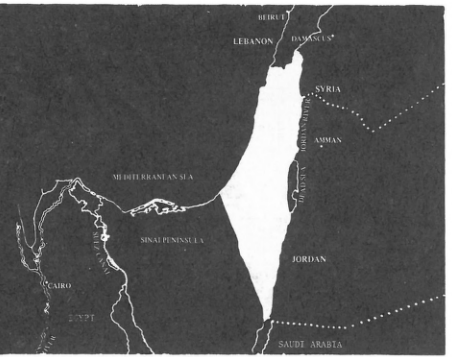


Palestine!



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SYRIA COORDINATES MOVES WITH U.S. AND ISRAEL

Palestinians in Battle for Survival

Tal az Zaatar, the Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Beirut, has taken on the name, "the Palestinian Stalingrad."

It is a symbol of resistance: the Voice of Palestine broadcast a report that after withstanding repeated armoured assaults by the militias of the Lebanese right, the camp's defenders have vowed never to surrender, but "to seek victory or martyrdom."

On June 22, the siege of Tal az Zaatar began. Thousands of artillery shells rained down on the camp. Dozens of major attacks were launched, spear-headed by heavy armor, as thousands of Palestinians and poor Lebanese from the surrounding shanty-towns, refugees themselves from Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon and from the capitalization of agriculture in rural Lebanon, huddled in the camp's numerous underground shelters. With 1000 wounded, many dying because of a lack of blood for transfusions and of other medicines; with many of the children dying, according to the Red Cross, of dehydration, Tal az Zaatar became the symbol of both the plight of the Palestinians, but more, of their will to resist. As one Palestinian leader has said of their situation in Lebanon, "We are now in our last trench. Should the Palestine revolution end here, it will mean a catastrophe for the Palestinian people." Another PLO spokesman spoke of the possibility of defeat in Lebanon as constituting "a greater tragedy for our people than 1948."

Underlying the heroic resistance is the desperate plight of the

Con't. on page 2



Palestinians allied to the Lebanese Progressive Front capture Syrian tank at Saida on June 8.

Lebanon War Shapes U.S. Strategy in Middle East

Imperialists Seek Rightist Axis

Recent indications are that the United States government is hoping to parlay the bloodshed in Lebanon into diplomatic gains for the U.S. in the Middle East.

U.S. strategists recognize that the civil war in Lebanon is linked intimately to the Palestine problem and to the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. They realize that the conflict in Lebanon will not entirely vanish as long as the issue of Palestine remains, as Dean Brown, Kissinger's recent special envoy to Lebanon, told a Senate subcommittee in June. At the same time, the State Department appears to be hopeful that the effects of the Lebanese crisis on the Palestinians and Arab states can be turned to their advantage.

Matti Golan wrote late in June in *Haaretz*, an Israeli daily, that "senior American sources" had recently told Israel it believed that "the war in Lebanon has caused a substantial change in the attitude of the Syrian regime to the conflict with Israel," and that even if Syria patched up its relations with the PLO somewhat, the U.S. did not expect Syria to resume a militant confrontational stance against Israel. Golan, who recently wrote a book entitled *The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger*, based on information leaked from inside the Israeli government on Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, is a journalist whose sources are

obviously high in the Israeli government. Similar statements were made by Shlomo Avineri, the director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry when he was in New York in June.

A State Department memo which has been circulating recently puts a rapprochement between Syria and Egypt at the top of a list of "positive developments" to be sought. Ironically, it was Kissinger's accomplishment in arranging the Sinai Accord that produced the bitter split between Syria and Egypt last September. The immediate benefits that accrued to the US government by separating Egypt from its erstwhile Arab allies in the struggle against Israel were obvious, but the longer-range difficulties were considerable. First, the U.S. strategists believe now that it is impossible to proceed any further toward an Arab-Israeli settlement without unity between Egypt and Syria. Secondly, if the U.S. protege Sadat remains something of a pariah, it is more difficult for him to play an active role and one useful to the U.S. among the Arab states. A strategist from the War College told the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Near East in June that the policy which split Egypt and Syria forced the U.S. to rely solely on Syria, a weaker force, in the current Lebanese crisis.

U.S. strategists seem to believe that the effects of the war in Lebanon, and the Syrian invasion, have enhanced the possibility

Con't. on page 9

Lebanon

Con't. from page 1

Palestine liberation movement. Driven out of Jordan by King Hussein in Black September of 1970 and its bloody aftermath, unable to organize and operate freely in Syria, the Palestinian resistance has only Lebanon in which it can work openly.

The forces which the people of Tal az Zaatar are resisting show the complex and bizarre alignment which is attempting to crush the Palestinian and Lebanese progressive movements. The reactionary Lebanese militias which are attacking the camps are armed—they no longer bother to conceal it—by, among others, Israel, which is shipping U.S. made M-1 rifles, NATO type assault rifles and heavy armoured cars into the rightist Lebanese port of Jouniyeh. The Syrian navy, while patrolling the coast to prevent supplies to the Palestinians and Lebanese left, allows the Israeli arms to enter Lebanon unhindered. Syrian troops, which invaded Lebanon in force in June, leave the rightist militias free to launch their offensives secure in the knowledge that Syrian troops are guarding key points throughout the country. The U.S. government has been acting as a go-between in the strange alliance between Syria and Israel.

It was at Tal az Zaatar that the series of events began last January which has led to the current stage of the war in Lebanon. With the civil war then nine months old, the right wing blockaded Tal az Zaatar and Jisr al Basha refugee camps, a Palestinian presence in the area between the right's strongholds in Beirut and their mountain bastions to the east.

The blockade signalled the beginning of a reactionary military offensive to force the progressive movement in Lebanon to accept retention of the quasi-feudal sectarian political system, and to eliminate the Palestinians' armed sovereignty over their miserable refugee camps and their freedom of action to strike across the Lebanese border at Israel. The alternative, warned Pierre Gemayel, head of the rightist Phalange party, was partition of Lebanon.

In a two-week offensive the reactionaries began in fact to carve out a Christian enclave. By mid-January, the Syrian government decided to intervene, saying that it could not permit partition of Lebanon. Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) units stationed in Syria were allowed to cross the border and, with their armored cars and artillery, to join with the progressive Lebanese and Palestinian forces in a powerful counteroffensive, in which the nationalist forces quickly gained the upper hand, taking control

of 80 percent of Lebanon's territory. Those few days of fighting were both the high point and the conclusion of the alliance between Syria, the PLO and the Lebanese progressive forces.

The political intentions of the Syrian regime, as it rapidly became clear, went beyond preventing the partition of Lebanon by the right, to include restoration of the previous status quo, with minimal reform, and containment of the Palestinian movement. Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam quickly arranged a ceasefire. The political conditions of the ceasefire, articulated in a 12-point program, offered to the right a formalization of the unwritten sectarian system which allows the presidency to a Maronite, and awarded the left only minimal reform, parity of Christians and Moslems in Parliament, rather than the previous slight Christian majority. The program also called for implementation of the 1969 Cairo agreement on the Palestinian presence in Lebanon; although the PLO in principle accepts the agreement, if implemented in the present civil war situation, it might be the basis to isolate and contain the Palestinian armed movement. Khaddam publicly stated the need to impose "discipline" on the Palestinian movement.

THE US-SYRIAN INTERSECTION

By the end of January, when the political thrust of the efforts of Syria's Head of State, President Hafiz Al-Assad, had become somewhat clearer, U.S. strategists were supporting his intervention, which was still essentially political rather than military.

