

Palestine Focus

NO. 8

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NOVEMBER 29th COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE

SEPTEMBER 1984

Editorial:

The Terror Continues

Two Years After Sabra and Shatila

Two years ago the world was shocked by the massacres of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut. Today the world is shocked again to learn of the deadly attacks planned by settler terrorists against West Bank Palestinians. In both cases the Lebanese rightists, Israel, and the fanatical Jewish settlers have all been subjected to the judgement of world opinion. However, the accountability of the United States—specifically the Reagan administration—concerning these crimes has been largely ignored.

Sabra and Shatila

September 15-17, 1982: The Israeli military had just entered West Beirut in the aftermath of the assassination of Bashir Gemayel. On September 11 U.S. troops had been removed from Beirut, two weeks before their scheduled departure. This was in violation of the agreement signed by special U.S. envoy Philip Habib on the evacuation of PLO fighters from Beirut which stipulated that those troops, as part of a multinational force, were responsible for the protection of Palestinian civilians.

The stage was set for what the Israelis dubbed "Operation Iron Brain." The Israeli military sealed off the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, allowing no one in or out, and sent in Lebanese rightist militiamen—mainly Phalangists and followers of Major Saad Haddad, both financed in great part by Israel. Ariel Sharon declared that the rightists, notorious for their atrocities against Palestinian civilians, were sent in to "mop up" and "to clear out terrorist nests," to "take vengeance" for the death of Bashir Gemayel. As gunfire crackled inside the camps, a *Newsweek* reporter asked one of Haddad's men what was really going on. "'We are slaughtering them,' the militiaman replied cheerfully."

Later, after the news of the massacres reached the world, Loren Jenkins of the *Washington Post* stood on top of a mass grave looking up at the Israeli Army's main observation post. "As I stood there Saturday morning looking up, there were six Israelis looking straight down at me. They stood and watched throughout this whole horrible tragedy as people were brought here, shot, dumped in this grave and packed up." An estimated 3-5,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians were butchered with full knowledge of Israeli authorities—indeed, in full view.

"Goyim kill goyim, and they immediately come to hang the Jews," responded Menachem Begin to the world outcry against Israel. Yet 400,000 Israelis demonstrated



Terrified Palestinian women plead with Israeli soldier to stop the massacre in progress.

against the atrocities and their government's role in them. Professor Yeshayahu Leibovitz of the Hebrew University wrote:

The massacre was done by us. The Phalangists are our mercenaries, exactly as the Ukrainians and the Croats and the Slovaks were mercenaries of Hitler, who organized them as soldiers to do the work for them. Even so have we organized the assassins in Lebanon in order to murder the Palestinians.

After Begin was pressured, the Kahan Commission investigated Israel's role in the murders based on the fallacious premise that no Israeli knew in advance or participated in the massacres. Instead, they found the Israeli military commanders guilty of "bad judgement." Mild rebukes were handed to government officials. Sharon himself was forced out of the cabinet as Defense Minister only to return as minister without portfolio.

American media praised the Kahan Commission, vindicating Israeli democracy because the pretense of justice resulted in a few slapped wrists. The Reagan administration was greatly relieved that Israel was found guilty enough to require forgiveness in the form of even more increases in aid. Certainly, by consoling the "moral anguish" of Israel (while disregarding the real anguish of Palestinians and Lebanese who were once again brutalized), President Reagan could obscure the role of his own administration.

The United States blamed Israel only for having failed to prevent the butchery, not for its role in implementing it. At the United Nations, the United States and Israel stood alone against the entire world in refusing to condemn the massacre. The United States broke its agreement for the evacuation of the PLO

Continued on page 7

Lebanon: The Phalangist Rise to Power

By Douglas Franks

A Phalangist officer inside the Sabra-Shatila camps during the massacres two years ago radioed his superior, Phalangist intelligence chief Elie Hobeika, and asked him what to do with 50 women and children he had rounded up. "This is the last time you're going to ask me a question like that," Hobeika replied impatiently. "You know exactly what to do."

Two years later, the leader of the Phalangist Party, Amin Gemayel, is president of Lebanon. Few Americans realize that President Gemayel's loyalties are with a party whose roots go back to European fascism. Not surprisingly then, the Phalangist attacks on Sabra and Shatila are the rule rather than an aberration. If anything, Amin's presidency has endowed his party's traditional excesses with a deceptive air of legitimacy.

"Nazism? In every system in the world, you can find something good."

—Pierre Gemayel

That the Reagan Administration endorses Gemayel's leadership and embraces him as its ally in the region may further confuse one's perception of who Gemayel is and what the significance of his Phalangist affiliation is. On the other hand, a reading of Phalangist history and objectives provides a sobering counterpoint to the U.S. Administration's esteem of Gemayel.

While Gemayel's Phalangist-dominated government may indeed be Ronald Reagan's solution to Lebanon's woes, what does the Phalangist Party really represent and who is the United States really supporting?

The Phalangist Rise to Power

The Phalangist Party ("Kataeb" in Arabic) is a well-organized, rightwing, political-paramilitary organization with an almost exclusively Maronite Christian membership, predominantly middle-class

Continued on page 3

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"National Unity" To The Right

Despite the continuing loss of Israeli lives in Lebanon, the brutal occupation of the West Bank and other areas, despite the economic chaos resulting from Israel's distorted and dependent economy of militarism—the Labor Alignment could not oust the party of Begin, Sharon, and Shamir.

Labor, of course, was never set on making any decisive, qualitative changes in Israeli policy. Yet Israel's steady march to the right was actually further consolidated by the indecisive election and not stopped as some may believe.

The election of archracist Meir Kahane signals an extremely dangerous trend within Israeli society—one that has been unchecked by any of the hollow rhetoric of Labor. Two thousand Israelis demonstrated against Meir Kahane taking his Knesset seat. The fact that they gathered at Emile Grundzweig Park, named after the Peace Now activist killed by a grenade thrown by a Jewish terrorist during a peace demonstration, underscores the challenge faced by oft-touted Israeli democracy. For the first time, supporters of the settlements are using terror tactics against fellow Jews. As Rabbi Levinger, leader of the Gush Emunim, says it, "The Jewish national renaissance is more important than democracy. The fate of the land of Israel and a free and whole Jewish life in it are not subject to majority vote." Previously, only Palestinian Arabs were victimized by both official and unofficial terror in the name of such a "renaissance."

At the demonstration against Meir Kahane, Gideon Spiro, a former paratrooper and peace activist, said: "Kahane did not just come from the sky. He says brutally what a lot of Israelis say quietly. He's a fruit of the occupation."

(We should also note that the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and the Progressive List for Peace were able to secure

"Israel's steady march to the right was further consolidated by the election."



Rightwing political rally in Tel Aviv

"What kind of 'national unity'? To deny all Palestinian rights?"

six seats in the Knesset, assuring that a firm albeit small voice for genuine democratic rights will be heard.)

Since Labor was unable to unseat the Likud, another "fruit of the occupation" has ripened at presstime—the likelihood of a government of "national unity."

We cannot help but ask what kind of national unity is being planned? Is it national unity to continue the settlements (which were initiated under Labor governments)? National unity to continue the brutal occupation of Lebanon? National unity to keep the status quo—the denial of all Palestinian rights?

rallies and meetings of the Rainbow Coalition. We should also add that inside the Democratic Convention members of the Rainbow Coalition raised the issues of Palestinian rights.

Our new Dallas chapter cosponsored the "Alliance for Justice" activities at the Republican Convention, joining peace and Central America solidarity groups, women's rights groups, and others. The high point was a march and rally of three thousand which included a spirited Middle East contingent. Palestine was addressed in the context of opposition to Reagan's policies in Central America, the Middle East, and at home. Don Will, former Methodist Church representative to the U.N., spoke in support of Palestinian self-determination, cutting U.S. aid to Israel, and the need to stop the settlements. Around two thousand copies of *Palestine Focus* were distributed, and



Iskanzar Zalami of the Palestine Congress of North America addressing rally outside Democratic Convention.

fifteen hundred balloons, inscribed with "Justice for Palestinians," were released.

On July 25, with only three days notice, over four hundred people demonstrated against Reagan's campaign appearance in Austin. Groups picketing included the Austin Peace and Justice Coalition, November 29 Committee for Palestine, CISPES, NOW, and others. A photo in the Daily Texan shows protesters on a balcony holding signs, each with a single letter, spelling out U.S. Out of Central America and Lebanon.

