

PLO warns of realities of Israeli Labour Party

فلسطين حرة free palestine

February 1981 Price 20p

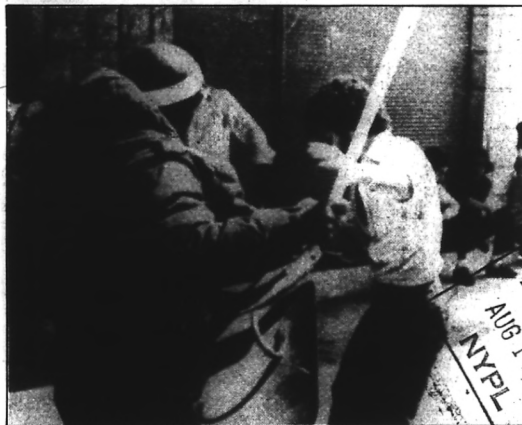
EUROPE MUST ACT NOW TO ASSERT PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

BRITAIN AND the Palestinian people share mutual interests in securing an early settlement of the Middle East conflict, and Britain, with her European partners in the EEC, must act without delay to secure the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. This is the view of the Conservative Member of Parliament for Macclesfield, Mr Nicholas Winterton, following a recent fact-finding tour of the Middle East.

Although these views are now held by an increasing number of British MPs, Mr Winterton does not conceal the fact that in the past he has been a supporter of the Zionist cause. However, after visiting Palestinian refugee camps in the Lebanon and witnessing the havoc created by frequent Israeli bombing raids, and his meetings with West Bank Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories, the Conservative MP has returned to Britain dismayed by what he heard and saw.

Mr Winterton told *Free Palestine* in an exclusive interview that having set out from London slightly biased against the Palestinian cause, the tour had completely altered his assessment of the Palestine question. It shattered many of the myths, which the Zionists have been promoting for years, concerning the nature of the PLO and Israeli policy in southern Lebanon and the 1967 occupied territories.

Concerned by Israel's settlement programme on the West Bank, Mr Winterton points out, 'People wake up one morning and find huge areas of their land wired off. Initially it's supposedly for security reasons. And then, of course, the building begins.' He describes how the seizure of a village's farmland leaves the



Zionists guilty of 'worst forms of discrimination'

Palestinian residents with no option but to seek work in Israel 'for lower wages than Israeli workers doing the same job'.

In occupied East Jerusalem, says Mr Winterton, the Israelis are seeking to separate and isolate the Arab suburbs, and to prevent their expansion. He says he believes this has nothing to do with strategic reasons, but that it is motivated by racial considerations.

Settlements, he adds, are 'being established quite wrongly, quite illegally, for sinister strategic and racial purposes, and not for the benefit of Israel and its people, nor the Arabs with whom they must live if there is to be peace in the Middle East'.

He believes that President Reagan, who has so far described the Israeli settlements as provocative, must condemn them as illegal. The Israelis, adds Mr Winterton, 'talk about discrimination against Jews. They themselves are practising even worse forms of discrimination'.

'The one thing that impressed me,' he said, speaking of the West Bank, 'was the repressive attitude of the occupying forces, their arrogance'. As an example, he described a visit to Najah University in Nablus. Outside was an armoured personnel carrier, and an Israeli soldier photographing students as they left the campus, so that they might be identified if they later participated in demonstrations. The British

Member of Parliament was struck by the way the soldier was taking the photographs: 'not surreptitiously, very openly, as if to say, "We are the masters here".'

Mr Winterton expressed his concern at the havoc the Lebanese civil war has wrought on the country, and condemned the repeated Israeli attacks against the Palestinians living in exile in Lebanon. He accepted the difficulties of hitting strictly military targets when the adversary is an elusive guerrilla army. Nevertheless, it is clear, he believes, that 'areas of Lebanon are being laid waste by Israeli air attack and artillery bombardment which do not appear to be directed at precise military or associated areas'.

He adds, 'It would appear to me that some of the raids into Lebanon are quite indiscriminate. They cannot be described in any way as being for military purposes. They are intimidatory'.

Recalling his own abhorrence of the treatment of Jews in Nazi Europe, Mr Winterton continued: 'They, themselves, in a more sophisticated way, are carrying out similar oppression against the Palestinian people'.

His visit to the area, and his extensive talks with Palestinians, both in exile and those living under Israeli military occupation, have convinced Mr Winterton that the PLO is an essential party to any Middle East peace negotiations, and that it has wide support and backing amongst the Palestinian people.

'I would say that the overwhelming majority of the people we met believe that the PLO represents the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people,' he says. 'I cannot name a group, a body, an organisation, which was mentioned to us which carried any influence whatsoever, or even sought to represent the people of that area'.

Politically, Mr Winterton considers himself on the right wing of the Conservative Party, yet he admits being greatly impressed by Mr Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, and the man who has come to symbolise the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. Expectations of Arafat as an archetypal 'Marxist terrorist' were not fulfilled. Instead

A CAMPAIGN has been launched in London by the Palestine Liberation Organisation to draw the attention of British political leaders and the public to the realities of the Israeli Labour Party's plans for the Palestinians. The campaign comes against the background of the European tour by Labour's leader Shimon Peres to project a flexible and moderate image to Western leaders in the hope of easing pressure on Israel to respect the rights of the Palestinian people.

According to opinion polls in the Zionist state, Peres looks almost certain to defeat Beigun's Likud Party in the June elections.

In a memorandum to the Foreign Office, Mr Nabil Ramlawi, the PLO's London Representative, has warned that the Israeli Labour Party programme 'totally negates the Palestinian national rights conceded by the international community. The cornerstone of the programme is the physical, political and ideological elimination of the PLO, and its replacement by a Quisling alternative'.

Similar moves are being taken by other PLO envoys in western capitals. Mr Peres' tour of Europe was shadowed by PLO roving envoy, Dr Issam Sartawi, a member of the Palestine National Council. In London both Mr Ramlawi and Dr Sartawi addressed a press conference, to give a detailed assessment of Labour's programme. Dr Sartawi branded the Labour manifesto 'a programme for war, not a programme for peace'.

Nabil Ramlawi has reminded the Foreign Office that 'the PLO is universally recognised by the Palestinian people as their sole legitimate representative, and identified as the symbol and instrument of their national identity'.

'The favourable reception of the programme in some quarters and the exaggerated publicity which surrounded it, helped to create the misleading impression that a breakthrough in the deadlocked peace process has been reached,' added Mr Ramlawi. 'This feeling of optimism is totally unfounded, and is based on false premises'.

In letters to Opposition leaders Mr Michael Foot and Mr David Steel, as well as to foreign news editors of the major British newspapers, Mr Ramlawi said: 'I am sure you will agree that any progress towards securing respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and peace in the Middle East would be seriously jeopardised by any misunderstanding by western opinion as to the realities of the Israeli Labour Party programme'.

To back up his views, Mr Ramlawi enclosed copies of the complete text of the Israeli Labour Party's programme, together with a detailed analysis of its implications.

Mr Ramlawi pointed to the expansionist nature of the ILP programme, which calls for Israeli annexation of the Jordan Valley, the Etzion group of settlements to the south-east of Bethlehem, the Jerusalem region, including the eastern part of the city, the southern Gaza Strip, and the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. The area marked for annexation by Labour amounts to 40 per cent of the entire area of the Palestinian territories seized in 1967. Such annexation, he said, would be 'in flagrant contempt of international consensus'.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Peres and the Palestinians

THE PROSPECT of a Labour government being returned in Israel's June elections poses new threats to the Palestinians. With the West widely lauding Shimon Peres as a moderate, *Free Palestine* looks at the Israeli Labour Party programme on page 10.

Palestine Focus 1980

A SPECIAL three page review of events and trends during the past year looks at the escalation of Israeli oppression of the Palestinians living under military occupation, the Zionist settlement programme, the stand of the United Nations on the Palestine question, and the Zionist war in Lebanon. See pages 5-7.

Culture under threat

IN THE 1967 occupied territories of Palestine, the Israeli military authorities are adopting an increasing repressive stance towards Palestinian artists and writers in a bid to silence patriotic and nationalist opinions. A report on the dangers facing Palestine's cultural community appears on page 11.

CONTINUED ON P9

Arafat: UN role in creation of Palestinian state

PLO CHAIRMAN Yasser Arafat has said the PLO would accept any solution to the Palestine problem advocated by the United Nations. In a 13th January interview with *Ash Sha'ab*, the newspaper of the Egyptian opposition Socialist Labour Party, the PLO leader stressed that he meant a solution drawn up by the UN itself, and not one reached through an international conference organised by the world body but with a limited range of participants.

Chairman Arafat reiterated the PLO's statement of last year that it would accept temporary UN administration of a West Bank-Gaza Strip Palestinian state and the presence of a UN force. He told *Ash Sha'ab* that the PLO agreed to a UN administration — but not a mandate — of a Palestinian state for a period ranging from three to six months.

The possible role of the UN in solving the Palestinian conflict was a major theme of a two-hour meeting in early January between Chairman Arafat and a visiting delegation of 26 US university professors who were on a fact-finding mission to prepare a report for a UN conference in New York. Philip Rivera, the delegation leader, said Arafat had confirmed he would 'accept UN forces and super-power guarantees' to ensure peace between the Palestinian state and Israel.

Palestinian armed resistance intensifies

ON NEW Year's Day an Israeli military spokesman admitted that the Zionists suffered 163 casualties in 262 Palestinian commando raids in occupied Palestine last year. Nine Israeli soldiers and 19 settlers were killed and 58 soldiers and 77 settlers wounded. And on 28th January the Zionists admitted that 70 bombs were planted in the 1948 occupied territories in 1980, killing one person and wounding 57.

Despite Israel's imposition of a harsh 'iron fist' policy in the 1967 occupied territories after the May resistance raid in Hebron that killed six armed settlers, the Zionists admitted to a 73 per cent increase in commando operations in the West Bank and a rise of 103 per cent in the Gaza Strip. Significantly, the Israeli casualty figures exclude their losses during their frequent aggressions in south Lebanon. These were repulsed after fierce fighting and Zionist casualties were embarrassingly heavy.

On 17th January, military authorities declared a state of emergency in the occupied Gaza Strip after an incident the day before when three Palestinian commandos overran an Israeli police post in the south of the Strip. They disarmed the Israeli guards and replaced the Israeli Star of David flag with the flag of Arab Palestine. Mass arrests followed the incident, the first of its kind since the Gaza Strip was seized by the Zionists in 1967.

Japan recognises PLO

JAPAN, ONE of the major Western powers, has decided to grant the PLO's Representative in Tokyo, Mr Fathi Abdel Hamid, diplomatic status. The decision will reportedly



Palestine Briefing



become effective as of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's visit to Japan, expected in the spring. The Japanese government, which supports the right of the Palestinians to an independent state, regards PLO participation as an integral part of any solution of the Palestine conflict.

Get tough with Israel says Hoover

CONSTERNATION HAS been caused in Zionist circles by a Hoover Institute report calling for the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and for American pressure on Israel to force the Zionist state to make concessions. The 40-page report appears in Hoover's *America in the 80's* volume and is co-authored by Dr Peter Duignan, the Deputy Director of African and Middle East Studies at the prestigious Hoover Institute at California's Stanford University, and Hoover Senior Research Fellow Louis Gann.

Their study says, 'The creation of a West Bank state would entail the end of Israeli claims to the historic lands of Samaria and Judea — a small price for peace.' If necessary, they continue, the US 'should persuade Israel into concessions by threatening to withhold essential military and economic aid.'

The Zionists are particularly concerned by the close association of many of the Hoover scholars with President Reagan. There are fears that the Hoover report will be for Reagan what the 1975 Brookings Report had been for President Carter. That too had recommended Israeli withdrawal from the lands seized in 1967 and the creation of a Palestinian state, and reportedly influenced Carter's initial thinking on Palestine.

Duignan, who was one of 75 experts who served on the Republican foreign policy advisory team during the election campaign, has since spoken of the President's total rejection of his recommendations.

New land expropriations in Galilee

ISRAEL HAS expropriated 117 dunams of land belonging to four residents of the Palestinian village of Sakhnin in Galilee and handed it over to the nearby Zionist lookout post of Lotam. The seizure was made on the pretext that the land was needed for 'public purposes'. The four landowners refused to accept any compensation either in money or land. One of them was quoted as saying he would have rejected any offer, 'even if I was offered a plot in the Garden of Eden'.

The committee of Palestinian local councils said Galilee Palestinians did not object to land taken for genuine public use. But they do reject land being taken from Arabs and given to Zionist settlements and landowners.

In a further incident, the Israeli military government recently seized 770 dunams of vineyards belonging to the Palestinian village of Artas, south of Bethlehem on the occupied West Bank, the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz* reported on 26th January. The land, on which eight inhabited houses had stood, was closed off by settlers from Kfar Etzion assisted by Israeli troops and officials of the military government.

In addition, almost 400 dunams of Palestinian land have been seized by settlers from the Zionist village of Kiryat Arba on the outskirts of the West Bank city of Hebron. The Israeli military government sent notices to local village headmen regarding three 25 dunam plots of land, one of 100 dunams and another of 200 dunams, alleging that the land was government-owned and would be seized unless appeals were lodged by the Palestinian villagers within 21 days. Knowing from bitter past experience the futility of challenging seizures of land which is not documented as privately-owned, the villagers took no action. In January Zionist students from the religious seminary in Kiryat Arba began planting the land with trees.