The U.S. and Syria had found an intersection of their interests in Lebanon. As Dean Brown, for a time this spring Kissinger's special envoy to Lebanon, told a Senate Subcommittee on June 21, "What the Syrians want is not too much different from what we want." Brown defined this shared goal as "the recreation of a Lebanon of the past somewhat changed, but basically filling a role of a service country in the world; a country that provides banking services; financial services through which ideas and movement flow, which is an entrepot for Syria."

The rather modest program of transition toward a secular, democratic and capitalist Lebanon which the Lebanese Front of Nationalist and Progressive Forces espouses does not in and of itself alarm U.S. strategists (though they are no doubt concerned about the strength of the Lebanese left, and the prospect of social changes which do not stop with political democratization). As Dean Brown indicated not long ago, these reforms would bring Lebanon into line with Western capitalism.

But the special problem which the Palestinians pose to imperialism requires the maintenance of a whole system of anachronisms in Lebanon to attempt to contain the left as well as the Palestinians. The rapid growth of the Lebanese left was made possible by the protection of the Palestinian resistance and in the last year, the left has become a serious military force with arms and training partially supplied through the Palestinians. The left is deeply committed to the preservation of Palestinian rights in Lebanon; the two are, in fact, guarantors of each other's interests. Thus for the U.S. and its allies, the sectarian divisions of another era have to be maintained in a rapidly capitalizing economy and the power of feudal leaders preserved in their ancient mountain fiefdoms and the hashish fields of the Beqaa plain, while massive economic power is being concentrated in the new skyscrapers of Beirut.

Since the fifties the U.S. has been covertly arming and aiding the militias of the Lebanese right. These militias, based in the Maronite community and formed along quasi-feudal lines, have expanded very rapidly, and have launched repeated attacks on the Palestinian movement which grew up after the June 1967 war.

The past year's campaign to "cleanse Lebanon" of the "foreign ingrates," as Pierre Gemayel so gracelessly describes the right's war with the Palestinians, was supported by the U.S. government. But the hardheaded strategists in Washington were afraid of the destabilizing consequences of a "Maronite Zion," no matter how much the partition project appealed to some of the political fossils the U.S. has preserved in Lebanon. Hence the

Con't. on page 3

Medical Aid for Lebanon Needed

An urgent appeal has been issued for medical aid to the progressive Lebanese and Palestinians.

*** Doctors, nurses and other trained health workers are needed immediately to care for the wounded. Arrangements will be provided for transportation to Lebanon.**

*** Contributions of money or medical supplies are being collected. Vital medicines and supplies are being purchased and readied for shipment by air in the very near future.**

*** Blood is desperately needed and can be donated at any Red Cross center. Specify that it is to be sent to Lebanon.**

*** Volunteers are needed to help organize medical aid to Lebanon.**

The Palestine Solidarity Committee hopes to participate in a broader coordinated effort for medical aid; in the meanwhile, please contact us if you are willing to use your training to help care for the wounded in Lebanon, or if you are interested in working on a project for medical aid here. Please also send us your contributions and receipt forms for blood donation: we will see that they are channeled to the proper place. Write to: Palestine Solidarity Committee, Box 1757, Manhattanville Station, New York, New York 10027.

DOCUMENT

PLO FACES GRAVE THREAT

Palestine Leader on Syrian Invasion

At the end of June, the PLO's publication, Filastin Ath-Thawrah, published in Beirut an interview with Abu Eyad (Salah Khalaf), in which he analyzed Syria's invasion of Lebanon. Abu Eyad, second to Yasir Arafat in the leadership of al-Fateh was appointed to head the new Unified Command of the Palestinian and Lebanese National Forces in Beirut in June.

The following is excerpted from his remarks:

[PLOT TO CREATE ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP]

[Asked about the "indications that the Syrian regime, following the policy of King Hussein of Jordan and of the Zionist entity, is attempting to create an alternate Palestine command," Abu Eyad replied:] I would like to reassure every citizen about this question. The whole world knows now that the Palestinian revolution exists, and it exists through its guns. This Palestinian revolution has its commands and rank and file who have fought since the inception of the revolution. They fought in Jordan, have been fighting in Lebanon for 15 months now and will fight against any new plot.

The tools of the Syrian regime [As Saiqa commando group and the Palestine Liberation Army units tied to the Syrian Army] have been burned and the Syrian regime's ability to put forward false "Palestinian" representatives has come to an end. Such falsifying could have been possible a long time ago when were unarmed in the refugee camps. But now no party, not even our enemies, can ignore the revolution and the PLO. Even if they were to gather all the lackeys and agents, they would not be able to change the facts in any way.

The results of the West Bank elections declare on behalf of the Palestinian people, the Galilee declares and our strugglers in Lebanon declare that the time when puppets could be created and moved as desired has come to an end.

[SAUDI ARABIAN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN RAPPROACHMENT]

Our main issue is the Syrian invasion which has taken place within the general imperialist design for a peaceful settlement in the area. Although we do not know the price offered to the Syrian regime, it was asked to liquidate the Palestinian revolution or neutralize it.

Proceeding from this point, we can talk about the

attempts at reconciliation between Egypt and Syria. [These two regimes have been at odds ever since Syria began its vehement campaign against Egypt's pledge of three years of "non-belligerency" towards Israel in agreeing to the Sinai Accords in September, 1975.] We regard the Sinai agreement as a deviation in the Egyptian national policy. While during the Lebanese crisis the Egyptian regime has given us aid which we will never forget, this, however, does not mean that the difference over the Sinai agreement is over. Our difference with it will stay. As for us, we will try our best to restore Egypt to the Arab national rank so that it can assume its true role.

From this point of view, then, if the Saudi Arabian attempt at a reconciliation between Syria and Egypt leads to a reconciliation of their differences over the Sinai agreement and the continued Syrian onslaught on the Palestinian revolution, it would be a reconciliation which took place at our expense.

[LIBYA ALONE IN SUPPLYING SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT]

One can bitterly say that there are maneuvers by the Arab states. This has been felt in the contacts which brother Abu 'Ammar [Yasser Arafat] is making with the Arab states. He goes to a certain Arab country and they tell him 'our forces are coming' [to help police a Lebanese cease fire]. Every time, an obstacle arises.

However, the Libyans have come with all their weight. The Libyan prime minister has been here for the last 20 days seeking day and night to achieve major points.

Meanwhile, the other Arab states are raising their voices, but we do not see their deeds.

[REVOLUTIONARY OPTIMISM]

I am very optimistic in regards to the general picture because the cohesion among the Lebanese national movement, the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese masses is more than any revolution ever dreamed of. If we triumph over the plot against us, and I am sure we will, I expect that a change will take place in the Arab world. The Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement will then have caused a retreat in the plots of the Arab reactionary apostasy. The Syrian invasion has been the most dangerous link in these plots. If we are finished with it, then everything else will be less dangerous.

U.S. warning last January that the Syrian initiative—return to the previous status quo with minimal reform and containment of the PLO—was the "last and best hope" for the right.

SYRIA'S MOTIVATIONS

Syrian President Assad's actions were dictated by his perceptions of the path for Syria to regain the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since 1967, and to secure a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on terms (relatively) favorable to his country.

Popular mobilization, as advocated by the Palestinians, and even by more radical Baathists whom Assad overthrew in his 1970 coup d'etat, is not a possibility for Assad, for the simple reason that his regime rests on an elite rather than on a mass base. And since Assad's accession to power in 1970, he has been moving Syria to the right, encouraging the return of capitalists

who fled during the period of nationalization of the economy, and welcoming investment by Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab states.

