to be called the International Human Rights Advisory Centre, plans to 'challenge governments to meet their obligations under international conventions', and its activities will not be restricted to Communist countries.

Said one of the founders, Professor Irwin Cotler of Montreal's McGill University: 'We want to create a human rights jurisprudence that can just as easily be used against South Africa, say, or Uruguay.'

Or, say, against Israel?

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Editor: Louis Eaks Associate Editor: Dr Alan George

Research: Neil Catford Production Administrator: Gillian

Bishop Photosetting: Nik Lumsden

Publisher: Petra Publishing Company Limited

Print: Astmoor Litho Ltd, Runcorn, Cheshire

COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL:

Back to Basics

WE ARE told that President Reagan is fighting to salvage his self-styled Palestine Peace plan following the decision by Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation to abandon their dialogue on a joint response to the American proposals. However, if the Americans had been half serious about their plan the battle to give it credibility should have started from the moment Mr Reagan finished outlining his proposals and stepped from the glare of the television cameras last September.

The media response to the announcement from Amman, the Jordanian capital, that the PLO-Jordanian talks would not continue suggests that the press continues to view events in the Middle East purely within the narrow confines dictated by State Department briefings. In attempting to place the blame for the proclaimed collapse of the Reagan initiative on the PLO, the press has again shown itself totally divorced from reality. Even *The Guardian*, which adopted this approach in its 12th April editorial had only a week earlier informed its readers in the same column that the PLO response was a side issue since the Beign regime had effectively undermined Reagan's initiative through its continued occupation of Lebanon and its massive settlement programme on the West Bank aimed at permanent incorporation of the West Bank and Gaza lands into the Zionist state. It noted that Beign had refuted the President's plan from the outset.

Once again the victims of aggression, the sufferers of military occupation, are presented as the cause of their own problems. This has been the distorted logic of the Zionist case since the conflict began many decades ago. As Mr Farouk Qaddoumi commented (see this page), the current thrust of Zionist and American statements is aimed at attempting to convince the Palestinian people that they have a choice between the PLO and their land.

The weakness of American proposals, even when they run counter to Zionist policy, is that they are based on the belief that the Zionists are open to rational argument and are ready to respect international decisions and laws. American Presidents in particular show an innocence, bordering on sheer naivety, which is alarming.

The Reagan Plan has collapsed for no other reason than it lacked credibility. Not only was the formula designed to sidetrack the PLO, and offer something less than the internationally agreed basic Palestinian rights to self-determination in an independent state, but more important it was put forward by a government which has yet to show that it is willing to act effectively to challenge Israeli policies in the region.

It is quite wrong to believe that only America can solve the Palestine problem. If America persists in aligning itself with Israel (politically and militarily), the solution — liberation of Palestinian and other Arab lands — will eventually be achieved despite the Americans. As Mr Qaddoumi suggests in his interview, the Arab states have considerable political, military and economic potential which

has yet to be placed in the service of the Palestinian cause. American alarm, reflected so faithfully in the servile western press, is more likely to be the result of fear that the Arab states may now line up with the PLO than out of more concern for the Reagan Plan itself.

It is equally incorrect to suggest that the Reagan Plan offered the last hope of liberating the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The implication, so often voiced by *The Times* and other papers, was that once the Zionist settlement programme is completed, the Pales-

tinians will have to abandon any hope that these territories will ever return to Arab rule. This was nothing short of psychological blackmail to make the Palestinians accept a package of proposals which fall far short of providing the rights to which they are entitled. An occupation which is illegal remains illegal however many settlements the Zionists create to stake their claim to Arab land. And legitimate rights of the Palestinians remain the same regardless of Zionist actions.

What is now at stake is not the credibility of the PLO, nor in reality is the future status of the West Bank in question. What is at stake is the credibility of the United States, its President and administration, to play an effective role in the Middle East to secure a just and lasting settlement to the Palestine conflict.

The options available to the Zionists

have always been dependent on the Americans, and this is no less true today. From the outset of the Reagan Plan, last September, the Beign regime rejected it (taking this into account there is need for some very tortuous logic to place responsibility for its failure on the PLO), yet Washington did little to clip the wings of the Zionist hawk.

Just as great an obstacle to any just and lasting solution is the American trauma created by the thought of coming to terms with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to self-determination in an independent sovereign state. Just why apparently sane and rational thinking politicians should tremble at the thought of a Palestinian state defies explanation. Nevertheless, the recurring attempts by Washington, and other countries, to patch up a peace formula which

denies this right to the Palestinians are in themselves disruptive and dangerous.

