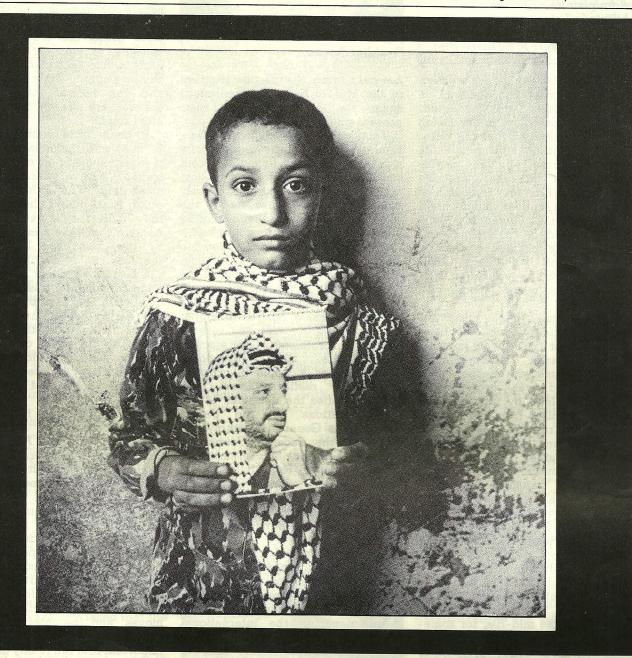
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Al Fatah: 16 years of Palestinian struggle

1ST JANUARY 1981 marked the sixteenth anniversary of the armed liberation struggle launched in 1965 by Al Fatah, the Palestine National Liberation Movement. A special report on page 10 looks at the background which led to the emergence of the Fatah movement, and its progress during the past sixteen years.

Time is running out

THE INTERNATIONAL community is increasing its pressure on Israel, and the European attitude is also hardening against the Zionists. The apparent intransigence of the Reagan Administration and the possibility of a Labour government in Israel should not be an excuse for this pressure to be relaxed.

TIME IS running out for any western initiative to break the deadlock in the Middle East. Lord Carrington, as we report elsewhere in this issue, has virtually pledged that the European Community will renew its efforts to bring all the parties together later this year, and his recent Middle East tour is a token of the continuing interest which Britain and the European Community have to move towards a real solution and away from the impasse caused by the failure of the Camp David process. But this is one bright spot on a landscape which is otherwise rather bleak.

In the United States, policy towards the Middle East has been locked solid for virtually six months, Carter as the administration occupied its time with election campaigning, and was subsequently rendered useless by Mr Carter's defeat. The noises from the Reagan camp do not raise a great deal of hope. Like any group concerned with policy rather than burdened with its implementation, the Reagan foreign policy transition team contains individuals with overlapping, and possibly even conflicting, ideas. Which of them becomes the eventual policy of the Reagan administration is of course not clear. But certain lines can be determined.

On the Middle East itself, the search will continue, as it has since the days of Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the mid-70s, for someone prepared to control the Palestinians. The forthright rejection of the PLO by Ronald Reagan during his election campaign, his notorious description of them as a 'gang of thugs', saddles the President with a tremendous handicap in Middle East policy. Many leading figures in Europe are depressed by this dogmatic and unrealistic approach, and they naturally hope that pressure, in the form of a genuinely independent European initiative, might



President Reagan

not only bring the parties together in the Middle East, but also might shake the Americans from their present rigidity.

This might indeed work. Electoral promises have very little significance for the tiny elite which controls American foreign policy, and if, as the Palestinians firmly believe, the real interests of the west in general and the United States in particular lie in a break with Zionism, this will eventually become clear to those who shape US policy. The problem caused by the electoral promise, though, is not surmountable in the short term. Like any politician, Ronald Reagan is, hopefully, capable of doing the reverse of what he promised to get elected.

Meanwhile, the international community as a whole is growing increasingly restless. Israel consistently defies the decisions of the United Nations. At the United Nations, the General Assembly has called on the Security Council to consider the imposition of sanctions against Israel. This follows the Israeli refusal to heed resolution after resolution in both General Assembly and Security Council, and in particular, its failure to meet the deadline set in July last year to begin withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories by 15th November. The degree to which international opinion regards Israel, along with South Africa, as roque states menacing the international community in general and their neighbours in particular, fails to filter through to much of British public opinion.

The call for sanctions against Israel — or rather for 'effective measures' under Chapter VII of the UN Charter — is not likely to get very far. Even if it were ever to be brought before the Security Council, such a move would be vetoed by the United States. Without great power support, sanctions

would be useless, as the western involvement in propping up South Africa demonstrates.

The appointment as Secretary of State of General Haig, the former NATO Supreme Military Commander, indicates that the parameters of US policy are to remain static. The US is obsessed with the 'Soviet menace', and therefore susceptible to the simplistic interpretation of Middle East affairs so convenient for the Zionists, which sees US support for Israel against 'communist-backed' Arabs as the way to secure US interests in the region. The PLO, it is often alleged, if it were given the smallest area of territory to run as a Palestinian State, would be nothing more than a Soviet puppet; Syria in particular, and the radical Arab states in general, are already that, the argument runs.

It holds little water for anyous familiar with the situation. The PLO is explicitly not a marxist organisation, but a national liberation movement. The Palestinians, and other Arab states, have turned to the USSR for arms and support because they have been denied them by the west, too busy courting the Zionists. Much the same story can be told by many national liberation movements. It is the instability created in the area by Israel which has led to Soviet involvement. Of course, it may be that Soviet involvement in parts of the Middle East is secretly welcomed by the west as a way to keep some states militarily dependent on western

But in the long term, western interests are in oil and econon development in the Arab world. It cannot expect co-operation from the Arabs on these if it continues to back their principal enemy.

With the virtually certain return to power of a Labour government in Israel, there will be a renewed attempt to obscure the real face of Zionism. Labour will pay more attention to international concern, but its policies will not differ in essentials from those of Beigin. But lest the world be hoodwinked by such moves, and the international pressure on the Zionists diminish, it is important that the reality of the occupation be kept before the international community.

Because now, the international pressure is producing movement, at least in the form of the European initiative. Neither the intransigence of the Reagan administration, nor the Zionists' choice of the 'Labour option' should be allowed to persuade the world to reduce its pressure.

New European initiative will involve the PLO

DIPLOMATIC SOURCES in London and other European capitals expect that a new European diplomatic initiative in the Middle East will be launched in the early part of 1981. A document is said to be circulating among the foreign ministries of the member states of the European Community — which now number ten, with the accession of Greece on January 1st 1981 - which is said to underline the importance of the PLO and the necessity of its involvement in any lasting peace settlement. The European Community is said to be ready to further than the Venice Declaration issued after the European Summit in June 1980. This called for the association of the PLO with any future talks, but stopped short of recognising it as the sole legitimate representative of the Pales-

tinian people.

But recent remarks by Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington indicate that the British Foreign Office sees the role of the PLO in a more positive light than even the Venice Declaration. Despite the furore which has been raised by the Zionists whenever there has been any mention of contact between British officials and the PLO, Lord Carrington told several newspaper reporters during his recent Middle East trip that 'if an occasion arose hen I thought it useful to talk to ir Arafat, I would meet him just as I met Mr Kenyatta and Archbishop Makariosand Mr Mugabe and everybody else . . . if people represent quite a lot, which obviously the PLO does, you talk to them.'

It is known that Lord Carrington, adopting the traditionally pragmatic British approach to foreign affairs, is meeting opposition within the Cabinet from its more hardline Zionist members, particularly the Prime Minister herself. But both he and the Foreign Office are convinced that the best way to solve international disputes is by getting all the parties concerned round a table, and in this sense, Lord Carrington does not see the Middle East as widely different from other international conflicts which have been solved by compromise between the parties.

Lord Carrington's freedom of action will be perceptibly enhanced when, in June, Britain takes up the Presidency of the European Council of Ministers, a post which is held

A NEW European initiative on the Middle East problem is expected to be launched later this year. All indications are that it will seek closely to involve the PLO, and some western politicians are preparing the way for such a move to be rendered acceptable to international opinion.

of six months. Each Minister from the presiding country then chairs the meetings of his opposite numbers from all the member states, and therefore, can act on their behalf rather than solely as the representative of his own government.