Consequently, after the October War it was easy for Assad to subscribe to the cliché of Arab conservatism that only the U.S. government could deliver the Arab territories from Israeli occupation. Although he cooperated with the U.S. government's step-by-step diplomacy sufficiently to earn Kissinger's praise and token U.S. aid, Assad learned to his bitter disappointment in September 1975 that he had been double-crossed. Kissinger arranged the Sinai Accord, by which Anwar Sadat agreed that Egypt would accept three years of "non-belligerency" with Israel in return for a small slice of the Sinai. With Egypt out of the confrontation with Israel, Assad was left to face the problem of the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights alone.

Assad's response was to strengthen his negotiating position

Con't. on page 10

UP TO DATE

PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK STAGED PROTESTS ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1967 WAR. The Israeli military government had attempted to prevent demonstrations on June 5 by carrying out the "preventive detention" of suspected protest organizers in the preceding days. Nevertheless, demonstrations occurred in a number of towns, and a commercial strike shut down business in Nablus. Israel soldiers destroyed the film footage that camera crews from the American Broadcasting Corporation, French TV and Israeli TV had made of the army dispersing a demonstration in Nablus with tear gas.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE SYRIAN INVASION OF LEBANON FILLED THE THREE DAILY ARABIC PAPERS ON THE WEST BANK ON JUNE 9. Editorials, columns and paid advertisements denounced the intervention. Previously leaflets signed by the PLO had been distributed on the West Bank calling for the protests against Syria on that day. Three demonstrators against the Syrian action were wounded by Israeli soldiers in Nablus.

PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE IS GROWING TO SELLING LAND ON THE WEST BANK to the Jewish National Fund. Since March 30, when a general strike in the Galilee was held to protest Israeli expropriation of Arab land, the Jewish National Fund has been having difficulty in persuading Arab owners of land in the West Bank to sell. If this refusal continues, according to *Haaretz*, it would mean "failure for plans for the enlargement of [Jewish] Jerusalem."

Last year the Israeli government spent \$6.6 million to purchase land on the West Bank through the JNF; the JNF guarantees to preserve secrecy and offers to pay the sellers, who are often absentees, "in any currency anywhere in the world."

THE USEFULNESS OF ARAB WORKERS FROM THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND GAZA WHO WORK IN ISRAEL, according to *Davar*, the newspaper of the ruling Israeli Labor Party:

"An Arab worker is exceptionally mobile, can be dismissed without notice and moved from place to place, does not strike, and does not present 'demands' as does his Israeli counterpart. In short... workers from the territories are a bargain for the Israeli economy."

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING \$3 BILLION IN AID TO ISRAEL, JORDAN, EGYPT AND SYRIA this year, about half of all foreign aid being requested from Congress. The lion's share, \$2.2 billion is earmarked for Israel.

A NEW ISRAEL-U.S. BUSINESS COUNCIL HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED to encourage U.S. businessmen to invest in Israel. George Romney, former chairman of the board of American Motors, is co-chairman of the council, and William B. Nicholson, vice-chairman of Union Carbide, is the Council's vice-chairman.

The Council is canvassing businessmen in twenty U.S. cities to assist the Israeli government in meeting its goal of \$150 million a year in new investments from the U.S. for the next five years. Israel is currently suffering from a \$4 billion annual balance of payments deficit, incurred primarily because of its massive military spending.

The council plans to tout easy access to key markets. Since January 1976 the U.S. government has been allowing a list of 2700 items to be imported into the U.S. from Israel free of duty, and beginning next July, Israeli manufactured goods will enter the European community countries without tariff.

The council is assuring potential investors that the Arab boycott need not deter them from investing in Israel. According to the July 12 issue of *Business Week*, "Egypt and several other Arab countries have indicated that they do not object to companies investing in Israel so long as they put an equal amount of money into the Arab world."

Wages in Israel are roughly half those in the U.S.

ARAB HEADS OF LOCAL COUNCILS IN ISRAEL AND THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF ARAB LANDS HAVE CALLED ISRAEL "A BI-NATIONAL STATE with a Jewish majority and an Arab minority." The statement, drafted on May 24 as part of a memo to be sent to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was construed in Israel as an attack on the Zionist nature of the state by laying claim to "national rights" for Israeli Arabs. A public furor arose, and Rabin replied to the council heads that his

government intended to preserve Israel as "a country with a Jewish destiny." Rabin had earlier defined the Arabs of Israel as people "with religious and cultural distinctions" living in a "Jewish" State, denying the Arabs any national status.

EMIGRATION FROM ISRAEL LAST YEAR APPROXIMATELY EQUALLED THE IMMIGRATION TOTAL OF 17,000. The Jewish Agency as a result has created a special "department for the prevention of emigration" and spends 40 percent of its time urging emigrants to return, according to the Associated Press.

A NUMBER OF MOROCCAN JEWS ARE EMIGRATING FROM ISRAEL to return to their homes in Morocco or to settle in other countries. At the end of May the heads of 14 Moroccan families publicly announced their intention to leave Israel because, as one said, "we are considered third-rate citizens."

The Israeli press carried a report that one hundred Moroccan families who left Israel over the past few years received passports from the Moroccan Embassy in Paris, and either returned to their homes or settled in Canada.

King Hasan of Morocco announced recently, at the request of the PLO, that the Moroccan government was prepared to help any Moroccan Jewish emigrants to resettle in Morocco.

THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT IS REPRESSING CRITICISM OF THE SYRIAN INVASION of Lebanon. Fifteen people, most of them prominent Palestinian nationalists, were arrested for signing a statement in June denouncing the invasion. According to reports at least some of them have been jailed in the notorious desert prison at al Jauf. The leading newspaper in Amman, *al Rai*, was suspended for publishing an editorial mildly critical of the invasion.

THE PLO AND PFLP STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE AIRPLANE HIJACKING that ended in Entebbe, Uganda on July 3. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat criticized the hijacking as a "criminal act, harmful to the Palestinian cause." George Habash, Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, denied categorically in a July 12 interview with a Beirut paper that the PFLP was in any way involved with the hijacking, though he acknowledged that several of the hijackers were men who had broke away from the PFLP some time ago. Habash added that the PFLP had ceased undertaking such operations several years ago and that such operations "cannot possibly lead to the liberation of Palestine."

THE U.S. VETOED A U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION on July 29 that supported the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and to achieve national self-determination. The resolution was based on recommendations submitted by the U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. (See PALESTINE! 6/10 for details of recommendations.)

The vote was 10 to 1, with Britain, France, Italy and Sweden abstaining. Voting for the text were Benin, China, Japan, Libya, Pakistan, Panama, Rumania, Guyana, the Soviet Union, and Tanzania. The negative vote by the U.S. was the third U.S. veto this year in the Security Council of resolutions that supported Palestinian national rights.



Demonstrators in West Bank town of Nablus carrying coffin of 16 year old Nidal Shankir. Shankir was killed and at least 15 others wounded on July 2 when Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinians protesting an 8 percent value added tax imposed by Israel on the West Bank.

Exposing Zionist Myths

Did Zionism Find a Desert and Make It Bloom?

"The land was largely swamp and barren hillside: It was in these areas that Jewish settlement began... Nowhere did the Jews seek to displace the indigenous Arab population... The Jew's right to the land is not only based on history and sentiment but is claimed by the physical process of the work invested in transforming it into an area capable of supporting life."

—"Israel, Never an Arab Land," distributed by the Consulate General of Israel in the U.S.

Palestinian agriculture flourished for centuries before Zionist colonization began at the end of the nineteenth century, and accounts of many European travellers to Palestine testify to this.