However, while Zionist settlements are encouraged, the Palestinian Arabs face increasing restrictions. The Israeli military governor of the Bethlehem district on the occupied West Bank issued an order in January banning Palestinians from all building activity along main roads in Bethlehem, Beit Jallah, Tekoa, Beit Suhur and Ras Beit Jallah, especially in the vicinity of military bases and Zionist settlements. Similar bans have been imposed elsewhere on the West Bank. In the Jenin area Palestinians have been forbidden to build anywhere within 100 metres on either side of main roads.

Apartheid funds for Zionist state

SOUTH AFRICA has agreed to allow its nationals to purchase State of Israel Bonds and has lifted restrictions on investments in Israel, it was announced in Jerusalem during December at the end of a two-day visit by the apartheid state's Finance Minister, Owen Horwood. The permission to buy State of Israel Bonds is a rare exemption from Pretoria's strict controls on the export of its funds.

At a joint press conference by Horwood and his host, the former Zionist Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz, it was announced that Israel Bond sales would be permitted up to a total of \$25 million for three year periods and South African investors in Israel will be permitted to conduct their transactions at the official rate of exchange in Pretoria, which is thirty per cent higher than the world rate of the Rand, giving the investors a substantially higher return.

Hurwitz said he had asked Horwood to allow South Africans to deduct contributions to the Jewish

National Fund, which finances Zionist colonisation in Palestine, from their taxes. It was announced that he and Horwood had agreed to set up a standing committee of top officials of both countries to meet semi-annually on economic co-operation. One item on the agenda will be to work out the details of an agreement whereby Israel will buy coal from South Africa for its new coal-fired power station at Hadera. Another is Israel's request for fishing rights in South African waters.

Meanwhile, the Zionist minister responsible for settlements, Ariel Sharon, is currently pressing ahead with a scheme to accelerate colonisation of the occupied West Bank, and is seeking substantial funds to this end from South Africa's Jewish community, reported *Ha'aretz* on 19th January.

Sharon plans to erect numerous 'public' buildings on land outside the existing settlements on land currently administered by the Israel Lands Authority. The 'public' aspect is crucial, for the Israelis can confiscate Palestinian land with legal impunity for 'public purposes' under a Jordanian law that permits such expropriations, and which the Zionists have been careful to keep on the statute books.

The idea is to construct schools, offices and other such structures that can be classified as 'public' or 'government' buildings. Sharon is handing over land for these buildings to contractors in exchange for little or no money, on condition that they build immediately, before the elections later this year which seem likely to bring to power a Labour government which may be less dedicated to colonisation throughout the West Bank.

Zionist organisations are currently campaigning amongst the world's Jewish communities for funds to support Sharon's plans. In South Africa the campaign is being directed by Tsvi Salomon, a prominent activist of the right-wing Gush Emunim settler group, who is approaching donors and committed Zionists throughout the apartheid state.

Israeli police stop cultural review

ISRAELI CENSORS have banned the performance of a play in Nazareth, in the territories conquered by the Zionists in 1948, by a joint Israeli-West Bank Palestinian theatre troupe. The play, *Mahjoub*, which is a review of Palestinian history, has already been performed five times in occupied East Jerusalem and towns in the West Bank under a licence issued by the Israeli Film and Theatre Censorship Board.

The Nazareth performance had been scheduled for 16th January under the auspices of the Israeli Communist Party, Rakah, but police acting on the instructions of the censors told the organisers that the permit had been cancelled on the grounds that the play's text dif-

fered from that originally submitted to the board.

According to a member of the troupe, which is called Al Hakawati (The Storytellers), no fixed text had been prepared for the review and a summary of the story had been submitted to, and accepted by, the censorship board.

UN Issues Palestine stamp

THE UNITED Nations has issued a postage stamp bearing the words 'inalienable rights of the Palestinian people'. It was released at the end of January in New York, Geneva and Vienna. The decision to issue a stamp drawing attention to Palestinian rights was taken by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session in 1979.

Predictably, the stamp has severely angered American Zionists, who have pursued an abortive campaign to prevent the stamp's appearance. Responding to their protests in January, UN Chief Spokesman Rudi Stajduhar said: 'The importance of assuring the rights of the Palestinian people in the process of establishing a permanent peace in the Middle East has been accepted by the vast majority of the world community.'

Palestinian rights deleted from WJC resolution

THE WORLD Jewish Congress ended a meeting in Jerusalem on 22nd January by deleting any reference to Palestinian rights from a major policy resolution. Several of the delegates from 42 countries protested when the resolution was read out in its original form, but the chairman ruled that they were out of order by introducing amendments during the assembly's closing session. However, this did not prevent the delegates from taking the highly unusual step of overruling the chairman's decision and amending the resolution, which had been approved unanimously by a resolutions committee.

In its final form, the resolution read: 'The World Jewish Congress records its full support for the peace process begun at Camp David which offers the most promising and concrete basis for a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.' The original version included the phrase: 'and notes that the Camp David accords include due recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'.

'I have read the Camp David accords several times, and the words "legitimate interests of the Palestinians" do appear,' said Schneider Leveberg, head of the resolutions committee.

Meanwhile, a report commissioned by the World Jewish Congress and published in January sharply attacks one of the cardinal tenets of Zionism — that all Jews should immigrate to Israel. The

report says the classic Zionist ideology that Jews living outside Israel are in exile is no longer in touch with reality. Mr Edgar Bronfman, the congress chairman, said in an interview: 'Israelis will have to understand that the diaspora is here to stay and that a majority of the Jewish people will remain outside Israel.'

Rejecting Israeli demands that Jews abroad should keep their criticism of the Zionist state private, the report contains a stinging broadside against many aspects of Israeli political and social standards. Israel's colonisation of the 1967-occupied territories is described as 'extremely parochial obtuseness.' Its political scene is labelled 'factional, contentious, unstable and generally unseemly' and the electoral system as 'incapable of resolving basic issues'.

West Bank has no security value

A SECRET study commissioned for the Carter administration has concluded that Israel has no security grounds for its continued occupation of the West Bank. The study was prepared by the Rand Corporation and highlights the expansionist motive for Israel's colonisation of the occupied region.

The study reportedly 'denies Israel's contention that its forces must retain control of the hill-tops in the West Bank for radar use. Highly sophisticated early-warning systems, provided by the US, could serve the same purpose behind the pre-1967 truce lines.'

The Rand Corporation report also concludes that the establishment of settlements throughout the West Bank serves no real security purpose, but does support selected Israeli military outposts along the Jordan River as useful for surveillance.

The study says that the Israeli highway across the northern part of the West Bank has a security value. But it recommends that Israel surrender the road in the interests of peace, as it relinquished control of the oil fields in Sinai. The report stresses that recent technological advances, including improved helicopters and 'Smart' bombs, make it possible for Israel to protect its borders without retaining the West Bank.

Israeli soldier refuses West Bank service

AN ISRAELI military court has sentenced a soldier to a year's imprisonment for refusing to serve in the territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war. Private Gad Elgazi had already received brief prison terms from his company commander for failing to carry out orders to report to a military base in the West Bank after completing his basic training.

Exiled mayors state terms for recognition of Israel

MR FAHD Kawasmeh, mayor of Hebron, and Mr Muhammad Milhem, mayor of Halhoul, who were both summarily deported by the Israelis last May following the Palestinian commando raid in Hebron that killed six armed Zionist settlers, have urged the EEC to pursue their Middle East initiative, and stated their personal view that Arab



Israel's harsh reign of terror on the West Bank

Zionists assault West Bank residents

ISRAELI OCCUPATION troops have admitted beating residents of the West Bank village of Silwad and vandalising property during a two-day curfew imposed after the killing of an alleged Palestinian collaborator, Zionist military authorities announced on 17th December. An Israeli officer said one soldier had confessed to stealing 200 Jordanian Dinars (worth about \$700). Others admitted beating residents and destroying property.

Residents of the village, eight miles north east of Ramallah, gave reporters graphic account of the troops' behaviour during the curfew. 'They knocked on my door Friday night around 8,' said 18-year old Ahmad Hamid. 'They stretched

out my legs and hit me,' he continued, showing how two soldiers grabbed his legs, a third his shoulders, while a fourth beat him across the thighs with a stick. Mr Hamid described how soldiers broke several large vats of olives and deliberately trampled across several beautifully patterned rugs.

The muezzin at the village mosque, Sheikh Abdul Hai Ayad, described how the soldiers beat his 19-year old brother, Abdul Majid. 'They said, "Everybody outside!";' he recalled, adding that the soldiers, who came to his house on the Friday afternoon, threw about 100 books out of the door, including copies of the Koran. Sheikh Ayad said soldiers then took his brother inside and began slapping his face. They took him to a closed room where they struck him with rifle butts during interrogation.

A watchman at the Silwad secondary school for boys, Abdul Hamid Ayad, said soldiers used a military vehicle to break down the school

entrance. 'They threw food, empty cans and plastic containers all over the place,' he added. 'I know. I had to clean it up.'

Brutality at the hands of the Zionists is becoming increasingly common. A sixty year old Palestinian resident of the occupied Palestinian city of Hebron, who was hospitalised after being attacked near Beit Hadassah, said on 21st December that his assailants were from the illegal Zionist settlement of Kiryat Arba, on the outskirts of Hebron, and that he could identify them. On his way to work as a watchman, he was beaten over the head with an Uzi submachine gun.

Further evidence of the settlers' continuing campaign of intimidation of local Palestinians came with the news that on 21st December a slogan reading 'Death to the Arabs' and signed with a star of David was found painted on the Machpela Cave in Hebron, which is holy to both Muslims and Jews as the burial place of Abraham.

a wide range of Third World countries. Besides the Kfir, Israel's military exports include automatic weapons such as the Galil rifle and the Uzi submachine gun, missile patrol boats and tanks.

PLO official applauds European Initiative

PLO CHAIRMAN Yasser Arafat's chief adviser on European affairs, Dr Issam Sartawi, has stressed the importance of a European peace initiative over Palestine, saying he believed it to be 'independent of the American effort'.

He told Beirut's *Monday Morning* magazine on 11th January: 'The initiative is a dynamic, evolving process which it is in our interest to encourage rather than abort by prejudging it as an imperialist conspiracy or as an instrument for the fulfilment of American foreign policy.'

'Although Europe is dependent on the US for its security, it is trying to assert some independence in that field and although it shares economic interests with the US in

the Middle East, its economic objectives in the region differ from those of the US,' Sartawi added.

Dr Sartawi said the PLO would continue 'pressing Europe to advance more quickly' onto the Middle East stage. He said a positive aspect of the European role was the increasing recognition of the PLO and Palestinian rights in Europe over the past decade. 'In less than ten years the Palestinians have progressed from having to sneak into Europe incognito to having their leader (Yasser Arafat) officially received with full public honours,' declared Dr Sartawi.

Druses reject Israeli IDs

OF THE 13,000 Arabs of the Druse religion living on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, only 600 have applied for Israeli identity cards, Israel radio reported on 20th January. The Zionists accord the Druses special status in an attempt to divide them from their fellow-Arabs under occupation. They are, for example, required to serve in the Israeli army. The Druses' refusal to accept Israeli documentation, however, underlines their reluctance to comply with Israel's plans for them.

US churchmen call for Israeli aid cuts

ABOUT 400 American clergymen, including several bishops, have called for the United States to reduce its aid to Israel because of the Zionist state's violations of Palestinian human rights. In a statement released on 6th January the churchmen also said the US and Israel should each open talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The statement, which was delivered to the Israeli embassy and sent to President Carter and President-elect Reagan, charges Israel with violating various principles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, including torture, seizure and destruction of property, annexation of territory, arbitrary arrests and collective punishments.

Noting that the US Congress in 1975 prohibited economic aid to any country engaging in 'gross violations' of human rights, the statement called on the US government 'to reduce aid to Israel until she recognised the human rights of the Palestinian people'.

Signatories included four United Methodist Bishops, two of them retired, a retired Episcopal Bishop, Antiochian Orthodox Metropolitan Philip Saliba, Catholic anti-war activist the Rev Daniel Berrigan, civil rights leader the Rev Jesse Jackson and the noted American anti-Zionist Rabbi Elmer Berger. The signatures were collected by Search for Justice and Equality in Palestine, an organisation that works for the human rights both of Palestinians and Israeli Jews.

'We urge the Israeli and American governments to recognise the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza if they so decide,' the statement said. It continued: 'Mutual accommodation between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs can only result from negotiations between the chosen leadership of both parties,' and called for negotiations between the United States and the PLO and also between Israel and the PLO.

recognition of Israel would follow the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Speaking at a press conference in Brussels on 21st January, Mr Kawasmeh, emphasising that he was putting forward a personal view, said: 'I think if we accept a Palestinian state, we accept in principle the other's (Israel's) right (to exist). But at the moment we cannot say this officially.'

Expressing cautious optimism about the EEC's peace mission, Mayor Milhem said that 'European states must act independently. As long as you follow the Camp David peace process there will be no way out.'

Israeli arms for Mexico?

MEXICAN DEFENCE Minister Felix Galvan Lopez has paid a five-day visit to Israel, in the course of which he met military officials and inspected Israel's armaments industries. On his departure on 15th January the Mexican Minister, who headed a high level military delega-

tion, announced that his country would decide within a month whether to buy weapons from Israel, in particular the Kfir fighter bomber. Israel's deputy defence minister Mordecai Zippori described the delegation's visit as highly successful. Israel hopes to secure much of its oil needs in the future from Mexico. Supplies from Iran, formerly the Zionist state's major supplier, dried up with the fall of the Shah and his replacement by the pro-Palestinian revolutionary government.