Lord Carrington stressed the urgency with which he will approach the Middle East question. 'I think 1981 has got the be a year of progress,' he said, adding: 'I do not say that in any dramatic sense, but because problems are crowding in on all of us, and pressures will continue to build up unless we seek a solution.' Lord Carrington stressed the parallel with the Zimbabwe talks, where the Patriotic Front of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo were brought round the table at Lancaster House with Ian Smith and the white minority regime.

The difference, at least at the moment, is that Lord Carrington, and the other European ministers, are setting conditions for participation in the talks, which was not the case for the Zimbabwe talks. The PLO, he insisted, must recog-



by each member country for a period Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington

nise Israel and its right to exist within secure boundaries; the Israelis must in turn recognise only something vaguely described as 'the rights of the Palestinians', though the Europeans have never set out in detail exactly what they believe these rights to be. But Lord Carrington is also clearly embarked on a propaganda campaign to increase the acceptability of PLO participation in any future talks.

Lord Carrington's goals are equally impressive, given the record of the West on the Palestine problem to date. 'A Palestinian state is obviously one of the possibilities of a settlement — not necessarily the best. But it is something which, if it ever happened, would have to be freely negotiated between those tak-

ing part,' he said.

Lord Carrington — and hence the European Community — appear to be further apart than ever from the US on both their aims for the Middle East and on their tactics for achieving their aims. The Reagan administration, in so far as can be gleaned from the statements of the various members of President Reagan's foreign policy transition team, is wedded to the Jordanian option — the re-incorporation of the West Bank, and possibly the addition of Gaza, to the Hashemite Kingdom, perhaps with some measure of local self-government. This too, is the policy of the Israeli Labour Alignment, which seems certain to form the next government of Israel, and to take office at about the same time as Lord Carrington assumes the Presidency of the European Council of Ministers. Abba Eban told the London Guardian that the Labour Alignment would stick by the Allon Plan, as the Jordanian option was previously called, which envisages the giving up of large parts of the West Bank for Zionist settlement and military bases, with the remainder demilitarised and under the civil administration either of Jordan or Palestinian collaborators.

But the early protestations of Reagan's backers may bear little relationship to the Administration's policies. American foreign policy formation is not at all democratic, but is the function of the tiny ruling elite. While the Zionists hold tremendous power within this elite group, their power is not unassailable. The Europeans and Lord Carrington may be able to convince America's rulers that western economic interests in the Middle East are best served by respect for Palestinian rights rather than open-ended commitment to the Zionist state of

New ties forged between Palestinians and Britain

TWO POLITICAL delegations from Britain have been visiting the Middle East as ties between the PLO and the British Parliament and trade union movement continue to grow. As a new all-party Palestine support group is formed at Westminster, one British Member of Parliament declares that the Zionists are now on the defensive.

EXPANDED ACTIVITY on behalf of the Palestinian cause in the British Labour and Trade Union movement will follow from the visit of a fourperson delegation from Britain's Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFP) to branches of the Palestine Trade Union Federation in Lebanon.

The leader of the delegation, Dundee West Labour MP Ernie Ross, said that they had been profoundly impressed as socialists and trade unionists at the dedication to trade union principles shown by members of the various branches of the Palestinian trade union movement whom they had met at numerous meetings in various parts of Beirut, and the southern part of the Lebanon.

We expected that the Palestinian trade unions would be largely an extension of the political activity of the PLO,' he said, 'but we found that there was real dedication to the basic concerns of working people; wages, conditions, and the prices of consumer goods. And we were also very impressed by the Palestinian trade unions' insistence on unity between themselves and Lebanese unions and workers.'

At the same time, Mr Ross said, the Palestine Trade Union Federation naturally saw itself as an integral part of the Palestine Revolution, with the aim of ensuring that the trade union struggle and the national struggle went hand in hand.

All capitalists have the same face. whether they are Lebanese or Palestinian, Arab or European, delegation was told in Tyre by a representative of the Sea-workers' branch of the PTUF.

Mr Ross said that the delegation was impressed by the way in which trade union activity was supported by Palestinian workers despite the difficult situation in Lebanon. When the Sea-workers' put forward demands for higher

wages which were refused by the ship owners, they organised collective action to mount a picket of the home of a leading ship-owner. They maintained a 24-hour picket, with food and drink brought to the pickets by their fellow workers. This, the MP said, was impressive in view of the fact that the chaotic situation in Lebanon meant that many disputes were settled by the gun. The Sea-workers won their wage claim.

Our work is always hazardous, as any sea worker 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 our nets, several of our people have had boiling water poured over them by Israeli gunboats. Three of our fishermen have been killed."

Practical co-operation between Lebanese and Palestinian agricultural workers has resulted in the increase in the day wage for agricultural labourers from five Lebanese pounds per day in 1970 to 40 per day now, by a series of bitter strikes mounted at harvest

Concern over the prices charged by private merchants for basic foodstuffs has led to an initiative from the PTUF which benefits all Palestinians. The trade unions have created retail co-operatives to sell basic foodstuffs and necessities. The co-operatives are part of the International Co-operative movement, which takes its initiative from the example of the trade unionists of Rochdale in England, who founded the first worker-owned shops.

It's a marvellous thing,' said Mr Ross, 'to be walking down a street in one of the refugee camps and to see the same "Co-op" sign as you would see in any British High Street. One of Trade Union Friends of Palestine's main activities will be to raise money for the co-ops, by selling shares to British Trade Unionists, at £2.50 each. This will go to finance the expansion of the Palestinian trade union retail coops. At present there are seven, and the largest, in the Bourj al Bourani Camp, has a turnover of £40,000 per month. Dozens more are planned.

On the political side, the dele-



Exploited Palestinian workers: new solidarity from Britain

Yasser Arafat and with Farouq Qaddoumi, head of the Political Department of the PLO. Mr Qaddoumi said that the responsibility for the creation of the Zionist settler state and the expulsion of the Palestinians rested with the British, but, said Mr Ross, he drew a firm distinction between the British governments which were responsible for the present tragic situation in Palestine, and the ordinary people of Britain. Mr Qaddoumi told the British delegation that the Palestinians feared the worst from the Americans in 1981, and predicted that a massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon would accompany US 'peace' moves, this time the 'Jordanian option' instead of Camp gation also met with PLO Chairman David. The aim of such an invasion

would be the same as in 1978 the annihilation of the Palestinians.

When they met later with Chairman Arafat, the British delegation was left in no doubt about Palestinian reaction to the US moves towards the 'Jordanian option', and the role of the Israeli Labour Party. 'They [the Americans] are polishing Peres and his so-called Labour Party as one of the ingredients in their "Jordanian option"; Reagan knows that the only way such an option can succeed is if the spirit of our people is broken,' Chairman Arafat told the delegation.

Trade Union Friends of Palestine was founded in June this year to make the Palestinian cause better known in the British Labour and Trade Union movement. Its inaugural meeting was addressed by PLO's London Representative, Mr Nabil Ramlawi, and took place in Dundee, the Scottish city twinned with Nablus on the occupied West

Bank. On the TUFP delegation to the Palestinian unions, 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.

TUFP draws its membership and support from right across the broad spectrum of political view to be found in the trade union movement. Its intentions are to raise the Palestine question by means of resolutions at meetings of Labour and Trade Union organisations at all levels - branch, district and national. In particular, it is hoping to gain affiliations from Trades Councils, the locally-based organisations, part of the TUC, which gather together trade unionists in

each town or city. TUFP will be supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as defined by the UN General Assembly: the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland, and the right to selfdetermination in an independent sovereign state.

Mr Ross said that widespread discussion of the Palestine question could only favour the Palestinian people. The Zionists who formerly enjoyed great support in the Labour and trade union movement are now on the defensive, he said. They do not want the issue discussed.

They are afraid to put up pro-Israeli motions for discussion at meetings,' Mr Ross said, 'because they know that the rights of the Palestinians will be brought in. Questions will be raised to which they have no answers. So we have what amounts to a conspiracy of silence by Zionists in the Labour movement to stop discussion. We intend to stop that.

Parliamentary group formed at Westminster

JANUARY SAW the creation of an all-party group on Palestine by Members of the British Parliament. The group is open to all Members of Parliament, and its inaugural meeting on January 20th saw 28 MPs from the Labour and Conservative Parties agree to become members. The two cochairmen are Tony Marlow, Conservative MP for Northampton North, and Roy Hughes, Labour MP or Newport. Secretary is Dundee Test Labour MP Ernie Ross. The founding members are to approach the smaller Parliamentary parties with a view to widening the representative nature of the group's membership.