In June the Austin chapter organized a series of events on the second anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, including a broadly supported rally on June 20.

In San Diego several thousand people marched on July 1 in the Jackson Rainbow March for Peace. The Middle East contingent was prominent with banners reading "Palestine--El Salvador in Solidarity" and "PLO-FMLN/FDR--One Struggle, Viva Palestina Libre" featured in the media coverage.

Our Chicago chapter reports that they attended the pre-convention conference of the Rainbow Coalition. As well, they organized a tour of the author Lenni Brenner on the release of his latest book, "The Iron Wall." Lectures, book parties, receptions and media events were held in Chicago, Champagne, and Urbana, Illinois; and in Bloomington, Indiana.

Also, in Chicago, the Palestine Human Rights Campaign will hold its second annual Commemoration for the Palestinian and Lebanese victims of Sabra-Shatila massacre and the "Untold Story of Ansar Prison Camp" in southern Lebanon. Under the theme Scars of Occupation, the commemoration will be September 29 and 30 at the Mart Plaza Holiday Inn. Speakers will include human rights activist Marie-Christine Aulas, Edward Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, author Cheryl Rubenberg, Princess Dina Abdul Hamid, and Palestinian folk singer George Kirmiz will perform. Phone the PHRC at 312-987-1830 for more information. □

FOCUS ON ACTION

By Steve Goldfield

"Vote Peace in '84," the major demonstration of the antinuclear, anti-intervention, and social justice movements held outside the Democratic Convention was very successful. Organizers estimated that thirty thousand showed up to hear Jesse Jackson, George McGovern, Ron Dellums, Rev. Cecil Williams, Arnaldo Ramos of the FDR/FMLN, Frances Moore Lappé of the Institute for Food and Development Policy, peace activist Dr. Helen Caldicott, and many others, including Iskandar Zalami, representing the Palestine Congress of North America. Zalami's speech linked intervention in the Middle East, Palestinian aspirations for self-determination, and for social justice in the United States, drawing applause from the crowd.

"Vote Peace in '84" proved to be a major step forward for the peace movement. Not only was a Palestinian speaker on the platform, but the November 29th Committee for Palestine played a central role in organizing the entire activity. A large and vocal Middle East contingent with activists drawn from many organizations was formed, displaying a distinct and growing movement against U.S. intervention in the Middle East. Although some were fearful of raising the issues of the Middle East, the demonstration proved that correctly targeting this issue does not weaken peace activities--in fact, this one was strengthened by it!

About seven thousand copies of *Palestine Focus* were distributed along with thousands of our new brochure, "The Palestinians and the Quest for Peace" at "Vote Peace in '84," the demonstration for Gay rights, and at several

Israeli Elections: A Close Look at the Results

By Ur Shlonsky

Tel Aviv—Israeli election results demonstrate that neither the invasion of Lebanon and the protracted, costly occupation of its south, nor the seemingly grave economic situation reflected in an annual inflation rate of 400 percent, are considered severe enough by most voters to warrant a change of government to institute alternative policies.

This fact calls for a reevaluation of the significance of the Lebanese war for the Jewish population in Israel; the longterm impact of the opposition to the war and the occupation must be reconsidered. Six hundred dead, several thousand wounded, daily casualties inflicted by the Lebanese resistance, as well as a marked increase in prices and taxes, have not swayed Israeli public opinion to challenge its government.

Soldiers on Active Duty

Very instructive in this respect are the election results among soldiers on active duty. If the distribution of seats were carried out solely on the basis of the soldiers' votes, the eleventh Knesset would have the Likud with 47 seats (instead of 41) and the Labor Alignment would have 41 (instead of 44). Likud would have been able to form a comfortable majority of 64 with other rightwing parties. Tehiya would still win 5 seats, while Kahane's Kach would score 3 seats instead of the one it did win.

One may argue that soldiers because they are young (18-21) tend to be more rash and extreme than older, more established voters; yet note that extremism in this case is in one direction only—to the ultra-right. Hadash and the PLP failed to even pass the one percent barrier necessary to be eligible for consideration in seat distribution. While it is precisely soldiers on active duty who face the greatest danger in Lebanon, they overwhelmingly support militarism and occupation.

The Ultra-Chauvinist Fringe

25-30,000 Israelis voted for Kach, a movement which calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from Israel and occupied territories, the dissolution of democratic institutions and the foundation of a totalitarian state. Some 80,000 more voted for Tehiya and some 35,000 for Morasha; both parties, while rejecting the vehement rhetoric of Kahane, differ little from the substance of his views. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that not a single rabbi has spoken up against Kahane, a silence which testifies to the firm foundation of his views in modern-day State Judaism.

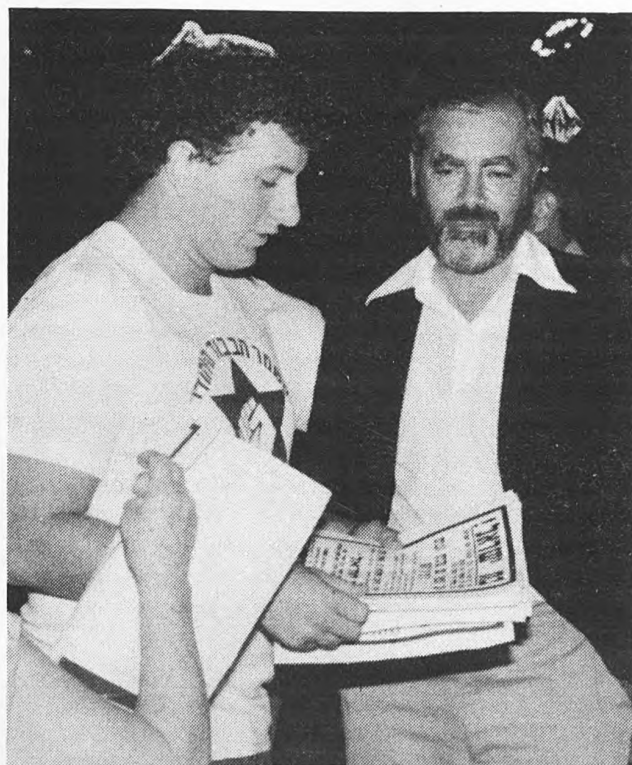
This ultra-chauvinist fringe, more than posing a danger in its own right, acts as a catalyst for the right and as a legitimating device for those with a slightly less vicious image. Thus, Kahane's call for mass expulsions of Palestinians makes former Chief-of-Staff Eitan's demand for legislated apartheid a more "acceptable" and "humane" solution.

Kahane's strength now lies less with young American and Soviet Jewish immigrants and more with voters with origins in the Islamic countries. As the *Jerusalem Post* (July 27, 1984) noted, Kahane's

success constitutes another chapter in the Sephardi voter rebellion that started in the 1977 elections and continued this week when those Sephardi Jews who were dissatisfied with the Likud's performance switched, not to Alignment, but to anti-Alignment parties such as Kach and Tehiya...

Kahane's vote was well above the minimum of one percent needed to enter the Knesset. Near-final results give him 1.3 percent of the vote, about the same percentage as obtained by Shinui or the Citizens Rights Movement in 1981...

The data show that in small development towns like Beit She'an, Oafakim, Beit Shemesh, Dimona



Meir Kahane and followers distribute anti-Arab leaflets at memorial for Sabra and Shatila, Sept. 1983.

Jeffrey Blankfort

and the like Kahane gained 3.3 percent of the total vote. He got almost as much [3.2 percent] in religious moshavim (overwhelmingly of Asia/Africa origins).

In the poorer areas of Jerusalem (Katamonim, Nahlaot), Kahane drew 2.7 percent and again almost as much in the Asia/Africa origin moshavim of the moshavim movement.

In large development towns like Beersheba, Ashdod and Ashkelon, almost 2 percent voted Kahane.

In contrast, in veteran cities with European-origin majorities, Kahane did not clear the 1 percent barrier. In the richer areas of Tel Aviv and Haifa, he did not even clear 0.5 percent of the vote. In veteran moshavim and kibbutzim his vote was negligible.