*The American missionary William Thompson visited all the areas of Palestine between 1832 and 1876 and discovered rich agricultural development throughout the land. Outside Bethlehem, he viewed "the greenery of wheat;" approaching Ramallah, he found "vineyards cover[ing] the surrounding hills which were filled with figs and olives, while apples, pears, pomegranates and other fruits were abundant;" near Jenin "the soil is planted with cucumber, melons and maize;" towards Acre he crossed "the green expanse of meadows;" in the Galilee, he found "olive groves" (*The Land and the Book*, p. 24, 107, 166, 251, 303.)

*Sir Moses Montefiore, who traveled to Palestine in 1839 to look for agricultural lands to acquire, described the eastern Galilee as covered with "groves of olive trees, I should think, more than five hundred years old, vineyards, much pasture, plenty of wells and abundant excellent water; also fig trees, walnuts, almonds, mulberries, etc., and rich fields of wheat, barley and lentils." In the area around Dja'ouna he found "the highest state of cultivation... the inhabitants were good farmers and possessed horses, cows, oxen, sheep and goats in great abundance." (*Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore*, p. 169, 175-176.)

*When Ahad Ha'am, a leading Zionist, visited Palestine in 1891 he wrote that "we abroad have a way of thinking that Palestine today is almost desert, an uncultivated wilderness... But this is not in fact the case. It is difficult to find any uncultivated land anywhere in the country." (*Am Scheidewege*, p. 86.)

It was only a lavish infusion of foreign capital and the expulsion of the indigenous Palestinians that enabled the Zionist settlers to develop some previously unfarmed lands and to modernize agricultural methods.

*For example, the Baron de Rothschild provided funds to drain the swamps near Hadera; hundreds of Arabs were hired "to dig the broad and deep trenches required for the drainage" of the malaria infested swamps; the Arabs "died by scores" in completing the project which made way for a Zionist settlement of 5000 inhabitants. (*Hadera*, Jewish National Fund Library No. 2 quoted in *Nisi Nominus*, by Neville Barbour, p. 115)

*Over \$30 million of Zionist contributions from abroad were spent on agricultural settlements before 1945. It is no wonder that the Zionists' gradual "adoption of scientific methods and principles has actually improved agricultural production in Palestine," as John Richmond wrote. He continues, "But to say that Palestine was a desert before the arrival of the Zionists is senseless. I first saw Palestine in 1923 and I can vouch for the abundance of green Arab territory." (*The Observer*, September 28, 1969)

*Zionist colonists concentrated their settlements on the coastal plains and northern inland plain of Esdraelon, which



Palestinian peasants packing oranges near Jaffa in 1902.

comprised the most fertile lands of Palestine, cultivated for centuries by Palestinian Arab farmers. Earlier, Ottoman Turkish feudal rulers, without regard for the rights of the indigenous population, had often given the "ownership" of these lands to absentee landlords, many of whom were not Palestinian. It was from these absentee landlords that the Zionists acquired 90 percent of their lands before 1948, and it was on these lands, developed over the centuries by Palestinian peasants, that much of Zionist agriculture existed. (Polk, Stampler, and Asfour, *Background to Tragedy*, p. 236)

"Enormous J.N.F [Jewish National Fund] purchases in the Esdraelon and elsewhere evicted thousands [of Palestinians]... Jewish brokers made it clear to the seller that they would not accept transfer of the tract until it was clear of all tenants." (John Ruedy, "Dynamics of Land Transformation," *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. Abu-Lughod, p. 31)

The myth that Palestine was agriculturally neglected, a desert in need of regeneration, is propagated by official Zionist agencies to justify the theft of the land from the indigenous Palestinian Arab people.

*Emer de Vattel, perhaps the most famous of all theorists on imperialist international law, wrote in *The Law of Nations*: "When the Nations of Europe, which are too confined at home, come upon lands which the savages have no special need of and are making no present and continuous use of, they may lawfully take possession of them and establish colonies in them." (in Philip D. Curtin, ed. *Imperialism*, p. 45.) The Zionist movement was born within the context of this colonialist assumption. In the negotiations which led the British government to assume the role of the imperialist sponsor of Zionist colonization through the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the Zionists submitted a carefully detailed memorandum on the *Resettlement of Palestine*.

This memorandum claimed that the Arabs of Palestine were "too small, too poor, and too little trained to make rapid progress" and therefore the land "requires the introduction of a new and progressive element in the population [i.e. European Jews], desirous of devoting all its energies and capital to the work of colonization on modern lines." (Document quoted by David Waines, *The Unholy War*, p. 34) Zionist colonization formalized this notion in the slogan *Kibush Hakarka*, "Conquest of Land." (Arie Bober, *The Other Israel*, p. 11.)

PALESTINIAN DESCRIBES VISIT TO WEST BANK

Life Under Occupation

The following is an interview with a Palestinian woman living in the United States who recently visited the West Bank town of Ramallah where she had lived before Israeli occupation in 1967.

It's really nice to see your home again, but it's not the way it was when we were children. You feel the depression of the people; people are very depressed. It's not as lively. Before you had your friends around in the streets. People would come in the summer to have summer festivals and dances in the school, but now it's very quiet.

Somehow I felt different. You get used to the idea, you get used to seeing soldiers in the street. I was afraid to see soldiers walking in the street. They would walk on the sidewalk and you would walk on the street.

After I got to the West Bank my aunt prepared this little meal. She apologized for not having a big meal, a good meal, since the stores were on strike. She could not get anything from the outside. This was July 2.

You ask why there was a strike. Everybody, all the kids, knew what was going on, why the strike, and they tell you how the strike was effective that day. All the stores were closed. You wouldn't see any store that was open. The strike was about the high prices and the taxes imposed on the shops [value added tax]. It's very sensitive to live in the West Bank now. Of course, everybody was happy when the strike was on and everyone cooperated and went along with the strike.

WHAT WAS THE ISRAELI RESPONSE TO THE STRIKE?

In other strikes they would come and open the stores and put X marks on the stores that were closed. The Israelis would force the stores to be open. They would unlock, break the lock, open the door, and people would come and robbery would start. The shopkeeper would have to go and reopen his shop to protect it. This time, you walk down the street and see the X mark on the

stores, but they're all closed. They couldn't come and open every door because it was impossible. Imagine the whole city, all the stores are closed, every shop. The strike lasted until the day I left that area.

WHERE DID YOU GO WHILE YOU WERE THERE?

I went to see relatives and friends in the West Bank. They all talked about what they did during the April 15 municipal elections in the West Bank. They were successful getting out demonstrations from the school and helping the demonstrators to pass out leaflets. They talk about this; it's on their minds all the time.

My aunt told me about an experience they had about two months ago on the day called Yom Alaad. There was a curfew and her oldest son was supposed to take a final exam. He was studying and had the door open so the sunlight could pass into the house. Israeli soldiers saw him with the door open. He heard steps rushing to the house so he locked the door. As soon as he locked the door, five other Israeli soldiers started banging with their guns and boots on the door asking them to open. In Palestine they have iron shutters on the windows; they had them closed also. The soldiers were circling the house and asking my aunt to open up the house. My aunt had talked to other women and she had learned of the soldiers demanding her to open the door. They ask the people to open the door and they pick up, just take, whoever is a student or mature person and take him to jail. They would say that he had committed a crime and ask the parents to pay a fine or else that person would have to leave the West Bank. They want the parents to put pressure on the kid not to participate in demonstrations or political activity.