The UK-Palestine Group will ensure that the Palestinian position is put in the British Parliament, and it will attempt to build an understanding of the Palestine question among Parliamentarians; specifically, it will support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a state of their own in Palestine.

5th, a ten-member delegation, consisting of five Conservative and five Labour MPs, is to visit the Middle East. They will see Lebanese and PLO officials in Beirut, and will visit Syria and Jordan. They hope also to be allowed to visit the occu- to all their MPs; the Zionists pied West Bank as part of their responded with an appeal to their fact-finding tour. Secretary Ernie supporters to swamp the inaugural Ross will carry a special message meeting. from the Lord Provost of Dundee to



Khalid al-Hassan

Bassam Shaka, Mayor of Nablus, Dundee's twin town.

The group sees its immediate task as co-ordinating pressure 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 renew European efforts to-From January 29th to February wards a Middle East peace ini-

Zionists made an abortive attempt to prevent the creation of the Palestine Group. News of its initial meeting was circulated on the official party whips of both major parties

'We are writing to ask if you would National Council.

be so kind as to attend the meeting in order to counter these [pro-Palestinian | views, and, if necessary, put forward nominations as officers of this group of people who are sympathetic to the views of Israel, the Director of Labour Friends of Israel wrote to members of his organisation.

As the group's secretary, Ernie Ross MP, pointed out, such a move was an unprecedented interference with the tradition which allows the creation of Parliamentary groups on a wide range of issues, and the creation of groups with opposing aims. There is an active Parliamentary Israel Group.

In the event, only three or so Zionists turned up and were silenced when David Watkins, MP for Consett and Chairman of the Labour Middle East Council, revealed that an organised attempt had been made to prevent the effective creation of **UK-Palestine** Parliamentary

The group, in addition to its planned fact-finding mission, is to hold a number of meetings with guest speakers. Among those invited to address MPs are Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hurd; Labour Foreign Affairs spokesman Denis Healey; PLO London Representative Nabil Ramlawi, and later, the Israeli Ambassador, followed by Ambassadors of Lebanon and Jordan, and Khalid al Hassan, foreign affairs spokesman of the Palestine

The changing face of the British Labour Party

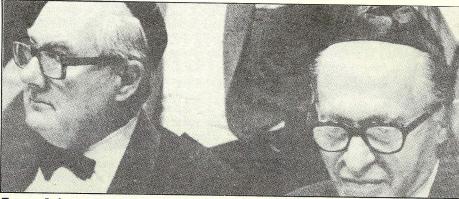
THE FAMILIES of most of Britain's Jewish citizens fled to this country from persecution in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As refugees, they ended up at the bottom end of the social scale. Their political and economic interests were identical with those of other working people, and they thus turned naturally to socialism and to the Labour Party.

Poale Zion, founded in 1905 and affiliated to the Labour Party in 1920, is a self-styled socialist and Zionist organisation, which has concentrated its efforts on infiltrating the Labour Party and winning it for Zionism. It made little headway in the industrial wing of the Labour movement, the trade unions, because it had little to say about industrial problems. But it scored tremendous success in the infant Labour Party, and built support which exists to this day.

Poale Zion, Hebrew for 'workers of Zion', advocated Zionist colonisation of Palestine because, they claimed to the Labour movement in Britain, such colonisation was in the interests of Palestinian Arab workers, and was opposed only by reactionary and landowning elements. Zionism was presented as a special case of benevolent colonialism. In a Labour movement which had mixed ideas on colonialism. many accepted the contention of the Liberal imperialists of the nineteenth century that interference in other countries' affairs was for those countries' benefit. The pioneer advocates of colonial freedom were treated as fringe extremists when

Yet while the Zionists claimed to the Labour movement that the colonisation of Palestine was for the benefit of the population, they were creating racist institutions like the Histradrut, which specifically barred Palestinian Ārabs from membership. For much of their political strength, they relied on the assistance of sympathisers within the Mandate administration. The evidence of the unspeakable atrocities of the Nazis against European

they began their crusade.



Former Labour Prime Minister Callaghan with Beigin

THE LABOUR Party has always been the more overtly Zionist of Britain's two major political parties, but the pro-Israeli factions in the Party have been considerably weakened over the past decade. The election of Michael Foot as Party Leader is also a good omen for the future.

Jewry gradually became known and were seized on by the Zionists as evidence in support of their cause. Such was the strength of the Zionists that in 1944 they even managed to persuade the Labour Party's annual conference to adopt a resolution calling for the transfer of the existing population of Palestine away from their country in order to allow the settlement of displaced European Jews.

By the end of the Second World War, it was impossible for anyone to stand against the Zionists without being greeted by the persistent smear that this was nothing but anti-Semitism. The Foreign Secretary in Britain's post-war Labour Government, Ernest Bevin, was a prime target for such allegations.

The position of the Zionists never went uncontested. There were always voices in Parliament and Party conferences raised against the Zionists, and after 1948, in support of the Palestinian people. But this opposition was not organised until 1969.

In that year, several factors came together. The Palestinian people themselves had ceased waiting for others to help them, and took their future into their own hands. The armed struggle to liberate Palestine had scored its first successes. The 1967 war had showed the aggressive and expansionist nature of Zionism; and in Britain, the vitriolic abuse poured by Labour Zionists on the few MPs who spoke against Israeli aggression shocked many who had no particular interest

in the issue; and the elections of 1964 and 1966 had brought Labour's largest crop of new MPs since 1945, and hence the largest number of men and women with open minds to consider the issues in the Middle East. All these factors led to the foundation in 1969, of the Lab Middle East Council, LMEC.

It is a measure of how far public opinion has moved in eleven years that LMEC specifically eschewed overt support for the Palestinian people, and set itself instead the task of 'promoting inside the Labour movement a constructive and balanced view of the Arab-Israeli conflict.' But it was a breakthrough; for the first time, the alternative to Zionism was organised in the Labour Party.

Many things have contributed to the change in climate in the Labour Party on the Middle East over the 1970s. One has certainly been the general move to the left, which has been a steady process born of the search for alternative policies after the 1970 election defeat. But in foreign affairs, a number of experiences have sharpened the Labour Party's understanding of colonialism, and have also firmly convinced many party members of Israel's settler colonialist social formation.

The sycophantic support of Harold Wilson for the Americans in Vietnam sparked the new interest in foreign affairs for many Labour Party members. The American overthrow of the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile was another crucial event. The evident immorality of US policy and the closeness of Labour's leadership to US interests undermined the leadership's credibility in overseas matters. In the Middle East, the brutality of Israel's occupation of the 1967 conquered territories was slowly becoming clear.

Persistent lobbying by LMEC and others eventually bore fruit. The Zionists had long held great influence on the Party's International Committee, and indeed, still do.



Forging ties: Nablus mayor Bassam Shaka with Dundee's James Gowans

But the facts of the Middle East issue were becoming clearer, and as a result, the statement of policy on the Middle East presented to and pted by the 1973 Party Conterence said that the root cause of the problem was the 'failure to find a fair and humane solution to the problem of the Palestinian community.'

That in itself is not a particularly radical formulation. It broke with the then-current Zionist claim that the Palestinian people did not exist, but it was equally a sop to the Zionist view that what they labelled the 'refugee problem' had been exacerbated by the Arab states. Given the history of the Labour Party, it represented spectacular progress.

David Watkins, in his study of Zionism and the Labour Party points out the significance of the backbench revolt which occurred in arliament just a few days after 1973 Party Conference, as the October war raged in the Middle East. Harold Wilson, as opposition leader, tried to force Labour MPs to support the supply of arms to Israel. This was an unprecedented step, as Britain normally cuts off its usual clients for weapons when they begin actually to use them. The fact that Israel sought the arms in order to maintain its hold over territory seized in war made the move even more blatant. Fifteen MPs voted against the Labour Party and for the Conservative Government's decision not to supply arms to either side. 75 Labour MPs abstained. It was, as David Watkins says, the turning point, the effective end of the Zionist monopoly in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The Labour Party when it returned to office in 1974 devoted most of its overseas affairs interests to the problem of Zimbabwe. Those years in the Middle East saw Kissinger's shuttle dimplomacy followed by the Camp David talks. Both Harold

Wilson and his successor James Callaghan were Zionists, but in the Middle East, British interests came more and more to be devoted to strengthening ties with those oilrich states which had once enjoyed British 'protection'.

The Zionists still hold great sway in the Party's committees. Their influence is seen in the remarks made by James Callaghan as Opposition leader in 1980, when he said that the extremely mild reference to the Palestinians in the European Community's Venice Declaration was 'going too far'.