The Reagan Plan was not the only option. The escalation of Zionist settlement plans for the West Bank, which now envisage 1.2 million Zionist settlers in that region by the year 2010, coupled with the increasing terrorist activity against the Palestinians living under Israel's military occupation, does, however, demand immediate international action to challenge the Israeli government.

The United Nations has defined the rights of the Palestinians. The PLO has accepted them as the basis for a settlement. If Reagan is serious about his desire for peace, the next step for the Americans is to co-operate in an international initiative to deal with the delinquency of the Zionists.

QADDOUMI INTERVIEW:

Reagan responsible for stalemate over peace plan

DESPITE THE decision by Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation not to proceed with discussions on a joint response to the Reagan Plan for a settlement to the Palestine conflict, a leading PLO official said on 9th April that he remained confident of a victory for the Palestinian people, and optimistic about future political developments on an international and regional level.

He stressed that American policy in the region had been the primary cause for the so-called collapse of the Reagan Plan. Events in Lebanon and on the West Bank provided no indication that the Americans were serious about dealing with Israel's expansionist programme.

Interviewed on *Voice of Palestine*, the PLO's radio station based in Baghdad, Mr Farouk Qaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the PLO and effectively the PLO's Foreign Minister, accused the Americans of attempting to block PLO participation from the political search for peace. However, he predicted that the situation for the Palestinians was improving. It was not as bleak as some commentators claimed, he stressed.

In particular, Mr Qaddoumi predicted that the position of the Arab regimes would move towards the PLO, new opportunities had been created for European initiatives, and in the United States there were already signs that Washington was moving towards a more acceptable position, which was the consequence of a major shift in American public opinion towards supporting the Palestinians' right to self-determination in an independent Palestinian state.

Mr Qaddoumi was responding to questions put to him only hours after

King Hussein of Jordan had announced an end to the PLO-Jordanian dialogue which the Americans hoped would herald Arab participation in the Reagan Plan.

Commenting on the Reagan Plan, Mr Qaddoumi explained: 'It is obvious that it will not be a good basis for a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East; it ignores Palestinian rights by ignoring the PLO and our right to an independent state and to self-determination. We are asked to go to Reagan and fully concede our rights.'

He added, 'The United States must revise its plan and improve it. The Arab states should exercise pressure in this regard because the plan means that we must concede our rights (which is) something we will never do.'

The PLO leader continued, 'This plan asked us to cede representation to others. This is impossible. We have won this right, which was reiterated in the Rabat summit, and which said that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Our absence from any negotiations or peace efforts means a disregard for the Palestinian people's legitimate rights. To represent the Palestinians indirectly means absencing the PLO. It also means forcing the PLO to concede the right of representation to other parties.'

'The United States insists on the absence of the PLO in any peace efforts. We categorically reject this and are exerting efforts to make the United States recognise our right to full representation,' said Mr Qaddoumi. 'We know this is not a simple problem. At the same time, Arab efforts must be exerted in this regard.'

The PLO could not have faith in

the Reagan plan; there was no evidence that the Israelis would agree to the American proposals however much they were weighted against the Palestinians, Mr Qaddoumi explained.

'US credibility has been tested many times by the Palestinians,' he said. 'The latest test was in Lebanon, where it was agreed that the Palestinian fighters would leave Beirut, that Israel would not enter Beirut, and that the security of our camps and people there would be preserved. What happened was just the opposite. Israel is now adhering to its illegal occupation. It is stalling and procrastinating in order not to leave. The pretext for its invasion was to drive the fedayeen (commandos) from Beirut. Now that they have left Beirut, what are Israel's pretexts?'

Mr Qaddoumi continued, 'It is well known that Israel has enormous ambitions in Lebanon — its waters and lands. Actually the United States still hesitates to put pressure on Israel. The United States can put pressure on Israel and force it to leave Lebanon completely. It made many promises to the Lebanese government and the Lebanese President, but it did not fulfil them. Israel remains in most of the lands occupied (during the war).'

'We know the battle is long,' said the PLO leader. However, 'no matter how many settlements are built, the Palestinian people will not forget their rights. We will continue to fight for our rights. Time is on our side. The Arab situation cannot be worse than it is now. There are signs which call for optimism.'

He explained, 'These signs indicate that the Arab situation will change, though slowly; that the Arab nation's problems will be solved,

though in a slow manner; and that our Palestinian situation is improving on both the military and political levels.'

Europe's role

Forces outside the region have an important role to play in determining the future, Mr Qaddoumi asserted. 'We note that during the invasion the European positions developed. In fact, the right to self-determination for which the European countries are calling means an independent Palestinian state. Some argue that they do not recognise the PLO because they do not recognise organisations, and that if the PLO establishes a provisional government, the European countries and Japan may consider recognising it. Even many world Jews and Jewish communities began to be convinced of the Palestinian people's right to determine their own destiny and that this is the solution to the Middle East crisis.'