The Kfir, and most of the other sophisticated military equipment produced in Israel, has American components. The United States recently authorised Israel to sell these weapons to certain specified countries, including Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico. In December the Colombian Defence Minister was in Israel to discuss the purchase of Kfirs and other military equipment.

Arms currently account for about 20 per cent of Israel's total exports and the lifting of restrictions on the sale of the products of US-Israeli joint ventures is expected to enhance this figure. Israel's principal customers are South Africa and

EDITORIAL

A dangerous year ahead for Palestinians

MANY YEARS observing the Palestine conflict and the intrigues surrounding it, does not permit any optimism that an early solution is at hand, despite the advances of the last year. It is true that there now exists a greater understanding of the Palestine question amongst the nations of the international community: support for the PLO moves from strength to strength at the United Nations and within the movement of non-aligned nations; even in Western Europe, once unquestioning in its support for Israel and the Zionist cause, criticism of the Israeli government is not now uncommon, and the EEC has moved part of the way towards recognising the PLO.

However, none of these developments lessens the possibility of a further major Middle East war. Neither of the major Israeli political forces in the June elections accept the Palestinian dimension of the conflict. Nor will they recognise the PLO as the representative body of Palestinian opinion. Both Beig's Likud and Peres's Labour Alignment are fighting the election on a platform of confrontation with the PLO.

There are already frequent Israeli raids into Lebanon to strike at Palestinian refugee camps, and on a few occasions even to hit at Palestinian military bases. Beig's ranking in the opinion polls shows that he must make some dramatic move to rally Israeli public opinion behind the Likud before the June elections. Since there is little hope that he will solve Israel's economic crisis, he may well turn to the war option, launching a major offensive against the Palestinians in Lebanon, and making a pre-emptive attack against Syria's forces.

Beig could then call on Israelis to rally round the Likud banner in a time of national crisis — 'a battle for survival' as the Zionists would project it.

Similarly, the Israeli Labour Party's political programme makes a commitment to confront the PLO, rather than recognise it. By its rejection of the Palestinians' right to self-determination in an independent state and its plans to maintain occupation of 40 per cent of West Bank territory, together with the whole of Syria's Golan Heights, Labour is similarly committing itself to a military confrontation with the Palestinians and the Syrians to maintain its occupation of lands seized (by an Israeli Labour Government) in 1967.

The dangers of war, a planned genocide against the Palestinians by either Israeli party in government, are all the more serious as a result of the failure of the EEC governments and the United States administration to deal firmly with the Zionist delinquent state.

Rather than a constructive political programme from the US and the EEC to resolve the Palestine question on the basis of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians as they have been defined by the UN Gen-

eral Assembly, the PLO has been offered nothing more than political intrigue. The wars of 1948 and 1967, in which the whole of the Palestinian homeland came under Zionist military occupation, and 1.5 million Palestinians were forced to live in exile, are fading into history. Yet Europe and the United States are still unable to formulate a constructive, just policy.

To date the EEC and the United States have shown that they would appear to support almost any plan ('solution' is not the appropriate word) rather than come to terms with the reality.

The UN General Assembly has defined the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and the PLO has declared these acceptable as a basis for a solution. They are not privileges, but merely the kind of rights which any people would expect:

1. The right to return to their homes and properties from which they have been displaced and uprooted;
2. The right to self-determination without external interference;
3. The right to national independence and sovereignty.

In addition, the UN has recognised the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Indeed, despite the reluctance of the United States, the EEC and Israel to accept this, none has found a credible alternative. Not that they can be accused of making the attempt.

So long as the most powerful Western governments refuse to accept these 'legitimate rights' of the Palestinian people, it can only give encouragement to the Zionists to maintain their intransigent position.

Indeed, Reagan's proposal of the Jordanian option, also supported by the Israeli Labour Party, can only prolong the lack of a solution to the Palestine question. This 'option', which seeks to project Jordan's King Hussein as representing the Palestinian people (a role which even he rejects) is an affront to the Palestinian people, and a provocation for further bloodshed and war. If the EEC wants to be taken seriously by the Palestinians, and the wider Arab nation, it must declare publicly its rejection of such a scheme.

It becomes increasingly difficult to take the European initiative seriously. For more than a year the foreign ministers have been considering the Middle East; it hardly reflects well on their abilities that more than three decades after the dispossession of the Palestinians in 1948, some of the most powerful nations on this planet are still in the process of formulating a policy. It becomes a farce when President Sadat of Egypt, heading a regime expelled from the Arab League, is afforded such an ovation for an exposition of opinions (that Camp David must be carried forward, and the PLO has no place in the discussions) that match the spirit of the most extreme of Zionist positions.

Israel vetoed PLO role for early release of US hostages in Iran

A WHITE HOUSE spokesman has confirmed that Israel vetoed a plan discussed between President Carter's administration and the Austrian government, which, using PLO mediation, would have secured the release of the American hostages in Iran in the early weeks of their imprisonment.

On 4th February a White House spokesman confirmed former White House Counsel Robert Lipshutz's comments in a 29th January interview with Associated Press that 'President Carter rejected a "very enticing" proposal that might have freed the Americans shortly after they were taken captive, but would have meant *de facto* recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.'

Lipshutz said that at the suggestion of Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, he and a New York attorney flew to Vienna and listened to a plan for publicly asking the PLO to intervene for the hostages but rejected the idea after sounding out the Israeli government.

In Washington, two senior PLO envoys have confirmed that the PLO played an important role in the negotiations to win the release of the Americans held hostage in Iran. Dr Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, a member of the Palestine National Council, and Dr Hatem Hussein, have expressed astonishment that the Israeli government should be given veto power in a matter affecting the fate of American citizens.

Chancellor Kreisky told ABC News on 28th January: 'I am

convinced that the first (thirteen) of the hostages were released in November 1979 probably because of the assistance of Yasser Arafat and the PLO.'

The PLO spokesmen told reporters that it was at the encouragement of the PLO that Archbishop of Jerusalem Hilarion Cappucci went to Iran to assist in the release of the bodies of eight US servicemen killed in the aborted US military rescue attempt.

Dr Hussein said the PLO played 'a very positive role in trying to bring about a better understanding between Iran and the United States'. He said this resulted in the selection of Algeria as the diplomatic intermediary that led to the freedom of the hostages.

ARAFAT CALLS FOR EUROPE TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY OF US

PLO CHAIRMAN Yasser Arafat has told a nine-man delegation of British MPs that while Europe had a key role to play in promoting a solution to the Palestine question, the Ten must loosen their ties with the American stance on the Middle East. He also issued a firm warning not to expect any change of Israeli policy towards the Palestinians with the possible election of Shimon Peres, the Labour Party leader, as prime minister in the general elections scheduled for late June.

The British parliamentarians, all members of the newly-formed UK-Palestine Group, arrived in Beirut on 29th January for a fact-finding tour of the region, at the invitation of the PLO. The delegation included Mr Tony Marlow, Conservative Member for Northampton North, who is co-chairman of the parliamentary pressure group, and Dundee West Labour MP Ernie Ross, Secretary of the UK-Palestine Group and Chairman

of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine.

The PLO leader told the delegation: 'Europe has a role and a responsibility towards international security and peace, but that role cannot be carried out as long as Europe is unable to free its will from US decisions on various international issues, including the Palestinian question.'

Europe, he said, had been dragging its feet on the Palestine question. It had done nothing except issue a political statement (the Venice declaration of last June). This did not amount to an initiative, said Chairman Arafat.

In the course of their tour, delegation members expressed strong support for the creation of an independent Palestinian state and condemned Israeli aggressions against south Lebanon. Speaking to Israeli radio on 3rd February, Labour MP Frank Hooley said the sooner Israel came to terms with the idea of an

independent Palestinian state the better. He added that such a state would not pose any security threat to the Zionists since 'Israel is the most powerful military state in this part of the world.' Asked about possible Palestinian guerrilla raids from a Palestinian state, Mr Hooley gave a blunt rejoinder: 'What about the terrorism that is being waged by the Israeli air force in south Lebanon at the moment?'

Delegation leader Ernie Ross told the Jerusalem paper *Ash Sha'ab* that when the British people became aware of the conditions of suppression under which the Palestinian people are living, 'they will definitely support the Palestinian people's efforts to achieve liberation, justice and peace.' He added: 'I will do my best to convey to the British people and to the members of the House of Commons the real picture of what I have seen. I will tell them about the Palestinian people's suffering.'

Europe must recognise PLO say non-aligned nations

THE CONFERENCE of Non-Aligned Nations has called on the European Community to recognise the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In the first official statement on the outcome of the four day conference which ended in New Delhi on 13th February, PLO spokesman Abdul Muhsin Abu Maizar told the *Emirates News Agency* in Abu Dhabi that the PLO had achieved further international support from the non-aligned foreign ministers' conference.

The 96 member states, he said, had adopted several important and

new resolutions in support of the Palestinian people's liberation struggle. Most important were those dealing with the US position, and the conference's rejection of all initiatives and options that deny the fact that the Palestine issue is the core of the Middle East problem.

The conference had for the first time in its 20 year history urged Europe to recognise the PLO, and called on the United Nations and its specialised bodies to refuse the credentials of the Israeli delegation following its violation of all international rules and regulations. Abu Maizar also pointed to the confer-

ence's resolutions condemning all unjust solutions to the problem including UN Security Council Resolution 242.

The PLO official also ruled out the possibility of reaching a clear European initiative due to the differences between the ten member states. However, he stressed, the PLO will continue in its political drive to win further support and recognition.

'We have to differentiate between the political and military struggle, and we in the PLO have to struggle on all fronts and seek wider support of world public opinion for our legitimate causes,' he said.

PALESTINE FOCUS '80

Mayors and Students: Targets of Zionist oppression

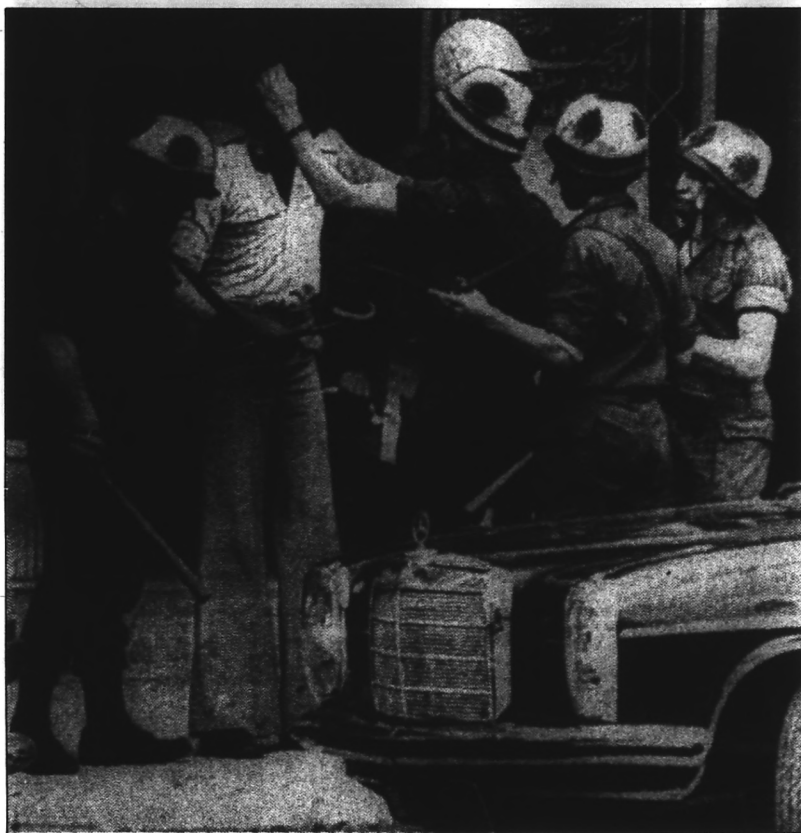
THE DECADE began last year with the Palestinian cause moving from strength to strength on the international scene with Israel's traditional allies becoming both increasingly vocal in their criticism of the Zionist regime in occupied Palestine, and also conscious of the fact that the Palestine question is at the heart of the Middle East conflict, and that peace cannot be achieved without full respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

But it was in the occupied homeland, notably on the West Bank, that the most dramatic developments occurred during the past year. The Israeli military occupation reached new levels of barbarity, matched only by the growing spirit of defiance and resistance throughout the Palestinian communities of the West Bank. Added to this was the rapid escalation of the Zionist settlement programme in the 1967 occupied territories. The Zionists may have been defiant of international opinion, and openly charted their expansionist plans, but this required little courage when seen against that of students, mayors and other Palestinian civilians confronted with armed Israeli troops, imprisonment and deportation, alongside the menace of armed Zionist settler militants.

The rapid escalation of the Zionist settlement programme went hand-in-hand with a new reign of terror at the hands of the Israeli armed forces and the Zionist settlers. In reality, these two aspects of occupation could not have been more co-ordinated in their single aim to consolidate the occupation of the West Bank and intimidate the Palestinian population into exile.

The early weeks of 1980 set the pattern for the year. On 30th December 1979, the Israeli military government banned a meeting of democratically elected West Bank mayors which was to have been held in Jerusalem. Three weeks later, on 21st January, West Bank mayors and trade union leaders were barred from travelling to Gaza for talks with their Gazan counterparts, and the following day the Israelis announced the indefinite postponement of the municipal elections in the West Bank and Gaza, which were scheduled for April. Ironically, the current team of West Bank and Gazan municipal councils and mayors were elected as part of an effort by the Israelis to bring to the fore a non-PLO Palestinian leadership. However, those elected have proven to the Zionists that support for the PLO is near unanimous amongst the Palestinians living under occupation. Democracy, it seems, has no advocate amongst Zionists when the result favours the PLO.