The soldiers could not open the doors no matter how much they banged on the doors, no matter how crazy they got, they could not open the door. The Israeli soldiers outside were cursing. My uncle called the Military Governor and asked him what was going on. "How come they bang at our door? It's supposed to be a curfew and we're not leaving the house. We're all in the house and what do you want from us? A person walking in the street breaking curfew, maybe you could say something to them, but we're all in the house. We're not violating any of the laws." So the Military Governor tells my uncle that if an Israeli says 'open,' you open the door. My uncle didn't pay any attention to what the guy was saying.

You know they got tired. They're lucky the house is made from stone and the door made from iron so that they could not break in. If they could, they would have gone wild after all the banging. They would break into the door and probably shoot them all.

My aunt was also saying that there were demonstrations at the school and they had just shot a Palestinian student. They shot him right in the school. I was going to Jerusalem with my aunt and she told me, "There's the officer, the Israeli officer that followed the student and shot him right in the school yard for participating in a demonstration." He meant to shoot him, he fired six bullets on that kid. They know that there is somebody who is going to be killed or punished for going to a demonstration.

I went to the school I attended before 1967. When a demonstration is organized, the students come at night and put messages on the wall. The next day the students don't go into the school, they mobilize outside and go to the demonstration.

The messages on the school walls were not clear because they were sprayed over. The whole wall was sprayed different colors: black, white, and gray. The Israeli soldiers repeatedly spray painted over all the messages. It is something to see the school walls all painted and all sprayed; they're all gray instead of stone.

Demonstrators on W.Bank carry Palestinian flags





Protest in front of World Zionist Organization

N.Y. Protest Hits Zionist Parade

Countering the annual "Salute to Israel Parade," several hundred demonstrators held a "Salute to the Palestinian People" on June 13 in New York City. Under banners reading: "Self Determination for Palestine," "No U.S. Aid to Israel; No Cutbacks in NYC," "U.S. Technicians Out of Sinai," and " 'Salute to Israel Parade' is a Salute to Racism, Colonialism and Repression," the protesters gathered at Exxon's New York headquarters, marched to the South African Airline and on to the World Zionist Organization.

This year's Zionist parade, celebrating the anniversary of the creation of the Israeli state, was also a bicentennial extravaganza, and stressed ties between the U.S. and Israeli governments. At the counterdemonstration, a member of the Palestine Solidarity Committee pointed out that "Seventy percent of the current U.S. foreign aid budget is going to the Middle East—with Israel at the top of the list."

Sheila Ryan, a spokesperson for the Palestine Action Coalition, organizer of the demonstration, condemned the main slogan of the Zionist parade, "Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land," as "cruelly ironic," particularly in light of the vicious repression by Israel of the recent Palestinian demonstrations in the occupied territories. "We say their 'Salute to Israel,' " she continued, "is a salute to racism. Israel is a racist state because by law any Jew in the entire world has a right to live there, but none of the million and a half Palestinians exiled from their homeland and forced to live as refugees is allowed to return."

A member of the Arab Student Club at Columbia University spoke to the crowd in Arabic and a representative of the Community Coalition to Save Hostos College addressed the rally in Spanish. After the demonstrators joined peoples' singer Barbara Dane in "The Palestine People are Rising," and listened to Suni Paz, Argentinian folksinger, they marched to the South African Airline chanting "Israel-South Africa; End Racism Now!"

Once in front of the World Zionist Organization, Marion Feinberg, an organizer of the demonstration's Jewish contingent asserted that "Zionism does not speak in the interest of the Jewish people... Zionism tries to put the Jewish people in the imperialist camp, in the camp of the United States politicians and corporate leaders... Zionism is the betrayal of the Jewish people because it separates us from the Palestinian people who represent a revolutionary vision—a vision called the democratic

secular state, as opposed to the reality of the Zionist state of Israel."

The march continued on through midtown Manhattan with demonstrators carrying Palestinian flags and banners in English, Spanish and Arabic.

The organizations composing the Palestine Action Coalition, organizer of the demonstration are: Arab Student Club of Columbia University; Black Panther Party (East Coast); El Comité-MINP; Eritreans for Liberation in North America; Friends of Haiti; the Guardian; International Indian Treaty Council (AIM); Irish Republican Clubs of the USA and Canada; Liberation Support Movement; Palestine Information Committee; Palestine Red Crescent Society; Palestinian Women's Union; Palestine Solidarity Committee; Partido Comunista Dominicana; Prairie Fire Organizing Committee; Puerto Rican Socialist Party; Socialist Workers Party; Turkish Student Association; Yemeni Emigre Club; War Tax Resistance; Venceremos Brigade; Worker Student Organizing Collective; Young Socialist Alliance.



Palestine contingent of 50 people joined tens of thousands in July 4th demonstration in Philadelphia to demand "Freedom for all oppressed nations." A Palestine contingent also participated in a simultaneous San Francisco demonstration.

U.S. EDITORS TOUR APARTHEID STATE

Zionist- S.African Relations Promoted

Israel's Ambassador to South Africa Yitzhak Unna told the editors of twelve major U.S. Jewish newspapers who toured South Africa in May that by presenting a positive view of South Africa in their papers they would "be doing South Africa/Israel relations a service" and would also "be doing South Africa a service." Conditions in South Africa are actually much better "than the anti-South Africa propaganda slant tends to make out," Unna told the editors. The Ambassador made this assessment just a month before the South African government's brutal repression of the anti-apartheid resistance which broke out in Soweto in June and soon spread elsewhere in South Africa.

The editors' trip was paid for by the South African Tourist Organization, a semi-governmental agency, and Pan American Airlines. The editors were escorted by William Evans of Pan Am's Special Projects and by the general manager of the South African Tourist Organization's New York office. Billed as a visit to the Jewish community in South Africa, the tour was designed to promote Pan Am's new New York-Rio-Johannesburg flight, and tourism to South Africa.

The intentions of the trip's sponsors were outlined in the May 27 issue of *Jewish Week* by Philip Hochstein, editor and publisher of that paper and a participant in the tour. "Pan Am's introduction of a new New York to Johannesburg route via Rio de Janeiro has signalled public relations efforts to attract the Jewish tourist. The invitation to the Jewish editors is part of that effort. . . . South Africa especially wants Jewish tourism because of its potential volume and also because of the hope that a common interest in Israel's survival and in resisting Russian imperial domination may spread understanding abroad of South Africa's uniquely complex race problem and its strategic world role. Confronted by the suggestion that the Russians may undermine South Africa by championing equal rights for Blacks, both could more easily manipulate a prematurely racially integrated South Africa because the whites would then be rendered helpless by inexperienced Black majority rule."

The official leadership of South Africa's Jewish community, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, has worked for many years, with uneven success, to win support for or neutrality on apartheid from international and U.S. Jewish organizations.

Despite the controversial nature of the tour, no editor declined the free trip for ethical or political reasons, Pan Am's Evans, who selected the editors on the basis of the size of circulation of their papers and geographical distribution, told a writer for *Palestine!*

Jesse Lurie, executive editor of *Hadassah*, said that he had supported the Zionist tourism boycott of Mexico last year because of the Mexican Government's vote for a U.N. resolution denouncing Zionism, along with South African apartheid, as a form of racism but said that he had no qualms about encouraging visits to South Africa. Lurie commented, "South Africa is a beautiful country, a fascinating one. There's no reason to boycott it." Lurie added that he had told the South African Minister of Tourism, "You have a beautiful country. It reminds me very much of Israel. It has insoluble problems."

According to Lurie the group had met members of the Jewish Board of Deputies and numerous government officials, but he himself had met only one black South African, a millionaire.