Nevertheless, the tide of opinion had to be turned in America, which Mr Qaddoumi described as 'the front on which we are waging the battle'. He recalled that an opinion poll in the US showed that 75 per cent called for an independent Palestinian state. 'This is clear proof that we have managed to penetrate the US wall,' he declared. 'There are pressures. Even Reagan's plan, with all its content and negative aspects, in fact came to indicate clearly that the Palestinian issue is not only one of refugees. After all, Reagan used to say that we were just a handful of terrorists.'

A subsequent commentary on *Voice of Palestine* by the station's political editorial, broadcast on 10th April, warned against the suggestion that the Palestinians faced a choice between their land and the PLO. Both the Americans and the Zionists, he said, were attempting to break the link between the Palestinian people and the PLO. The consequences of such a move were obvious.

The commentary stressed, 'The PLO is the one that made the Palestinian people's cause the most important issue in our age. The PLO is the one which gave new hope to the Palestinian people and won them the respect of the Arabs and the world.'

'The most significant and clearest fact remains that the Palestinian people are the PLO and the PLO is the people. None of the outsiders can separate the two.'



free palestine

ISSAM SARTAWI ASSASSINATED

FOLLOWING HIS assassination in Portugal on 10th April, tributes to Dr Issam Sartawi have come from Palestinian leaders including Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO. Dr Sartawi was attending the meeting of Socialist International on behalf of the PLO when he was shot down in the hotel lobby.

The Abu Nidal group has claimed responsibility for the killing, although PLO sources, including Mr Arafat, have declared the work to be that of Israeli intelligence (Mossad) agents. Abu Nidal broke with the Al Fateh group during the 1970s, and has since waged a murder campaign against Palestinian

envoys throughout Europe, including Said Hammami, the former PLO representative in London.

It was the Abu Nidal group which attempted to assassinate the Israeli Ambassador in London last June, an event which gave Israel its pretext for the invasion of Lebanon in which tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed in what the Israelis claimed as revenge. The consequences of the London shooting, with Israeli forces already mobilised along the Lebanese border, must have been obvious to the Abu Nidal group and its backers, and strengthen claims of his connection with Mossad.

A statement issued by the Fateh Central Committee described Dr Sartawi as a 'hero struggler' and 'a fighter in the arenas of political struggle'. The statement added, 'He succeeded in achieving much that served our people and annoyed the enemy's leadership.'

Dr Sartawi was at the forefront of Palestinian initiatives, which started during the 1970s, to open a dialogue with those Israelis who recognised the rights of the Palestinian people. Before joining the Palestinian resistance struggle, Dr Sartawi established himself as one of the world's leading cardiologists.

THATCHER HEARS PALESTINIAN CASE

A SEVEN-member Arab League delegation visited London last month for talks with Mrs Thatcher, after months of postponement because of the Prime Minister's obdurate refusal to accept a PLO representative as part of the Arab team.

The delegation was set up after last September's Arab summit in Fez, and was charged with explaining the joint Arab position on the Palestine question, agreed at the summit, to those governments with veto powers in the UN Security Council. Before coming to Britain, the delegation had already visited Washington, Paris, Moscow and Peking.

The high-powered Arab team was originally scheduled to visit London last autumn, but Mrs Thatcher suddenly vetoed the mission on the grounds that the planned delegation included Mr Farouk Qaddoumi, the Head of the PLO's Political Department, who acts as the Palestinian 'Foreign Minister'.

It was an extraordinary move that caused deep resentment in the Arab world, prompting Saudi Arabia to threaten economic sanctions against Britain in retaliation. There was also unease at the Foreign Office, which saw Mrs Thatcher's intervention as an attempt to assert her influence in foreign affairs at the expense of Foreign Secretary Francis Pym.

The refusal to confer with the PLO representative was in clear contradiction of Britain's stated position, set out in repeated joint EEC statements on the Middle East, which stress the need for the PLO 'to be associated with' peace negotiations.

After much wrangling, the visit eventually went ahead on 19th March, with the Arab delegation headed not by the Moroccan King Hassan, as originally planned, but by Jordan's King Hussein. Representing the Palestinians was Professor Walid Khalidi, a prominent member of the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian 'parliament', who holds the Chair of Political Studies at the American University of Beirut and is a visiting professor at Harvard. After meeting separately with Mrs Thatcher and Mr Pym, the Arab delegation was received by the Queen at Buckingham Palace.