February 1980 was to see the pattern of defiance and repression continue. On 18th February the Israelis set up road blocks to stop West Bank mayors travelling to Jerusalem for a meeting, and on 24th February the mayor of Hebron was refused a permit to travel to New York to address a committee



The courage of the Zionists: a young Palestinian gets the 'treatment'

1980 SAW major advances for the Palestinian people and their cause on the international scene, while in the occupied homeland the year was marked by savage oppression by the Israeli military authorities, and an increasing mood of resistance and defiance amongst the Palestinians living under occupation. In this special report Louis Eaks reviews the events and trends of the year, while Alan George provides the inset reports on recent resolutions at the United Nations.

of the United Nations. Also during the early part of the year, the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul were on trial for a clash with Israeli police during a trial of West Bank Palestinians the year before.

In May, however, the Zionist campaign against the elected voices of the West Bank Palestinians took a new turn. Following nighttime arrests at their homes, the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul, together with the Muslim Qadi of Hebron, were arbitrarily deported across the border into Lebanon. Four weeks later, as the deported mayors arrived in London to address press and parliamentarians on the situation in the occupied territories, came the news that Zionist terrorists had planted bombs in the cars of several West Bank mayors. The mayors of Nablus and Ramallah had been seriously injured.

The culprits of the car-bomb outrages have not yet been traced, but it was generally accepted by the western media that Gush Emunim settlers were responsible, and work-

ing in close liaison with personalities in the Israeli government, possibly in the Prime Minister's office.

However, the Zionist campaign of intimidation and harassment was directed at all levels of Palestinian life, especially amongst students and academics. During November 14 unarmed West Bank Palestinian students were shot at close range by Israeli troops as they protested the one-week closure of Bir Zeit university. Earlier in the year five schools had been closed by the Israeli military authorities, resulting in 2,000 high school students being unable to take their exams. At the same time two Arabic newspapers published in East Jerusalem, *Ash-Sha'ab* and *Al Fajr* were banned from distributing copies on the West Bank.

Added to these examples of the daily harassment and intimidation facing the Palestinians under Israeli military occupation, there have been curfews, crops sprayed with killing chemicals, attacks by armed

Zionist vigilantes, and widespread arrests and brutal interrogations.

The escalation of repression has been part of the Beigin regime's declared 'iron-fist' policy. That it has been possible for the Israelis to mobilise sufficient troops to implement its new tough policy has, ironically, been made possible as a consequence of the Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt. Israeli troops withdrawn from the Sinai front have been drafted into the West Bank and Gaza in a renewed attempt to subdue and suppress Palestinian opposition to a military occupation which not a single country in the world accepts as anything but illegal.

Settlements: An increasing danger to survival

ON 24th April scores of Gush Emunim militants went on the rampage through the West Bank Palestinian towns of Ramallah and El Bireh, hurling stones through windows of scores of cars, houses and shops. For the Arab residents of the towns in their homes that night, it was a horrifying and frightening experience, and one which western journalists compared with the Nazis' *Kristallnacht*, when Jewish homes in Germany were smashed and raided.

From the outset of 1980 the Zionists made clear their intentions to boost their settlement programme in the occupied Arab lands

in defiance of international law and the resolutions of the United Nations. On 2nd January the Jewish Agency revealed plans to increase the settler population from 2,500 to 10,000, and despite a strongly worded Security Council Resolution (465) on 1st March condemning Israel's settlement programme, three weeks later the Israeli government gave its backing for settlers to reside in the centre of occupied Hebron, for which a reported \$2.5 million was earmarked. In the same month 1,000 acres of Arab land in East Jerusalem were confiscated, following an Israeli government decision to approve the seizure of 5,000 acres, a part of a plan to boost the Jewish population of the Arab city to 100,000. The Jewish Agency also announced a massive budget for the development of 103 settlements.

The Security Council Resolution adopted on 1st March received even the support of the United States. It declared that 'all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity, and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention and a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.'

However, the Zionists were not deterred by the unanimous voice of the Security Council. On 31st July the Knesset voted to approve a bill declaring Arab Jerusalem to be part of Israel's 'eternal capital'. Again on 20th August the Security Council agreed (Resolution 478) by 14 votes to none with the US abstaining, that the Zionist move was 'null and void' and 'a violation of international law'.

Although the announcement of new settlements gives a fragmentary picture of what is really happening in the West Bank, the overall Zionist plan is to create centres of Jewish population throughout the occupied Arab lands over which the Zionists will insist on maintaining sovereignty in the event of some future negotiated withdrawal.

Not only has the rash of new settlements been provocative to the feelings of the local Palestinians living under Israeli military rule, but so too have the settlers, fanatical members of the Greater Israel movement, Gush Emunim, who are well armed, generally undertaking settlement and Army work at one and the same time. The settlements have also acted to deprive many Arab communities of their most important resource — water supplies to irrigate their land.

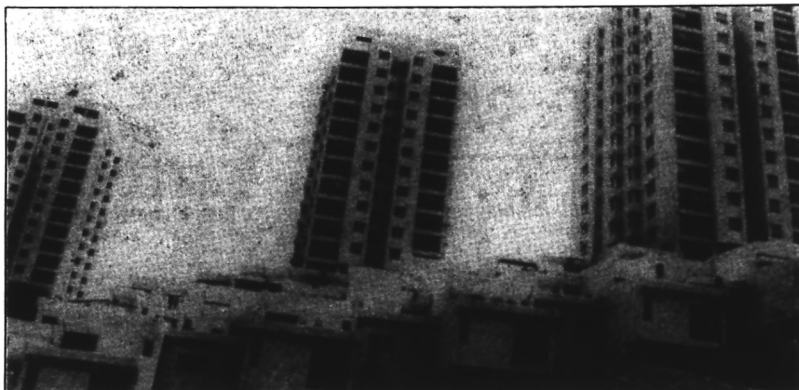
The long term pattern of the Zionist settlement programme was revealed in mid-1980 with the completion of a confidential programme to boost the Jewish presence in the occupied West Bank with the creation of 85 new settlements within five years. The Drobless Plan, named after its author Matityahu Drobless, calls for a tenfold increase from today's 14,000 settlers to between 120,000 and 150,000, excluding Arab East Jerusalem.

PALESTINE FOCUS '80

Lebanon: The war that cannot be ignored

THERE IS a second conflict in the Middle East with consequences as tragic as those in Palestine. To the north, Lebanon has been torn apart by civil war and conflict, the causes of which are in no small part an inter-related aspect of the Palestine question. Both the United States and Israel pursued policies in the early 70s to create unrest in Lebanon; their aim was to undermine the Palestinian resistance movement based in the sprawling refugee camps which are a common sight in Lebanon. A decade later, despite the efforts of the Lebanese government, the rebel forces of Major Sa'ad Haddad remain in undisputed control of the southern sector of the country along the borders of occupied Palestine, and dependent for their survival on Israeli arms and support.

Beyond Haddad's territory to the north, the Israelis have for a decade maintained regular air, ground and sea-borne raids into Lebanon, and 1980 has been no exception, despite the presence of the UN peace-keeping force. The targets, most often, have been the pathetic refugee camps which provide homes of a sort for the Palestinian exiles. The motive, as the British MP John Home-Robertson declared on his return from a visit to the scenes of Israel's carnage, is 'to destabilise, and if possible, to occupy parts of neighbouring Arab states'. As he pointed out, 'This has the effect of creating a military buffer zone around Israel and also keeps the unfortunate Palestinians on the move.'



The face of Zionist occupation: high rise settlements in occupied Jerusalem (above), and new West Bank settlements (below)



The PLO took a series of steps during 1980 to try and defuse the fragile situation in Lebanon. On 24th June Yasser Arafat ordered the closure of all resistance offices in the southern port of Sidon, and on 15th July he called for the closure of all PLO offices outside the refugee camps.

Yet the Zionists and their renegade allies have not been deterred. Confident in the knowledge that the United States would remain passive during presidential election year, Israel and the Haddad forces stepped up their provocations.

In April events in Lebanon had taken a sickening turn, with the murder of two Irish soldiers, part of the UN contingent. It was widely believed that the murders were in retaliation for Ireland's *de facto* recognition of the PLO, and Irish envoys did not mince their words in charging Israel with complicity in the murders.

During May the Israelis made three major incursions into Lebanese territory, supported by gunboats at sea, and helicopter borne troops. In August and September, the Zionists launched a further series of major raids deep into Lebanese territory, the most serious being the 19th August major assault on Beaufort Castle, held by the Palestinians, and which commands territory helped by Haddad's Zionist backed rebels.

The Zionists actions are designed to crush the Palestinian resistance, and thereby remove pressure from PLO forces on the Israelis. The Zionists recognise that if the PLO can be eliminated from the Middle East equation, then Israel will have a free hand to perpetuate its occupation of the Palestinian homeland and remain intransigent on the issue of respect for Palestinian rights.

Students shot in freedom revolt

ZIONIST OCCUPATION troops have shot and wounded 14 unarmed students demonstrating against a one-week closure of Bir Zeit University in the West Bank town of Ramallah. The use of live ammunition against civilians met worldwide condemnation, and in a vain attempt to quell the rising tide of international criticism, the military authorities have implemented a harsh new policy of restricting the activities of foreign newsmen on the West Bank.

The closure of Bir Zeit came on 14th November after the university had staged a Palestine Week of cultural events. The Israelis claimed that the week's activities had been political, and staged without their permission. The closure sparked widespread protests in the occupied West Bank, which were brutally repressed by Zionist troops. The first casualties came on 17th November when girl students from a Ramallah high school were fired on. A 14-year old student was wounded in the leg and two other pupils needed treatment for shock.

This brutal violence brought the West Bank to boiling point. The region was rocked by a wave of angry demonstrations against the continuing occupation and there were further shootings in the towns of El Birch, Bethlehem and Nablus.

Despite the Zionists' extraordinary admission that their soldiers had instructions only to shoot at demonstrators' legs and that Israeli troops 'know how to shoot', one student in Bethlehem sustained a severe abdominal wound. The toll from the two-week period of protests was fourteen Palestinian students wounded.

It was the closure of Bir Zeit University that sparked the Palestinian protests. But at their root lay simmering resentment at persistent Zionist interference in Palestinian education during the 13-year occupation. The most far-reaching measure directed against higher education institutions came in Military Order 854, issued on 6th July last year. This brought all such institutions under Israeli military law and declared them all to be operating on temporary licences. The latter must now be renewed annually, and are subject to the approval of the West Bank military governor. The order also stipulated that written approval from the military authorities would henceforth be required before either students or staff can take up their positions.

The order deprives Palestinian universities of the freedoms essential in higher education, and places them under permanent threat of closure. The intention is to silence

the Palestinian academics and students of the 1967 occupied territories, who have been amongst the most effective and articulate opponents of Israeli practices since 1967.

Dr Gabi Baramki, Vice-President of Bir Zeit, has described the order as 'the most serious action by Israeli authorities against academic freedom' since the beginning of the occupation.

A group of prominent British academics protested in a letter in *The Times* on 22nd November that the new Zionist demands 'contravene the Geneva conventions and open an ugly prospect of increased intellectual repression, with the threat not only of closure but of possible extinction.'

Journalists arrested

The international outcry over the shootings prompted the Beigin government — which has never been noted for its concern for Israel's international image — to take counter measures. Stiff new restrictions were placed on foreign journalists, on the pretext that it was their presence that has sparked off the protests in the first place. An attempt was made to prevent newsmen from witnessing the demonstrations — and the Zionist response — first-hand.

On 25th November foreign cor-

respondents were barred from visiting Bir Zeit to report a demonstration. Similar banning orders had earlier been clamped on reporters from *The Times* and the *Washington Post*. On 29th November a two-man television crew from UPTN was arrested in Ramallah for attempting to film a protest at a Palestinian school. They were detained for several hours and a cassette of their film was destroyed.

The new Israeli policy — which underlined the real meaning of freedom of information in what Zionists never cease hailing as 'the only democracy in the Middle East' — merely compounded the embarrassing predicament of the Beigin government.

On 10th December the Foreign Press Association in Israel sent a strongly-worded letter of protest to Beigin, saying that assurances given in the past about the reporting of events on the West Bank were 'being broken wholesale by the military government'. It added: 'Israel as a democratic country, is espousing democratic principles, and should stand by one of the mainstays of a free and informed society, freedom of information.' The letter dismissed as 'unjust and baseless slanders' suggestions that the foreign news media may have been in any way responsible for the wave of unrest on the West Bank.

Routine violence

What the Israelis were really aiming at by preventing coverage of the protests by foreign newsmen was of course to halt the adverse publicity created by the brutality of their troops. Such publicity extended even to newspapers which have always been amongst Israel's staunchest supporters. Thus, a *Washington Post* editorial on 20th November condemned the shootings as 'shameful' and 'as the act of an arrogant police administration'.

It added: 'The shootings, moreover, were not really aberrations. Resistance to Israeli occupation, though it has its ups and downs, is constant. The Israeli government's policy is to reply by force with regular units and, it is increasingly suspected, to wink at the use of force by irregulars among the settler population and their army colleagues.'

Often force is used pre-emptively or routinely — not merely to retaliate but to intimidate. A press veil is drawn. And when the Palestinians turn to political action, the authorities crack down there, too.

The government refuses to deal with the PLO on the grounds that it is terrorist and un-elected, but then it expels mayors who are political and elected. As we see, it shoots students.'