The fact that the Israeli Labour Party, along with the British, and most of the Social Democrat Parties of Europe, is a member of the Socialist International, has also been used to legitimise Israel and to present settler colonialism as a socialist utopia. The fact is that Labour has controlled Israel for the entire existence of the state apart from the past four years, and Labour's policies on the West Bank and in Gaza were not greatly different from those of Menachem Beigin. But membership of the Socialist International has prevented other member parties, notably the Austrian Socialists led by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, from taking a far more prominent and positive position.

Writing in 1975, Labour MP and LMEC founder David Watkins forecast that Labour's Zionists would seek to ensure that Conference commitments to a more open policy on the Middle East were not acted on by the Parliamentary leadership. The decision at Labour's 1980 Annual Conference that the Labour leader would henceforth be elected by the Party as a whole rather than only MPs thus presents a formidable opportunity for supporters of the Palestinian cause to take their arguments once again to the broad membership of the Labour Party. A number of dedi-



Michael Foot: a new era

cated anti-Zionists have been doing that for many years; now, the increased influence of the Party's membership over policy gives the work a new meaning.

Already, there are signs that such moves will attract wider support in the Labour Party than would have been thought possible a few years ago. The Labour Party Young Socialists have mounted a vigorous campaign for Palestinian rights: Hackney North constituency Labour Party, despite the opposition of local Zionists, has passed and affirmed resolutions supporting Palestinian rights, and has explained patiently to the large local Jewish community that such resolutions are fully in accord with its determined opposition to racism in Britain; and it was of course Labour controlled Dundee City Council which took the hitherto unprecedented step of 'twinning' the city with the Palestinian city of Nablus in the 1967 occupied terri-

The election of Michael Foot as Labour leader is a hopeful sign for two reasons. Firstly, it is a sign of the recognition by MPs of the new power of the party outside Parliament, and secondly, Mr Foot, unlike the three other contenders in the 1980 leadership battle, was not an avowed Zionist. He was a member of the Labour Middle East Council. But his preoccupation will not be Middle East policy; he has made it clear that he will campaign first and foremost on the state of the British economy.

His foreign policy interests lie in Europe, and in preventing the escalation of the arms race by the stationing of more US missiles in this country. This opposition to US foreign policy in Europe will move British foreign policy under Labour in certain crucial aspects away from US policy, and this again will be no bad thing for the Palestinians.



Zionist troops harass Palestinian workers

Zionist colonialism: Focus on Gaza

THE **ECONOMIC** relationship between the Zionist state and the areas occupied in 1967 bears the classic hallmarks of that between an imperial power and its colonies. The London journal 8 Days summarised the situation in Gaza thus: 'While subject to the same tariffs, exchange rates and fiscal and monetary policies as Israel, as an occupied territory Gaza's development and wellbeing are subjected to policies tailored to advance Israel's economic interests' (11th October 1980).

The 1967 occupied territories are a source of cheap unskilled labour for the Zionist state, and because of restrictions on manufacturing investment, they offer the Israelis literally a captive market for their consumer goods. The Israelis are systematically blocking any investment in the territories that might lead to their economic self-sufficiency.

For the Zionists, this colonial economic relationship has a number of advantages. Above all, it is highly profitable. Palestinians from the 1967 occupied territories are employed in Israel at rates of pay far lower than those enjoyed by Israeli Jews. Often they are employed on a day-to-day basis and no trade union organisation exists to protect them. They can be laid off at will and without warning.

The lack of employment opportunities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is intended to encourage emigration of Palestinians

THE STEADY pressure of economic restrictions on the development of Gaza and the West Bank is intended to prevent the emergence of a strong economy in a future Palestinian state.

to find work elsewhere in the Arab world or even further afield. This particularly affects better qualified Palestinians, who are unable to obtain skilled work in Israel, whose apartheid system ensures that Palestinian Arabs — even when Israeli citizens - are kept out of the better paid, skilled jobs. Qualified teachers and technicians are offered work, if at all, only at menial jobs in construction and municipal services. So it is not surprising that about 20,000 Palestinians per year leave the West Bank and 10,000 the Gaza Strip. The depopulation of Palestine has been the aim of the Zionist movement since its inception. The Zionists wanted 'a land without people'. The fewer the indigenous residents of the 1967 occupied territories, the more easily Israel can implement its settlement programme there; the fewer the educated Palestinians remaining under Zionist role, the less scope there is for organised Palestinian civilian resistance to the occupation.

The colonial economic relationship betweeen Israel and its 1967 conquests is particularly marked in the crowded Gaza Strip, where about 460,000 Palestinians, most of them landless refugees from the 1948 fighting, live in an area of only 33,500 hectares which has limited natural resources. About 43 per cent of the Gaza labour force works in Israel, compared with about 29 per cent of the West Bank's workers. Unemployment is high among Gazans as a whole; but it is rampant amongst those with qualifications.

The problem was recently highlighted by Mr Said Jamal of the placement office in Gaza operated by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees: 'This year [1980] we received only 30 job openings for people with university degrees. And for two-thirds of these jobs experience was required.' About 2,000 young university graduates have but unemployed since 1978 or have but able to find work that bears no relation to their qualifications. The problem is compounded each year as some 2,500 young people return to Gaza with university degrees, mainly from Egyptian universities.

Agriculture is still a mainstay of the Gazan economy but it is being starved of funds. One farmer told 8 Days: 'Five years from now there will be no citrus because of the increased taxes we pay and the absence of local banks to help with development and modernisation programmes.' He added: 'Israeli banks charge 120-140 per cent annual interest — nobody is going to borrow at these rates.' At the same time, the Zionists maintain rigid control over Gaza's citrus exports to ensure that they do penetrate either the Israeli or international markets at the expense of Zionist growers.

Industrial development has also been discouraged by the lack of investment funds and by the impossibility of successful competition with the highly developed and heavily subsidised industrial sector of Israel. In Gaza industry is confined to small-scale workshops.

The fate of the Gaza Strip's electricity and telephone systems underlines the determination of the Israelis to maintain their grip on the occupied territories. When Gaza city's electricity generator ceased working for lack of spare parts, Israel promptly linked the Strip into Israel's national power grid. The Gaza telephone exchange, bought from Sweden before the 1967 war, has been removed by the Zionists. Calls are now channelled through the exchange in Ashkelon, on the coast in the 1948 occupied territories.

Academic freedom and Israel's 'iron fist'

'THE ISRAELI Government, especially the military government on the West Bank, is engaged in a slow attempt at the murder of Palestinian national consciousness.' This is how Sari Nusseibah, a professor of Islamic philosophy and head of the faculty association at Bir Zeit University on the occupied West Bank, summed up the motive for the Zionsts' systematic repression of academic freedom in the 1967 occupied territories. He was speaking in the wake of the student demonstrations that rocked the West Bank in November, during which 14 unarmed student protesters were shot at point-blank range by Israeli troops. The protests were arked by the one-week closure, on 14th November, of Bir Zeit University by the Zionist occupation forces as a punishment for a Palestine Week of cultural activities held at the university. The Israelis alleged that the week's events were in fact political.

The roots of the angry demonstrations, however, lay in simmering resentment at persistent Israeli interference in Palestinian education during the 13-year occupation. The latest, and most dramatic, measures directed against higher education institutions came in Military Order 854, issued on 6th July last year. Under the order, all institutions of higher education were brought under Israeli military law, and are still considered to be operating on a temporary licence. ermits must now be renewed annually and require the approval of the military governor. Moreover, written approval from the military authorities is also now required before either students or staff can take up their positions.

The order deprives Palestine's universities of the freedoms universally recognised as essential to higher education and places them under permanent threat of closure. It is clearly designed to silence opposition to the occupation by academics and students, who have been amongst the most outspoken critics of Israel's repressive policies in the 1967 occupied territories. Dr Gabi Baramki, Vice-President of Bir Zeit University, has called the order 'the most serious action Israeli authorities academic freedom' since the beginning of the occupation. In a letter to The Times on 22nd November 1980 a number of prominent British academics protested that the new demands 'contravene the Geneva Students face intimidation

DESTRUCTION OF Palestinian consciousness is one of the principal aims of the Zionist authorities. This report examines the harassment of further education in the West Bank.

conventions and open an ugly prospect of increased intellectual repression, with the threat not only of closure but of possible extinction.'

