

# palestine/israel bulletin

Vol. 5, No. 6 • An effort to redress the imbalance of information on the Palestine/Israel conflict • September 1982

## Israel's Goals in Lebanon

On June 6, the U.S. voted for UN Security Council Resolution 509 calling for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. By June 25, the U.S. had joined Israel in calling for the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon. After Ambassador Philip Habib negotiated the PLO withdrawal, President Ronald Reagan surprised the Begin government, in his August 25 speech, by pressing for a peace settlement within the Camp David framework.

Responding to Begin's immediate rejection of Reagan's plan, Schlomo Hillel, a hawkish Labor Party Member of Knesset, said, "You're reacting hysterically because it turns out there is apparently readiness on President Reagan's part, and perhaps on the part of the Jordanians, to talk about this topic." (*New York Times*, September 9, 1982.)

After rejecting Reagan's initiative, Begin announced plans for several new settlements on the West Bank and gave Mr. Gemayel the ultimatum of "signing a peace treaty or accepting a 'special status' for a 40-kilometer security zone along Israel's northern border, which would effectively preclude the reunification of Lebanon." (*Christian Science Monitor*, September 9, 1982.) The zone would be policed by the Israeli-backed militia of Major Saad Haddad.

Taken together, these actions demand a reexamination of the goals of the invasion of Lebanon. Begin claims that the goals of the invasion were (a) to achieve security for Israeli citizens living in the Galilee area against PLO attacks from southern Lebanon; (b) to destroy the PLO's military and diplomatic power so that "moderate" Palestinians and Arabs would be able to step forward and negotiate without fearing the PLO; and (c) to restore sovereignty to Lebanon. Israeli and other critics of the war have challenged each of these points: (a) the PLO did not violate the cease-fire negotiated by Habib in July of 1981 (see Robin Wright's March 18 *Christian Science Monitor* article reprinted in the *Palestine/Israel Bulletin*, May 1982); (b) the PLO can be removed, but not destroyed, because to Palestinians it is the embodiment of their nationalist aspirations; and (c) Israel's support for Major Haddad's state within a state belies an interest in the sovereignty of Lebanon.

The real goals of the invasion appear to be (a) to gain access to the waters of the Litani River through a separate peace settlement with Lebanon; (b) to discredit moderate forces in the PLO and the Arab League; and (c) to

use the gains and uproar of war, and the disruption of the PLO infrastructure, to annex the West Bank and Gaza.

### The Litani

In 1919, Zionist leaders demanded southern Lebanon as part of the "Jewish national homeland" at the Paris Peace Conference. According to John Cooley of the *Christian Science Monitor*, they specified that all water sources on the flank of Mount Hermon should be secured for the Jewish homeland. After Israel became a

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## A War Based on Lies

*We reprint below an article that appeared in Ha'aretz on June 30, 1982.*

by Shulamit Har Even

We are told that we engaged in this war because the terrorists shelled the Galilee. The truth is that for eleven months the terrorists adhered strictly to the cease-fire and not one shell fell inside our borders. We, and not they, broke the cease-fire by a massive bombardment of Beirut, after which the terrorists also opened fire, and not one minute earlier.

We are told that there were also various incidents during the cease-fire. In one of these incidents, it is told, we seized a terrorist cell 7 kilometers north of [Kibbutz] Hanita. Seven kilometers north of Hanita is six kilometers inside of Lebanon. That is not inside of Israel.

Mr. Sharon announced to us on television that, since the sixties, Israel has suffered 1,002 dead as a result of terrorist actions. It is possible that he started his count from the riots of 1936-1939. However, the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces—Ed.] spokesperson said that in all the terrorist actions in the north since 1967, 106 people have died. A quick survey of the press shows that there had been a notable decline in the casualty figures, with 20 people killed by terrorists in all of Israel in 1980, 17 in 1981, and one in the present year. During the same period (in the past three years) more than 1,200 people were killed in traffic accidents in Israel. As of this writing, the IDF's losses in this war are equal to the potential losses of fifty years of terrorist shelling, were this to continue.

On the third day of the fighting, Mr. Begin said in the Knesset that it was Israel's intention to consolidate its position on the line of 40 kilometers from its northern border and not beyond that line. The prime minister

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## Goals

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state, it retained an interest in southern Lebanon: "Under plans actually drawn up for Israel by an American consultant, Walter Lowdermilk, in 1953, a diversion tunnel could easily be blasted and dug to the nearby Israeli border. Through the Marj River . . . Litani water would enter Israel's northern Lake Hula water system." (*Christian Science Monitor*, March 23, 1978.)