PALESTINE FOCUS '80

After Camp David: Europe

WITH AMERICAN foreign policy paralysed in the 1980 presidential election year, the focus of international activity related to the Palestinian problem shifted towards Europe, where it was becoming increasingly recognised that the Camp David accords were irrelevant to resolving the Palestine question.

In July came the Venice Declaration issued at a summit meeting of EEC leaders, in which they laid down a policy stance towards the Middle East conflict and the Palestine question. The Declaration recognised that the Palestinian people must 'exercise fully its right to self-determination', and that the PLO would have to be 'associated with the negotiations'. It also stressed the 'need for Israel to put an end to the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967'.

The Venice Declaration, however, did not match the expectations of the EEC; it failed to recognise the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and made no mention of the specific legitimate rights of the Palestinian people defined by the UN General Assembly. Indeed, it did not go as far as previous statements by several of the individual EEC governments.

Yet even in its moderation the EEC drew sharp criticism from the parties to the Camp David accords — Israel, Egypt and the United States. Nevertheless, recognising Europe's traditional close ties with the Zionists, the Venice Declaration may yet prove to be a significant landmark in the history of Palestine.

However, by the end of 1980 there had been little development of the Venice Declaration. The election of Ronald Reagan in the United States and the prospect of Shimon Peres as Israel's prime minister in 1981, focused attention on the so-called Jordanian option, which seeks to create a Camp David, Phase 2 agreement between Israel and Jordan to undermine any moves towards Palestinian self-determination in an independent state.

United Nations: The year of Palestine

THE DEVELOPMENT of a European stand on the Palestine question may in the long term prove to be the most important development of 1980 on the international scene. However, it has been at the United Nations that an international consensus has been emerging over the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. And it is respect for these rights which the PLO has stressed should provide the basis for any settlement to the Palestine question.

The rights of the Palestinian people had been defined in the General Assembly earlier than 1980 as:

1. the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and properties;
2. the right to self-determination without external interference;

3. the right to national independence and sovereignty.

4. In addition, the PLO had been granted observer status at the United Nations as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In 1980, however, the General Assembly moved forward in defining its stand on the Palestine question. On 29th July the General Assembly ended a Special Emergency Session devoted to a debate on Palestine, and by 112 votes to 7 against, and 24 abstentions including the EEC states and Israel, the Assembly called for Israel to start evacuation of the 1967 occupied territories by 15th November 1980. The Assembly again declared its commitment to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and recognised the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Assembly's position took a further step forward in a later vote on 15th December, when it expressed its rejection of Security Council Resolution 242 (adopted in the wake of the 1967 June War as the basis of settlement, but consistently rejected by the PLO because it makes no reference to the Palestinian people, nor their national rights).

But perhaps the most important point of the Assembly's resolution was its rejection of what it termed 'partial settlements', a reference to the Camp David accords, and the proposed Jordanian option being put forward by Ronald Reagan and

Shimon Peres. Also, for the first time the Assembly referred to the 1947 Partition Resolution (181), which defined the border of a Jewish state in Palestine well within those finally claimed by the Zionists in 1948, and which stressed that Jerusalem should be an international zone, contrary to the Zionists' claims on the Holy City.

The Assembly, in addition, called on the Security Council to convene to consider sanctions against Israel, or as the resolution was worded, 'effective measures'.

The major stumbling block at the UN remains in the Security Council, and in particular the US threatened veto, which has resulted in the Council failing to adopt any resolution to match the terms of those supported by the overwhelming majority of nations in the General Assembly.

However, the Security Council did, during the course of 1980, agree a series of toughly worded resolutions. The vote condemning Israel's settlement policy was approved unanimously on 1st March (although Carter later claimed the US vote was a mistake). The Council condemned Israel over the deportation of the Mayors of Halhoul and Hebron in an 8th May vote. On 5th June the Council further condemned the assassination attempts on the lives of several West Bank mayors, and urged states not to give aid which Israel might use to pursue her settlement programme. Later the same month, on 30th June the Security Council condemned the proposed Israeli bill

to make Jerusalem Israel's 'eternal capital', and when the bill was finally approved by the Israeli parliament, the Security Council condemned the Zionists' actions.

Palestinian Resistance: Armed struggle in parallel with a political initiative

THE ARMED struggle of the Palestinian people, and the diplomatic and political initiative being waged on the international scene by the Palestine Liberation Organisation are two aspects of a single campaign for the liberation of the Palestinian homeland under Zionist military occupation. Had the Palestinian people failed to respond through armed resistance to their oppression under occupation and exile by force, there is no doubt that Palestine would not be a major issue at the United Nations, and in the world's parliaments.

According to an Israeli military spokesman on 1st January, the Zionists suffered 163 casualties in 262 Palestinian resistance operations, averaging five a week, in the 1967 occupied territories, representing a 73 per cent increase in the West Bank and a 103 per cent rise in the Gaza Strip during 1980. In the 1948 occupied territories, the Zionists admitted 70 bombs had been planted last year, killing one person and wounding 57.

And although the Palestinian people have made advances at the United Nations and in Western Europe during the past year, this has been strengthened in a tougher Arab position adopted at a series of Arab and Islamic summits, and through recognition of the PLO elsewhere in the Third World.

In particular, at the Amman Summit of Arab leaders, which the PLO failed to attend, and the Taif Islamic summit in early 1981, resolutions on the Palestine question reinforced the PLO's status as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Jordan declared, and others accepted the position, that the Amman government has no role to play in negotiating the future of the Palestinian territories.

When the Zionists, armed and financed by the American government, turn their arms on the civilian population and students in the occupied territories, and restrict the freedom of the elected leaders in the West Bank and Gaza, Zionist motives overall come into focus. The Israeli government, whether led by Beigun or Peres, has no intention of respecting the rights of the Palestinian people, even less the views of the international community expressed through the United Nations.

As the Palestinian conflict moves into a new year, and the Palestinian resistance movement led by Al Fateh, the largest of the resistance groups, marks its sixteenth anniversary, it is increasingly evident that the time has come for the international community to act.

UN strengthens stand on Palestine

IN AN important resolution approved on 15th December, the UN General Assembly adopted a much tougher line on Israel, and a much stronger stance in favour of Palestinian national rights. Notable departures from previous UN policy were the General Assembly's firm rejection of Security Council Resolution 242, its support for the 1947 UN resolution providing for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states (Resolution 181) within borders which the Zionists have ignored since 1948, and a call for the Security Council to prepare sanctions against Israel for its persistent disregard of UN resolutions and its refusal to respect the Palestinians' UN-defined legitimate rights.

The PLO and many other parties have always been deeply critical of Resolution 242. It was passed in the aftermath of the June War of 1967 and refers to the Palestinian issue only as a refugee problem, with no mention of the Palestinians' national rights. It is the first time that the resolution has been specifically rejected by the General Assembly.

The reference to the 1947 partition resolution is also new. Resolution 181 provided for the division of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with the Jewish state to have an even more limited area than that of pre-1967 Israel. It also called for Jerusalem to be at the centre of an international zone. The new resolution was an embarrassment for western delegations, many of which had voted in favour of Resolution 181 in 1947, at a time when it represented a significant gain for the Zionists.

For the first time, the General Assembly has called for sanctions against Israel. The resolution does not call specifically for sanctions, but calls on the Security Council to take 'effective measures' under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which deals with threats to international peace and security and provides for the imposition of sanctions if necessary.

For the first time Jerusalem is accorded a separate section, rather than being mentioned in references to the territories occupied in 1967 as a whole. The Assembly censured Israel 'in the strongest terms' for its annexation of the Holy City, condemning the move as a violation of international law, and specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The UN also determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying power, which had altered or purported to alter, the character and status of the city were null and void and should be rescinded forthwith. The UN stand on Jerusalem was reinforced by the reference to UN Resolution 181, which provided for the city to come under international administration.

An important element in the new UN package is the clear rejection of bilateral agreements with Israel. The Camp David accords had been mentioned by name, and condemned, in a 1979 resolution, but the new resolution expresses strong opposition 'to all partial agreements and separate treating'. Clearly the

Assembly will resist any possible move by the Reagan administration to sacrifice Palestinian national rights on the altar of a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. The Assembly's position was reinforced by the declaration that no state had the right to undertake any actions, measures or negotiations that could affect the future of the Palestinian people without the full participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The General Assembly renewed its demand for Israel's complete and unconditional withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since the June War of 1967, and for the Palestinians to exercise their right of self-determination in an independent state.

Each section of the resolution was voted on separately but all were approved by substantial majorities. The strongest support was for the clause dealing with Jerusalem, which was carried by 143 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions.

On 11th December the General Assembly adopted a series of six resolutions condemning Israel's practices in the territories seized in 1967. By 140 votes to 1 against (Israel) with three abstentions, the Assembly called on Israel to facilitate the return of the exiled mayors of Hebron and Halhoul, who were summarily deported in May. The Assembly called on the security council to convene urgently to act on behalf of the two mayors.

The Assembly strongly condemned the measures taken by

Israel against Palestinian students and faculties, 'especially the policy of opening fire on defenceless students, causing many casualties'. It further condemned 'the systematic Israeli campaign of repression against universities in the occupied Palestinian territories, restricting and impeding academic activities of Palestinian universities by subjecting selection of courses, textbooks and educational programmes, admission of students, and appointment of faculty members to the control and supervision of the military occupation authorities', in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Assembly also condemned 'the persistence of Israel in changing the physical character demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the Syrian Arab Golan Heights'. Grave concern was expressed over reports indicating the intention of the Israeli authorities to enact legislation embodying the changing of the character and status of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan Heights'.

The December UN resolutions represent important diplomatic gains for the Palestinian people and the PLO. But despite the comment of one international news agency that the 15th December resolution 'is far stronger in its support for the national rights of the Palestinian people than that adopted at any previous regular session of the General Assembly', no major British daily reported the UN moves, with the sole exception of *The Scotsman*.

Islamic states reject 'Jordanian option'

LEADERS OF thirty eight Islamic states meeting in late January in the Saudi Arabian city of Taif have declared their firm opposition to any bilateral deal between Israel and any Arab state over the future of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. They also agreed a series of strongly worded resolutions in support of the Palestinian cause and decided to exert pressure on states backing Israel, if necessary through the 'oil weapon'.

The Islamic summit decisions are a clear warning to President Reagan to abandon any faith he may have in the so-called 'Jordanian option', which he seems to favour. This entails a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, with parts of the territories occupied in 1967 being handed over to King Hussein but with a substantial Zionist military and civilian presence remaining even in these ceded areas. The scheme, which has been widely hailed as 'Camp David Mark 2' would perpetuate the denial of the Palestinian rights to statehood on their national territory under the leadership of the PLO, almost universally recognised as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Mecca Declaration adopted by the Islamic summit stated: 'We reject any initiative that does not adopt the Palestinian option, which consists of a just settlement of the Palestine question based on the re-establishment of the unquestionable national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, to self-determination and to set up an independent Palestinian state on their national territory, under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative.'

This position was underlined in a separate resolution affirming the Islamic states' determination 'not to allow any Arab or Islamic side to resort unilaterally to solving the Palestinian question and the issues of the occupied Arab territories.'

The resolution also stressed that 'just peace in the Middle East region cannot possibly be established except on the basis of Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories'.

The Islamic states reaffirmed their commitment to the liberation of occupied East Jerusalem, 'so that it would be the capital of the Palestinian state'. They called upon all states to respect the UN resolutions condemning the Zionist annexation of the Holy City as illegal, and binding UN member states not to take any action regarding the city that might be viewed by the Zionists as conferring legitimacy on their annexation.

The Islamic summit reaffirmed its strong opposition to the Camp David accords, and in a new development condemned UN Security Council Resolutions 242 as being 'inconsistent with Palestinian and Arab rights'. Accordingly, the summit declared that the resolution 'does not form a suitable basis for solving the Middle East crisis and

the question of Palestine' resolution 242 was passed in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War and has been the basis of recent western policy on the Palestine question. It has been heavily criticised for its lack of recognition of Palestinian rights: it refers to the Palestinians only as refugees.

The Islamic states decided on concrete measures to further the Palestinian cause, including pressure on countries supporting Israel. They decided to 'use all their military, political and economic potential, and their natural resources, including oil' in support of the Palestinians and as a lever on states which give Israel military, political and economic backing.

The conference decided to declare a jihad — widely interpreted in the west as a 'holy war' but more appropriately translated as 'all-out struggle' — to liberate Jerusalem, Islam's third holiest city, to support the Palestinian people and to bring about Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab lands.

Observers see the Taif summit's most important outcome as the firm rejection of any bilateral deal between Israel and Jordan over the territories seized by the Zionists in 1967. There are strong indications that it is in such an arrangement that the new US President sees the main thrust of American Middle East policy in the coming years. Hopefully the Islamic summit will make Reagan think again.

The question of the 'Jordanian option' lay at the heart of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's address to the conference. Noting that 'certain parties are making proposals and initiatives to settle the so-called Middle East problem', he went on to call on the participants at Taif 'to warn those making these initiatives against any attempt to jump over or side-step the PLO or to deny or reduce the Palestinian people's rights.'

King Hussein himself dismissed suggestions that he might be prepared to offer himself as a spokesman for the Palestinian people and to enter an agreement with Israel over the West Bank and Gaza.

In his conference address he called for firm action to 'guarantee our restoration of our right to Jerusalem and its liberation... and restore to the Palestinian Arab people their homeland and right to self-determination and sovereignty on their soil under the PLO, their sole legitimate representative.'