The four Palestinian institutes of higher education in the West Bank - Bir Zeit University, Bethlehem University, the Najah University in Nablus and the Islamic college in Hebron — have always been subject to severe harassment by the Israelis. They have been closed on numerous occasions; Zionist troops and armed Israeli settlers have stormed onto their campuses shooting and attacking students and vandalising property.

Israeli measures to frustrate the development of Palestinian higher education were highlighted in a recently published report by the respected International Commission of Jurists, ICJ.* Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, the oldest Palestinian university, has gained an international reputation for the



quality of its programmes and so has been a particular target for Zionist oppression. The insist, for example, that ıniversity pays customs du ind taxes on imported laborator uipment, office machines and building materials. In the Zionist state itself, universities are exempted from such taxes.

If they cannot be silenced West Bank academics are deported. In November 1974 Dr Hanna Nasser, the President of Bir Zeit University, was summarily expelled to Lebanon. In 1978 eight foreign professors, mostly Americans, had their work permits rescinded because of alleged incitement against the occupation. Only international outrage saved their jobs. In June last year the head of the geography department at Najah University had his work permit suddenly cancelled. No reason was given and the professor was given 72 hours to leave. feature prominently Academics amongst the hundreds of Palestinians deported since 1967, reflecting Zionist policy of emasculating opposition to their occupation by expelling articulate Palestinian nationalists whom they feel might act as foci for dissent.

According to the ICJ report, students face even more serious problems from the Zionists. 'They are singled out at road blocks for harassment. They are often turned back on their way to or from school, without being given any reason. They constantly live under the threat of being called in for interrogation, where they are required to give information about their political views and those of their professors and fellow-students. Hardly any university student escapes these interrogations. During times of strikes and demonstrations hundreds of students may be called in for questioning. According to students' reports these are frequently accompanied by physical beatings and humiliations.

The net result of the Israeli intimidation, say the ICJ, is 'that an atmosphere of fear, intimidation and lack of trust prevails in schools and academic institutions. Teachers and students feel they must decide their words carefully. They cannot discuss freely any subject that may be viewed by the authorities as political.

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

Al Fatah: 16 years of Palestinian struggle

JANUARY 1ST, 1981, marked the sixteenth anniversary of the present stage of armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine. The Palestinian people's fight to regain their lost lands has won the support of the overwhelming majority of humanity. This special report examines the major developments in the process which transformed the shattered refugees once more into a proud people determined to shape their own destinies.

ON NEW Year's Day 1965 a communiqué was distributed to Beirut newspapers by a virtually unknown organisation. It read: 'On the night of 31st December 1964 — 1st January 1965, detachments of our strike forces went into action, performing all the tasks assigned to them in the occupied territories and returning safely to their bases.' The statement was described as Military Communiqué No 1 of the General Command of the Asifah (Storm) Forces. The Asifah forces were in fact those of the fledgling Palestinian resistance organisation Fatah.

The Harakah al Tahrir al Watani al Falastini — the Palestinian National Liberation Movement — had been founded seven years earlier. Reversing the initial letters of its Arabic name gives the acronym Fatah — which also means 'liberation'. Fatah was an expression of the anger and determination of seven young Palestinians at the

continuing failure of both the Arab states and the international community to secure their people's rights. They decided that the time had come for the Palestinians to take matters into their own hands.

The prime moving force was Jerusalem-born Yasser Arafat. In the 1950s he left his refugee home in the Gaza Strip to study in Cairo where he became President of the Palestinian Students Federation. In Egypt those who participated in the preliminary plans for the creation of a liberation movement also included Salah Khalaf, Khalil Wazir and Muhammad Najjar. Later in Kuwait Arafat worked as an engineer, and became friends with other future leaders of Fatah -Farouk Kaddoumi, Kamal Adwan and Khalid al Hassan. Two of these Kamal Adwan and Muhammad Najjar — were murdered in 1972 by an Israeli assassination squad in Beirut. The others continue to play a prominent role in the movement they founded and in the Palestine Liberation Organisation, of which Fatah is the backbone. The foundation of Fatah was a declaration that the Palestinian people themselves would liberate their home-

After 1948, when most of Palestine was seized by the Zionists and almost a million Palestinians were driven into exile, the Palestinian Arabs were a demoralised people, without organisation or leadership. The traditional structure of a peasant society had been destroyed. They looked first to the Arab world and



Fateh leader Yasser Arafat providing hope for a new generation.

the international community to secure their rights for them. In the 1950s the upsurge of pan-Arabism pointed to Arab unity as the route towards the liberation of Palestine, because it seemed that only a united Arab world would have the strength to defeat the Zionists. Palesti ians joined pan-Arab parties such as the Nasserites and the Ba'athists. Disillusion set in when many Arab

Arafat warns Reagan

'YOU CANNOT say no to the PLO and you cannot threaten the PLO.' This was PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's blunt message to President-elect Reagan in his speech marking the 16th anniversary of Fatah's first military operation against the Zionist state. It was a sharp rejoinder to Reagan's remarks during the US presidential election campaign in which he declared that the PLO was a 'terrorist' organisation which his administration would never recognise.

Chairman Ārafat said that Reagan's emphasis on defaming the PLO merely underlined the strength of the Palestinian movement and the importance of its cause. 'Whether he likes it or not, he has put us at the top of US problems and preoccupations,' declared the PLO leader.

He said that whoever was in power in the United States or Israel should realise that there could be no solution to the Middle East conflict without full respect for Palestinian rights. 'A lasting peace and a just settlement can be achieved only through a Palestinian settlement, through a Palestinian peace, through a Palestinian decision and through a Palestinian option, he said. The use of the word 'option' was a thinly-veiled warning of the dangers of the

much-discussed 'Jordanian option' which Reagan appears intent on pursuing. This would involve a continued denial of the Palestinian right to statehood by linking the West Bank in a federation with Jordan, with continued Zionist military presence and settlements in the region.

The PLO leader also had a message for the outgoing Carter administration, whose National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, became renowned for his disparaging remark, 'Bye bye PLO.' Chairman Arafat said: 'I have something to say to Carter and Brzezinski as they leave office: ''Goodbye to you; and the PLO is still here''.'

states showed little real commitment to action over Palestine and others were beset by pressing economic problems which they felt had first to be resolved to provide a basis on which to confront Zionism. The unification of the Arab world was replete with difficulties. The last straw was the collapse in 1961, after three years, of the union between Egypt and Syria. Most Palestinians came to agree with the nascent Al Fatah that they could regain their homeland only through their own efforts.

In the early 1960s Palestinians began to organise into small groups to conduct armed operations against Israel. There was no overall coordination and often the various groups did not even know of each other's existence. In those early rs resistance operations were on a modest scale, mainly involving the sabotage of isolated Israeli installations such as water conduits. In the two and one half years preceding the June War of 1967 Palestinian guerrillas killed only eleven people and injured only 62.

Fatah was the largest of the Palestinian groups, a reflection of its adoption of a straightforward nationalist stance. Fatah argued that the liberation of Palestine should be the principal concern of the Palestinian people. Until liberation, Fatah said, there was little to be gained from ideological disputes over the economic and social relations that should prevail in a future Palestinian state. This position appealed to the mass of the dispossessed camp dwellers. Fatah's pragmatic broach enabled it to side-step the ideological disputes of the Arab world and forge close relations with Arab and other governments of all political persuasions.

The crushing defeat of the Arab regular forces in the 1967 June War had profound consequences for the Palestinian fighters. The only ray of hope for the Arab world was offered by the guerrillas, who kept their rhetoric to a minimum and in contrast to many Arab governments took concrete military action against the Zionists. Fatah's ranks were swelled by volunteers from the refugee camps. Weapons abandoned by the retreating Arab armies in the West Bank, Sinai and the Golan Heights were re-possessed by the Palestinians. The power of the resistance was admitted by the Israelis themselves. In January 1968 Zionist Defence Minister Moshe Dayan announced in the Israeli Knesset (parliament) that 'terrorists' had been responsible for killing and injuring no less than 97

Israeli soldiers in the six months since the end of the June War.

The battle of Karameh in March 1968 was the major watershed for the Palestinian resistance movement. Some 350 guerrillas attacked a massive Israeli force which had crossed to the east bank of the River Jordan to raid the refugee camp at Karameh. It was the first time the Israelis had encountered stiff resistance on such a raid. They took the camp, but only after fierce handto-hand fighting in which they lost at least 21 men and several tanks and other vehicles. The guerrillas knew that the eyes of the Arab world would be on them, and, as they had expected, their prestige was enormously enhanced. Volunteers flocked to join their ranks.