Moshe Dayan proposed a more straightforward approach to securing the water. As former Prime Minister Moshe Sharett wrote in his diary:

According to [Dayan], the only thing that's necessary is to find an officer, even just a major. We should either win his heart or buy him with money, to make him agree to declare himself the saviour of the Maronite population. Then the Israeli army will enter Lebanon, will occupy the necessary territory, and will create a Christian regime which will ally itself with Israel. The territory from the Litani southward will be totally annexed to Israel and everything will be all right. [Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*, Belmont, Mass.: Arab American University Graduates, 1980]

The invasion and Begin's ultimatum to Gemayel appear to be the fruition of Dayan's plan.

## Discrediting moderates within the PLO and the Arab League

Israeli leaders and media refer to the PLO as "the terrorists." As long as the PLO is perceived as nothing more than a terrorist organization, it is easy for Israel to justify war against PLO fighters and their supporters, and to deny them any role as representatives of the Palestinian people. Since the early seventies, the PLO has

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changed its image both by denouncing and failing to endorse acts of terrorism and by building an infrastructure of factories, schools, hospitals, and welfare services. These actions and intense diplomatic efforts have earned the PLO a legitimacy that has led to its recognition as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" by 123 countries, and observer status at the United Nations. This legitimacy is seen as a threat to Israeli leaders who want to deny Palestinian rights.

Israel has attempted to foster the terrorist image of the PLO during the invasion of Lebanon. For example, the Israeli government has repeatedly charged the PLO with holding civilians hostage in West Beirut, pointing in contrast to Israeli efforts to avoid civilian casualties by dropping leaflets warning the residents to flee. However, when in response to the leaflets, "thousands of civilians were trying to flee the western half of Beirut . . . rightist Lebanese Phalangist militia . . . tightened an existing policy of security checks, preventing an undetermined number of persons from using the escape routes." (*Boston Globe*, June 28, 1982.)

This was still a problem in August. "When asked why the Palestinian women and children were not allowed to leave [West Beirut], Amin Gemayel [a Phalangist leader] . . . said with bitterness, 'Ask the Israelis; they are the ones who command here,' deciding when and if to open the crossing point and for how long." (*New York Times*, August 8, 1982.)

Speaking of Sharon's goals for the war, Anthony Lewis wrote: ". . . the Lebanese operation would tend to discredit moderates in the Arab world—those who wanted to accept Israel and negotiate its withdrawal from the West Bank—there would be no more initiatives from Saudi Arabia and the like. And Israel would consequently be free to go ahead with the policy fundamental to Prime Minister Begin: absorption of the West Bank." (*New York Times*, September 9, 1982.)

## Annexation

Begin's efforts to destroy the PLO in Lebanon have been accompanied by increased Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza. This situation is discussed by David Blundy in the *London Times*, July 25, 1982; excerpts of his article are reprinted below.

## Under Smoke of War, a Land Grab Speeds Up

While the initials of war—M60 tanks, F16 jets, RPG7 rocket-launchers—dominate the news in Israel, other initials loom over the Palestinians on the Israeli-occupied West Bank. They are the initials of Plan RJ5. If, as Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem says, "Under the smoke of the war in Lebanon, the Israelis are waging war on the West Bank," RJ5 is a potent weapon.

It is the biggest land-grab since the Israeli occupation in 1967. The plan, which is already being implemented, although it has not yet passed through the legal process, puts about a third of West Bank land under strict Israeli control—a vast tract from Ramallah to Bethlehem, from Jerusalem to the Jordan Rift, which includes five municipal towns and villages.

The Bethlehem town clerk, who has seen the Israeli plans, says that 40 per cent of the area on the map of the West Bank is colored yellow, which means it is for Jewish settlements or Israeli military use. Fifty per cent is for agriculture, with strict controls on Arab buildings, and 10 per cent is for the development of Arab towns and villages.

"The most disastrous land appropriation ever," says Freij. "They are even proposing a road system in which the road is from 40 to 50 meters wide, but with extensions on each side of 150 meters. Clearly they do not want roads which are 350 meters wide. The only purpose is to prevent Arabs from building beside them."

The West Bank war is being waged briskly, with ad-

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The *Palestine/Israel Bulletin* is published once a month except July and August by Search for Justice and Equality in Palestine, P.O. Box 53, Waverley, MA 02179, Telephone (617) 899-9665, and the Middle East Resource Center, 1322 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, Telephone (202) 659-6846. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to SEARCH, P.O. Box 53, Waverley, MA 02179. Subscriptions: \$6.00/year; \$15.00/year for institutions. Make checks payable to SEARCH.