He continued: 'By talking about the existence of an option or an alternative, Zionism and its spokesmen aim at consecrating occupation and preventing the Palestinian people from exercising their right to repatriation, sovereignty and liberation.' The King further underlined his position at a press conference where he described Camp David as a 'dead horse'. He told newsmen: 'There is no Jordanian option. There are no options. There is reality. I have pledged my support to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.'



Palestinians' exile prolonged by US backing for Israel, and Europe's lack of bold initiative

Europe, America and Palestine

Commentary by Andrew Faulds MP

IN THE report which a group of Liberal Party members issued recently on a visit they had paid to the Middle East, they quoted His Majesty King Hussein as saying to them: 'I believe that the United States is the key to the situation and Europe is the key to the United States.'

Few would question that the United States does indeed hold the key. The question is not whether Washington can, but whether it will, turn the key and open the door to peace. The suggestion that one often hears that no American administration has the power to act against Israel, because of the strength of the Zionist lobby, is, I believe, false. It presupposes that America's leaders are and will always be irredeemably feeble in defence of America's own national interests' or irredeemably unprincipled in their hunger for power and office.

So to be sure, in the recent presidential campaign all three candidates, in bidding for the Jewish vote, played havoc with the vital interests not only of America itself but also of its friends and allies. We in Europe may and do justly resent this. But we ought not to fall into the error of believing that campaign promises dictate future policy.

Does Europe hold the key to the United States? We certainly have a duty to offer advice to our friends in Washington and it may be that they are more inclined to pay heed to Europe than to advice from elsewhere. But how effective Europe's power to advise may be is by no means clear. The petulant reaction of the Carter administration to the European initiative earlier this year might mean either that they could not care less about European opinion or, on the contrary, that they saw European interference as a serious threat to their own monopoly of peace-making.

One thing seems clear. If Europe's power to advise is to be exercised effectively, it must be done openly and publicly. I am profoundly sceptical of the idea that Europe can do much to influence Washington in this matter by discreet advice from behind the scenes.

Europe has a duty to do what an

American administration cannot do — that is, to challenge openly Zionist influence in the United States and to appeal directly to public opinion there for America to adopt a more even-handed policy in the Middle East. I would like to see European diplomats getting out from behind their desks in Washington and New York and speaking out against the Zionist-inspired betrayal of Western interests in the Middle East. This is not interference in the domestic affairs of the United States. It is legitimate action to defend our own vital interests. In their hearts American leaders might even welcome it.

A familiar concept in the United States is a power 'to advise and consent'. Does Europe's role extend not merely to tendering advice but also to withholding consent? No one would go so far as to suggest that Europe has a power of veto over American policy in the Middle East. But by withholding consent it does have a means of influencing Washington, provided it is prepared to make its dissent open and explicit. No peace initiative can succeed if the United States and Europe are seen to be divided on it, since that will cause the dissatisfied parties in the Middle East to hold out for better terms.

To that extent it is true that Europe does have a power to consent as well as to advise on American policy. European leaders must bear their share of blame for the Camp David fiasco because they went on appearing to consent to it long after it had clearly failed.

The case for Europe having a power of consent, if it wishes to exercise it, breaks down if the real policy of the United States is not to seek a settlement at all, but simply to maintain the existing deadlock in Israel's favour. In that case, by withholding consent to American 'peace' efforts, Europe is serving the secret purpose of American policy, while at the same time giving Washington an excuse for placing the blame for the continuing deadlock at Europe's door.

It is theoretically conceivable that Europe could enforce a change in American policy on the Middle East if it were prepared to demand this as

the price of continuing European co-operation in Western defence. But of course that simply is not on, in terms of practical politics. The Arab world cannot ask Europe to put Western defence at risk for the sake of a settlement in the Middle East — though of course 'defence' is an important part of the West's interest in a just and lasting peace there.

However, while Europe cannot, unaided and alone, require a change in American policy, it could perhaps bring something near to irresistible pressure to bear on Washington if it were seen to be acting in combination with others, and in particular with the Arab world. A peace plan formulated by Europe, acquiesced in by the Arab world and commanding wide support in the rest of the world would not be easy for Washington to ignore.

That may be crying for the moon. But it does, I believe, illustrate how crucially important the European role may now be. The fact is that the others concerned in the Middle East are now stuck fast in the log-jam of fixed and irreconcilable attitudes. Israel will not willingly budge — it is a mistake to imagine that a new government in Israel will reverse the annexationist policies or abandon the dictatorial practices of its predecessors. America is hamstrung by Zionist pressure and will not exercise the compulsion it could on Israel. The Palestinians will not go further than they already have to moderate their position, so long as Israel remains intransigent. The rest of the Arab world will not compromise on Palestinian rights — President Sadat's predicament shows where that would lead. Russia and the rest of the Communist bloc have no power to make peace, though they have some to frustrate it. The Third World is committed to the Palestinian cause and against Israel and the United States; but they cannot do much beyond exhortation. Only Europe still has some room for manoeuvre, some power of initiative, some capacity to play the role of 'honest broker' which Washington has often claimed for itself but which it has discredited itself from filling by its partisanship for Israel.

FREE PALESTINE

PO Box 492, London SW19 4PJ Tel: 01-947 7679

Free Palestine is published by Petra Publishing Company, PO Box 492, London SW19 4PJ

Photosetting and printing by Astmoor Litho Ltd, Runcorn, Cheshire. Artwork and design: The Main Event Limited

BRITAIN MUST ACT NOW!

Interview with Nicholas Winterton MP continued

he found the Palestinian leader to be a nationalist rather than an ideologist.

'I am convinced, having met him — and I do not believe this is just a superficial judgement — that he is trying to achieve his objectives by peaceful means, through negotiations and discussion.' Mr Winterton adds, 'I, myself, could negotiate with him, and all I can say is that if I can negotiate with him — and I am considered a very hard liner by many in the House of Commons — why cannot Beigun or Peres negotiate with Mr Arafat?'

Characterising his meetings with the PLO leadership as 'very fruitful indeed', Mr Winterton came away with the clear impression that the PLO would settle for a West Bank — Gaza state, which would co-exist peacefully with Israel within its pre-1967 borders.

'If and when — and I believe it is now a matter of when and not if — a Palestinian state is established on the West Bank and Gaza, a Palestinian government would agree to recognise the boundaries of Israel,' said Mr Winterton. 'This is the impression I got from talking to Mr Arafat — and I am not trying to put words into his mouth or create embarrassment for him.'

Mr Winterton also expressed his understanding that Yasser Arafat cannot play his 'ace card', recognition of Israel before some indication of a reciprocal move by Israel.

Nor are the difficulties which lie ahead underestimated by the Conservative MP. Nevertheless, he argues that meeting Palestinian aspirations for statehood are not incompatible with the safety and security of the Israeli Jews within the pre-1967 borders of Israel. He believes that pressure must be exerted on Israel to withdraw from the territories seized in the 1967 war, so that an independent Palestinian state can emerge on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with guaranteed access across Israeli territory to link its two parts.

From his meetings with the Palestinians, Mr Winterton is impressed by their ability to administer their own state. Referring to the 'high calibre' of the PLO members and other Palestinians he met, he concluded, 'They are able, competent people, who can form the basis of a successful Palestinian state.'

In Mr Winterton's opinion the partition of Jerusalem should not be a consequence of such a development towards Palestinian statehood. He advocates two separate municipal councils, one for the East and one for the West. An overall consultative council should be established to deal with problems as they arise.

Joint action by the PLO and Jordan should not be discounted in the event of positive moves by Israel, Mr Winterton believes. 'I make it quite clear that I am not trying to sell the Jordanian option, which I think is a non-starter,' he says. However, he feels that Israel might be induced to negotiate with the PLO if representatives of the resistance movement were included in a

joint PLO-Jordanian team. While the PLO has said it would accept a UN force to supervise the liberated territories for an interim period pending the establishment of a Palestinian state, Mr Winterton argues that in his view Jordan could fulfil this role.

In no doubt that Palestinian patience is wearing perilously thin, Mr Winterton has called for prompt action by the West to resolve the Palestine conflict. Continued strife, he says, will lead to increasing involvement by the superpowers, and an escalating danger of a major Middle East war, with incalculable consequences for the West, not least in respect of vital oil supplies. Continued deadlock, and failure by the Western nations to formulate an active policy of the Palestine question, aimed at the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, he warns, can only work to push the PLO into the Soviet orbit.

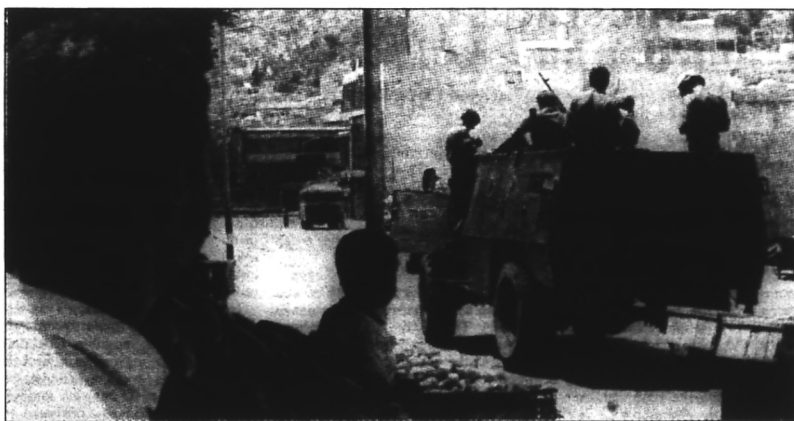
The West, he says, has a key role to play, and he wants action before Palestinian patience snaps. 'The Palestinian people, in the main, have been very passive to date, but there is a limit to their patience, and I want to see the West act before that patience runs out.'

The United States holds the key to solving the Palestine question, he says. Washington should put economic pressure on Israel to come to the negotiating table. With this in mind, Mr Winterton, along with other Conservative members of the delegation, is seeking a meeting with the Prime Minister before Mrs Thatcher holds her forthcoming summit with President Reagan. Already they have conveyed their impressions of the tour to Mr Douglas Hurd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office concerned with the Middle East.

Mr Winterton's views on the role of the West echo those of the PLO leadership. He says that both Yasser Arafat, and Farouk Qaddoumi, were 'desperately concerned' that Europe should develop a constructive policy towards Palestine, aiming at the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They were equally concerned that Europe should encourage the Americans to adopt a more positive stance on Palestinian rights.

The tour of the Middle East has made a strong impression on Mr Winterton. He will be joining the recently formed all-party UK-Palestine parliamentary group, created to put the Palestinian case in Westminster. He will do so, he says, not to side with the Palestinians against everyone else, but as 'an indication that I am very understanding of, and sympathetic to, their cause, and wish to see a Palestinian state created in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at an early date.'

'I believe not only would that be good for the Palestinian people, and it is not more than their right anyway, but it is also in the national interest of the United Kingdom. I believe the national interest of Britain lies in recognising the aspirations of the Palestinian people.'



A Palestinian worker in Nablus watches the Israeli occupation forces

Trade Unionists forge ties with Palestinian workers

A FOUR-man delegation from Britain's Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFP) has declared its admiration for the activities of Palestinian trade unionists they met during a January visit to branches of the Palestine Trade Union Federation (PTUF) in Lebanon.

Delegation leader Ernie Ross MP says, 'We found that there was real dedication to the basic concerns of working people: wages, conditions and the prices of consumer goods.' He added: 'We were also very impressed by the Palestinian trade unions' insistence on unity between themselves and Lebanese unions and workers.'

The delegation had set out expecting to find that Palestinian unions were pre-occupied with the political activity of the PLO. While favourably impressed by the Palestinian unions' overriding concern with the economic and working conditions of their members, the Federation also stressed its role as an integral part of the Palestine Revolution, with the aim of ensuring that the national struggle goes hand-in-hand with the trade union struggle.

Mr Ross expressed his admiration for the support of Palestinian workers in south Lebanon for trade union activity, despite the violence that is endemic in the region because of repeated Israeli attacks and the legacy of the Lebanese civil war, which has led to a tendency for all local disputes to be settled by the gun. To underline his point, Mr Ross described peaceful industrial action taken by the seamen to secure higher wages. When the ship owners refused pay increases, the workers organised collective action to mount a 24-hour picket at the home of a leading shipowner. Food and drink was supplied to the pickets by their fellow-workers. The action was successful, with the seamen winning their wage claim.

'Our work is always hazardous, as any seaman knows,' their representative told the British delegation. 'But we have to endure also the daily shelling and air attacks. At sea also, the Israelis do their best to destroy our work; they shoot over our boats, cut out nets, and several of our people have had boiling water poured over them by Israeli gunboats. Three of our fishermen have been killed.'

Co-operation between Palestinian and Lebanese farm workers, who jointly mounted a strike at har-

vest time, resulted in an increase in the daily wage for agricultural labourers from five Lebanese pounds in 1970 to 40 per day now.

The high prices for basic foodstuffs charged by private merchants led to an initiative from the PTUF which has benefited all Palestinians. The trade unionists decided to establish retail co-operatives to sell basic commodities more cheaply. The scheme has proved a resounding success. At present there are seven co-ops and the largest, in the Bourj al Bourani refugee camp, has a monthly turnover of £40,000. Dozens more are planned. These Palestinian co-operatives are part of the International Co-operative movement.

'It's a marvellous thing,' says Mr Ross, 'to be walking down a street in one of the refugee camps and to see the same "Co-op" signs as you would

see in any British High Street.' One of the major activities planned by the Trade Union Friends of Palestine is to raise money for the co-operatives by selling shares to British trade unionists for £2.50 each.