The Doves

With 3 seats each, the expansion of Shinui and Ratz can be viewed as the consolidation of a dovish non-annexation camp. Together with several members of the Alignment (such as Yossi Sarid), this camp numbering 8-10 members of the Knesset, supports a "territorial compromise" in exchange for peace, though it doesn't openly support negotiation with the PLO. The base of support for this minority is found mainly in upper middle-class Jews of Western origin.

Palestinians in Israel

With a turnout of 78 percent (as opposed to 69 percent in 1981), Palestinians have turned more and more to the electoral process as a vehicle. Only a small minority chose to heed a call for a boycott of the elections. For the first time since 1948, Palestinians in Israel gave a 52 percent majority of their votes to parties supporting Palestinian national rights, Hadash and the PLP.

Hadash, with its strong organizational base in some of the most important Palestinian villages and towns, retained its strength of 4 seats in the face of a serious challenge by the newly-formed PLP. One could argue that the failure of Hadash to gain more from the radicalization of Israeli Arabs, especially since 1982, has been a setback. The struggle between Hadash and the PLP was fierce, with eruptions of both verbal and physical violence throughout the campaign. Nevertheless, the united forces of both groups will provide Palestinian voters with 6 Members of Knesset (MK's) rather than Hadash's 4 in the last Knesset.

The eleventh Knesset shows only 14 or so MK's dedicated to some notion, no matter how skewed, of ethnic and religious equality who are prepared to oppose legislative assaults on Palestinian human and civil rights. As such, this Knesset, although a product of a democratic process, is an affront to democracy. The election results confirm that the overwhelming majority of Israelis support the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the settlement policy and the apartheid regime born from occupation. It appears that the Lebanon war had the support of most Israelis as well, despite large protests.

The explanation for the success of the Zionist right can be found in a basic fact: Despite a seemingly profound economic crisis, the standard of living of most Israelis has increased tremendously over the last few years. The virtual "dollarization" of the Israeli economy points out how erroneous it is to consider the state of the shekel, the local currency, as the standard of economic health.

Every year, larger amounts of U.S. aid keep pouring in, making Israel a subsidized U.S. garrison. With no serious military threat at hand, Israelis feel secure; they consider the price paid for this security worthwhile. Yet government critics are coming to realize that only when the price paid for the maintenance of an aggressive occupying state becomes too high in both human and economic terms will there be a meaningful shift in Israeli public opinion. □

Who's Who in the New Knesset

Likud (41): Traditional rightwing Herut Party and Liberal Party.

Labor Alignment (44): Israeli Labor Party.

Tehiya (5): Supported by large segments of Gush Emunim and religious right.

NRP (4): National Religious Party.

Shas (4): Orthodox religious Sephardi Party.

Hadash (4): Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, led by the Communist Party.

PLP (2): Progressive List for Peace, a coalition of Palestinians who do not support Hadash and a Jewish group headed by Matitahu Peled and Uri Averi.

Shinui (3): Dovish centrist party.

Ratz (3): The Citizens Rights' Movement; along with Shinui absorbed Peace Now votes.

Yahad (3): Founded by former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman who resigned in 1980 following the Camp David agreement and a reduction of the defense budget.

Agudat Yisrael (2): Orthodox party; entered the ruling coalition in 1981 in exchange for promises for religious legislation.

Morasha (2): Rightwing religious party with base of support in Gush Emunim.

Tami (1): Religious party based among Jews of North African origin.

Ometz (1): Party of former Likud member and Dayan supporter Yigal Hurvitz.

Kach (1): Party of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Phalangist Rise...

Continued from page 1

merchants, small businessmen, and professionals. The Phalangist Party makes up at least 80% of Lebanon's consolidated rightwing political parties and militias known respectively as the Lebanese Front and Lebanese Forces.

The Phalangist Party was founded as a youth group by Amin Gemayel's father, Pierre, on Nov. 21, 1936. Attending the 1936 World Olympics in Berlin, Pierre was profoundly impressed by Hitler's disciplined youth brigades and by the fascist movements under Franco and Mussolini: "I

saw discipline and order...and said to myself, 'why can't we do the same thing in Lebanon?'...Nazism? In every system in the world, you can find something good." To this day Gemayel displays a 1936 photo of his newly formed, dark-shirted Phalange standing in review.

Gemayel and other Phalangist elders have also been influenced by their education at St. Joseph's Jesuit University in East Beirut. Of its rector John Ducruet, Robert Friedman in *The Nation* writes: "John Ducruet has left his imprint on three generations of Christian leaders. This Jesuit Svengali, as he is sometimes called, is violently anti-Semitic...and 'is the most important man in Gemayel's life,' said a Phalangist who

knows them both. 'He controls Pierre like a puppet.'"

While fascism was defeated in Europe, Gemayel's Phalangist Party in Lebanon took hold and grew in size, strength, and purpose. On May 20, 1952, it became an official political party under its present name. By the mid-60's, it claimed a total membership of 54,000 and has had representatives in every Lebanese Parliament since 1951, though during the 50's and 60's the Phalangists fared less well electorally than other Christian parties. Now the Phalangists dominate the Lebanese government and are the cornerstone of Lebanon's Maronite state-within-a-state.

During the 1960's, emphasis on military

training within the Phalange increased in proportion to the rise of the Lebanese opposition and the Palestinian resistance movement. From the early 70's on, this militarism boldly asserted itself as the Phalangists prepared to confront their adversaries full force. Their combat ranks swelled as hundreds of new party members were recruited and trained in mountain strongholds.

At the outset of the Civil War in 1975, the Phalangists had already begun the atrocities with which its name became synonymous. On April 13, a busload of unarmed Palestinians and Lebanese passing through Ain

Continued on page 6

Memoirs of Beirut 1982

By Im Lutfi

The following excerpts are taken from the memoirs of an American medical volunteer with the Palestine Red Crescent Society in and around Beirut during the 1982 invasion and siege. She gives a compelling eyewitness account of the human devastation caused by the arsenal of sophisticated U.S.-supplied weapons used by the Israeli military. Portions of her account ominously foreshadow the Sabra-Shatila massacres committed five days after the closing episode of her memoirs.

We left the States by plane and arrived at the Phalangist-controlled port of Junieh by boat. The green line was a broad no-man's-land littered with three- and four-foot brass shell casings. Great mounds of red earth, gullies and embankments were without landmarks. We walked quickly, climbing over hillocks and through dusty rubble with a purposefulness and a casual confidence that we hoped would make us invisible. Our greatest fear was that we would never make the final crossing from East to West Beirut.

Checkpoint by checkpoint we began to slip into West Beirut. There was tension, yes, but there was something else in the air too. Each militia, Mourabitoun, PLO, Syrian Socialist Party, half a dozen more, all were there, laughing, confident, welcoming. Suddenly, in a miraculous moment, all our anxiety washed away. To be at one with a people besieged is an indescribable feeling. The city was high with it.

Through cratered and glass-strewn streets we found our way to the Near East School of Theology, wartime headquarters of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). With diplomatic graciousness, Lawyer Hadla Ayyoubi and Doctor Eugene Maklouf checked our credentials and served us coffee while others rushed off to find Dr. Fathi Arafat, Director of the PRCS. He hurried in flushed and tearful, delighted not merely to have help where help was so badly needed, but also very much because at last, Americans had responded to that need.

We went from clinic to clinic, exploring the health care system of Beirut on foot. We talked to administrators, medical people, the wounded, the maimed, the burned. We observed the many who were utterly silent. The telephoto lenses of our minds registered block upon block of incomprehensible destruction. We scanned and rescanned what we would never adequately recount. What we saw did not become a story to be told, it became a part of our personalities, changing us as people.

At the Red Crescent's Akka Hospital on the verge of Shatila we saw the sky through the bombed basement shelter. At (PRCS) Gaza Hospital in Sabra, a whole wing had been shelled. There were upper story rooms facing south with only two walls remaining.

Nor was damage restricted to Red Crescent facilities. Every hospital in the southern suburbs of West Beirut had been extensively hit, especially with phosphorus shells and fragmentation bombs. These included notably Ma'awa al-Ajazi, the Lebanese Hospital for the Aged; the Mokassid Hospitals for children and for the retarded; and the Hospital for the Insane, shelled continuously, at one point, for five days.

Berbir Hospital, near the Museum Crossing—site of numerous invasion attempts—was functionally destroyed. Its American administrator, Dr. Amal Shaama, had been seen on United States TV displaying twin baby girls who had been burned to death by a phosphorus bomb, their bodies still burning despite total immersion in water for one hour.