Foreign Secretary Francis Pym

In a BBC radio interview, Mr Pym praised the Arabs for their constructive efforts in pursuit of a Middle East peace, and accused Israel of being unwilling to enter negotiations. The Arabs, he said, 'have got their act together, which has been developed by the work which King Hussein has been putting in, and Yasser Arafat too, for that matter, so there is one condition achieved for the start of the peace-making process, the other being agreement by Israel to take part'.

'It is really Israel that has got to change its mind about the position,' he declared, saying that bringing Israeli into negotiations was 'the heart of the matter'.

Few details were released of the talks, although there was apparent unanimity on the need for Washington to step up efforts to restrain its Zionist protégé. Members of the delegation expressed full satisfaction at their discussions with Mr Pym, and said that they had been pleasantly surprised by Mrs Thatcher's 'sympathetic understanding of the Palestinian cause'.

After initial statements by King Hussein and Mrs Thatcher, the British Prime Minister listened to a detailed exposition of the Palestinian position from Professor Khalidi. Whitehall officials said that they could not recall an earlier occasion when Mrs Thatcher had heard directly from a Palestinian the case for an independent state in Palestine.

Zionism is racism

the Israeli cause of racism. Our Correspondent writes.

Meanwhile, General Rafael Eitan, Israel's outgoing Chief of Staff, said yesterday that 100 new settlements between Jerusalem and Nablus in the occupied West Bank would put an end to the stoning of Jewish settlers in the area. "Then all the Arabs would be able to do would be to scurry about like drugged cockroaches in a bottle," he told the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee.

MUNICH: Mr Sartawi

DESPITE LOUD protests from the Zionists over the UN General Assembly's resolution that Zionism is a form of racism, statements by Israeli leaders continue to confirm the international declaration. Following Premier Begin's assertion last year that the Palestinians were 'two legged animals' comes General Eitan's claim that he will make the Palestinians 'scurry about like drugged cockroaches', taken from The Times report on 13th April.



BEIRUT ORPHANS TOUR BRITAIN

DANCE TROUPE formed from sons and daughters of martyred Palestinian fighters performing during their recent highly successful tour of Britain. Photo: News Line

Mass lobby of Parliament planned

AMID GROWING public support for the Palestinian cause following Israel's savage invasion of Lebanon, British solidarity groups are having a particularly active year. The main thrust of campaigning has centred on the continuing Zionist occupation of Lebanon, and in particular on the plight of the thousands of innocent Palestinians languishing in Israel's concentration camp at Ansar.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), a national grouping with informal trade union and labour movement links, declared a month of action on behalf of the Ansar prisoners, inaugurating a busy schedule of

events with a two-day fast and vigil at St Martins in the Fields church in London. A petition was launched at the vigil, demanding the release of the detainees, and it has so far attracted 5,000 signatures.

In addition, PSC staged a series of rallies and solidarity conferences throughout Britain to highlight Israeli policies in Lebanon and the 1967 occupied territories. The month of activities was concluded with a public meeting in London, addressed by Walid al Fahum, the Deputy Mayor of the Palestinian city of Nazareth.

After Easter the campaign is due to continue with a mass lobby of Parlia-

ment, organised by the Emergency Committee Against the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon, an all-party umbrella body that co-ordinates the activities of a range of solidarity groups, including PSC, the London Friends of Palestine, the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (CAABU), and the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Middle East Councils.

Public awareness of the Palestine question has been heightened by two noteworthy television productions. On 13th March Channel 4 Television screened 'On Our Land', a documentary detailing the fate of the Palestinian village of Umm al Fahm, in the

1948 occupied territories. It is one of the best films on the Palestine question, and Channel 4 was, predictably, attacked vehemently by Zionist lobby groups for showing it.

On 22nd January, Laila Mantoura, a Jerusalem born Palestinian living in exile in London, who is an active campaigner on behalf of her people's rights, was the subject of a programme in the BBC2 series 'Surviving'. She recounted her experiences at the hands of the Zionists in a moving and matter-of-fact way that gave viewers a compelling insight on what Zionism means for ordinary Palestinian families.

The Friends of Birzeit University

(FOBZU), meanwhile, which monitors and publicises infringements by Israel of academic freedom at Birzeit University and other Palestinian higher education institutions in the 1967 occupied territories, has established its first-ever permanent office manned on Thursdays and Fridays by a volunteer worker. FOBZU is now based at 20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN.

□ Palestine Solidarity Campaign, BM PSA, London WC1N 3XX
□ ECAL, c/o Ernie Ross MP, House of Commons, London SW1
□ CAABU, 21 Colingham Road, London SW5 0NU