TUFP was formed in June last year to promote the Palestinian cause in British Labour and Trade Union circles. On the delegation to Lebanon, TUFP Chairman Ernie Ross was accompanied by George Galloway, Vice-Chairman of the Labour Party in Scotland and Secretary of TUFP, and two of its Executive Committee members: Bill Spiers, who is an Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, and Jack Skelton, a member of the National Committee of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Britain's largest union.

British MPs form Palestine lobby at Westminster

THE GROWING support for the Palestinian cause in Britain was underlined in January with the creation of a new all-party organisation in Parliament dedicated to ensuring the Palestinian cause does not go unheard at Westminster. The UK-Palestine Group is open to all Members of Parliament and its inaugural meeting on 20th January saw 28 MPs from the Labour and Conservative parties joining the new group.

The group sees its immediate task as co-ordinating action on the Palestine question in Parliament, particularly after July when British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington becomes Chairman of the EEC Council of Ministers. He is expected to give new impetus to European moves towards a peace settlement in the Middle East. The UK-Palestine Group will fight for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a state of their own in Palestine.

The two co-chairmen are Tony

Marlow, Conservative MP for Northampton North, and Roy Hughes, Labour MP for Newport. Secretary is Dundee West Labour MP Ernie Ross. The founder members plan to approach the smaller parliamentary parties with the aim of broadening their membership base.

The UK-Palestine Group moved swiftly into action, with a fact-finding delegation touring the Middle East in late January. Talks were held with a range of Arab leaders, including PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. Forthcoming activities include a series of meetings to be addressed by guest speakers. Among these will be Foreign Office Minister of State Douglas Hurd; Labour Foreign Affairs spokesman Denis Healey; PLO Representative in London Nabil Ramlawi; the Ambassadors of Lebanon and Jordan, and Khalid al Hassan, foreign affairs spokesman of the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian 'parliament'.

THE DANGERS OF REAGAN

Commentary by Nabil Ramlawi, London Representative of the PLO

YEAR-BY-YEAR an increasing number of governments have pushed aside Zionist pressures to give backing to the rights of the Palestinian people. In the past few years alone, support for the Palestinians has increased from the 89 countries which supported Resolution 3236 in the General Assembly in 1974 to the 112 countries which supported our rights this year in the General Assembly.

Those 112 nations which voted to support Palestinian rights during the General Assembly's Emergency Session in July this year did not, of course, include the nine countries of the European Community. Nevertheless, 'the past year has been marked by an important shift in British government policy on the Palestine question, and the developments within the EEC which led to the Venice Declaration last June. Although the Venice Declaration failed to meet our expectations from the European Community, we recognised it as an important step forward by Britain and her associates in Europe.'

If I might adapt a well known saying of Lord Nelson, 'Palestine expects that Britain should do her duty.' The PLO remains convinced that the EEC, and Britain in particular, not only has responsibilities in acting to resolve the Palestine question, but we expect that the EEC and Britain should do this through an initiative which is both positive and bold, and which sets as its task a solution based on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, as they have been defined by the United Nations General Assembly.

The PLO believes that only through respect for these rights can peace and justice be restored in Palestine.

Let me emphasise, we urge Britain and the EEC not to be deflected or diverted from their Palestine initiative by the election of Mr Ronald Reagan as the next President of the United States. Although the new American administration has yet to provide the details of its policy on the Palestine question, the indications from Mr Reagan make sombre reading, not just for Palestinians, but for the whole international community.

Whether we be Palestinians or Europeans, we are all entitled to ask whether a new and major international crisis erupting out of Mr Reagan's announced position on the Palestine question is a fair price to pay for European alignment with the United States.

Firstly, Mr Reagan has proclaimed the PLO to be simply a terrorist organisation. We reject this view. Indeed, our right to armed resistance to the foreign occupation of our homeland has been specifically recognised by the United Nations General Assembly. And we note that Lord Carrington has, himself, firmly rejected this assertion by the Zionists in Britain. However, from Mr Reagan's statements we can assume that his administration will not recognise any role for the PLO in the efforts to find a settlement to the Palestine question.

If the United States is successful in convincing the EEC to abandon recognition of the PLO, and to terminate the contacts which have been established during the past year, it must be recognised that our options — the options of the PLO and the whole Palestinian people — are limited. We do not seek conflict and bloodshed, but if all other options are denied us, then the Palestinian

people have no alternative but to put all their energies into a sustained war of liberation. The consequences in terms of bloodshed and loss of life are obvious, as well as tragic. The responsibility must, however, lie with Mr Reagan, and those who accept the American position.

The second aspect of Mr Reagan's Middle East policy appears to be what is being widely termed 'the Jordanian option'. This is the Zionist formula being widely promoted in the western press at the moment. To place it in perspective we see it as nothing less than 'Camp David, Phase 2'. It is designed to establish a settlement between Jordan and Israel, reaching into the heart of the Pales-

tine question, but seeking a Zionist solution which will deprive the Palestinian people of their rights for many more years. If the goal is not a great enough betrayal of the Palestinians rights to self-determination in an independent state, the path to reach this goal, and the consequences of the strategy, must be recognised now.

Israel is already adopting a strategy designed to make steps towards the Jordanian option possible. The daily bombing raids into Lebanon, and the support given by the Zionists to Haddad's rebel forces in southern Lebanon, are clearly designed to destabilise Lebanon. This is simply a prelude to an Israeli thrust to

crush the Palestinian resistance movement. Have no doubt that when this attack finally comes, Israel will attack not only the Palestinians, but Syrian forces also. It will lead to a new and major Middle East war, and there should be no doubt about the political and economic effects of that war in Europe, North America, and throughout the industrialised world.

I say now to Britain, her EEC partners, and to the United States, do not deceive yourselves. The Reagan plan for the Jordanian option will be vigorously resisted by all the Arab states, and by the United Nations General Assembly. When this scheme against our people becomes

more than an option in the minds of newspaper editors, each and every industrialised nation will be judged by the Arab states on the basis of their position towards Reagan's plan.

The years ahead will see new American and Zionist conspiracies against the Palestinian people. The PLO, on behalf of the Palestinian people, is equally determined to resist and defeat these conspiracies. It would be better, I am sure you will agree, if they are foiled through political and diplomatic action, before they are set in motion.

This commentary is based on a speech given by Mr Ramlawi at the House of Commons in London to mark the UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, November 1980.

Behind the image of Shimon Peres

30TH JUNE is election day in Israel and the extreme right wing coalition led by Menachem Begin is widely expected to be ousted by the Israeli Labour Party, headed by Shimon Peres. This prospect has prompted considerable optimism in the West. It is being argued that Peres would be more 'reasonable' and 'flexible' on Palestinian rights than the intransigent Begin regime. However, a study of the Israeli Labour Party programme, and Labour's past record in office, does not support this view. What really seems to differentiate Peres from Begin, at least on the Palestine question, is that Peres is genuinely worried about Israel's international image while Begin has always pursued his objectives with a bland unconcern for the international repercussions.

In December last year the Congress of the Israeli Labour Party adopted a foreign policy programme which is clearly designed to create the impression that Labour will indeed prove more flexible than Begin. If Peres can convince the West that Labour will make concessions for peace, then the pressures will be removed and Labour will be able to maintain the status quo.

Article 1, for example, declares: 'The achievement of permanent peace is the central aim of Israeli policy in the days ahead.' Article 3 states that 'the Labour Party rejects permanent imposed rule over 1,200,000 Palestinian Arabs inhabiting these territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip).' It adds: 'The policy of the Likud, aiming at annexation of the whole West Bank and Gaza and their inhabitants, must be rejected.'

But what exactly does the Israeli Labour Party intend to do with the territories seized in 1967? And what are its plans for the Palestinian people and the PLO, their sole legitimate representative?

Article 4: Israel 'will not return to the borders of June 4 1967'.

Article 5: 'United Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty is the capital of the state of Israel.'

Article 10: 'The Government of Israel will insist that in peacetime the deployment of the Israel Defence Forces and of the settlements including the Jordan Valley

THE PROSPECT OF Shimon Peres leading the Israeli Labour Party victory in the June elections is being widely heralded as a breakthrough which will secure a settlement of the Palestine question. Alan George looks at the ILP's programme, and finds proposals which could lead to war rather than peace.

(including the area to the North West of the Dead Sea), the Etzion bloc, the surroundings of Jerusalem and the Southern Gaza Strip, will be included in the sovereign territory of Israel.'

Article 11: 'The Government led by the Labour Alignment will work for consolidation of the Israeli position on the Golan Heights and will insist that in peacetime the security and settlement deployment on the Golan shall be under Israeli sovereignty, as an inseparable part of Israel.'

What Western journalists and political leaders fail to appreciate is that the areas the Israeli Labour Party intends to annex constitute 40 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and contain about 90 per cent of the regions' fertile land and the great bulk of their water resources. Deprived of their economic base, the majority of Palestinian residents will have no choice but to emigrate, thus strengthening Israel's demographic hold over the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories.

ON PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD:

Article 13: 'Israel rejects the establishment of an additional Palestinian state (sic) in the territory between Israel and Jordan ... The Palestinian problem cannot be solved in a separate state without the territory and population of Jordan.'

The Labour Party is thus adam-

antly opposed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, whose establishment is in any case pre-empted by the party's commitment to annex almost half these areas. Instead Peres proposes to 'solve' the Palestinian question by the creation of a Jordanian-Palestinian state, comprising the current territory of the Kingdom of Jordan and those parts of the 1967 occupied territories Israel is prepared to relinquish. Labour's plan is in total contempt of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians as defined by the UN General Assembly.

ON PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION:

Article 18: 'The PLO ... cannot be partners in peace negotiations ... Active defence against the PLO in the field of security and the ideological-political field is a duty on any Government in Israel.'

Article 17: 'Authorised representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza are to be co-opted into the negotiations.'

The proposed negotiations for the settlement with Jordan will thus exclude the PLO, which the Palestinians universally recognise as their sole legitimate representative. Instead negotiations will be conducted by unspecified residents of the 1967 occupied territories — unspecified because there are none with the authority to speak on behalf of the entire Palestinian people. What Labour really intends is to do a deal with Palestinian Quisling collaborators in the occupied territories, despite the failure of successive Israeli governments to identify significant numbers of such persons.

In short, the Labour programme entails a continued denial of the Palestinians' right to self-determination in an independent state of their own. It fails to recognise the status of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. It rejects even the minimum Palestinian condition for co-existence with Israel — a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. It entails continued conflict with Syria. The commitment to 'active defence'

against the PLO and the commitment in Article 27 to uphold Israel's 'right of active defence and prevention of sabotage and terror, even when they originate beyond her borders' indicates that a Labour government would continue Israel's repeated aggressions against Lebanon and step up assaults on PLO personnel wherever they may be. Quite apart from the other shortcomings of Labour's plans for the West Bank and Gaza, the programme fails to note that King Hussein will have none of the 'Jordanian option' that will be on offer if Labour is victorious in June. Perhaps it is no accident that the Labour programme will not bring a settlement of the Palestine question, for Article 24 declares that 'in the absence of ... peace Israel shall maintain her full authority in the areas held by her since the Six Day War.'

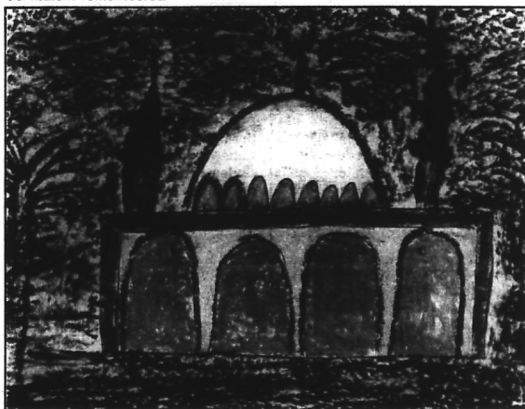
The Israeli Labour Party's foreign policy programme is, in reality, a commitment to continued Israeli expansionism and the continued denial of the internationally recognised rights of the Palestinians. Why, then, the difference between the harsh facts of the Labour programme and the 'moderate' policies that Peres was selling to European leaders on his tour in January? The answer might lie in Article 34: 'The failures of the policies of the Likud Government have been made use of to the detriment of Israel by hostile factors and has led to the decline of Israel's international standing. A major policy and information effort is required to restore the standing of Israel in the international arena and to pull her out of the situation caused by lack of understanding and isolation (sic).'

The real difference between the policies of Peres and Begin has been put very neatly by Mayor Basma Shaka of Nablus. On 14th February he told *8 Days* magazine: 'Both Labour and the Likud think that the Palestinians are living in a hotel, not in their own country. The only difference between them is that Begin wants to be the hotel manager and Peres wants King Hussein to be the manager.'

But the key to Labour's thinking comes in a recent comment from Abba Eban, who is almost certain to be Foreign Minister in the next Labour Government: 'Even if it (the policy of territorial compromise) is not carried out, it presents the Israeli posture in a way more likely to take us out of isolation. Therefore, there is a possibility of a strategic gain and the certainty of a tactical gain.'



Above: the liberation battle is part of life for young Palestinians; below: Jerusalem remembered



Children's art: The will to resist and dream of return

LONDON'S AFRICA Centre was the venue for an impressive exhibition of Palestinian children's art, which highlighted their deep attachment to their usurped homeland and their determination to resist and ultimately to return. Staged by the Middle East Child Welfare Programme, in association with the London Friends of Palestine, the exhibition opened on 29th November — the UN-designated International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Speakers at the opening ceremony included Mr Samir Speitan, of the PLO office in London, Lady Diana Richmond, Colin Winter, the exiled Bishop of Namibia and Saleh Maina, secretary of the MECWP.