The PRCS, in conjunction with AMEL and Secours Populaire (two Lebanese social service organizations), formed and administered a network of twenty-five emergency medical centers in schools, dormitories and public buildings throughout the city. At first these centers housed a thousand beds, but as the bombing continued, this number doubled, occasionally with two people sharing a single mattress on the floor. Between the camps and these unmarked hospitals of Ras Beirut, there were the bombed and burned out remains of several Red Crescent ambulances which had taken direct hits while moving patients during air raids, explaining the current use of unmarked vehicles.

The problem was availability of medical supplies, not for lack of money, but because of the blockade. Disinfectant was scarce and gauze came in unpredictable sizes and shapes and in limited quantities. We seldom had tape. Instruments were few and battered,

and in the absence of any standard way to sterilize them we often cleaned them with foil-wrapped disinfectant pads brought from the States. Disposable blades without handles were sharpened repeatedly. There was netting to protect the patients from flies, but no means of sterile isolation, and with the huge patient load, not even enough sheets. There were no masks and sometimes not even gloves. We feared that our hands, like those of the carriers of child-bed fever, were deadly. We wondered if our clinic was a time bomb and our fingers, fuses.

There were many people who would require months and even years of treatment for massive head, chest and abdominal injuries sustained during the bombing and in the collapse of buildings. Prostheses would be needed for nearly 2,000 single and multiple amputees many of whom had been injured by fragmentation bombs. These weapons, which expelled red hot spinning shrapnel (pieces of steel with jagged, razor sharp edges and points), were detonated at controlled distances from the ground. Their effect could be primarily anti-personnel at



Israeli troops arrest Palestinian doctors and nurses during invasion.

four feet, or primarily anti-materiel at forty feet, although they were selective in no case. (Their use was frequently associated with that of highly sensitive cluster bomb units which went off in the rubble when only slightly disturbed, rendering rescue operations nearly impossible.) Survivors of this weapons system were generally amputees, as people struck in the head or torso had little expectation of recovery. Radical amputation was common, since the shock wave caused by this small, high velocity missile shattered the bone and disrupted the flesh for a considerable distance from the sight of impact. Some amputations resulted from crushing injuries, which were, in addition, a common cause of spinal damage which left a number of people paraplegic.

Numerous people would require orthopedic and plastic surgery over an extended period. Phosphorus was especially destructive when it came in contact with wounds caused by bombing and shelling. Its effect was essentially corrosive sometimes burning deep into fractures, irrevocably damaging bone and joint structure as well as muscle and nerve tissue, and leaving patients extremely disfigured.

We treated people who, at the detonation of the incendiary shell, had been sprayed with a substance which ignited only things containing moisture, searing their skin, burning food, but leaving material objects in the shelter undamaged. Analyses of the materials involved and the medical results of their use were recorded in great detail. The reports were encoded and moved out of the country.

Precautions were taken to ensure that the providers and deliverers of these experimental weapons would not receive the feedback that they needed to complete their studies. Photographers were kept away from some patients, journalists' questions were incompletely answered and other subterfuge was employed to be sure that this knowledge would remain with those who would use it to heal.

Interpreting the Habib/Arafat agreement, the Lebanese government of President-elect Bashir Gemayel ordered the PRCS-operated clinics of West Beirut proper to shut down in late August. With great anxiety, the Red Crescent Society moved its patients and staff into the hospitals of the now unprotected camps.

Hadla Ayyoubi, alone with responsibility now that Dr. Arafat had left with the injured fighters, was especially apprehensive. It wasn't just that she knew the war wasn't over. She had seen other versions of the same conflict, and if experience held true, this lull would be used to pre-

pare for the final act, uglier than all the rest. At this time, when we might have thought we would soon be superfluous, she begged us not to leave. "We need you now more than ever," she said. "We need you to be our witnesses to what is going to happen here."

We were warned to destroy all PRCS identification and emblems. The vehicles in which we traveled were now unmarked. The very signs and symbols which previously had meant our security, could now mark us for death since West Beirut, no longer defended, had been infiltrated by a small army of spies.

Discovering that many of the foreigners had chosen to remain even after the evacuation of the fighters, a number of Palestinian doctors and nurses who had previously planned to flee while they could, made a dangerous choice and joined us in the camps. Later, twenty-four people identified as working for the PRCS, both foreign volunteers and many of those same Palestinian employees, were to be killed in the September massacres.

As we headed out to Gaza Hospital, tightly packed in a closed van, we became mired in a sea of people stretching

all the way from the suburbs to the port. Thousands crowded the streets in a passion of pride and sorrow as the fighters departed. Later, separated from the young men and apparently abandoned by the world, they returned to the camps to start over—the women, the children and the aged.

Our work entered a new phase when we moved to the camps. Incoming patients were no longer victims of aerial bombing or of shelling. Most injuries were incurred one to one on the ground. Sniper fire still struck the incautious in and around the camps, but with the escape or release of people interned at Ansar and the various interrogation centers in the south, we saw new types of injuries. Aside from simple trauma—broken bones and torn flesh (inflicted, often, by a chair or table leg with a nail protruding from the end), the most common problem was dislocated wrists due to the ratchet-action binding straps used to restrain the captured. In addition, some people had spinal column and disc injuries caused by a technique used frequently during detention. A large burlap sack of sand or earth would be placed on the neck and shoulders as the prisoner sat on the ground, hands strapped behind his or her back. Failure to maintain the sack in that position resulted in being beaten about the ears and face, so that motivation to continue holding the weight, even after injury to the neck and shoulders had been thus incurred, was great. (Needless to say, we saw only those people strong enough to risk the hazards of travel through occupied territory.)

As we worked in the camps, we recognized growing evidence for Hadla's concern. By the first of September the Israeli army was well above the official ceasefire line at Ouzai, slipping from building to building in and around the Kuwaiti Embassy Circle. The hospital shook as they detonated the land mines which were the city's last defense against a swift attack. On September 5th, the multinational forces left Beirut.

The most ominous event was the advance into our area of a type of operation much used in the occupied south—the application of extreme violence to a few people in order to terrify the many into a mass exodus. In a typical example, three teen-aged girls were kidnapped from the site of the destroyed Palestinian refugee camp, Ein el-Hilweh, where people were living in the open on the bulldozed remains of their homes. The girls were taken to Sidon where they were repeatedly raped, hideously muti-

Continued on page 6

Interview With Salah Ta'mari

Ansar: The Valley of Hell



Steve Goldfield/Palestine Focus

We may be exaggerating or lying even. Okay. We want an international body to investigate those charges; it's very important. If we are proven to be exaggerating or lying about those facts, I am willing to apologize publicly. I wish a Jewish investigating body would be formed. I wish the Jews in the States would form such a body to investigate what went on. If such a committee is formed, I will put myself at their disposal any time. But we want those events to be investigated.

The eldest prisoner was 85 years old; maybe I'm lying. Okay. Let them see for themselves. I said that many had serious ailments; I've got the list. Maybe I'm exaggerating. Okay. Let them check for themselves.

The first step is to meet with the prisoners and hear from them. A prisoner had gangrene; we watched him for three months. We watched his leg drying up. They wouldn't release him. Another committed suicide; he was a mental case. The Red Cross demanded his release. No way. He was released as a dead body.

People with one kidney went through agony without medical treatment or control over their diet. People with epilepsy--imagine someone with epilepsy living with four hundred human beings in one section. Sometimes they brought them in on stretchers. No medication.

In December 1982 an armored vehicle approached section number 20 and fired a round of machine-gun bullets at prisoners eating their meager lunch, killing three and wounding twelve. They said the soldier had a sudden nervous breakdown.

Salah Ta'mari was president of the prisoner's committee in Ansar, the prison camp in Lebanon where Israel held thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese arrested during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Mr. Ta'mari was born in Bethlehem. For the last twelve years he has lived in Sidon in the south of Lebanon where he coordinated youth activities for the PLO.

He was captured in Sidon on June 19. We asked him if the Israelis knew who he was. He told us, "I didn't hide my identity. I did not deny my relation with the PLO. I am proud of that relation. And I didn't do anything to be ashamed of. It is an honor for me to be a PLO member. Palestine, after all, is my own country and the cause of Palestine, my cause."