Staff: Edmund R. Hanauer, Cheri Hanks, Liza Burr, Ed Hogan.

## SHARON ON LEBANON

*The Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci interviewed Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon in late August. The interview, excerpted here, appeared in the Washington Post on August 29, 1982.*

by Oriana Fallaci

*Sharon:* The point is that we had to convince the terrorists to leave Beirut, and this could only be achieved with the bombings.

*Fallaci:* *Then why did you go on with that massacre even when they had agreed to leave? And why, when the agreement had been reached, the 11th of August, did you order the most ferocious bombing of all, 12 endless hours that caused almost 600 dead?*

Because Arafat continued to play, to trick, to lie. Because he made a joke of us, that liar. You can never trust him, you can never trust them. They live on shrewdness and they always betray their word, their agreements. Even during the expulsion the PLO did. They had agreed to give their names, for instance. Instead they haven't. They had agreed not to board jeeps and trucks. Instead they tried to. The 11th of August they still demanded that we withdraw from Beirut to be replaced by the international forces. So I bombed them, yes. And how—how— But it worked. The following night, that is, the night between the 12th and the 13th, they bent to our conditions. And I stopped.

*When did you inform [the U.S. government] exactly about your intentions of invading Lebanon?*

Apart from the fact that I don't like the word invasion—I prefer the word operation—I never informed the Americans that I would invade Lebanon. I never spoke with them about plans, timetables, schedules. But during almost one year, that is, since last September, I have been discussing with them the possibility that the operation would take place. I discussed it various times with Alexander Haig when he came to the Middle East; I discussed it with Weinberger when I went to Washington last November; I discussed it repeatedly with Ambassador Habib. Look, to be honest, I used to see Habib and Haig and Weinberger exclusively to discuss the problem of terrorism and PLO. I never kept secrets from them; I never made mysteries. And as our bombing of the nuclear reactor [in] Baghdad had caught them by surprise, as they had complained about it saying, "Don't catch us by surprise," when I spoke about Lebanon I kept warning them: "Don't be caught by surprise if or when we will do it." Or: "If or when we do, don't tell us that you were caught by surprise. The situation is such that we cannot restrain ourselves anymore."

*General Sharon, you will not stay there 15 years as you did in the Sinai, will you?*

No, I really believe that this time we will stay much less.

*In spite of your necessity of protecting that new ally of yours?*

We don't like to interfere with the internal affairs of Lebanon, but it would be hypocritical to say that we would accept a government which is ready to again host the Syrians and the terrorists. Needless to say that today's Lebanese Army is not strong enough to face the threats all

alone. Syria still occupies almost half of Lebanon, the terrorists are still in Tripoli and the Bekaa Valley with the Syrians, and the new government is a baby just born out of a Caesarean cut. Can a baby just born out of a Caesarean cut have the capability of dealing with Lebanon's present situation? Certainly not. And there is something more: if the Syrians remain so near Beirut, if we abandon the control of the Beirut-Damascus road, the newly born baby does not survive.

*And what if, staying on that road, you find yourself in Damascus?*

It should not be necessary to go to Damascus. We don't wish to go to Damascus. We really don't, we never did. I even think that we should avoid the fight in the Bekaa Valley. But, if the Syrians don't move, we don't move. And then it becomes an ugly story, because I tell you: the Syrians get a problem. Our troops and artillery in the Bekaa Valley are in the range of 25 kilometers from Damascus. This means that we can shell Damascus at any moment.

## Sharon's Solution

*We reprint below an article that appeared in Yediot Aharonot on June 11, 1982.*

by Boaz Evron

People say that when there's a war on we have to close ranks and not ask any questions but support our fighting sons until victory is won. But I think otherwise: that when people are sent to risk the most precious thing of all, their lives—and it's not just "our sons" we're talking about here, but all of us, for decisions which are taken can affect the fates of us all and whether we live or die—precisely then is the time to ask the cruelest and hardest questions of all, and not to keep your mouth shut for the sake of "morale" . . .

What is the real aim of this war, which is being conducted with a political shrewdness and military efficiency I do not doubt for a moment? It is not a campaign against the PLO, which has never posed a serious threat to Israel. It is not even primarily a war to "impose order" in Lebanon (an order which is none of our business). The real target is the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and Gaza. One of the main aims of the Israeli action is, by destroying the only territory under the control of the PLO, to break the spirit and the backbone of this people, in order to enable the government to impose the Begin-Sharon version of "Autonomy" in the (occupied) territories. In other words: the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza to Israel, but without granting Israeli citizenship to their inhabitants, which would enable them to influence the government by means of their own elected representatives, and to defend their civil rights. Instead they will be "autonomous"; in other words: we will be able to confiscate their lands and harass them with impunity, use them as a cheap labor force and convert them into hewers of wood and drawers of water, whereas they will have the autonomous right to dispose of their own garbage. In other words: an Israeli version of a "bantustan" in the spirit of our great friend and ally South

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even sent a message in this spirit to the president of the United States. As they say nowadays in the army in bitter mockery: "Don't you tell me how far 40 kilometers are."