The exhibits were organised in three sections. The first, entitled 'In Time of War: Children Testify', contained drawings by children from the sprawling Baq'a Palestinian refugee camp near the Jordanian capital, Amman. It was in this section that the children's deep yearning for their homeland was

most evident. Equally clear was their commitment to armed struggle to secure their ultimate return. The repeated images of destruction and violence bore harrowing testimony to the bitter impact Zionist aggression has had on the children's lives.

The second section, entitled 'Al Quds (Jerusalem) Our Dream' comprised paintings of the holy city by some of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children living in exile throughout the world. Photographs of refugee camps in Lebanon, showing the appalling conditions in which many children must be brought up, constituted the third section of the exhibition. These were assembled by Norway's Ghasan Kanafani Foundation — named after the Palestinian artist and writer who was murdered by Zionist agents in Beirut in 1972.

The week-long exhibition dramatically highlighted the denial by the Zionists of Principle 3 of the UN declaration of the rights of the child: 'The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.'

A MAJOR threat to the cultural and academic freedom of Palestinians in the Israeli occupied territories is revealed in this report. In a series of actions reminiscent of Stalinist Russia, the Israelis have adopted firm measures to suppress all forms of individual expression.

NOT CONTENT with having seized the entire territory of Palestine and exiled the majority of its people, the Zionists are bent on destroying the very culture of the Palestinians living under Israeli rule. One of the latest manifestations of this policy came on 21st September when a squad of Israeli troops burst into the sole Palestinian art gallery on the occupied West Bank and closed it down. The Zionists claimed that the paintings on display constituted an 'incitement against the state of Israel'.

The legal pretext for the closure was that the gallery was operating without a permit, although it had been opened a year previously and the lack of a permit during the twelve months had not prompted the military authorities to take any action other than what West Bankers term 'routine harassment'. Last August, for example, five paintings were confiscated by the occupation authorities, for their alleged 'political' content.

Gallery '79 in Ramallah was opened in May 1979 by Hebron artist Issam Badir, a graduate of the Baghdad Academy of Fine Art, who felt the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation were being deprived of the opportunity to appreciate art. 'As a person who appreciates art, I felt that the Palestinians were being deprived. At least by opening the gallery, the children of the area would be able to see, and hopefully appreciate, art,' he says.

Gallery '79 proved a resounding success from the start. Mr Badir has mounted displays of paintings, pottery, copperwork, enamel and wood engravings. For the more than 25 full-time Palestinian artists on the West Bank it was the only place where they could exhibit their work in an organised fashion. The gallery's success had prompted Issam Badir to expand the range of activities to include art lessons for children and the sale of art materials. His plans were dashed when the Israeli troops moved to close down the gallery in September. The artwork on display was removed and the keys to the building were confiscated.

'The Israelis just want us to eat and sleep and work in their factories. They don't want us to have a cultural life,' says Suleiman Mansour, one of the painters whose works were on display when the gallery was shut down. He vigorously denies that his paintings and engravings were political in content. Most of them depicted women at work and other scenes of rural Palestinian life. 'The problem is that art is an interpretive process. We have no way of predicting what will raise the wrath of the authorities,' he says.

Another prominent Palestinian artist from the 1967 occupied territories, potter Vera Tamari, speaks of the fear that Zionist intimidation

has placed in the hearts of the artists. She says, 'People are simply scared to exhibit.'

She adds that the Israelis, in accordance with their policy of treating each part of the Palestinian people separately in an attempt to undermine their common identity, have forbidden artists from the occupied Gaza Strip to display their work alongside that of West Bank

New books for Palestinian children

BEIRUT'S DAR An Nawras publishing house recently issued a series of short stories and a collection of poems by distinguished Palestinian and Arab authors. They are aimed at acquainting Palestinian and other Arab children with Palestinian history and the rich cultural traditions of the Palestinian people. The publications, lavishly illustrated with colourful drawings by Arab artists, follow a new approach in style, form and content. The intention is to free the reader from imposed judgements. Instead the child is allowed to draw his own conclusions from stories and poems that are rooted in the rich fantasy world that is central to the lives of all children.

The approach is readily apparent in Tawfiq Fayyad's short story, *Haifa and the Seagull*. Haifa is a Palestinian child who loves her grandfather, a fisherman who often takes her out to sea in his boat. One day he sails off alone, saying he is going to Haifa. The child is distraught, thinking he is going off to meet another girl. She is jealous and weeps. But the seagull tells her that the other Haifa is in fact the Palestinian city where her grandfather had been born, and that he had gone to visit it. The girl is mollified. She begins to dream of going to Haifa too.

The new *Dar an Nawras* publications are the latest in a growing range of books for Palestinian children. The first collection of such publications came out in 1975, when Beirut's *Dar al Fatah Al Arabi* publishing house put out a series of 67 brightly coloured booklets. Before their appearance, Palestinian children had no option but to read western books presenting western attitudes to the Arab people and the Palestine conflict. The new *Dar an Nawras* publications have significantly widened the scope for Palestinian children to read books relevant to their status as exiles, and their often tragic family histories.

CULTURAL FREEDOM UNDER THREAT

artists. The extent of the Zionist pressure on Palestinian culture is highlighted by her report that the authorities have threatened even to remove political artwork from the artists' own homes. 'The logical result is that the whole culture is at stake,' she concludes.

The Zionists' fear of the power of the intellectuals to articulate their Palestinian identity is also reflected in the harsh censorship policies imposed on West Bank writers and in the restrictions imposed on the reading material available to the Palestinians of the 1967 occupied territories. Academic institutions are affected particularly harshly.

The problems faced by Bir Zeit University near Ramallah, the pre-eminent Palestinian educational establishment, were highlighted by the recent report on Israeli practices in the 1967 occupied territories published by the highly respected International Commission of Jurists. 'The report says the university has been refused permission to subscribe to about 60 Arabic language academic periodicals, dealing with subjects such as history and economics.'

On 2nd January the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that amongst the latest of the many books that have been banned in the West Bank as a whole is *The Arab Awakening* by George Antonius. The Zionist weekly was itself forced to admit that the study, which analyses the development of Arab nationalism and was first published in 1946, 'has become a classic in its field'. Other works on the latest ban list include a twelfth century history of Jerusalem and Hebron by the Arab historian Hanbal, and titles by Rabbi Elmer Berger, the respected American anti-Zionist.

So intense is the Zionist repression against Palestinian culture in the 1967 occupied territories that they have even gone to the extraordinary length of confiscating a recent publication of a writer, the toleration of whose earlier works criticising Israel was hailed in Israeli propaganda pamphlets as exemplifying the benevolence of the 13-year occupation. Salah Kalifeh's latest book, *Sunflowers*, has been confiscated from bookshops by the occupation authorities. It reviews developments under Israeli occupation since 1973, with special emphasis on the necessity of liberation for Palestinian women if the Palestinian cause is to triumph. An *Associated Press* report notes: 'Ironically Miss Kalifeh was cited in an Israeli Foreign Ministry tract a few years ago as an example of the cultural freedom permitted on the West Bank. Even though her earlier novel *Cactus* said harsh things about Israel, it was published and sold freely, a Foreign Ministry pamphlet claimed.'

* *The West Bank and the Rule of Law*, International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, 1980.

فلسطين حرة free palestine



Solidarity: Ernie Ross MP (left) with Nablus Mayor Bassam Shaka and Mrs Shaka, and Lord Provost James Gowans (seated), and Nabil Ramlawi (right, standing)

DUNDEE HOISTS PALESTINIAN FLAG

THE RED, white, green and black flag of Palestine now flies proudly over Dundee's Council Chambers, following the twinning of the city with the Palestinian town of Nablus in the Israeli occupied West Bank. The twinning decision, the first of its kind in Britain, has been warmly welcomed in the Arab world as a sign of growing understanding of the Palestinian cause in the UK, while

Israeli threats over the move have been brushed aside by the Scottish city's Member of Parliament as an unforgivable attempt by a foreign power to interfere in the internal affairs of a democratically-elected British local authority.

The twinning arrangement was first mooted in June last year when Mr Nabil Ramlawi, the PLO Representative in London, visited Dun-

dee to attend the inaugural meeting of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine. At a reception given by Dundee's Lord Provost, James Gowans, and also attended by Dundee West MP Ernie Ross, the possibility of twinning with Nablus was discussed as a positive step that might heighten the British public's awareness of the plight of the Palestinians, and especially those living under the ruthless Zionist occupation.

The proposal was approved unanimously by the controlling Labour group on the Dundee District Council at their September meeting and the Lord Provost's Committee, which is charged with formulating long-term council policies, adopted Mr Ramlawi's proposal by 17 votes to four on 17th November.

Shortly after, Mr Ramlawi returned to Dundee with Mayor Bassam Shaka of Nablus, who was then in Britain undergoing treatment following the Zionist terrorist car-bombing in June in which he lost both legs. The Nablus mayor was given an official reception by the Lord Provost, and following the exchange of messages of friendship Mr Shaka presented the city of Dundee with the Palestinian flag.

The final step came on 27th November at a full meeting of the District Council, which approved the twinning proposal by 26 votes to 16. The Tories voted *en bloc* against, despite the Thatcher government's more positive line on Palestinian rights, while all the Labour councillors voted in favour, along with two independent councillors, who represent local ratepayers. One of the independents is a member of the Lord Provost's Committee and had supported the proposal when it was considered at the 17th November meeting.

PLO is key to settlement, declare British Liberals

'NO LASTING international agreement is either possible or just which does not recognise the rights of the Palestinian people,' declares the recently published report of a British Liberal party delegation which toured the Middle East on a fact-finding mission in September and October. It adds: 'At the core of that recognition is the creation of a national Palestinian identity, free to determine its future relations with its neighbours.'

The delegation, headed by Liberal leader David Steel MP, included the Party's Foreign Affairs spokesman, Russell Johnston MP, and the Defence spokesman, Stephen Ross MP. Also in the delegation were Roger Sibley, Chairman of the Middle East and Defence Panels, David Alton MP, Chairman of the Liberal party's policy review committee, and Stuart Mole, David Steel's personal assistant.

The Liberals held wide-ranging talks with Syria's President Assad, Jordan's King Hussein, Egypt's President Sadat and the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. They also met with mayors and other leading Palestinian personalities from the West Bank. Only the Israeli leader Beigun refused to talk with the delegation.

The Liberal report does not represent official party policy, but its impact on Liberal attitudes to the Palestine question will be considerable since not only the party leader, but also the defence and foreign affairs spokesmen have lent their support to it.

The Liberal report emphasises that 'A Palestinian national identity lies at the heart of the refugee problem,' and firmly rejects both the Camp David 'peace' process and the much-vaunted 'Jordanian option' as entailing a continued denial of Palestinian rights and therefore a perpetuation of strife in the Middle East.

The report states: 'The West Bank and Gaza should be the Palestinian homeland; continuing Israeli occupation of these territories is unacceptable and a withdrawal should be negotiated.' The major obstacle to a solution along the lines suggested in the report is seen by its authors as Zionist policies of expansion: 'The likelihood of a climate of opinion favourable to a solution is seriously undermined by the present Israeli government's insistence on its policy of permitting settlements within the West Bank.'

The Zionists never cease asserting that the settlements are essential for Israel's security. The Liberals state: 'This is a view the delegation rejected. Further settlements are inimical to the cause of peace and

ought not to be permitted, pending a comprehensive agreement.'

The Liberals also rejected out of hand arguments put by Zionists that Israel's borders should place centres of population out of range of most powerful artillery in the Arab armoury, pointing out: 'The ultimate logic of that argument would be for Israel's borders to steadily expand with every advance in weaponry technology.'

On the Israeli annexation of occupied Arab East Jerusalem, the Liberal report says: 'The Jerusalem Bill was indeed provocative; it can have no international force.'

The report affirms that 'Arab Jerusalem is an integral part of the West Bank and the rights of its citizens must be respected and restored under Arab sovereignty.'

No to Camp David

Rejecting the Camp David process, the Liberals say: 'Camp David alone will not be a sufficient basis for future agreement on the West Bank and the Arab-Israel dispute as a whole. We share the view of those who argue that the Palestinian problem cannot be solved bi-laterally and without involvement of the Palestinians. Nor do we accept that "topping up" the Jordanian delegation with Palestinians constitutes a satisfactory means of representing Palestinian opinion.'

On the contrary, the Liberals come out strongly in support of the PLO as the only authentic representative of the Palestinian people. 'It is our firm view that no solution is possible without the involvement of the PLO,' says the report. 'There can be little doubt that the PLO is clearly representative of the vast bulk of Palestinian opinion, and that they have an undisputed relevance in any peace settlement.'

Looking to the future, the Liberals argue that peace might be secured through multilateral negotiations. The Report says, 'Europe has an opportunity to enlarge upon its Venice initiative and prepare the ground for a development of the Camp David agreements. We believe that any such agreement must involve the USA and the USSR, and must include all protagonists in the conflict. This will include the PLO.'

To back up their conclusion that the entire Middle East region will remain unstable until the Palestinians secure justice, the Liberals quote the PLO Chairman, who told them: 'We are stateless and homeless. We will never accept a solution without a Sovereign State. There will never be a solution, never stability, no security unless the Palestinians regain their rights.'

Make sure you receive Free Palestine

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

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

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

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

Name

Address

☐ delete [complete as applicable]

Subscription rates: UK (Eire £4.00) Europe £5.00 | Elsewhere airmail £7.00