About his arrest, Mr. Ta'mari told us, "I spent one night in Safa detention place (a fruit-packing factory) in the south of Lebanon. The next day they moved me to the occupied territories or Israel where I spent about four months, ten days, most of it in solitary confinement, and then they moved me to Ansar where I spent the remaining 18 months." Almost all the prisoners in Ansar were brought out of Lebanon, he told us, a clear and direct violation of the Geneva accords.

PF: How was the prisoner's committee formed?

ST: Actually, it was the Red Cross that convinced the camp commander that there should be a committee for the prisoners. At the beginning, they refused, but then they had to recognize that committee and to deal with it. But many times they tried to get rid of it. On April 19, 1983, they took the entire four-man committee to solitary again.

Ansar was left without leadership, and they tried to fabricate another committee which the prisoners refused to deal with. They protested and demonstrated until the Israelis brought us back to Ansar.

PF: How were you chosen as a leader?

ST: There were so many reasons. First of all, I was well-known amongst people in the south of Lebanon, whether Palestinian or Lebanese. Second, it seems they heard me speaking on the radio. What I said maintained their morale. Third, I took the initiative in doing many things. So, actually it was not calculation; leadership in such situations sprouts from among the people themselves. Although PLO members were the minority, about 10 percent of the camp's nine thousand prisoners, we were well-organized. The majority, the civilians, were not organized. So, it was our task to organize them.

PF: Was the Red Cross the main reason the Israelis recognized the committee?

ST: Whether they liked it or not, there had to be an organization for the prisoners. According to Geneva convention number 3, if we were prisoners of war, then the ranking officer would be in charge of the prisoners; he would be the link between the prisoners and any other authority, whether the camp commander or the Red Cross. But according to Geneva convention number 4, as civilian detainees, we should have a committee.

At the beginning, the Israelis wanted to implement some parts of the Geneva convention without admitting our legal status. So they wanted to deal with me as the highest-ranking officer. I refused, because if I accepted, that means the majority [who were civilians---ed.] would be without leadership. It was better to deal according to Geneva convention number 4 and keep the unity of the prisoners. It worked. I said, "No, there should be a committee," and it was not difficult to agree on who should be on it.

PF: What is the appropriate international response to Ansar?

ST: Ansar is still going on. We accuse the Israelis of putting stamps on people's forearms and of the killings that took place in Ansar camp. We accuse them of depriving us of hot water for 18 months, etc.



Palestine

A bulldozer killed four more; they said it was an accident. It was *not* an accident. It was done on purpose. The prisoners were supposed to be hiding underground when their tunnel collapsed. That's not true; I saw the corpses. The wounds were clean. I had eyewitnesses who told me the real story. If they had been hiding when their shelter collapsed, then their bodies would be mixed with mud. No. Some had their heads chopped off.

Another was killed just because he wanted to collect a letter from his brother who threw it through the fence. He stretched his hand through the wire--which was inside the camp--and a bullet blew his skull up. Nobody investigated that.

Deaf people who lost their hearing aids--smashed by the soldiers--were beaten up because whenever they were given instructions they could not hear them. The guards thought they were disobedient and would beat them until the guards realized they were deaf. The same thing was repeated whenever a new guard came.

Some people had their artificial teeth smashed by the soldiers. They lived for 18 months on bread and water and tea, if they could get a cup of tea.

PF: Did you gain an insight into the mentality of the people doing this?

ST: Yes. The majority of Israelis live in ghettos of the mind; they are not aware of other people's suffering. If you ask me what I remember about their characteristics, I would say one thing. The most obvious thing is that they are arrogant, and they have so much vanity that is so obvious in their behavior. They think they can do anything. Their moral code is the absolute code. Whatever they do is the right thing. Their blood is the most sacred blood. They are racist.

PF: Where do you go from here?

ST: I don't know. This is the truth. Can I go back to Bethlehem? I will stick to youth work. No way to give it up. They are my people, and I love teaching and working with children. I love it.

PF: How has this experience changed you?

ST: For the better. I feel I live my life deeply. I understand the Israelis in a better way, in a deeper way. When I say I understand, that doesn't mean I approve, but now I understand their behavior. There are reasons for that although we don't approve of those reasons. I am satisfied because I don't feel bitter.

This is so important to me. That was my main battle ... not to be bitter, not to have hatred as a motive. I don't want to hate anybody. I'll always have love for my country as a motive, not my hatred for the enemies. In a way, I thank God I've been through this experience. One becomes more understanding to other humans. One's anger against his injustice becomes deeper and more constructive. I don't want to be desperate. This experience maintained my faith in the future.

I still say coexistence between Moslems, Christians, and Jews is inevitable; *it is inevitable*. Yes, we can coexist. Those who established Ansar to deepen the grudge failed in making coexistence impossible. We can live together. A few Israelis helped us, treated us humanely.

Dr. Portnoy, an Israeli, did his best for us; he said, in the presence of the Israeli prison camp commander, "This place is not suitable for animals to live in." On one occasion, when more than twenty prisoners were wounded by direct fire from the soldiers, Dr. Portnoy was faster in arriving on the scene than the ambulance, but he could still not get into the section, since the officer who had the keys was not available. It was so touching, and moving, to watch him throw medical instruments over the barbed wire to a Palestinian doctor reaching for them on the other side in a desperate, breathless effort to save the lives of the wounded prisoners.

Other Israelis left a different impression. For four days I was given no water while I was kept in an outdoor cage. When I woke up, there was no water. I waited for hours until a guard brought me water. Instead of bringing it in the customary plastic cup, he brought a metal one. I grabbed it because I was dying of thirst. It was boiling. I had to drop it.

With that soldier, I hate him because he brought to the surface the worst part of me with his behavior. I don't know what I would do. Sometimes I feel like killing him even if he were in a church when I met him. Other times I say no, I just think he's wretched; he needs my sympathy. I'm sure I will overcome this feeling though it's not easy ... it was water. I was thirsty. If he had deprived me of water, that would be even less brutal than giving me boiling water and laughing from afar. That's the one incident I try to forget. It holds me from time to time.

PF: How did you react at the time?

ST: I jumped up on my feet--I don't know how because I was very weak and in chains--trying to grab him because to me he was not a human being. He didn't belong to the human race when he did it.

But I will overcome this feeling of bitterness about that particular incident.

PF: It must be very difficult to speak of such things.

ST: Not really. When you are working for survival, even at the grimmest hours, you feel you have to survive to tell what you have been through. □

Phalangist Rise to Power...

Continued from page 3

al-Rummaneh was attacked by Phalangist gunmen. Nearly fifty of the passengers were killed or wounded. "It is clear that the Kataeb Party bears full responsibility for the massacres, for the subsequent complications, for the deaths, the damages, both physical and spiritual, which have affected the country as a result," declared Prime Minister Rashid Solh a month later upon his resignation from office.

During the Civil War, the youngest of Pierre Gemayel's sons, Bashir, further consolidated the power of the Phalangists, achieving prominence and notoriety in the process. He became commander-in-chief of the Phalangist militia in 1976 and ruthlessly built up the Phalangist-dominated Lebanese Forces to an estimated 25,000 strong by 1982.

In Jan. 1976, Bashir led the siege of Tal al-Zaatar refugee camp and subsequent massacre of its inhabitants; the camps of Karantina and Dbayeh suffered similar fates that same month. In 1978 and 1980 respectively, he conducted raids against his fellow rightwing political rivals, Suleiman Franjeh and Camille Chamoun and their militias, seeing to the brutal slaying and mutilation of scores of their followers. This accomplished, he announced his intention to bring all potential Lebanese allies under his command and to increase his armed forces to 40,000. A ruthless despot by any standard, Bashir Gemayel dismissed his murderous actions as "social revolt against feudalism."

Phalangist View of Lebanon

Bashir's despotic quest for power perhaps best exemplifies the central goal of the Phalangist Party: to dominate Lebanon politically, militarily, economically and socially, at any cost, no matter what amount of poverty, powerlessness, or physical harm those outside its sphere of acceptance may suffer. As such, Bashir's excesses and preposterous justifications for those excesses are not unique to him; the intolerance and racism inherent to Pierre Gemayel's Berlin-inspired vision of a superior social order is a mainstay of Phalangist dogma.