The growing frustration and desperation of the Palestinians in the late 1950s and early 1960s did not go unnoticed by the Arab states. Seeking to channel this frustration they created the Palestine Liberation Organisation at the first Arab summit in Jerusalem in 1964. But it was the resistance groups, rather than the PLO, who spoke for the Palestinian people, a fact which was gradually recognised. In 1968

Yasser Arafat was accorded official recognition by President Nasser who included him in an Egyptian delegation to Moscow. During that year, Fatah's influence in the PLO grew and in 1969 Yasser Arafat was elected Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, and other resistance leaders took prominent positions. The linking of the resistance within the PLO was a decisive step in ensuring that the organisation was representative of all sectors of Palestinian opinion, and it paved the way for the now total acceptance by Palestinians of the PLO as their sole representative.

The unity which the PLO has brought to the Palestinian people is the foundation of the resistance against Zionism. The Zionists have sought to divide the Palestinian people into 'residents of the occupied territories', 'refugees' and 'Israeli Arabs' and to implement separate solutions for each group. Camp David was the most recent such attempt. The recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of all Palestinians frustrates this Zionist division, and is the essential prerequisite for the liberation of Palestine.

Armed struggle: 262 operations in 1980

AN ISRAELI military spokesman admitted on New Year's Day that the Zionists suffered 163 casualties as the result of Palestinian resistance operations in 1980. Nine Israeli soldiers and 19 settlers were killed and 58 soldiers and 77 settlers wounded. He added that guerrillas had carried out 262 operations in occupied Palestine. Despite Israel's imposition in May of an 'ironfist' policy in the 1967 occupied territories following the daring guerrilla attack in Hebron that killed six armed settlers and wounded 16 others, 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 Zionists' casualty figures exclude those sustained in the course of the repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanon. These met with fierce resistance and Zionist casualties were embarrassingly heavy.

The growing scale of the Palestinian armed struggle was underlined in February last year when the Israeli ambassador to the UN, Yehuda Blum, told the Security Council that since 1967, the resistance movement

had carried out 10,000 operations. The Zionist authorities were prepared to admit to 640 Israelis and 3,425 injured, belying their own assertion that there is only minimal resistance to the occupation and to the continued denial of Palestinian national rights.

The Zionists spare no effort to portray Palestinian resistance operations as terrorism and the PLO as a 'gang of terrorists'. The international community, however, recognises that the PLO is an authentic national liberation movement fighting an occupying power. The United Nations has repeatedly affirmed the Palestinians' right to struggle for their national rights by all means at their disposal. The most explicit UN endorsement of the Palestinians' right to armed struggle came in General Assembly Resolution 3246 of 29th November 1974, which recognised their right to 'struggle for liberation from colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation by all available means, including armed struggle.' 107 countries voted in favour and 20 abstained. Israel alone opposed the resolution.

The Palestine Red Crescent: The PLO's national health service

THE PALESTINE Red Crescent Society (PRCS), set up in 1969, is the Palestinians' NHS. It is affiliated to the PLO and is headed by Dr Fathi Arafat, brother of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. It was not only the casualties of the liberation struggle that prompted the development of a Palestinian health service. The appalling conditions and malnutrition in the crowded refugee camps were taking a terrible toll that begged action. Equally, though, the development of medical services was made a vital necessity because of armed action in occupied Palestine and the subsequent Zion-

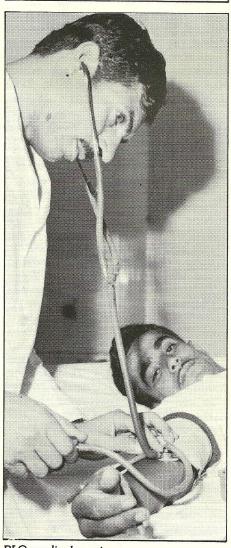
ist attacks on the camps.

When the PRCS was founded, it was therefore given responsibility for the provision of health care to all Palestinians, both civilians and combatants. The free or cheap services available at PRCS hospitals and clinics were soon in demand from the residents of the Arab countries to which the Palestinians had been exiled. The PRCS responded by throwing its doors open to all persons in need of medical care. Funding was a criti-cal problem. The PRCS is dependent on donations from international aid agencies and intermittent grants from Arab governments. Despite the financial constraints, however, and the severe problems posed by the constant state of war, the PRCS has flourished. Today it operates about 35 hospitals throughout the Arab world and over 100 clinics. There is also a wide range of back-up services, including dental care and rehabilitation.

It is a sad irony that the Society's greatest tests have come not from the armed struggle against Zionism but from conflicts within Arab states. First there was the war in Jordan in 1970. Then came the prolonged and bloody conflict in Lebanon, beginning in 1975, climaxing the following year, and continuing to this day.

The PRCS rose magnificently to the challenge and Lebanon is now the focus of the Society's work. It has become the major source of medical care not only for the large Palestinian community but also for the mass of the Lebanese themselves, for the civil war destroyed the country's own public

THE PALESTINE Liberation
Organisation functions as a
national administration for the
Palestinian people—though the
nation is without its land.
Departments paralleling the usual
range of ministries found in
nation states provide all the
basic requirements of a
civilised community. One of the
PLO's greatest, but least
publicised, achievements has
been the establishment of what is
in effect a national health service
second to none in the Middle
East.



PLO medical services

health care system, rudimentary though it was, while the cost of private medical care, which was anyway well beyond the reach of most Lebanese, has increased astronomically. Over the past few years, apart from one month in 1976 when the Palestinian camps were under severe military assault, more than 50 per cent of the Society's patients have been Lebanese. The astonishing scale of the PRCS's work is illustrated by the number of patients treated at its facilities during the Lebanese civil war. Between April and November 1975, 5,200 cases of all nationalities were treated.

The Society's facilities in Lebanon are impressive, particularly as they have been built up against a backdrop of constant Israeli attacks and civil war. There are now eight 100-bed hospitals — five in Beirut and one each in Damour, Tripoli and Sidon. The hospitals were established in buildings intended for commercial and residential They are not luxurious, but are well equipped for their tasks. Two even have kidney machines. The Nasr hospital in Beirut specialises in paediatrics, and the Haifa hospital also in the Lebanese capital, specialises in caring for the handi-capped. The PRCS staff in Lebanon include more than 300 full-time doctors, many of them specialists, as well as dentists and nurses.

The Society's first purpose-built hospitals in Lebanon are currently under construction, in Tyre and Sidon in the south. Both towns, along with the rest of south Lebanon, are the target of frequent indiscriminate Israeli raids and the new hospitals incorporate a number of unusual design features. Their roofs had to be specially reinforced and at least one methick. Several floors have been built underground to house the more vulnerable facilities such as operating theatres and intensive care units.

The PRCS runs two training schools for nurses, in Sidon and Beirut, the latter for staff nurses. The Society also operates a network of clinics, kindergartens and perinatal services in Lebanon. Great efforts are put into preventative medicine through a programme of health education and innoculation. This is an uphill task, however. In the refugee camps conditions remain appalling. Overcrowding, poor housing, an inadequate diet and lack of sanitation combine to militate against good health. In summer the major complaint is gastro-enteritis; in winter chest ailments are rife. There is a high incidence of miscarriages and premature births. About 40 per cent of camp dwellers suffer from malnutrition or anaemia.

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Ist December:

Palestinian commandos detonate bombs in a commercial centre in occupied Jerusalem, in a textile mill in Migdal Ha'emeq settlement north of Afuleh and in the Tanbour oil factory in central Jerusalem. All the explosions caused severe material damage.

Israel television reports that there are now 650,000 Palestinians living in Israel, about 17 per cent of the total

2nd December

☐ It is reported that the PLO is to be granted diplomatic status in Mali.

population.

At the end of their Luxembourg summit, EEC leaders decide to hold a new round of talks with Middle Easteleaders in pursuit of the basis for a prehensive peace settlement in the

□ Palestinian leaders support that new measures to bolster resistance to Israeli oppression in the 1967 occupied territories were approved at a six-hour emergency session of the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian 'parliament'.

3rd December

☐ It is reported that Turkey has decided to withdraw all its diplomats from Israel except a second secretary, and to maintain diplomatic relations at a 'symbolic level' only.