The trip was in line with recent official government measures to strengthen relations between South Africa and Israel. The editors' trip was made shortly after South African Prime Minister Johannes Vorster visited Israel, where he concluded a major trade pact. Vorster, who was jailed during World War II as a general in the South African Nazi organization "Osserwebrandwag," and a member of its military wing, the "Stormjaers," was received warmly by the Israeli government. At a state dinner in Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin toasted Vorster, saying, "I believe both our countries share the problem

Columnist Impressed With Apartheid

Just one month after the 12 Jewish newspaper editors visited South Africa, militant protests by black students broke out against aspects of the apartheid policies of the regime. According to U.N. reports, up to 1000 demonstrators were killed by South African security forces in repressing the uprising.

The international outrage at the brutal repression was derided by Phineas Stone, the lead columnist for the *Jewish Week*, whose editor Philip Hochstein had just returned from the editors' trip to South Africa. The newspaper has a circulation of over 100,000 in the U.S.

In a column filled with racist slanders, Stone criticizes the "liberals" who suggest that South Africa "turn to 'gradual' equality." Equality between "a primitive but overwhelming Black majority" and "an advanced white ruling minority" would lead first to expulsion of the whites and then to "years, and perhaps decades of mutual slaughter" by the country's "rival Black tribes," Stone argues.

Stone writes that the "group of Jewish editors [who] visited South Africa just some weeks ago . . . were, on the whole, impressed with the logic and sincerity of the "Separate Development" [apartheid] program" of the regime.



White policeman searching black resident during June uprisings in South Africa.

of how to build a regional dialogue, coexistence and stability in the face of foreign-inspired instability and recklessness."

Evans of Pan Am arranged an interview for the twelve editors with Unna, Israel's Ambassador to South Africa, who outlined, according to the *Jewish Press*, "some of the underlying philosophies and reasons behind the unusual closeness that has developed between Israel and South Africa." The interview has since been printed in Jewish newspapers in the U.S.

The following is excerpted from the interview as published in the June 18 issue of *Jewish Press*:

WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY FACTORS BRINGING ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA TOGETHER?

Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Unna: I would say if you ask a South African and in particular an Afrikaner, he will give you three reasons for this closeness. He will say first of all we have a common biblical heritage, and I would not underrate this feeling. The Afrikaners are a devout Christian Calvinist people, who know the Bible perhaps even better than we do, including the old Testament, and they make a comparison. You find this very often they make a comparison between the Great Trek of the Afrikaners away from the British to the Transvaal and the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. So there is a common Biblical heritage which they respect tremendously in Israel.

Then there is the feeling which is perhaps a slight oversimplification which the South Africans feel that South African and Israel are in the same boat. A small community surrounded by a preponderance of hostile neighbors which has to survive.

There is a Jewish community here of roughly 117,000 people, Jews who really have an unblemished record of fidelity to Israel, who feel very strongly about Israel, who participate both financially and culturally and spiritually in the upbuilding of Israel, who have a very good aliyah [emigration] from here to Israel thanks to the good relations between the government of South Africa and Israel. The Jews are really in a way in a

privileged position inasmuch as they are able to send funds to Israel. [South African regulations forbid currency transfers and investment abroad to prevent a flight of capital, but an exception is made for Israel.]

MR. AMBASSADOR, IS IT YOUR VIEW THAT BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL THAT IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA, ISRAEL, OR FOR THAT MATTER ANYWHERE, TO LOOK FAVORABLY UPON SOUTH AFRICA?

Israeli Ambassador Unna: Look, I would take my guidelines from what the [South African] Minister of Tourism, Mr. Marais Steyn, said to you last night. South Africa is not a Utopia, in fact very few countries are, even Israel is not a Utopia: we all have our shortcomings. Nobody doubts, including South Africans, that South Africa has its shortcomings; but I do believe that such a visit as yours here, as guests of the South African Tourist Organization and Pan Am, will enable you to have an honest look at South Africa. You will be able to, I think, divorce hostile propaganda from the reality of the situation, which I believe is far more sanguine than the propaganda the anti-South African propaganda slant seems to make out, and if you in your various papers present an accurate and sincere picture as you see it of South Africa, and I have no doubt that this is what you will be doing, you will be doing South African/Israel relations a service, you will be doing South Africa a service.

U.S. Strategy Con't. from page 1

of a rapprochement between Syria and Egypt. They hope that King Khalid of Saudi Arabia can enforce a reconciliation, now that Assad no longer has a good reputation to maintain among nationalists, and since Saudi Arabia is withholding \$4 billion of funds for economic development in Syria until Assad accedes to the restoration of good relations with Sadat.

NEW ARAB BLOC

The Egyptian-Syrian reconciliation would pave the way for a larger conservative Arab axis, which the U.S. is now working behind the scenes to assemble. According to Golan's dispatch, "recently the United States has been active toward consolidating a bloc of Arab states to be based on an Egypt-Syria-Saudi Arabia-Kuwait axis... Even though the two main political factors of the axis are Egypt and Syria, Washington is earmarking Saudi Arabia to play the chief role. This is because King Khalid proved recently by a series of acts that he differs from his predecessor in his willingness to apply Saudi Arabia's vast financial influence on Arab states in a dynamic manner."

Jordan would also play an important role in such an axis, particularly because of its strategic relation to the Palestinian issue. Now that Syria and Jordan have a strong connection, Jordan has emerged from its post Rabat doldrums. The active role Hussein played in the Lebanese crisis must also have rehabilitated him in the eyes of any Washington observers who thought Rabat and his reverses on the West Bank rendered him obsolete.

If such a Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi-Kuwaiti-Jordanian axis can be forged, strategists in the U.S. State Department hope it could be employed for three purposes:

First, the axis could support a Lebanese settlement, perhaps arranged as a State Department memo suggests, along the lines of a French proposal that the parties to the conflict meet for a conference outside Lebanon. According to this Washington scenario, the Lebanese parties would meet first without the Palestinians and agree among themselves on an acceptable status for the Palestinians, necessarily involving yielding to some of the right's anti-PLO positions. This "Lebanese" definition of the PLO's status would then be negotiated with the Palestinians at a second stage of the conference.

The U.S. strategists believe the emerging conservative Arab axis can help return Lebanon to the previous status quo with some minimal adjustment to the realities of sectarian balance. Such a solution, it believes, is possible only with the "insulation and control" of the PLO. Dean Brown has already brandished the enticement of U.S. aid to rebuild the Lebanese economy and state apparatus, and since the U.S. favors the restoration of Lebanon as a service center for international capital, as regional headquarters for banking and petroleum-related industry, it is not difficult to predict the guidelines the U.S. would impose on any rebuilding operation.

Second, the U.S. hopes that this conservative Arab axis could reverse the diplomatic victories the PLO has won in the Arab world over the last few years. Some in the State Department are suggesting that the Arab League might negotiate an agreement with the PLO on the "nonintervention of the Palestinians in the domestic affairs" of the Arab states where they are living in exile. Golan reports that in Israel "it is not being ruled out that Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Kuwait will support a change in the Rabat resolution which granted the PLO exclusive representation of the Palestinians. Jordan's recently increased activity in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] indicates, in Jerusalem's view, that King Hussein thinks that this representation may be granted to him in the not too distant future."

Third, the U.S. government hopes that this conservative axis, after stripping the PLO of much of its stature and independence, could then maneuver into a position to conclude a comprehensive peace settlement with Israel.

Golan reports that "senior sources in Jerusalem expressed their view recently that Israel should prepare itself quickly for the possible consolidation of such an axis. This anticipation, the senior sources said, has to find reflection in the drawing of an Israeli plan toward the possible renewal of contacts with the neighboring countries." Avineri commented that the U.S. and Israel are "constantly exchanging opinions" on the new political options presented by the war in Lebanon and the Syrian intervention.