With all the zeal associated with European fascism, the Phalangists view the Maronites as a separate and unique, hence favored, Western-oriented "race," quite distinct from Arab peoples. Just as Mussolini glorified Italy's link to ancient Rome and Hitler espoused "Aryan purity," so does Phalangist mythology invoke the heritage of the ancient Phoenicians as entitlement to "special destiny." A Phalangist poster depicts a Maronite warrior slaying "hordes" of Arab, Asian, and African "subhumans."

Under the banner of "Christendom's eastern bulwark," the Phalangists attempt to sanitize their defense against serious political and social reform in Lebanon, namely, an end to Phalangist domination of Lebanon's power structure. Their chief victims are the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Charles Ghostine, former deputy commander of the Phalangists, told the *N.Y. Times* two weeks after the Sabra-Shatila massacres that the massacres had "been magnified" and he denied they were "real" massacres. Phalangist emissary Pierre Yazbek insinuated that the massacres were "military actions." Etienne Saqr, commander-

in-chief of the "independent"--but by his admission beholden to the Phalange--rightwing "Guardians of the Cedars," said in a *MERIP Reports* interview that "thanks to Israel, the cancer which was in the

"The United States is now allied with a regime indebted to the same fascism it helped defeat during World War II."

Lebanese body and which posed a mortal danger to us was gone."

Using more guarded language, Pierre Gemayel, in his 1955 *Memorandum*, nevertheless conveyed the same contempt for Lebanon's ethnic diversity:

It is spiritually impossible to unite [Lebanon] to a world which does not share its state of soul, its spiritual principles. Lebanon is a mission, incompatible with that which the Arabs



New Phalangist recruits give fascist salute at swearing-in ceremony.

aspire generally to realize. It would find itself divided against itself, in its view of life, in its intelligence, in its soul and in its being.

Prominent theoretician of the Lebanese right, Charles Malik, similarly defended exclusive Phalangist rule, citing the "historic uniqueness and apartness of Lebanon in the whole of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East." With arrogant disregard for the implications of minority rule, Malik asks, "Must the fate of the Christians...be ineluctably sealed by sheer determinism of numbers?"

Phalangist-Israeli Alliance

Ideological kinship has engendered solid strategic alliances between the Phalangists and other governments. In fact, Phalangist party strength derives largely from outside help, in glaring contradiction to its reputed "fierce independence" and disdain for "foreign forces." The Phalangists have been assisted by an assortment of foreign forces, including French advisors. Jordan's Hashemite regime has supplied advisors, troops and weapons. U.S. military assistance has been significant even apart from its 1958 intervention and recent Marine presence. During the 1975-76 Civil War, for example, the United States supplied the Phalangists with munitions routed through NATO countries to the Phalangist port at Jounieh.

The biggest boon for the Phalangists,

however, has been their longstanding alliance with Israel, notwithstanding an occasional tactical disagreement between the two. While it may at first seem bizarre that Israel would unite with a party identified with Nazi ideology, their unity is firmly bonded by parallel views on religious sectarianism and racism. A "Christian" Lebanon led by the Phalangists would go far towards legitimizing "Jewish" Israel.

Over the years, Israeli material, logistic, and political support has been considerable; without it, the Phalangists admit they would be in desperate straits. From 1976 on, Israel provided tens of millions of dollars worth of war materiel; *The Nation* (6-9-82) estimated Israeli military aid to the Phalangists in 1980 alone was worth \$100 million. By 1981 Israel had supplied them with 40 U.S.-made Sherman tanks; by 1982 1500 Phalangists had been trained by the Israelis.

East Beirut was given over as a staging ground for the Israeli siege.

The "Moderate" Amin Gemayel

Current Lebanese president Amin Gemayel is generally characterized as a moderate, a traditional political tactician. Yet outspoken and controversial colleagues of his--like Etienne Saqr, ardent defender of the Sabra-Shatila massacres--say of him, "Amin Gemayel is...a Kataeb leader--he is one of our friends and fellows." Cosmetic touches of "moderation" and "impartiality" have failed to prove otherwise.

Moreover, Amin's father has been exerting more leverage over party direction in recent months. Pierre's admonitions have invariably set the tone in attempted reconciliation talks: "If anyone says anything against what I have said, we will reject it." Indeed, to most Lebanese, writes *The Christian Science Monitor*, "he is seen as the main obstacle in reconciliation efforts, since he has so often in the past balked at any scheme that allows the majority Muslims greater power at the expense of the minority Christians."

As if to say being just an "obstacle" were somehow too lenient, leading Phalangist ideologue Antoine Nijam vented his impati-

ence towards what lately the more militant elements within the Phalangist Party regard as unacceptable bridling of their power: "Israel should push towards a new leadership for the Christians...Perhaps we need a new edition of July 7"--the day Bashir's men massacred Chamoun's militia in 1980.

Likewise, Fadi Frem, successor to Bashir as commander-in-chief of the Lebanese Forces and key figure in the Sabra-Shatila massacres, grows increasingly adamant in opposing the whole concept of reconciliation. Alarmed at even the little progress being made, he is urging all Phalangists to mobilize for a "resistance campaign." "In the Christian area, there is something new that has come up," he warned. "Now we will be having our own political visions and options."

The Phalangist track record leaves little room for speculation over those "visions and options." The long and rapacious ascent of the Phalangist Party bears out the seriousness of its intention to create an exclusive "Christian" state in Lebanon, one unaccountable to and hostile towards most of Lebanon's population. The United States government appears equally determined to expend tax dollars on an alliance with the leader of the Phalangist Party. How ironic that a country that fought against--and helped defeat--fascism during World War II is now allied with a regime indebted to that very same fascism. □

Memoirs...

Continued from page 4

lated, and two of them killed. The bodies, and the remaining battered girl, saved so she could tell her story, were dumped back at the camp by men described as members of the Haddad Militia.

As we read of these events in the Beirut newspapers and heard the details from our patients, we could not help wondering when the reality of Hadla's nightmare would reach Sabra and Shatila, those camps which we watched daily becoming once again vital and exciting suburbs.

Time passed and bodies healed, better perhaps than expected. The people of the Burn Clinic, where we

Americans had first worked, were now absorbed into the population of Gaza Hospital. They maintained a particular closeness and continuity. As the day came for each person's release, they were told of family losses--children, husbands, wives. We foreigners became "Im" this and "Abu" that ("mother of," "father of") as people learned of mothers and fathers gone forever and not merely missing or in some other hospital as previously hoped.

We observed that despite conditions medically unthinkable by American standards, the people of the Burn Clinic got well too fast; that they had too low an infection rate; that there were unexpectedly few, and minimally severe complications. Despite immense personal tragedies and loss of all physical property, and with no anticipated end of military action against them in sight,

these people were without self-pity. They were marked only by a clear-eyed and glowing anger at what had been done. They were confident, realistic and ready to start over. By any reasonable standard, the results were amazing.

If there was a single factor that carried more weight than any other in this accident of success, it was just this: that a number of other people in no way related to their situation, simply entered their lives, walked in on their war, unarmed, and stayed with them.

On the eleventh of September, three days before Bashir Gemayel's assassination, four days before the invasion of West Beirut, and five days before the start of the massacre, we discharged the last of the people of the Burn Clinic and sent them back to the camps. □

"Beirut 1982: From the Israeli Invasion to the Massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila Camps" is a stunning photographic documentary published by the PLO. Edited by Japanese photojournalist Ryuichi Hirokawa--one of the first reporters allowed into the camps after the massacre--this book is both document and tribute.

This book is filled with powerful images, including extensive coverage of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. It concludes with photos taken in the camps during happier days in 1980. Is that smiling boy photographed in 1980 the strangled child of Sabra and Shatila who appears pages earlier? The moving photos of Hirokawa are supplemented by those of another Japanese photojournalist, Hiromi Nagakura. The book includes eyewitness reports by the two photographers, Norwegian and British doctors and nurses, and members of an American team that had gone to Lebanon.

To find out how to obtain this book--along with many of the other books that are recommended in this column--write to the Arabic Book Center, P.O. Box 6678, San Francisco, CA 94101. In addition to books in English on the Middle East, ABC carries an extensive list of Arabic books.