Mr. Begin festively announced to the nation that the whole operation would end within 24 hours.

The chief of staff reported, in an interview, that 170 IDF soldiers had been killed. On the same day, at noon, it was already known, and in the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security as well, that the number had gone beyond 200 killed, and that was still not the end of the story.

We are told about Syrian harassment. The truth is that since 1974 there had been not a single shot fired by the Syrians, not even a pistol shot.

When Mr. Begin and all the government's spokespersons reported that we are not in Beirut, and that it is not our intention to enter Beirut, reporters sent out news reports, mockingly, from Non-Beirut and asked, "What is this if not Beirut?" There is not one Knesset member who did not visit this Non-Beirut, into which, it goes without saying, we did not enter.

Mr. Sharon said, with the famous tick on his face, that it was the Syrians and not us who broke the ceasefire on the Beirut-Damascus highway. The latest eruption of fighting was, according to all the commentators, unnecessary. For the first time in the history of the IDF, soldiers (whose names are known to us) phoned to their homes, kibbutzim, and military yeshivot, with the plea: "Do something, stop him!" And these people come from the most select and bravest army units, which are ready to fight but not senselessly.

Mr. Begin said in the U.S. that the military mission had been completed and that the IDF has no intention of conquering West Beirut. On the same day, Mr. Sharon said in Lebanon that the military mission had not been completed since the terrorists are still in Beirut.

We were told that the PLO infrastructure had been destroyed. Tomorrow, or the day after, it will be possible to set up the PLO headquarters elsewhere, and to supply them with arms many times the quantities we took from them. The world arms market is open, and there are plenty of mercenaries available.

It is said to us that it is not possible to carry out many social welfare projects in Israel—to rehabilitate our urban neighborhoods, to close the social gap, to properly develop the educational system, because we don't have enough money. This war cost up to now more than 1.5 billion dollars.

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ministrative and bureaucratic weapons, and with potentially more impact on the fate of the Palestinians than the bloody destruction of refugee camps in Lebanon.

There is military Law 973, for example, implemented by the West Bank civilian administrator, Menachem Milson, on June 9. It said that no West Bank municipality could bring money from any Arab source deemed hostile to Israel (which is all of them except Egypt) without an Israeli permit. If permission is granted, the money must

be placed in a bank account under the control of a seven-man Israeli committee.

The result of Law 973, Freij says, is simple: "No Arab government will give us money under such restrictions. Municipal functions will now cease. Forty per cent of my normal, day-to-day budget comes from Arab countries, and 100 per cent of my development budget. I have suspended all projects."

Other Israeli tactics on the West Bank continue as routine: eight mayors have now been dismissed; local councils have been suspended; mayors have been put under town arrest. Key supporters of the Palestinian Liberation Organization from most towns and villages were arrested in preemptive raids by the Israeli army at the beginning of the Lebanese war. The main Palestinian university, Bir Zeit, has been shut down again. It has been closed for seven months so far this academic year. Two new Israeli settlements were established near Bethlehem last week. Detentions for questioning, and arrests, have increased.

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Africa. And if they dare open their mouths or raise their voices—there's a "solution" ready: "transports," expulsion to the "real Palestine," i.e. Jordan. These are the "liberals." The less liberal argue that "transports" are needed in any case, from the "demographic" point of view, even if the Palestinians surrender to us completely and grovel in the dust.

These are the general lines of the "solution to the Palestinian problem" envisaged by Sharon. It is about this "solution" that the war is being fought.

This solution is no solution . . . Total repression will give birth to total rebellion. And if hundreds of thousands are banished beyond the border—will they not intensify their war from there? Where do all the Fatah recruits in Lebanon come from if not from the refugee camps? The wars will continue. You cannot go on suppressing the aspiration for human dignity and equality forever if your only advantage is the mailed fist . . .

Blood will be spilt again, their blood and ours. We'll go to war again, and have brilliant successes again, and every generation will be called upon to spill its blood three or four times, for the wars come thick and fast, every few years, and every war is declared to be the last one, until the next. And the weary hand sticks to the bloody sword, and there is no end to the killing in view.

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Equality in Palestine  
P.O. Box 53  
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