☐ The Israeli Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem endorses a five-year plan for the development of the northern part of the occupied city. The plan is for a 4,600 dunam area that was expropriated last year south of the Neve Ya'aqov quarter, and the intention is increase the number of Israelis in

region to 100,000.

In the first operation of its kind in over three months, Israeli commandos land on the Lebanese coast some 25km south of Beirut, setting up a series of ambushes on the main road to the port town of Sidon.

4th December

☐ PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat meets with Syrian President Assad in Damascus.

☐ Israel admits to six casualties when a bomb planted by Palestinian commandos explodes in a shop in occupied Jerusalem.

☐ The Israeli Supreme Court rules that the banishment of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul in May was legal, but recommends that the Beigin government reappraise the expulsion order.

5th December

☐ Israel deports the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul, despite yesterday's recommendation by the Supreme Court that the original expulsion order be reappraised.

☐ Mr Bassam Shaka, mayor of occupied Nablus, addresses a meeting organised in Paris by the Franco-Arab

Israel's bestial 'Christmas present'

ON CHRISTMAS DAY Israeli troops shot five Palestinian commandos near Wadi Zun during one of the Zionists' incursions into southern Lebanon. About 40 minutes after the shooting, the bodies of the five guerrillas were piled up, sprayed with an unidentified liquid and blasted with two separate explosive charges. The gruesome crime was witnessed by Dutch members of the UN peace-keeping force in south Lebanon. The Zionists categorically denied the atrocity.

In an interview with The Times on 5th January, however, Mr James Holger, the senior UNIFIL spokesman said that rigorous internal investigations by UN military personnel had confirmed detailed claims by a five-man patrol of Dutch soldiers that the incident did take place. 'Because of the gruesome and serious nature of the charges we have conducted a most searching inquiry. Despite the denial by the Israeli authorities, we remain convinced that the incident took place as originally reported,' Mr Holger said. 'The Dutch Defence Ministry in The Hague also supports the evidence of its soldiers. This is not something which anyone would treat lightly.

After abortive attempts by UNIFIL to persuade the International Red Cross to investigate the atrocity, a UNIFIL team returned to the scene of the crime on 29th December, before any

official UN communiqué had been issued. The team comprised senior officers from UNIFIL head-quarters in Naqoura, French bomb disposal experts and a Swedish doctor.

'We deliberately withheld information until every aspect of the allegations had been checked,' Mr Holger told The Times. 'The UNIFIL team went back in order to try and give the dead men a decent burial. But they were prevented from reaching the spot by warning shots fired by the Israelis.'

Mr Holger, who is the political adviser to UNIFIL Commander General Erskine, said the team stayed to observe from a distance. 'Before long they saw Israelis, equipped with stretchers, arrive and scoop what remained of the bodies into plastic bags and carry them in the direction of Israel.'

In a statement released in Beirut an official PLO spokesman said the 'heinous, obnoxious crime' was reminiscent of the atrocities perpetrated against Arabs during the British mandate in Palestine by the Zionist terrorist groups such as Irgun, of which Menachim Beigin was the leader. The PLO spokesman appealed to world opinion, to international humanitarian organisations and international organisations concerned with respect for human rights to condemn this latest example of Zionist terrorism.

Association in solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

6th Dec-mber

☐ Angry protests break out in the occupied West Bank in response to Israel's expulsion of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul.

7th December

☐ For the second day running, Israeli troops crush protests in the West Bank against the deportation of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul.

8th December

☐ Palestinian commandos explode a car bomb in occupied Jerusalem, injuring five Israelis.

US State Department spokesman John Trattner says the US was 'deeply disappointed' over Israel's expulsion of the two West Bank mayors, adding that the action was not helpful to the entire situation in the area and was a

violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention

☐ Israeli troops fire tear gas and warning shots to quell further angry demonstrations on the West Bank against the expulsion of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul. As part of its harsh new censorship policy, Israel detains a US television crew near Bethlehem and confiscates two film cassettes.

☐ Israel radio reports that Zionist settlers in the Jordan Valley have begun cultivating land on the banks of the River Jordan, beyond the security fence.

☐ Beirut radio reports that Israeli forces last week completed the expropriation of 1,800 dunams of land in south Lebanon.

9th December

☐ The PLO's General Mobilisation Committee meets under the chairman-ship of Yasser Ārafat.

☐ Protests at the expulsion of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul continue ▶

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Obituary: Dr Fayez Sayegh

DR FAYEZ Sayegh, a member of the Palestine National Council the Palestinian 'parliament' in exile— and one of the most articulate exponents of his people's cause, died in a New York hospital on 9th December, aged 68.

After gaining his BA and MA degrees at the American University of Beirut, he moved to Washington to study for his doctorate, which he gained in 1949. His career comprised two lengthy periods as a diplomat and international civil servant, mostly at UN headquarters in New York, interspersed with several years of full-time academic work.

Between 1949 and 1959 he worked in the Lebanese embassy in Washington, in the Radio Division of the UN Office of Public Information, as Social Affairs Officer at UN head-quarters and as Counsellor to the Permanent Mission of north Yemen at the UN.

In 1960 he began a period of academic work. Until 1963 he was Visiting Professor at Macalaster College and Stanford University. This was followed by a year as Guest Fellow at St Anthony's College, Oxford. From there, he moved to Beirut to take up a post as Associate Professor at the American University.

Dr Sayegh returned to New York as Rapporteur for the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and went on to be the Arab League's Permanent Observer at the UN. Since 1972 he had been Counsellor to the Permanent Mission of Kuwait at the UN.

Dr Sayegh was a prolific and much-respected writer on Arab nationalism and the Palestine question. His publications included Arab Unity: Hope and Fulfillment, The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World, Zionist Colonialism in Palestine and Zionist Diplomacy.

Dr Sayegh was renowned for his The Camp David Agreement and the Palestine Problem, a penetrating analysis of why the US-sponsored peace settlement between Israel and Egypt would do nothing to resolve the Palestinian question. The paper was published in the Winter 1979 issue of the Journal of Palestine Studies.

on the occupied West Bank, with soldiers firing tear gas to disperse a demonstration at a Ramallah high school and Zionist troops sealing the area around Bethlehem University barring entry by 850 students. This followed an eight hour seige of the campus that was lifted yesterday, that had sealed in about 1,000 students, teachers and administrators.

☐ It is reported that Israel has expropriated 1,000 dunams of Palestinian land near the West Bank town of Ramallah.

10th December

☐ It is reported that Dr George Habbash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has fully recovered from a brain tumour suffered earlier this year. An unsuccessful operation in summer had left him semiparalysed.

A delegation of the Japanese-Palestinian Friendship Society arrives in Damascus on a visit made at the invitation of the Palestine National Council. The delegation includes eight Japanese parliamentarians representing all parties in Japan.

☐ The Foreign Press Association in Israel strongly protests at the Zionist crackdown on press coverage of pro-

tests in the occupied West Bank.

☐ Palestinians demonstrate in Hebron and Ramallah in the fifth day of protests over the expulsion of the two Palestinian mayors from the West Bank.

☐ Two people are wounded when a bomb explodes under a car in occupied Jerusalem.

11th December

☐ The UN General Assembly votes 117 to 2 for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to debate measures to force Israel to readmit the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul and the religious leader of Hebron, who were all deported in May following a Palestinian ambush in Hebron.

☐ Zionist troops fire warning shots in the air to break up a demonstration in the occupied West Bank town of El Bireh. The protest was against the deportation of the mayors of Hebron and Halhoul.

PLO's Information Office in Washington. A Zionist terrorist group claims responsibility for the attempted bomb-

13th December

☐ The Daily Telegraph reports that Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington has

endorsed the main points in the recent Liberal Party report on the Middle East, which called for the creation of a Palestinian state and recognised the PLO's status as the representative of the Palestinian people.

☐ Israeli long range artillery shells the Rashidiya and Buss Palestinian refugee camps in south Lebanon.

14th December

☐ PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat addresses a meeting in Beirut's Ārab University to mark the eleventh anniversary of the foundation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

☐ Palestinian commandos explode time bombs in several military plants in occupied Beersheba, causing heavy damage and a number of casualties. Israel admits the operation, saying one pewas killed and another injured.

☐ An Israeli soldier is wounded in a clash with a Palestinian commando squad in occupied Palestine near the Lebanese border.

☐ Israel radio reports that several Zionist settlements in the occupied West Bank are to be expanded.

☐ Israel radio reports that a new Zionist settlement is to be established north of Jerusalem, beyond the city boundaries.