When Menahem Begin became Prime Minister in 1977 "his first act was to hang a portrait of Vladimir Jabotinsky on the wall of his office"--an act of no small significance. Jabotinsky, founder of that strain of Zionism known as "Revisionism," had been cursed as a Hitlerite by none other than David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister. Jabotinsky's support for Mussolini, his notorious alliance with the Ukrainian anti-Semite Simon Petliura, his extremist insistence that Israel should encompass both sides of the Jordan--all of Jabotinsky's

Getting It All In FOCUS

infamy as the fascist among the "socialist" mainstream Zionists was swept away with Begin's small act to honor his mentor.

And now Lenni Brenner, author of *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*, has published *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (Zed Books, London), an illuminating book which documents the careers of Jabotinsky, Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. This is not the typical history of the Zionist movement--but one which delves deeply into the mentality and maneuvers of the one-time extremists who now control Israel.

Indeed, while regarded as an aberration for decades, Zionist Revisionism is now secure as a dominant force in Israeli politics. Yet, as Brenner points out, this is really not so surprising. Begin's "accession to power was not a revolution within Zionism but rather an extension of the logic of development of the previous Labour Alignment governments. It was they, not he, who had started settling new colonists on the West Bank. It was they who told American Jewry to vote for Nixon, who forged the links with the CIA. It was Rabin, not Begin, who invited (South African Prime Minister) Vorster to Israel in 1976. And it was Labor Zionism, not Revisionism, that first started arming the Phalange in Lebanon. Jabotinsky was ahead of his time, these things could not be rushed.

Zionism had to go through several stages before it could reach its present form. Begin was not some sort of Zionist mutant; Zionism could only have developed behind an iron wall and, eventually but inevitably, its official ideology caught up with its reality."

You can get this book directly from the November 29th Committee for Palestine. Write to November 29th Committee for Palestine, P.O. Box 115, New York, NY 10113.

"Update: Mideast" is a new magazine put out by Claremont Research and Publications. This is an excellent resource for those of us who can't seem to keep up with clipping newspapers--and who don't have access to the Manchester Guardian and other important papers. Each issue includes a chronology for the month, a review of editorials and opinions, and a commentary followed by a substantial selection of clippings.

Ever needed a map of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for a study group? Claremont Research also supplies such a map with keyed references, statistical tables, data on settlements, municipalities, refugee camps, and more. For this and "Update: Mideast" write to Claremont Research and Publications, 160 Claremont Avenue, New York, NY 10027.

"At the Democratic Convention I got a copy of Palestine Focus. I wanted to tell you all that it has become a first rate newspaper. We've needed a paper of this caliber on Palestine--and now we've got it." So wrote James Zogby, Executive Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. We'd like to thank the ADC and all those who've been sending us words of encouragement. Keep those cards and letters--and much-needed donations!--coming in! □

The Terror Continues...

Continued from page 1

combatants, failing to protect the civilians. While the killers were termed "Israeli-backed," Alexander Cockburn commented in the *Village Voice* that "they should, with equal accuracy, be termed 'U.S.-sanctioned' since their onslaught on the camps was only possible in the event that the U.S. flouted a specific guarantee."

Further U.S. complicity became apparent when it was learned that American officials knew of the massacres 24 hours before they ended yet failed to do anything to stop them. Then came news with a familiar ring: Elie Hobeika, one of the Phalangist militia commanders who led the massacre in the Shatila camp, was the Phalangist liaison officer with the CIA.

While little attention has been focused on the unsavory companionship of the CIA and the Phalangists, the broad scope of U.S. complicity was by no means limited to such "covert" action. This was aptly described by former deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti:

What's our Army if not the product of American aid? Didn't Reagan proclaim Jewish settlements on the West Bank "not illegal?" Didn't Haig sanction the first phase of the Lebanese invasion? Everything that has happened in Israel until now has carried the stamp of American approval, or at least it was tolerated by your government. If the genie is out of the bottle, it was Washington that helped to turn him loose.

Settler Terrorists

April 27, 1984: Israeli security forces discovered explosive devices planted on five Arab-owned civilian buses in Jerusalem. Set to explode during rush hour on a Moslem holiday, the bomb could have killed or injured an estimated 300 people.

Some twenty Israeli Jews were arrested for the planting of bombs in the Arab buses. After their arrests, they also admitted to the June 1980 car-bomb attempts to assassinate three mayors in the West Bank, the July 1983 machine gun assault on the Islamic College in Hebron in which 3 were killed and 33 wounded, and many other attacks on civilians and Christian and Moslem shrines.

Once again the American media heaped praise on Israeli democracy: "Israeli Democracy Foils Jewish Terrorists" blared the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. But even this tune has begun to sour. American media has been unable to hide the ugly racial hatred which has become common in Israel. Israeli leaders declare that Palestinians are "two-legged beasts" and "drugged cockroaches in a bottle." They defend the settler terrorist gangs, and extol the "positive effects" of attempting to assassinate Palestinian mayors. In such a climate, the settler terrorists can only be viewed as organic products of a profound social malaise.

The settler terrorists are scolded for "taking the law into their own hands," while it is left unsaid what "law"

FORTY HOURS OF HORROR

1. Wednesday, Sept. 15: Israeli tanks surround Sabra and Shatila camps, and patrols move from house to house on the perimeter. Fighting breaks out in the northern sectors, where left-wing militiamen, and possibly Palestinian guerrillas, resist the Israelis.

2. Thursday, Sept. 16: The camps are secured, and civilians who had fled the previous day return. Israeli tanks and troops are withdrawn. During the day, Christian forces, made up of Haddad militiamen from the south and Phalangists from east Beirut, pass through Israeli lines and assemble south of the airport.

3. From the airport staging area they move north and establish a command post next to an Israeli observation post overlooking the camps.

4. With Israeli flares lighting the area, some 600 Christian militiamen enter the camps. Gunfire and explosions are heard throughout the night.

5. Friday, Sept. 17: Christian militiamen move in and out of the camps. Israeli troops look on and occasionally talk with the Christians but do not interfere. As the gunfire continues, bulldozers dig mass graves and cart bodies away from the area.

6. On Friday, Christian militiamen enter Akka Hospital and kill doctors and nurses. On Saturday, Sept. 18, militiamen clear Gaza Hospital of staff, patients and refugees and march them off at gunpoint.

exists to kill Palestinians. But even this ambiguity between official and unofficial policy is becoming clarified according to famed Israeli "democracy." Massacres in Lebanon instigated by the Israeli Defense Forces and violence in the West Bank at the hands of vigilante settlers all have the same goals: to strike such terror into the hearts of the Palestinians that they flee for their lives, conveniently leaving the land for the occupiers.

The recent election of Jewish Defense League and settler gang-leader Meir Kahane to the Knesset illustrates such "democracy." Once Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, instigators of the Deir Yassin massacre and the King David Hotel bombing in the forties, were both condemned as terrorists even by fellow Zionists; then each rose to become prime minister. With a program to expel all Arabs in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Kahane only more clearly articulates the profound racial hatred which has become prominent in Israel. It would come as no surprise if one day Kahane--or the more "respectable" Sharon--were to become prime minister.

As Israeli legal proceedings continue against the settler gang, we are not reassured that "justice will be done." In 1956 Israeli Border Police massacred 49 'Israeli Arabs' returning home from their fields at Kfar Kassim. At the end of those legal proceedings the commanding officer received a fine of one piaster (penny). Those who instigated the Sabra and Shatila massacres continue to hold the reins of Israeli power. Israeli "democracy" seems to be hardly more than a debate between those who feel that paying one penny or nothing at all is the appropriate response to murder--murder of a Palestinian, that is.

Yet it is not only Israeli "democracy" that frightens us, but the ill-conceived policies of the Reagan administration as well. For, once again, there is a "Mr. Big" behind the scenes of the crime--someone who gives the orders and buys the bullets but who doesn't pull the trigger, and it's none other than the United States. Many of the Jewish terrorists are American-born--like Meir Kahane--and permitted to travel without hindrance by our own government. More importantly, the annexationist policies of the Israeli government and the consequent actions of settler terrorists would never see the light of day without the nearly \$3 billion in aid offered by our own country.

Perhaps President Reagan can now decry these settler terrorists, wishing the very best for Israel's "agony" to preserve "democracy," just as he decries the death squads in El Salvador. Yet those death squads were originally financed and trained by the CIA. The fanatical settlers on the West Bank are sustained by official Israeli policy backed by American taxpayers' dollars. Whether it's fragmentation bombs falling over Beirut or hand-grenades thrown at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, each attack against Palestinians is sanctioned and subsidized by U.S. foreign policy.