The U.S. government's plans are based on the hypothesis that the Palestinian and progressive Lebanese will fail in their resistance to the assaults by Syria and Lebanese reactionaries. And that premise may be a serious miscalculation.

Hunger Strike Demands Relief Aid for Lebanon

Five members of the Ad Hoc Lebanese-Palestinian Relief Committee held a 9-day hunger strike in early July at the Boston Red Cross Headquarters "to draw attention to the plight of Lebanese and Palestinians in the areas besieged by the Lebanese right-wing factions and/or the Syrian army."

The strikers pointed out: "In Beirut, a city of more than a million people in times of peace, water and electricity have not been available since the latter part of June. Hospitals are overcrowded with a severe shortage of medical supplies. Yet the various agencies of the International Red Cross have done remarkably little to alleviate the situation."

The group of progressive Lebanese and Palestinians in Boston began their hunger strike by demanding that the Geneva-based International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC): "1) immediately launch a wide public appeal for contributions to the relief of the besieged areas in Lebanon; 2) immediately initiate its own massive relief effort; 3) cooperate with the Palestinian Red Crescent to insure the success of the relief operation; 4) make clear to the international community which parties are obstructing its activities" if difficulties arise.

The strike ended when participants received cables from Geneva and outside sources indicating that the ICRC had stepped up its relief effort to Beirut.

Lebanon

Con't. from page 3

by uniting an Eastern front under his leadership: from this stance he believed he could convince the U.S. government to force Israel to yield territory. The front does not seem to have been constructed so much for military purposes—Assad extended the UN observer force's mandate in the Golan unconditionally in May—as for diplomatic ones.

Syria brought Jordan into the front, and built closer economic and political ties between the two countries, with plans for a Syrian-Jordanian federation. With some combination of Baathist faith in the power of Arab unity and a more sinister confidence in his ability to strongarm the PLO, Assad believed that the Palestinians could be brought into his Eastern Front alliance alongside Hussein—although the resistance's media still regularly attaches the soubriquet "butcher of Amman" to the name of their bitter enemy. With this Syrian-Jordanian-PLO front, Assad must have dreamed of offering Kissinger the ultimate package deal for the Middle East.

TENSIONS BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS

The Palestinians did not seem at all amenable, however, to the "discipline" Syria was trying to impose upon them. On January 31, forces of as Saiqa, a pro-Syrian Palestinian group, attacked the offices of two Beirut publications close to the Rejection Front, the Palestinian formation which had most irked Assad with its vociferous attacks on the "peaceful settlement" with Israel. The PLO and all the organizations in it strongly condemned the attack.

Next Assad and the PLO clashed over Hussein: the PLO bitterly attacked the King for steps to reassert his authority over the occupied West Bank, including summoning the Palestinian deputies from the West Bank to the reconvening of the Jordanian Parliament. The PLO argued persuasively that these measures contravened the Rabat Arab Summit resolutions, which had confirmed the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Assad and Zuhair Mohsen, head of as Saiqa, absolved Hussein of any wrongdoing, and inspired some rather nasty comments to the effect that it was time for "new blood" in

the PLO's leadership, and that perhaps Zuhair Mohsen should replace Arafat.

The rapid growth of as Saiqa, in this political context, alarmed the PLO. The political organization of as Saiqa, which is formally the Palestinian branch of the Syrian-oriented Baath party, has been virtually destroyed by Assad's government; since Assad's 1970 coup, as Saiqa has become in many ways an appendage of the Syrian army. As the war in Lebanon dragged on through the winter and spring, Syria was accused of swelling the ranks of as Saiqa with regular Syrian soldiers.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SYRIAN POLITICAL INITIATIVE

While tensions were increasing between Assad and the Palestinians, fighting in Lebanon never really stopped, and the Syrian political initiative was failing. The right presented the major obstacle to its implementation, when the reactionary parties and Lebanese president Suleiman Franjeh refused to give representation in the government to the progressive movement. Franjeh himself, an arch-conservative, was intransigent in his refusal to resign the presidency, even after two thirds of the parliamentary deputies petitioned him to leave office so that a new president might take office and salvage the situation.

Given the impasse, the state apparatus began to rapidly disintegrate. More and more soldiers deserted to the Lebanese Arab Army, led by Lt. Ahmed Khatib. This grass-roots, progressive movement among soldiers began after Maronite officers had ordered units of the army to enter the fighting in January on the side of the right wing. As it grew into a significant force, the Lebanese Arab Army began receiving support and supplies from al Fateh.

On March 11 General al Adhab announced that he was taking power in a coup to save the constitutional process by forcing Franjeh to resign so that a new president could be elected legally. According to several published reports, the coup was backed not only by senior army officers anxious to preserve the state structures of Lebanon, but also by the center of the PLO, eager to find a solution to the war which would edge Syria out of Lebanon and put an end to the fighting.

Syria now revealed its unwillingness to allow the Lebanese to get themselves out of their impasse by themselves. Syrian army troops and as Saiqa commandos blocked access to the presidential palace at Baadba to protect Franjeh from attempts to remove him from the presidency by force.

This was the moment when the potential for an imposed political settlement evaporated. The combined forces of the Palestinian movement and the progressive Lebanese were moved to launch in the last half of March a multi-frontal military offensive which brought them within sight of a decisive victory. When progressive Lebanese leader Kamal Jumblatt announced he would seek a military solution to the war, in order to impose the left's program of secular bourgeois democracy on Lebanon, and demanded that the Syrian troops should withdraw from the country, as Saiqa declared its willingness to fight anyone, including Jumblatt, who opposed the now discredited Syrian political initiative. Syria cut off its material support to the PLO and the Lebanese progressive movement.

By the end of March, after President Franjeh had been driven from the presidential palace to the rightist redoubt at the port of Jouniyeh, north of Beirut, the PLO and the progressive Lebanese suddenly halted their offensive. Assad was mobilizing 17,000 Syrian troops on the border and threatened an all out offensive against the PLO and Lebanese progressives. The main stream in the PLO, in particular, was eager to avoid, if at all possible, such a show down.

THE BEGINNING OF THE MILITARY INTERVENTION

Kissinger quickly dispatched Dean Brown to shore up the Syrian political initiative, but it was already too late. There were times, such as mid-April when a Palestinian delegation met Assad in Damascus and emerged with a 7 point agreement;

Con't. on page 11

WHAT LEBANESE LEFT WANTS

Program For Secular Democracy

The Nationalist and Progressive Forces, a front of Nasserist, Communist, Baath, socialist and other democratic parties first presented in August 1975 its transitional program of democratic reform of the Lebanese state and eradication of sectarianism in politics. Kamal Jumblatt heads the front.

The program continues to be the political basis for the Front's action. The progressive forces do not insist that the entire transitional program be implemented as the result of military victory, but are willing to accept a truce with some progress toward reform, and continue the struggle for the program's goals by political means.

The program calls for a transition from the semi-feudal sectarian political system "towards a modern democratic system capable of facing the economic and social problems arising from Lebanon's capitalist development." The proposals would not, the statement says, produce a "perfect democracy"—that would require additional drastic changes in the economic, political and social system—but it would be "a guarantee of the minimal degree of democratic development required at this phase." In order to obtain that, the program outlines an attack on "political feudalism" to end the exclusion of the major active social forces from political representation.