15th December

☐ PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat chairs a meeting of the PLO Executive Com-

☐ The Japanese Government announces that Premier Zenko Suzuki intends to receive PLO Chairman Yasser Ārafat. It will be the first meeting between the PLO leader and the prime minister of a leading western industrial state.

☐ It is reported that Sir John Grah
Deputy Under-Secretary in charge of the
Middle East at the Foreign Office,
met PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in
Beirut on 2nd December. The meeting
was attended by the British Ambassador to Lebanon and by Mr Farouk
Kaddoumi, Head of the PLO's Political Department.

☐ Israeli-backed Lebanese rightists and Palestinian forces exchange tank, artillery and rocket fire in south Lebanon.

17th December

☐ PLO Chairman Yasser Ārafat arrives in East Germany for an official visit.

☐ It is reported that the Israeli military government in the occupied West Bank plans to establish Jewish civilian courts there to apply Israeli law to Zionist settlers.

☐ Several villages in the UN-occupied area of south Lebanon are attacked by Israeli troops.

18th December

☐ Israel launches a major raid against the town of Ashiyeh, north of the Litani river in south Lebanon. A battle with Palestinian and leftist Lebanese defendance.

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ders lasted for several hours before the Israelis were forced to withdraw by helicopter. Palestinian sources reported 17 Zionist soldiers killed or wounded in the fight.

19th December

☐ The UN Security Council unanimously approves a resolution calling on Israel to allow the exiled mayors of Hebron and Halhoul to return.

☐ The UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim deplores the escalating violence in south Lebanon.

☐ It is reported that several Israeli soldiers have admitted beating residents he village of Silwad on the occupied West Bank during a recent curfew. They also admitted to stealing money from the villagers and vandalising property.

21st December

- ☐ It is reported that Mayors Qawasmeh of Hebron and Milhem of Halhoul have begun a sit-in hunger strike at UN headquarters in protest at their deportation by the Israelis.
- ☐ Norwegian units of the UN peacekeeping force in south Lebanon push back a 100-man Israeli force trying to dynamite homes in a UNIFIL controlled area
- ☐ A Palestinian guerrilla squad clashes with a Zionist patrol along the Lebanese border.
- ☐ Israeli war planes buzz Beirut, drawing anti-aircraft barrages from Palestinian positions.

23rd December

□ Voice of Palestine radio broadcasts a telegram from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to President Brezhnev expressing his condolences on the death of former Soviet Premier Kosygin. 24th December

☐ The exiled mayors of Hebron and Halhoul end their sit-in at UN head-quarters in New York, at the request of Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim.

25th December

☐ Voice of Palestine reports a Palestinian commando attack on a military barracks near Kibbutz Hanita in occupied Palestine.

26th December

☐ Three Lebanese villagers are woun-

Mayors return in triumph

THE TUMULTUOUS welcome for Nablus Mayor Bassam Shaka on his return to the West Bank on 4th January was 'one of the most fervent displays of Palestinian nationalism seen in the occupied West Bank for many years,' according to Times correspondent Christopher Walker. Mr Shaka lost both his legs in a Zionist terrorist car bomb attack in June and has since been abroad for medical treatment. He was fitted with artificial legs in Britain.

Earlier, on Christmas Day, Mayor Karim Khalaf of Ramallah, who lost his left foot in the attempt on his life, returned from the United States to a similar triumphant welcome. Mayor Khalaf also promised to continue his fight for a Palestinian state headed by the PLO. ded after an Israeli patrol entered the border village of Haddatha and blew up their house.

27th December

Bombs planted by Palestinian commandos in Dimona and Jerusalem are detonated by Zionist explosive experts, causing material damage.

29th December

☐ PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat meets with East German President Erich Honecker in Berlin.

☐ Mayor Bassam Shaka of occupied Nablus arrives in Damascus for a meeting with Syrian President Assad.

☐ Palestinian guerrillas explode bombs in two military transport stations in Ashqelon in occupied Palestine, wounding several Israeli soldiers and causing extensive material damage.

30th December

- ☐ The Israeli Supreme Court grants the Palestinian-owned East Jerusalem Electricity Company an order temporarily preventing its takeover by the Israeli government. The Zionist government was to have forcibly purchased the company on 1st January.
- ☐ Israel radio reports that a new Zionist settlement has been established in the Jordan Valley. Called Derekh Jericho, it is located four kilometres from the Palestinian town of Jericho.

31st December

Israeli warplanes returning from bombing raids against Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are intercepted by Syrian fighters. The Syrian MiGs are downed in a dogfight and at least one Israeli plane is reported to have crashed or made a forced landing in northern Israel.

Qaddoumi: Facing the new realities

QUESTION: In spite of the tensions in the Middle East, you — and the rest of the PLO delegation here [at the UN] for the debate — seem more relaxed than you were last July during the emergency special session on Palestine. Is that a misinterpretation?

Answer: No, it is not a misinterpretation. We are relaxed because although we think there are many problems, they can be solved in a short period of time. The situation will not get worse. We never thought that the Middle East would deteriorate to this extent.

The crux of the problem in the Middle East is the Palestinian cause. We are faced with new realities in the Middle East, because of the differences between the parties involved in tackling the Palestinian problem, and because there has not been any advance in solving the question of Palestine. The Israeli-Ārab conflict should be solved justly.

Do you have in mind a solution, a way to tackle the problem?

In accordance with the United Nations resolutions, on many occasions it was declared and announced by the PLO that there should be an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories; that the Palestinians should regain their homeland; that they should be able to establish an independent state; and they should have the right of self-determination. These are the main objectives of the Palestinian struggle.

Did you have fears that at this year's Arab summit in Amman King Hussein would be appointed spokesman for the Palestinian cause?

Well, in fact, there were many resolutions passed in previous summit conferences, in Algiers, Rabat, Tunis and Baghdad, that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Therefore we reject any idea that King Hussein should become the spokesman for the Palestinian people or territory. We struggled in order to avoid any attempt by the Americans or the Israelis to negotiate with Jordan and to give the Jordanian option the first priority in order to solve the Middle East problem. Because without the PLO, and without regaining our national rights, the Middle East crisis will not be solved. Whether they try through Sadat, or



Farouk Qaddoumi

FAROUK QADDOUMI, Head of the PLO's Political Department. led the delegation to the UN General Assembly debate on Palestine in New York. Interviewed by Marian Houk, he reiterated the need for an international solution to the Palestine question, and explained the PLO's absence from the Amman summit earlier.

King Hussein, all these attempts will eventually become failures. King Hussein shouldn't have the right to speak on behalf of the Palestinians, and we have denounced the attempts of Sadat to do so. and to negotiate for self-rule on the West Bank and in Gaza.

Why did the PLO not attend the Amman summit?

We did our best in order to find a compromise between the request for the postponement of the conference for two or three months and the decision to meet on the fixed date. We were successful at the beginning during the foreign ministers' preliminary meeting, but eventually failed. We asked that some mini-summits be held before the conference in order to agree on the programme and to solve some of the problems that exist between Arabs. Such mini-summits had been held before other conferences - in Baghdad (where President Assad

had flown to talk with the then-President Bakr and with Saddam Hussein) and in Cairo and Tunis. But Jordan refused. We wanted to avoid any explosive disunity among Ārabs - therefore we preferred to be absent from this summit, to avoid complications as a result of nonpreparation for the summit.

Do you think the PLO would have had to take sides, had there been an explosion, or would you have acted as a mediator?

We have our principles and our objectives, and we have to stick to them. All the Arabs are supporting our objectives. Therefore, we had to side with our objectives, and not with this country or the other.

In your address to the General Assembly during the Palestine debate, you directed some remarks to US president-elect Reagan, and said he shouldn't consider the PLO a terrorist organisation. Have you, or any member of your delegation, made any attempt to contact Reagan's transition teams?

We have had no contact with Reagan's team, because, you see, the United States is the only country which refuses to speak and conduct any kind of dialogue with the PLO. It is the only country which opposes the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. This is detrimental to the search for peace, and it is necessary for the Reac administration to consider the necessity of recognising the PLO and the national rights of the Palestinian people. We are ready to meet, but only at a suitable level — which has to be the secretary of state or the president himself. And there should be an official recognition of the PLO.

We know of the hostile attitude of the American administration, and the hostile attitude of Reagan's team. Therefore, we are not trying to contact them, unless they change their attitude regarding the Palestinian cause. But if anybody contacts us, wanting to talk, we have no objections.

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