The American people hold the keys to genuine democracy in their hands. More and more Americans cry out against our own government's role in supporting Israel's racist policies. As both official and unofficial violence heightens, it will become increasingly difficult for media and politicians alike to justify their backing of Israeli "democracy." And when the next crimes are committed many more fingers will point at "Mr. Big" rather than just at the one holding the gun. □

By Tony Martin

Israeli Military Orders—Annexation By Decree

Since 1967, when Israel took control of the 1.3 million Palestinians living in the West Bank, it has issued approximately 1100 military orders with the objective of stripping the Palestinians of a legal and cultural identity. Israel's intent to make Palestinians invisible in their own homeland can be seen from the earliest military orders which prevented Palestinians from having their own political parties, flying their own flag or singing national songs.

In the last seventeen years the de-Palestinianization of the West Bank has led in effect to cultural genocide by military decree. According to Jonathan Kuttab, West Bank attorney with Law in the Service of Man, Israeli military orders are:

aimed at changing and altering the character of the West Bank by removing the coherent non-Jewish character of the economy, institutions, traditions, agriculture and industry. In every category there is an attempt to remove any sort of autonomous Palestinian existence ... Through the military order you can apply Israeli law whenever it is in your interest to apply it. You can change Jordanian law to suit a purpose. You can create a whole new structure, which the settlements are, by military order ... So you can achieve the purpose of annexing the West Bank, and you can deport or replace the population to prevent its development and growth simply by adding military orders which make new crimes.

While we cannot hope to detail the multitude of military orders, we will try to highlight some of the most serious as well as absurd.

Destroying the Infrastructure

Consider the impact on a national group's ability to maintain its own independent economy when it is prohibited from maintaining its own banks. Under Military Order (MO) 8, all banks on the West Bank were closed, allowing no new banks to open without a permit. In the last seventeen years no permits to any Palestinian banking or credit institutions have been granted by the Israelis. The only permits that have been issued have been to Israeli banks.

Early on, Israeli military orders provided that no amount of money, no matter how small, could be brought in from an Arab country without a permit. This complemented yet another military order which provided that no sum in excess of \$3,000 from anywhere could be brought into the West Bank without a permit. Upon arrival all monies had to be deposited immediately into the Fund for the Development for Judea and Samaria—the Israeli names for the West Bank. During the lengthy wait for yet another permit to get the money out, Palestinian deposits are used to fund the illegal settlements on the West Bank. Recently, the Israelis further tightened their grip over Palestinian finances by issuing MO 998. This provides that any public institution, school, society, organization or group in the

West Bank must have a permit before it is allowed to collect money or accept money from either inside or outside the West Bank. Even a school raffle or fundraising drive would require an Israeli permit.

Agriculture and the Land

At first glance, one would think that when the Israelis issued military orders pre-



The power behind military orders: Israeli soldiers question West Bank youth at gunpoint.

venting Palestinians from drilling water wells on their own land or imposed orders which gave them total control over Palestinian agricultural exports both within and outside Israel, they would feel that their domination over Palestinian agriculture was complete. The Israeli authorities apparently did not, requiring permits even for the planting of fruit trees and vegetables. Under MO 1015 and 1039, any Palestinian who plants 25 or more eggplants is subject to fines, destruction of his entire crop and one year imprisonment for failure to get a permit. Obtaining a permit is exceedingly difficult because it requires the petitioner to submit proof of ownership of land (according to Israeli, not Palestinian standards). These orders provide another means of declaring land cultivated by Palestinians to be state land, thereby subjecting it to expropriation. Israeli settlers on the West Bank are not subject to any of these military orders.

As each new military order is issued, Israeli harassment intrudes even more deeply into Palestinian daily life. Early on, military orders permitted the Israeli authorities to declare whole areas such as villages as "closed," forbidding anyone to come or go. With the recent addition of MO 1021, such

power was refined: Israeli authorities can now expel any person within the arbitrarily closed area who is not from that village. In turn, they can now arrest any of the residents from the closed area who is no longer residing there but lives elsewhere on the West Bank and return him to the closed area to be punished with the rest of the villagers.

Under MO 59 the Israelis gave themselves almost total prerogative to claim Palestinian land as public land. It has been estimated that as much as 70 percent of West Bank land has been transferred into the Israeli public domain. Despite the overwhelming advantage that the Israelis have illegally gained by MO 59, and the more than 1000 military orders that followed it, they recently sought even more control over Palestinian land. Under MO 1060 any land that has no registration or whose registration is incomplete is not afforded the jurisdiction of the local courts. Local courts cannot issue injunctions to prevent their expropriation or make any orders relating to them. Once again, "registered" is defined by Israeli standards and the registration process is subject to intentional delays by the Israeli authorities.

The Israeli Supreme Court Upholds Injustice

Although the international legal community has condemned use of military orders on the West Bank as a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Israeli Supreme Court has been a steadfast defender of this practice. When the Israelis took control of the West Bank in 1967 every one of their moves as an occupying power was to be governed by the Fourth Geneva Convention. The limitation imposed on Israel as an occupying power was that it was not to move its civilian population into the oc-

cupied territories nor to force the civilian Palestinian population out of the West Bank through any form of expulsion. The Israeli government immediately violated one of the fundamental prohibitions of the Fourth Geneva Convention which forbade them from making any basic changes in the Palestinian legal system. Military orders were used to effectively strip the Palestinian legal system of any authority.

Military orders are the weapon of choice for the Israeli occupiers because they can be created without any safeguards for the Palestinian people. According to attorney Kuttab, a military order "is not passed by the Israeli Knesset but by a military governor. What he needs really is just a stencil machine." What is surprising is that the Israeli Supreme Court has totally abdicated its responsibility to make its domestic legal institutions conform with internationally recognized legal standards.

Any military order issued under the umbrella of "security" is virtually unappealable to the Israeli Supreme Court. Their highest court has repeatedly held that it has no jurisdiction in matters involving the security of Israel. In one recent case which concerned the right of the military governor to impose police supervision on a Palestinian, the court stated the following:

"The object of the order issued by the (military governor) was to ensure the safety of the people and public order, and we have no right to express an opinion as to whether this object can be achieved in this manner, this being left to the absolute discretion of the (military governor), and we see no justification for interference in this matter." (*Ismail Ali v. Police Inspector et al*, Judgments of the Supreme Court, No. 7, p. 913)

In yet another recent case which dealt with the power of the Military Commander to give orders for banishment and detention, the Israeli Supreme Court held:

"It should be mentioned that this power is very extensive. It is at the discretion of the Military Commander, not the court, and he has the right to give the order even when it merely seems to him that such an order is desirable." (*Hasanein v. the Minister of Defense*, Judgments of the Supreme Court, No. 41, p.

That the Israeli Supreme Court grants unfettered discretion to the military governor to issue military orders has produced a nightmare of repression. This nightmare should be understood as the predictable outcome of an unreigned occupying power changing without authority the Palestinian legal system.

Through military orders one can see the Israeli commitment to de-Palestinianize the West Bank by institutionalizing discriminatory legal treatment at every level. Despite the Israeli government's efforts at cultural genocide by military decree, the Israelis have failed. The Palestinians have steadfastly opposed the imposition of the military orders and have become even more militant in their claim for a homeland. Finally, the Palestinians continue to be increasingly successful in showing the world community the obvious link behind Israeli military orders and South African apartheid. □

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Palestine Focus is the national newsletter of the November 29th Committee for Palestine (formerly November 29th Coalition). The newsletter is an activist vehicle tied to an activist movement, yet aimed at a general audience with little background knowledge. We report on activities, not only of our committee, but of other groups; and we provide consistent commentary and analysis of events in the Middle East.

The November 29th Committee for Palestine takes its name from the date declared by the United Nations as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Our task is to spark and support consistent, far-reaching, and effective activity which brings the issue of Palestine before the American people and builds a growing and deepening base of understanding. Our movement organizes to stop U.S. intervention in the Middle East and to cut off U.S. aid to Israel. We educate Americans on the need to support the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to oppose Israeli policies of discrimination which deny the Palestinian people their rights.

Signed articles are not necessarily the opinion of the November 29th Committee for Palestine. Letters, opinions, articles, and other contributions are welcome.

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