The program states that the profound crisis now shaking Lebanon arises from "the contradiction between the sectarian, semi-feudal structure of our political system and the needs and requirements for the democratic development of the country in the various nationalist, economic, social and political spheres." An elaborate formula in Lebanon continues to allot each political office and government job to a specific Christian or Muslim sect with the Maronite Christians holding the largest share. Under this sectarian system traditional politicians drawn from the feudal class have maintained their grip on political life. On the economic and social level, the Front's program notes, wealth is being concentrated among a small sector, while the standard of living declines for the majority; the middle sectors, workers and peasants suffer, and the people are without basic social services.

The program calls for seven areas of reform:

1. Abolition of sectarianism, beginning with the

termination of sectarian division in the election of parliamentary representatives, and including the administration, courts and the army.

2. Reform of "popular representation." The electoral system would be revised to eliminate voting for parliamentary representatives on the basis of geographical districts, which reinforces sectarian interests. Instead, voters would cast their ballot for one of the contending nation-wide lists of candidates; each list would win a number of seats in parliament proportional to the number of votes its slate received. Corruption in elections would be stringently suppressed. Local councils and municipal government would be improved.

3. Reform of the branches of government. The parliament would be the source of all authority, and the principles of parliamentary democracy should be observed.

4. Reform of the administration, with a civil service and anti-corruption measures.

5. Reform of the army, to eliminate sectarian restriction and discrimination; the army would be subordinated to political authority, and would not intervene in government. The army should be strengthened for national defense and fulfillment of its responsibilities on Arab and Palestinian issues.

6. Consolidation of democratic rights, including adoption of a bill of human rights, ending discrimination against women; guaranteeing freedom of association with the right to form parties, unions and associations; rights of unions and democratization of the press law.

7. Election of a founding assembly, representing all political currents, to conduct a national dialog on reform and establish legislation to implement it.

The program condemns "isolationism," which is upheld by the sectarian political system. Isolationism calls for the severance of Lebanon from the Arab region, and the withdrawal of Lebanon from the national struggle against Israel. The Nationalist and Progressive Forces, on the contrary, call for "the adoption of the Arab nationalist option on the basis for Lebanon's official involvement in the overall national confrontation with Israel," and embrace the Palestinian resistance as a force not only for Palestine liberation but for the defense of Lebanon as well.

when it appeared that a lasting ceasefire could be established. But those hopes were again dashed by the intransigence of the right, and Syria's open support for this intransigence.

In early April as Saiqa forces seized key points around Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli, and began to blockade supplies to the Lebanese progressive and Palestinian movements. By mid April this led to armed clashes between as Saiqa and pro-Palestinian groups. Syria moved troops into Lebanon to seize the border points and take up positions in the nearby Beqaa valley.

Syria's actions were hesitant and indecisive, in part at least because Washington's approval had not yet been won for a full-scale invasion. That approval was crucial to insure that Israel would not respond to the entry of a large number of Syrian troops into Lebanon by an invasion of its own. Jordan's King Hussein had flown to Washington in late March to argue for Assad that a full division of Syrian troops should invade Lebanon and, in a massive strike, subdue the left and Palestinian forces. The U.S. government, in what Dean Brown later called a mistake, initially refused to accept the Syrian proposal. Apparently, however, the U.S. government did agree shortly thereafter to a gradual and small scale Syrian border invasion and elicited Israel's tolerance.

By April 19 a White House spokesman announced that President Ford no longer objected to external military intervention in Lebanon and approved Syria's actions there.

Meanwhile, fighting in Lebanon went on unabated after the election of the Syrian sponsored candidate, Elias Sarkis, as the new President-elect of Lebanon. On May 12 a joint command was established to coordinate the military efforts of the PLO, the Lebanese nationalists, and the Lebanese Arab Army. The joint command forces were fighting on two fronts. The war with the right was continuing, in a bloody contest for control of the port of Beirut and mountain areas. At the same time, hundreds were being killed in clashes between as Saiqa and pro-Syrian PLA units and those loyal to the Palestinian leadership.

THE SYRIAN INVASION

On May 31, Syrian troops began a massive invasion into Lebanon. Syrian armor and airplanes launched a direct drive to take control of the accesses to Beirut and the mountains of the northeast. A Syrian force moved southwest to seize Sidon, a port held by the Palestinian-Lebanese joint forces, but they were stopped inside the city by stiff resistance. A number of Syrian

Con't. on page 12

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IN THIS ISSUE:

LEBANON WAR	1
U.S. STRATEGY	1
MEDICAL AID FOR LEBANON NEEDED	2
PALESTINIAN LEADER ON LEBANON	3
UP TO DATE	4
ZIONIST MYTHS	5
WEST BANK INTERVIEW	6
PROTEST TO ZIONIST MARCH	7
ISRAEL/S. AFRICA	8
HUNGER STRIKE FOR LEBANON RELIEF	10
THE LEBANESE LEFT	11

Lebanon

Con't. from page 11

tanks were left smouldering in the streets, and the troops withdrew to the hills around the city. Widescale defections took place from the Syrian PLA units and from as Saiqa of men who joined units loyal to the PLO; others were captured or driven from the areas under national-PLO control.

Zuhair Mohsen, head of as Saiqa and loyal to the Syrian Baath, made a statement on June 7 denouncing al Fateh as "a desperate instrument in the service of Zionist imperialist scheme," adding that al Fateh's "lust for power" had led it to "fanning sedition in the Arab countries." Assad was quoted as saying that "the slogan, 'the PLO, the sole representative of the Palestinian people,' was a void diplomatic agreement and that henceforth it was necessary for the [Syrian] Baath to direct the struggle for the liberation of Palestine."

THE ROLE OF THE ARAB STATES

On June 2 the PLO appealed urgently for a meeting of the Arab League to discuss the crisis in Lebanon. PLO leaders had already been working for some time to make tactical alliances with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab states to counterbalance the Syrian pressure. In February the PLO convinced Egypt to allow units of the Ain Jalout Brigade of the PLA, which was stationed in the Sinai, to come to Lebanon. (The PLA men reportedly arrived clandestinely in Beirut, coming on regular flights with student visas.) The PLO's diplomacy succeeded in eliciting condemnations of Syrian intervention by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, notably in a speech on May 1, and in securing permission for the Egyptian-based *Voice of Palestine*, which had been closed by Egyptian authorities, to begin broadcasting again. Missions were sent to Saudi Arabia and elsewhere seeking support.

Some leaders within the PLO cautioned against placing any confidence in these conservative Arab forces. And, indeed, it was a sorry lot of allies from which the PLO was forced to seek support: Egypt, besides betraying the Arab struggle in the Sinai Accord, had been actively aiding the right wing at least through December, when it made a large shipment of arms to Camille Chamoun's fanatically rightist National Liberal Party. Saudi Arabia had, according to reports of U.S. bankers, transferred at least \$200 million to the reactionary forces in Lebanon.

The Arab League agreed to send a peace-keeping force "to replace Syrian troops," but in fact, only Libya sent its troops promptly. Among the Arab states which took an active role in the Lebanese crisis, only Libya showed itself in deed as well as in word wholeheartedly at the side of the Palestinian movement. Libyan Premier Abdes Salam Jalloud spent months trying to arrange ceasefires in Lebanon.

In the final analysis, the force on which the Palestinian and

Lebanese nationalist movements depends is the resistance of their own armed masses. As the defenders of Tal az Zaat and many others in Lebanon have shown, these masses are inspired by a desperate resolve to fight against all odds. The Palestinian and the Lebanese national movements both know they have no safe retreat, nowhere else to turn: for both, they are now engaged in a battle for their political survival. This desperate resolve to survive may prove, in fact, to be the decisive factor in the months ahead.